

A Report into the Benefits of using Prisoners as Volunteers' in the Voluntary Sector.

Part of the Rutland Consortium Infrastructure Early Investment Programme
In Compliance with Government of the East Midlands

Report Conducted by
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Acknowledgements and Declaration

I would like to thank HMP Ashwell and Malcolm Bull for their supervision on the Good Practice Guidelines. All prisoners, Ricky, Robert, Liam, John, Richard, Colin and Anthony are thanked for being very cooperative, considerate and forthcoming in their interviews. Great appreciation is sent to Martin Aspinall and Chris Lawton for their honest opinions and selfless hard work at their organisations, and Kathy and Chris at Voluntary Action Rutland for their support throughout the report.

This project is entirely my own work.

Signed Date

Abstract

Prisoners entering their resettlement period at HMP Ashwell are given the opportunity to join an outworking scheme. This involves voluntary organisations in the Rutland area employing prisoners from HMP Ashwell as volunteers. This report has been conducted in order to establish the benefits encountered for prisoners working within the community through the analysis of their subjective interviews. HMP Ashwell and the voluntary sector involved in the scheme were also interviewed to gather opinions. The report concluded that the prisoners' felt an improvement in their social skills i.e. higher self confidence, the respect of their workplace, a better understanding of people and that they also benefited from their time in the community through the work experience and building on education or skills. Acceptance from the voluntary organisations as a team member promotes the prisoners' respect of and responsibility to their work placements and therefore gradually developed their rehabilitation and integration into the community.

The voluntary organisations involved have upheld their partnerships with the prison service and encourage the scheme in order to help the prison and community, however, recommendations for better working relationships and resource needs have been established.

Introduction

The Voluntary and Community sector (VCS) Infrastructure Early Investment Programme (EIP) is interested in strengthening and improving the existing VCS infrastructure organisation and identifying and tackling any ‘gaps’ in the infrastructure in the East Midlands. (Government Office for the East Midlands, GOEM.)

The Rutland Infrastructure Consortium has been set up by those with an interest in working together to improve the services for their community. A Compact has been agreed on. This provides a framework for the way in which voluntary and community organisations and statutory organisations work together in Rutland, by promoting effective working relationships that provide effective and efficient services. The Compact is a partnership agreement and is endorsed and encouraged by the Government, in their document ‘Getting it right together-Compact relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community sector in England’ (Home Office; 1998) for the development of Compacts at local levels. It established that voluntary action is an essential component in a democratic society; also an independent and diverse voluntary and community-based sector is fundamental to the well-being of a society.

The Hon. Paul Boateng MP (Minister of prisons) spoke at the Prison Service Conference (2000) encouraging the partnerships between the voluntary sector and the prison service;

‘The use of the voluntary sector is rapidly increasing throughout the Government, and the potential for developing partnerships between prisons and the voluntary organisations is enormous. The significance of these partnerships in helping us to deliver constructive regimes and meet targets cannot be overemphasised. Voluntary organisations are an invaluable and currently under-used resource and it is vital that we involve them in our work wherever they can make a contribution.’

Community involvement in the provision of prison services should work towards the ‘Healthy Prisons Concept’, which describes a constructive regime for prisons as one which recognises the prisoners’ humanity and promotes their self respect and sense of responsibility. It also enhances their ability to lead autonomous, fulfilling and law abiding lives in the community. Minimising the prisoners’ loss of liberty (which is the essence of imprisonment) is important as many suffer from a reduction of their mental or social capacity to deal with freedom on release.

‘We know that there are many benefits to be gained from working with the voluntary and community sector and there are considerable advantages in being able to incorporate the informal and creative environment they can create as a way to engage prisoners with learning skills’ Ivan Lewis, Department for Education and Skills Minister (2004).

A conference hosted by the Prisons and Probation Inspectorate, ‘Through the Prison Gate’ (2002), highlighted the need for a joined up approach between Government, main stream agencies and the voluntary sector to prioritise resettlement work and ensure the successful reintegration of offenders back into the community. The conference explained the link between social exclusion, re-offending and the

importance of planning for a safe release, through ongoing assessments of risk (both of harm and re-offending) by the offender throughout their sentence and following their release, to ensure the protection of the public. It established the need for employers and other agencies to support the work of the National Probation Directorate and Prison Service to develop and deliver basic skills and learning for offenders to help them find work. The voluntary sector was seen as a much under-used but valuable resource in working with prisons both *pre* and *post release* to ensure the successful integration of offenders back into the community.

‘Our vision is that offenders according to need should have access to education and training both in prisons and in the community, which enables them to gain skills and qualifications they need to hold down a job and have a positive role in society’ Offenders’ Learning and Skills Unit (OLSU) Delivery plan 2003- 2006.

Preparation for release and resettlement requires different areas in prisons to work together with external statutory and voluntary organisations. The continuity of the learning process for the prisoner is important and should increase as sentencing policy moves towards a balance of time spent in prison and the community.

Voluntary Action Rutland (VAR) and HMP Ashwell are both part of the Rutland Consortium with joint aims and principles in working together. Voluntary Action Rutland is an ‘umbrella organisation’ or ‘Infrastructure organisation’ and works to fulfil four main functions; in development, in services to other organisations, in liaison and in representation. For the past few years VAR and HMP Ashwell have worked in liaison to offer opportunities for the prisoners entering the resettlement period of their sentence. VAR has been able to act as a liaison between HMP Ashwell and the voluntary agencies that may benefit from the use of prison volunteers for their organisation. This offers substantial learning opportunities for the prisoners. HMP Ashwell also has partnerships with other voluntary agencies in the Rutland area, which are accepting prison volunteers on a daily basis. HMP Ashwell is due to expand their resettlement unit to house forty prisoners, not all prisoners will be going out to work, this depends on close monitoring and reports from prison and probation on their suitability to work in the community.

Background

The probation service in England and Wales has had a lengthy history of work with the voluntary sector (Cross, 1995) but during the early 1990s political and legislative changes created formalised, contract based relationships between the probation service and the voluntary sector, which were termed ‘partnerships’ by the Government (Home Office, 1990; 1992). However, the Government still encourages these partnerships as they are seen as one of the cures to crime prevention and citizen participation in future crime control. Gibbs (2001) investigated the development of inter-agency partnerships between the probation service and voluntary sector in the early 1990s in England and Wales. Her study involved in depth interviews with probation staff, representatives from the voluntary sector organisations that were involved in partnerships or working within the probation services, and the probation service users (prisoners) taking part in schemes. Research from her study illustrated that there were strong views on ‘the meaning of partnership’ and interdependency; there was a need to share skills, pool resources and encourage mutual benefits

between the probation service and voluntary sector organisations. Interdependency meant relying upon each other and working jointly to address common problems. Gibbs (1994-95) also interviewed 15 current probation service users (prisoners) either attending a partnership scheme as part of a condition in a probation order or completing community service hours, or attending voluntarily whilst still on a probation order but it was not part of their order to attend any partnerships. The schemes varied in their requirements of the service user with some highly structured and formal projects having compulsory attendance expectations with predetermined activities, whilst others allowed voluntary participation and choice of activity.

The experience of partnerships for service users was therefore somewhat linked to their obligations; where service users had chosen to undertake voluntary partnership attendance they seemed more satisfied with their work and responsibilities, but where users had to attend under compulsion they were less satisfied. Usually, the more choice and flexibility that was offered resulted in more rewarding experiences for the service users (Gibbs 1996; 1999a).

Those service users attending partnerships as volunteers, were expected to contribute to the schemes in a helping capacity i.e. assisting at play schemes, teaching motor skills to young people and undertaking office work for charities in need. The service users were treated as co-workers by the voluntary sector personnel who ran the schemes; they were trusted more and given responsibility than if they were viewed by the personnel as clients of services only (Gibbs 1996; 1999). The benefits of this unique experience have been reported by the service users as:

- i) a sense of belonging or acceptance,
- ii) learning new skills
- iii) feeling better about themselves or increasing their self-confidence; and
- iv) putting something back into society.

This challenged some stereotypes of the offender as selfish, irresponsible and lacking in empathy. Gibbs found that the voluntary sector were keen to have offenders as volunteers, most voluntary organisation respondents were more than satisfied with the contribution made by offender-volunteers, they felt that the service user was doing valuable work and gaining employment skills for the future. The probation service assessed all 'volunteers' as trustworthy and reliable prior to placement.

Service users and offenders have not traditionally been asked their views about the service that they receive, however studies that have been conducted in the interest of the offenders' view have shown, amongst other factors, the significance of the relationships with their supervising officer as someone: with whom they can talk easily, in whom they can confide, and who can support them in practical and emotional problems.

There have been many studies based on the effects of community service on reducing re-offending, although community service is a fine upon the offenders' free time, it may have underlying values and benefits to understanding if working in the community would reduce re-offending. The re-integrative potential of community service was illustrated by a survey of placements providing agencies in Scotland (McIvor, 1992). Approximately half of the agencies surveyed stated that on at least one occasion, a community service worker had stayed on in a voluntary (and sometimes paid) capacity after their court order has finished. This seemed more likely to arise if the community service worker had been better integrated with agency staff and volunteers and where they enjoyed direct contact with service users that would benefit from the work that they carried out. More important than the work placement or setting, was whether the work facilitated offenders to learn new skills

(practical or interpersonal), brought them into contact with the beneficiaries and was valued by the beneficiaries. These qualities made community service a more positive experience for offenders, and those who had a positive experience were less likely to re-offend (McIvor, 1992). As McIvor has observed:

‘....community service placements which were viewed by offenders as most rewarding - and which were associated with reductions in recidivism (re offending) – might best be characterised as re-integrative and as entailing a degree of reciprocity or exchange. In many instances, it seems, contact with beneficiaries had given offenders an insight into other people and an increased insight into themselves; the acquisition of skills had instilled in them greater confidence and self-esteem; and the experience of completing their community service orders had placed them in a position where they could enjoy reciprocal relationships – gaining the trust, confidence and appreciation of other people and having the opportunity to give something back to them in return.’ McIvor (1998 pp 55-56)

There have not been many reported studies on the benefits of using offenders in prison, as ‘volunteers’ in voluntary and community sector organisations, apart from the evidence gathered by Gibbs (1996; 1999). At the moment HMP Ashwell run a scheme in accordance with other voluntary agencies in the Rutland area to utilise some prisoners completing their resettlement period as ‘Volunteers’. This scheme has been running for a few years however, it had a few complications to begin with. HMP Ashwell are now broadening their resettlement unit to a forty bed unit, where prisoners will be assessed and may get an opportunity to work outside the prison if passed for risk and deemed trustworthy to place outside.

This report requested by the Rutland Consortium, is part of the Infrastructure Early Investment Programme (EIP) with compliance from The Government of the East Midlands. **The aim of this report is to establish the benefits for prisoners using the ‘Prisoners as Volunteers/Outworkers’ scheme at HMP Ashwell, as well as investigate the opinions of the voluntary sector to utilise the scheme. It can be used in order for the scheme to be sustained, valued as a resource, and create effective partnerships within the Voluntary Sector and the Prisons and Probation service.**

Method

The research took place in the month of June 2004; it involved semi-structured interviews with 6 out of the 11 inmates that were currently outworking as volunteers in various voluntary agencies in the Rutland area. Malcolm Bull (Senior Officer at resettlement unit) referred the prisoners to myself, two were interviewed at the resettlement unit, and 4 were interviewed at their place of work. All the inmate volunteers were male; all inmates had reached their FELD (Facility Licence Eligibility Date) at the quarter of their sentence stage and had begun working as a volunteer.

The semi-structured interviews to the prisoners were based around:

- Their experience as an inmate/volunteer
- The benefits they perceive of outworking
- How they saw their role as a volunteer
- Identifying if skills had improved
- How they were judged by the community placements
- Their social skills and confidence
- Any improvements, choices, hardships faced.

Interviews with Malcolm Bull and Martin Aspinal (Head of volunteers at Rutland Water) and Chris Lawton (Head of The Owl Sanctuary) were conducted. Martin and Chris have had a history of working with HMP Ashwell and prison volunteers, 4 of the inmate volunteers interviewed work for those establishments. Willowbrook Residential home was contacted by telephone and conversations/meetings were held with Voluntary Action Rutland, (notes were taken down), both establishments also have partnerships with HMP Ashwell to receive volunteers.

All interviews were recorded with a Dictaphone and transcribed at a later date. Each participant gave verbal consent to the recording of the interview and was notified that the interview would terminate if they wished. The interview lasted until both participant and researcher were satisfied. All interviews are fully transcribed and can be found in Appendix 2. (All prisoners' names have been altered in order to keep confidentiality. The names of the heads of the voluntary agencies and Resettlement unit have been kept as normal.)

The study was qualitative in nature, and I drew upon the qualitative methodology of 'Grounded theory' proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Grounded theory works to break down material into themes, through discourse analysis. Through the use of grounded theory I aim to divulge themes and codes in the participants discourse to therefore subtract the benefits and disadvantages faced by them.

The potential placements were asked if they were able to use inmates as volunteers, and any viewed problems they had in working with prisoners. This was conducted through telephone calls to a selection of voluntary agencies in the Rutland Social Care and Health and Housing Forum. Responses were gathered and evaluated in the result section.

Results of potential voluntary organisations and agencies.

The organisations and agencies were contacted through telephone calls and meetings, and were listed on the Rutland Social care, Health and Housing forum members. Eight organisations were contacted and asked their opinion on using inmates as volunteers. The results are listed below.

The organisations interested in using inmate volunteers

Four out of the eight establishments showed fascination and interest in using prisoners. All three felt that the prisoners were a valuable recourse and the communities could benefit.

Head Mistress **Pia Kerridge** at The Parks School, expressed an interest in using the volunteers straight away for her school for a much needed garden/outdoor equipment renovation. She valued the help as her school has no budget. Through liaison with VAR the school should receive prison volunteers.

The **Rural Community Council** based in Leicester, have approved of the scheme and find it 100% helpful and beneficial for their communities. They say they could offer it to the communities, acting as a mediator between the communities and the prison. It would be left to the individual communities whether they would want a prison volunteer.

Anchor Staying Put is part of the Anchor Trust and provides home improvement to council houses within Rutland County Council. Anchor Staying Put has stated it is difficult finding individuals to complete small handy man jobs, and there is a big demand for gardening improvements in their homes. The service is supervised and prior health and safety checks are completed. They have used young offenders before and been given good feedback. They are confident in using prison volunteers however the only set back seems to be the irregular wait for a volunteer from probation and the lack of technical knowledge to complete job. Another problem is travel to jobs with a volunteer. Some jobs are not local and may need travel to longer destinations. Their desire is regular help.

Voluntary Action Leicester does not directly send volunteers to agencies; it holds various agencies and establishments details. It is then up to the volunteer to make contact with the agency. However, VAL did express interest in the idea of helping prisoners in the voluntary sector realising benefits for both the community and the Prison service.

All four agencies would benefit using similar schemes such as those currently used at HMP Ashwell. The courses that are completed at Ashwell may aid the volunteers in technical knowledge for completing jobs e.g. electricians, painting, and brickwork.

Interested but unsure

Three of the eight agencies asked, seemed mildly interested in using inmate volunteers however were unsure of legislative processes to take due to Criminal Records Bureau checks needed on all volunteers

Age concern Leicester and Rutland did not directly state NO, but insisted on needing Enhanced CRB checks and wanted to know the crime committed. The reasons were that those doing maintenance would not be supervised although may come into contact with the clientele using the establishment.

Leonard Cheshire provides social and practical support and services to disabled people. They accepted working with inmates but had concerns about them

working with ex-offenders. They also needed CRB checks on all volunteers. Other than that, Leonard Cheshire backed the scheme and stated it beneficiary. They work towards equal opportunities.

Manton Hall a private residential home had the most concerns about utilising prisoners. They had used inmates 6/7 years prior and problems had occurred causing stoppage. Now, if started again CRB checks would need to be issued and the commission would have the final decision. However, their thoughts on individuals with a prison history were negative, they were seen as high crime associated due to being sentenced and they were not trusted to work among vulnerable adults although Manton Hall has admitted a history of not employing people with criminal records due to the risk factor. They would be held responsible by the commission if anything was to go wrong. However, Manton Hall agrees that meeting the prisoner is helpful and may take on an inmate if the CRB check was satisfactory.

Unable to use inmate volunteers

Citizen's Advice say they are unable to take on inmate volunteers, due to training procedures that can take from 2 weeks to 2 years. This needs a commitment on a fixed rota for 6 days a week. Thus there are practical difficulties due to the nature of work that is undertaken by their establishment.

Results

By analysing the interviews with all six inmate volunteers, it was possible to derive certain themes and aspects that re-occurred in their experiences of outworking. These are listed below and encompass the benefits and disadvantages felt when outworking from subjective viewpoints.

BENEFITS

Overall feeling of benefiting or Change in lifestyle.

Re integration and social skills; or increasing their self-confidence

Sense of responsibility, respect and acceptance/appreciation

Learning new skills (using time in jail appropriately) and Employment

Putting something back into society

Most reoccurring Theme – TRUST

NEGATIVES or IMPROVEMENTS

Adjusting back into prison life (can work as a benefit to re-offending)

Negative criticisms – no thanks.

OVERALL FEELING of BENEFITING – Change in their lifestyle and attitude.

All the prisoners seemed to enjoy the outworking experience. Most felt it had given them a chance to be 'normal' for a day. Change of lifestyle and attitude has also occurred due to the outworking scheme.

(RT) working at Voluntary Action Rutland stated that

'Outworking is definitely a goal to work for, I mean it came up for me at the perfect time, I'd got no courses to do, got my sentence reduced and there's nothing keeping me, I could have gone to a D category, but there was this available, but a lot people have their courses to do, and if they think, I've got this to do then that, then its definitely a goal to work for.'

(RF) worked at the owl sanctuary, expressed the change he made:

'RF: I like nature anyway, so it's given me an opportunity to work with animals all the time'

'I mean part of having been in prison is, for me anyway, I, I've seen a psychologist in here and I've gone to CARROTS, because I had a bit of a drink problem, ... yeah yeah, Its been good for me, I certainly am not the same person I was even six months ago, so I, Its, its made a big difference and working out has, although working out brings its own kinds of pressure.'

(RB) suffered from bullying inside the prison, and came across as a shy and self conscious individual. Feedback from the prison and other outworkers on his growth in confidence and self belief was massive. Members at Voluntary Action Rutland and his outworking partner – J, played crucial roles in his development, as their pleasant and caring attitude towards him, regained RB's confidence he had lost, and made his experience positive.

R: well I've been in thirteen and a half months, er but I've been in this prison since October, erm... and I haven't really...you know I've had a few scrapes from time to time, I've been quite on edge, you know,

I: .yeah...

R: .Throughout, erm... me time here, and erm, they said it would do me confidence good, which I agree, but er it was really good, I enjoyed it'.

Due to the pressures of other individuals inside the prison, RB decided to spend most of his evenings and weekends in his room. Moving the rehabilitation unit into a separate unit from the prison should prevent others feeling alienated or at risk.

R: I found the best thing was to stay on me wing, keep, keep I really just used to stay on me wing, er, and stay in me room a lot. That way I wasn't coming out into the main jail, I wouldn't get any problems...you know, so, in a way I suppose erm, you know, I had to give up a fair bit, but in return it was worth it. It was nice, you know, I really enjoyed it.'

'Well, I worked with another lad, so at first I was getting him to talk, but then me confidence seemed to grow and...

I: ..inside you?

R: yeah!..because they were really nice to me, the way they treated me was really nice, Kathy was ever so nice, and Chris, all of them really...really nice to me...yeah...THEY REALLY ARE NICE...

I: Was it nice when people said you did a good job, did you get any positive feedback from anyone?

R: yeah, yeah um, yeah cause they always said thank you. And you know it's nice, you know, so I was always a bit worried. It seemed to go well and then when I was finally left, you know, they were really pleased and then if I knew then I'd done alright. Up until then it was always in the back of my mind, you know I wondered if I did alright.'

(LT) works at Anglian Rutland Water's Birdwatching Centre, and had the most profound change in lifestyle and attitude whilst outworking. LT decided to carry on employment at the voluntary organisation that he had been placed at, and was looking for housing around that area. LT had made a supportive and trusting friendship with the voluntary manager –Martin and gained an appreciation and respect for the work carried out there.

'I mean prior to release yeah, I mean this has been a very big help for me more than one hundred percent', (LT)

LT had negative views of people towards him before outworking, due to his background as a criminal, however being able to work alongside different types of people at Rutland Water he felt made him more approachable, and gave him an appreciation for others.

The experience of outworking gave LT more confidence that he will be accepted out of prison, and be able to interact with people on the outside.

'When I first came to the country I sort of believed that I wouldn't be able to talk to people like that, I didn't think I'd have that much, because of who I was and where I was from and my background, I was quite narrow minded towards people, but I've noticed that they're a lot different, they're a lot more broad minded with people like myself.'

He has been shown a different lifestyle, that may otherwise not have been available for him without outworking, through this LT has found positive rewards and his interest in the work has grown into something he wants to take up after release.

'Even with all the changes that I've made, but I just enjoy this lifestyle better. I didn't realise there was another lifestyle like this. You grow up in sort of, Leamington, Birmingham, Coventry and you just get used to, well that's just your life, and then you come to a little country place, you don't realise that such a small place can be so much fun and so much enjoyment where you can get the same sort of effects off it as you could back there and going out drinking every night.

LT: I mean, if you'd have spoke to me five years ago and said that I could go out and bird watch rather than go out on a Friday night and get drunk, they wouldn't know what to say, I sometimes say it to my mum, I can't believe that.'

It is important for many individuals that are focusing on rehabilitation to have someone that they can talk to emotionally. LT has made a strong relationship with Martin Aspinall, where he feels he can approach Martin with problems. Martin is also a mentor for the NVQ that 'Lenny' has taken up in order to improve his skills and chances of employment.

'Martin's been a really strong father figure to me since I've been here, and I know I've only been here 16 months but I think anybody that you asked about my relationship with Martin they would say exactly the same. He sort of, he always had time for me to chat with him, not just necessarily, yeah cause my sister is my co-accused, and my sister's in prison as well, and that's always been a big issue cause recently I got my parole and I can approach Martin with things like that, you know family things all the things, and he's encouraged me a lot, like I'm doing an NVQ at the moment in conservation, something I perhaps wouldn't have had, prison do NVQ's, but they're really basic you know, most people could achieve them, whereas that needed a lot to be done for it, and he has helped me get through it a lot, you know he's quite down to earth...'

LT feels that his experience outworking has been the most beneficial for his step into society and a new life. He estimates that his change was helped mostly by his experience at Rutland Water.

I: So do you think that it was the outwork that made a difference or your whole time at prison?

LT: Outwork. The time in prison was better because there's more on offer at Ashwell, but I think that when I first started the sentence, I think when you do a parole sentence, the only thing in your head is getting parole, so you sort of toe the line because you want parole, and I think any body, they'd all say the same thing because they want to get out that year early, because they don't want to go another year in prison, so sort of like, when I first came up, 70% of me was just working to get my parole, then sort of, I'd just been hit with, sort of, I don't know it just took over and now it became a bigger part through that to actually change, and I supposed to be 70% prison and 30% here, it sort of switched round to being 70% here, and 30% prison, so it's a vast change.'

LT has shown a great development in himself, his attitude is positive about the outworking scheme and his rehabilitation. His outlook towards people has changed from one that was negative to one which is very self-motivational, respectful and caring.

'its been a lot more constructive than just being in the prison, I don't think I would have changed, I don't think I'd have done anything different, I think I'd still have been positive enough to want to change but its helped, you know, the actual chance that people have given me, has made me, before I've always been quite negative about people, I've always had a low opinion of people, I've always you know, you don't really matter to me, it doesn't matter if I upset you or I don't, whereas here, the way I feel about people it annoys me if I don't pull my weight or I upset somebody, I feel quite bad for that for quite a while, where as before on the street if I had upset somebody, there was no guilt there, I'd just get up the next day and go about what...I just get drained quite bad, I feel it quite bad, like I said, I never really had to deal with emotions so that has been a good part of it. You do feel quite guilty sometimes if you let people down, you do feel bad about it.

LT: I definitely have a desire to have a life here, without a doubt, yeah a hundred percent yeah.'

RE-INTERGRATION and SOCIAL SKILLS; or INCREASING their SELF CONFIDENCE

Re-integration into the community is one of the goals that outworking aims towards. Successful re-integration into the community should mean a massive decrease in the percentage of re-offending. The prisoners felt that whilst in incarceration, they may have integrated into a prison lifestyle, which they described as a 'different world'. Some felt that they put a persona on in prison thus not to be targeted as vulnerable by other prisoners, or that the variety of people to talk to i.e. officers or prisoners, was

not stimulating and repetitive. This may have decreased self confidence or some felt they needed to make some adjustments in their social conduct towards 'normal' people. All felt that the outworking experience helped them achieve more confidence; regain their social skills, therefore aiding re-integration.

(RF): explained that prison is a different way of life, and there needs to be an element of re familiarising yourself with society.

'...also when your dealing with prisoners its not like dealing with everyday people, I mean, yeah , yeah, I mean because there's a whole code of conduct, there's a way you behave, there's things you say, there's the way in which you say it, I mean, its a whole different world.
...in as you get towards the end and wanting to go back out and hopefully your parole, hopefully you start re familiarising yourself with how you're supposed to behave.'

'yeah, its helped me, because like I said earlier in the interview, you know you get out of the habit of how you inter-react with people, with because how you interact with people, like prisoners and officers is very different to the way in which you integrate people within society.'

He explains about his choice to outwork:

'I just though it would be nice, and also erm I thought it would be a good way to help me re-integrate back into society'.

AV at Rutland Water explains his feelings of prison, and growth in confidence through outworking, and the difference of attitude on resettlement:

'I'm quite a confident person but thrown into the environment of the prison. I'm not criminally minded. A lot of people can handle it but you just tend to sit back and watch what's going on. But, yeah, it's given me a lot of confidence coming out here, in me. Like I keep saying, on the Rutland unit, it's just like a block of flats basically, because everyone just knows everyone; you eat together and stuff like that. It's a bit different from being down on B and C wing... and coming and going...'
'And, it's nice to have a bit of banter with someone, even it's the officers or anybody, 'cause in there its them and us! I can't get on with it but... its good to know you can have a laugh with people, makes your day go quicker.'

RT explained he felt that it was better for him to come out and integrate with normal members of society; he also gained respect and fulfilment from the type of work carried out by his voluntary employer:

RT: well yes its good isn't it, because I mean, you can come out, well while I am in here, I'm not in prison for a start, erm, dunno some prisons aren't all that bad. I mean your not inside, its quite a nice feeling to be coming out and mixing with normal people again, and I'm not saying that everyone in prison is strange or anything like that, cause they're not! But it's a certain environment, when you come out, it gives you at least half of your day, where you're free for a bit although you're not completely. It's much better, but I mean working in a place like this where your doing a lot of good, you know, its quite rewarding...'

RT talks about his social skills inside prison and the benefits of outworking (such as family visits which can help re-establish integration into normality:

'I've spent two years and its progression isn't it, you want to do good, and like I say, you get to speak to normal people again. I: suppose two years, talking to just prison officers, these ladies and chaps are nice people, but when you're in prison you only speak to prisoners and officers, it's bound to be to suffer really (laughs). I can imagine it can be difficult to get back in, yeah I would have thought so, but day visits help and I get to see me friends and family, and that's another aspect that helps you get back into it.'

'I was a little bit mad before I came in here to be honest with you, not mad! But you know what I mean, a little bit, but you do go, it does make you go, cause there's nothing to talk about, and you end up talking about strange things, mad, not about your day. It's a strange world, a totally different world.'

LT feels he has improved vastly on his social skills, he feels more able to understand emotions, whereas before he could not deal with them. LT feels that he is more able to deal with criticisms and changed his attitude from arrogance to confidence. He feels more integrated into a community that he did not understand and had judgements about, enough to set up a life there.

'I mean there's certain things you can't deal with inside prison, that you deal with out there. So, emotions, I've never been a person for emotions but working out here you do go through a lot of emotions, you know you have to sort of, change you who you are, you come out here and you lead one lifestyle, part of the day and then at, sort of, ten to four, just before you go back through the gate you switch to a different lifestyle otherwise you are gonna get into problems through it, but you have to realise that your still a prisoner, you cant not go back in with the wrong attitude'

Again there is an issue about the negativity of prison, there is a change of attitude that the prisoners feel pressured to adapt to. This is further discussed later in the results. LT learnt to deal with criticism due to the constructive approach by those at Rutland Water;

'I didn't used to deal with criticism very well, but since being here I can deal with...yeah because of my lifestyle I've never had constructive criticism it's always sort of been...really negative, which has here, its very constructive you know, if you do something wrong, you know, they're quite willing to show you've done it wrong, or explain a better way not necessarily make you change what you have done but just say that next time you do it, this might be a better option, so it's a lot more constructive, so I certainly, feelings and changes I couldn't really list them all to be honest with you.'

LT also learnt the difference and accepted his change in attitude from arrogance and confidence, which is a positive change in his rehabilitation. **It seems that the prisoners gain from the trust and responsibility that is put into them. The feeling of acceptance and being appreciated are IMPORTANT factors in gaining the prisoners confidence and respect.**

'I mean one of my biggest problems was mix matching confidence with arrogance, I was always quite an arrogant person before I came to prison, which had landed me where I'd been, whereas now I'm quite a confident person but because of the trust they give you, you can see that people are seeing the good in you. When I grew up I was quite a negative person, you know how you get your, sort of like, praises and all that, you know, I've never really had that before so perhaps we get them from here has been praise.

SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY, RESPECT AND ACCEPTANCE/ APPRECIATION

These are important themes in the experiences of the outworkers. Responsibility at the workplace gives the prisoners a sense of being accepted as part of the team. This in turn gives them a respect for the work place and the job that they do. Being appreciated is a big positive; it boosts self confidence and creates good staff morale. Not being appreciated or feeling unaccepted may produce negative attributes to the experience of outworking, and the benefits may become confused. Trust is an important element here, it awards the prisoners with a sense of respect, belonging and feeling dependable.

AV at Rutland Water is made to feel like a responsible member of the team, trusted with physically challenged individuals;

'...when Burma's round here, he'll say to me and LT (other Ashwell Volunteer) 'can you look after E.... or D.....?' and, and it does mean quite a bit, cause there's all these volunteers out here and he sees

you as one of the responsible ones to actually look after him.’ ... ‘You’re looking after the lads and that’s nice to know’.

LT – working at Rutland Water, Bird watching centre, has been responsible for leading teams, trusted in maintaining security for a large event and this has given him a sense of respect and care for the work placement. Trust is an important element in making him feel part of the team.

‘Yeah, I mean the trust and stuff that he’s put into me, for me to actually lead teams and stuff like that, and you sort of think you’re a prisoner, you don’t expect to be in charge and you think your gonna be, sort of like, put in the back and you know, I’ve led groups or I’ve been asked to do things that your not, ... like they had this big event here called the ‘Bird Fair’, it’s the biggest birding event in the country and I was part of the security team in that, now that sort of shocked me, a prisoner being asked to, ... they had a main opening event, and there I to be one of two main security people for that opening ceremony, which was quite an important ceremony. They treat me like anybody else, ... whereas I thought that would be a problem and it hasn’t been, the trust element from everybody is been fantastic,

LT appreciated being treated as a volunteer, having choices in the work and receiving small benefits

‘... you’re a volunteer here, you know they all make you feel like a volunteer, they don’t make you feel like you’re a paid member of staff so you *have* to’ ... ‘I also thought because I’m a prisoner I’d have to do things, but they’re quite, you know as long as the work gets done, they’re quite happy for us to sort of, have an extra half hour at lunch, or just enjoy a walk on the reserve or outside sometimes when there’s not many people in.’

LT created a secure bond of trust with the other volunteers and felt comfortable as one of them. His confidence and self esteem grew through the knowledge that he was personally appreciated.

‘I feel I treat everybody like quite family really. I mean there’s certain people that are here everyday of the week and you do get to know them as if they were family because you know you’re not going to get paid, so you’re here voluntary. So its not that people *have* to be here. People are there because they enjoy being there, and they obviously enjoy being there because your part of that enjoyment so, which makes it a big sort of like, ego boost sort of like thing, people come there not because of the place, but people make the place as well, so makes you feel quite good about yourself.’

RT seems to have grown a respect of the workplace through the treatment he has received by the other staff members, he is thankful of the chance that has been offered to him and wants to repay it through keeping up his job.

‘...I’ve done quite a lot since I have been here, I mean, I have answered phone calls, type things up which have done with admin a little bit here and then...

I: good

RT: picking tables up, also doing a bit of weeding, err, there’s always something you can do, picking up fag ends ... I don’t mind doing things, trying to make the place look tidy there’s always something to do might not want to but its alright ...’

‘... everyone is nice to you, treat me well, and they have given me the chance to come out and work because I am helping them out as well as them helping me out. You might get people that take advantage and sit around all day with nothing to do, I get bored.’

RB was nervous about the work he did, but the thanks he received greatly benefited him;

‘...they always said thank you. And you know it’s nice, you know, so I was always a bit worried. It seemed to go well and then when I was finally left, you know, they were really pleased and then if I knew then I’d done alright. Up until then it was always in the back of my mind, you know I wondered if I did alright.’

NEGATIVE APPROVAL

RF has felt he has received negative approval from his placement host, this could have caused problems if approached differently but RF has shown coping methods towards difficult employers. RF feels his efforts are not rewarded and there is not any care or sympathy shown by the employer for the long hours he may have put in. A small gesture or thank you, for the work being put in could prevent any negative feelings in the future. However, the employer at the owl sanctuary has had problems in the past with outworkers and thus may be cautious about new arrivals.

'I would normally class myself as quite passive, erm apart from having come to prison, before I became a criminal, before I committed all of that, I'd class myself as a fairly passive, easy going....'

'I think so, so for those people that are employing us out there, making us feel, I think sometimes that we are worthwhile is, is, important, not 'Great!!! Brilliant!!!' all of the time, you know, but occasionally,

I: a thank you or a gesture...

RF: ..a thank you or some kind of gesture, and some of the other guys, sometimes some people here work out later than normal, they work out till seven and miss the dinner, they say there buy them a can of coke or, whereas where I am, he's very rarely, very rarely grateful, he has a very strange attitude, you don't, perhaps money is tight for him which I kind of understand. I was out late Saturday till seven, and I missed dinner here, he didn't even offer to buy me a bag of chips, it didn't happen. Those are the kind of little things that I think to myself, well if I was outside, ... no I wouldn't be pissed off, I wouldn't put up with that. Well, I'd feel more able to raise, say you know look, I don't think...Even if they are your own employer on the outside you are still entitled to an opinion.'

'So, so I don't understand that one but, then again I put it down to, one, his character and two, that he was messed about with some other people (prisoners) just before me, so perhaps I'm paying the price for that. Which isn't, is a little bit mean.

I: Could you speak to someone around here (the prison/resettlement) about this problem?

RF: I've spoken to Malcolm. Malcolm says you know try to bear with it, whatever. In a way I find it good exercise for me cause if I can put up with, I can't put up with most things.'

RF also felt under pressure not to make any statements to the placement host about his feelings, in case it affected his report, however he realises that the element of trust and responsibility are more important in helping towards rehabilitation.

'But its one of those things that, because I also think to myself well, hang about I'm a normal person, if I'm a normal person, then a normal person wouldn't put up necessarily or make a statement and so therefore, if you do these things I feel like if you do that then ...

There's a bad report coming about you, and I'm, well I don't want that. So I kind of tend to sit there,'

'... and therefore the resettlement issue of like, rehabilitation, I think that's were it butts up against the reality of life. Whereas in the other jobs...but I think working out is a good thing and I think its a step towards rehabilitation for most people, Cause of the element of trust, erm and being able to cope by yourself.'

The negative disapproval that RF faced could have materialised through the attitude RF had had at his work placement. Conversations with the manager of his placement have established that RF may not have shown a good working attitude there. The manager appealed that he was grateful for the help he received, however, some prisoners he has dealt with have caused a considerable number of problems at his workplace showing no respect for the animals or staff.

What is important to remember is that gratitude can only be earned, such as trust and respect, the prisoners must keep in mind that they are given an opportunity to show themselves at their best in order to get a reference and gain employment. Just as strictly the voluntary agencies must remember that they are helping individuals reintegrate into society, and their acceptance and gratitude in the work conducted has major positive benefits and are enhancers to the prisoners' confidence.

LEARNING NEW SKILLS (using time in jail appropriately) and EMPLOYMENT

The aim of outworking can be to learn new skills, and improve employment chances. The skills that are learnt can range from physical skills such as building, painting, or maintenance to learning skills such as knowing natural habitats, and understanding administration. Personal skills for coping with emotions or coping with criticisms may also be built upon.

Employment chances may also rise as the prisoner has more skills and is more employable, the prisoner has built references from placements, the prisoner has shown their own initiative to wanting to work, and gained experience of different work placements.

LT has already been offered employment with his work placement:

LT: 'I've already been offered work since I've been here so I'm already going to be fully employed when I leave prison. Being a tree surgeon, landscaper and I've already got in writing'.

I: Is it anything you would have thought of getting into before outworking?

LT: 'Nay, never, I've done a chain saw licence and stuff with my NVQ, so that's all bettered the fact of the job, and then I've already had it in writing that he's written from the day I'm released I can work with him.'

AC feels that he wanted to outwork to improve his skills, and use his time in prison appropriately. He felt that the jobs inside the prison factories were not beneficial to him, and chose a course of brick work in the prison, which aided the work he does at Rutland Water:

'...I wanted to learn something positive while being in prison. Instead of just being a robot, by doing something efficient.'

Talking about the jobs that the prison offered AC referred to them as:

'... It's a robotic job, to me it wasn't beneficial. Ok, the money's there, but I thought... learn something which was going to help me in the long run. Which it would do. I thought, they, ... my erm, feeling is I think people would go to skilled job such as electrician, carpentry and bricklaying, but because the courses only pay a very basic wage, they tend to go to the workshops where they can earn the money.'

AV at Rutland Water has help from his father and friend in employment after release but still maintains that through the experience outwork, he has learnt more skills:

'I've got a couple of jobs lined up for when I get out. Me dad's a builder, and he says 'oh yeah, I can save you this bit of work,' and me friend's a builder and he says 'I've got this bit for you...'

I: Brilliant that you have that to go into. Do you think if you did not have your dad's help, this work (outwork) could have aided you?

AV: Yeah, Definitely! I learnt.

When RT was asked

I: Do you think it has improved your employment chances?

He replied:

RT: I don't think it will solve it, but it can't do any bad, at the moment, I mean its still gonna be difficult, as least they know that a long part of your sentence you have been working and getting out and doing things.

RF also has employment chances when released:

'I've had three offers of work for when I get out, I used to be gym instructor many many years ago, but my friend who stayed there, he's the manager and I got on well with the owner, has offered me a

position there on a sales stroke handyman ...work so I've got that, I've got one of my cousins, her husband has his own electrical company and so store person stroke driver stroke er if I want to, he's willing to sent me to college.'

PUTTING SOMETHING BACK INTO SOCIETY

This is a positive outcome from outworking for most prisoners. The chance of giving something back to the community.

RF seems to use outworking as a release to his guilty feelings, by helping the community.

'I feel very guilty for having, ... for what I did, and having been put into prison, and part of that for me, was to exercise the guilt that I felt, and so I thought by working in the community, it would re-pay, really feel towards society. You know, giving that little bit, I mean its not, I know it doesn't wipe the slate clean, but at least I, I feel its gone someway into helping society and repaying my debt rather than just being locked up and .. which, I just thought it would be nice, and also erm I thought it would be a good way to help me re-integrate back into society.' Ricky.

Voluntary work can be quite rewarding for prisoners as it facilitates their integration into the community, and lets them appreciate and work alongside members of the community, in a responsible manner.

RT feels rewarded working alongside the agency with the community, explaining it to be worthwhile;

RT: 'It's much better, but I mean working in a place like this where your doing a lot of good, you know, its quite rewarding...'

I: 'Seeing the community working together, how does it make you feel knowing that they don't have any expectations from you?'

RT: 'yes, I think it would be different if I like was working for a sales company, cause they isn't much point in that, other than to the company making their money, so I think it'd be different if I was working for somewhere like that, but to come here and the people are very nice and they do, do good. It's worthwhile, I think, which is great, it makes a difference...'

Feelings prior to outworking, were quite apprehensive from most prisoners, this changed as they started working by the response they got from the agencies they were employed at.

RB was very nervous about working and his abilities; however the initial interview with VAR settled him,

'I was a bit, a bit worried, you know, how I'd feel, d'you know when going out there.'

RF and LT both felt that they would be alienated, however this was more a case of feeling different because they hadn't come into contact with other people for a while. Thus the need for outwork as an opening to social integration is essential.

RF: I obviously thought that I'd have this big sticker on me saying, you know, criminal, scum or whatever, ...and also when your dealing with prisoners its not like dealing with everyday people, I mean, yeah, I mean because there's a whole code of conduct, there's a way you behave, there's things you say, there's the way in which you say it, I mean, its a whole different world'.

LT: ...erm, people's opinions, having to deal with being out, in prison, you get used to living. You work here, and suddenly you have to start thinking about your language, you can't swear, well try not to swear.'

'I didn't want to offend anybody so I was like, I used to go back and think 'I hope I didn't say anything,' cause in prison it doesn't matter, well it does matter but people obviously just don't take things in that way, whereas here you had to consider other people a bit more...'
'...you think that if you drop the front then you become vulnerable, then you just get used to being that person that you don't realise that.' LT

ADJUSTING BACK TO PRISON LIFE

Once the prisoners are given a chance to retrieve some sort of normality from their day through working, they often find it awkward getting back into the role of being a prisoner. This can work in a beneficial way as it can reduce the chance of re-offending after release, due to the negative feelings of returning back into prison each day.

LT: 'yeah I mean we had a day out to erm, the peak district, as a sort of like, thank you for the winter work and to have a look at another reserve, and sort of, there were twenty six of us who went, minibus and cars and it was just fantastic. I mean I was, it was quite hard actually cause I sort of forgot where I was that day, so... come five O'clock you think 'oh gosh in two hours time you'll be going through the gates again' I found that quite hard, but it seems to be getting easier.'

I: It seems entering back into prison is harder now you are so integrated into life.

LT: 'yeah, because so much of the day you feel like a real person, and a better person I've never had sort of, I've never done the sort of things I'd done before, worked honestly and things and then go back...'

Here, LT explains the challenge of re focusing your attitude when entering back into prison.

'I've never been a person for emotions but working out here you do go through a lot of emotions, you know you have to sort of, change you who you are, you come out here and you lead one lifestyle, part of the day and then at, sort of, ten to four, just before you go back through the gate you switch to a different lifestyle otherwise you are gonna get into problems through it, but you have to realise that your still a prisoner, you can't not go back in with the wrong attitude.'

RF admits he finds it difficult having to deal with freedom and coming back into prison, especially near his release. He finds it uncomfortable, however has acknowledged it and is trying to deal with the feelings. He still maintains that he wants to work after release and enjoyed working out whilst in resettlement.

RF: 'Its, its made a big difference and working out has, although working out brings its own kinds of pressure. You get a little bit of something, and'...

I: ...why?

RF: 'I think freedom wise, you know, you're given some so therefore you kind of get used to it. When I first went out it was a novelty and then the novelty starts to wear off and you think, well I'd much prefer to be out here, I mean I still think that there's stuff that I will continue to work on anyway even when I'm released. Whilst I'm doing the two, it's, sometimes I resent coming back into prison? I'm working towards my release so it's kind of an uncomfortable period for me, some days I feel really good about it and other days I can't wait for it to come'.

I: That's a difficult thing..

RF: mmm, 'it's a transitional thing, it's a journey, you know I knew it would be but obviously for different people is different things, but I mean that's how I personally think about it how somebody else will?'...

THE ISSUE OF TRUST

The element of trust seems to come up in various ways throughout the interviews with the prisoners. Being handed trust to carry out a job responsibly, and being given the responsibility to provide a service to others encourages the prisoners to conduct themselves in a respectable manner at their placements. The advantage of being outside prison is a privilege and most out workers take the opportunity seriously. However most of the prisoners are also aware that other individuals may take advantage of leaving prison daily. This again is an issue of trust on the prisons behalf, but the prisoner must also prove that they are trustworthy and responsible enough to be granted employment outside the prison.

(AV) from Rutland Water explains that some individuals will try and take advantage of the system;

AV: If you can talk the talk, and get yourself out here, and then do what you want to do. But, I can't see how they're gonna, if it's gonna happen, it's gonna happen.

LT believes that it depends on the want and effort of the prisoner to make out working a benefit to themselves. If there is not a genuine intention to improve themselves there is not much the prison service or voluntary agency can do;

LT: ... 'it depends on your genuine want to do that work, you have to learn that, if your put in that situation and you want to be out of the prison and learning something. Basically when I first came, I was going to do some day keeping – catching birds and killing birds like Magpies, and I weren't very keen on the killing, but then I sort of though, I should kill it, or I'll be in my prison cell all day, so I had to learn it, you just have to learn that skill ,like if you had to work in a kitchen you'd have to learn a skills there so, I think it depends on how genuine you are about not being in the prison.'

RF pointed out that the individuals working in the resettlement unit should have a belief and interest in the rehabilitation of the prisoners. RF pointed out that the staff should encourage the prisoners to feel confident about integrating back into society, there is a need for a positive and supportive attitude towards the prisoners that have taken it upon themselves to gain skills and improve themselves through out working or reaching resettlement. Through more support and monitoring of the prisoners, it may become easier to filter out those prisoners that are not taking their rehabilitation seriously.

RF: The other thing being that I think people who run the scheme should also be people who are.... in full belief of, of what they are doing in so much that this is about rehabilitation, this is about re introducing people into society to give them a chance. Erm we know that there is a big failure rate but, you still need people who have a positive attitude towards what they are doing and what they are offering here, and not...

I: So a nice supportive group who...

RF: ...who realise that it's not about them so much, it's about the prisoners, because like, at the end of the day they don't really want to send people out there who are going to fail, because of lack of support and lack of understanding, you know. I think...

I: At the moment they chose really, really well, because they haven't got a lot of out workers going at the moment...

RF: There's not so many people here, I think the pressure to, and, and perhaps slipping in between the cracks might happen more often the more people they get. Although again, it's important that you have the right staff in place to monitor, and to give support and actually believe, I'm not just saying, but ACTUALLY BELIEVE in rehabilitation, there's a big difference.

The trust that the prisoners are given by the Prison service and voluntary sector in accepting the prisoners as responsible staff at their agencies is showing the

prisoners that they are confident in their ability to rehabilitate. However, most outworkers have expressed that there may be more difficulties establishing those prisoners with a genuine belief in getting better, the overall concern was that individuals would take advantage of their situation, and cause problems for the whole scheme. To tackle this issue, HMP Ashwell, have presented the idea of Mini Sentence Plans in the new resettlement unit, for prisoners to prove their ability to work or be responsible. More assessments of the prisoners' experiences and feelings need to be conducted, in order to establish any problems they may face.

Discussion and Recommendations

Looking over the results from the interviews conducted from the prisoners and the information gathered from the voluntary agencies currently using prisoners, the benefits are similar to those found by Gibbs (2001) in her study with the probation service and voluntary sector.

The prisoners benefit in various ways; they gain their own confidence, their social and technical skills improve, giving them a positive attitude towards working. This applied together with positive reinforcers such as being accepted by the staff and agency, and feeling appreciated for completed jobs, should enhance their want to integrate back into the community and reduce their want to re offend. Not all of the prisoners that were on the outworking scheme came from a criminal background, however, outworking seemed to benefit all prisoners. Changes of attitude and lifestyle were significant in prisoners that were very interested in the work that they were involved in. Their intent to make outworking a benefit, stemmed from their attitude to benefit themselves. Their ability to act responsibly, respect the placement and staff, and learn new skills as well as help their community all depended on the prisoners' approach to the scheme.

The benefits in employment also rose, with one of the prisoners already being offered employment at his placement. The prisoners' self-confidence and ability to socially integrate also improved vastly, through being accepted by the agency and staff members, and feeling responsible. The prisoner with very low self confidence also noticed an improvement in his own attitude through the scheme. Most prisoners all aimed for outworking as an opportunity to gain skills and leave the unfamiliar environment of the prison behind for a day.

There seemed to be very good matches for the prisoners and agencies with minimal problems encountered, the negative feelings arose due to no appreciation felt for the work conducted by the prisoners, or having to return to prison after working. This did cause some stress for a few prisoners as it meant adjusting back to the attitude needed for prison, alternatively, this could act as a benefit as they may feel more discouraged to re offend and return to prison. The negative approval faced by 'Ross' at his placement could be due to his not showing the right working attitude. His placement host complained about his attitude to the work and thus the relationship between them may not have worked. It is important if the prisoners are to be trusted as staff members and given responsibility that they approach the work with the right attitude, however it is just as important for the agencies to realise the efforts made by the prisoner and reward them.

The aim of out working is re integration of the prisoners back into the community. The prisoners have said that the environment of prison can be very difficult, and it is easy to focus on those mannerisms forgetting the outside world. By gradually integrating back into society through outworking, prisoners improve their communication skills and feel a sense of confidence in their achievements. 'Lenny' seemed to find a better method of understanding his own emotions and establishing the difference in his attitude towards people in the past compared to his response to people nowadays. 'Ross' seemed to have a better understanding of himself due to his time spent in prison.

The outworking scheme seems to follow the 'Healthy Prison Concept', which aims to develop a constructive regime which recognises the prisoners' humanity, promotes their self respect and sense of responsibility, and also enhances their ability to lead autonomous, fulfilling and law abiding lives in the community.

Voluntary agencies that work in partnership with HMP Ashwell in order to provide this scheme, uphold Government policies such as those explained in the Prison and Probation Inspectorate 'Through the Prison Gates'. This ensures that the voluntary sector works with the prison service to ensure successful reintegration of offenders back into the community, by providing skills and learning for offenders to help them find work.

The voluntary agencies that have worked with the prison volunteers all seem grateful and appreciative of the extra help that they attain through the scheme. All agencies have received helpful and considerate prisoners, some of which still keep in touch with the agencies post release. All agencies have not found it a problem working alongside prisoners, in fact in most cases the prisoners became part of the team and respected as good workers. The agency benefits through the use of staff that may be skilled in some areas (maintenance) to complete jobs that other volunteers perhaps could not do. The age and sex of the prisoners is a benefit for agencies that have a lot of laborious work, however, agencies have also used prisoners in other capacities such as administration. There is no cost to the agency which is a benefit for such establishments that receive small budgets.

Problems arose in some cases due to certain prisoners that took advantage of the scheme, however, through the recommendations and the good practice guidelines that have been put together, these problems are being addressed.

The relationship between the prison and voluntary agency needs to be more consistent in approaching each other. Clearer guidelines and information needs to be set for the agencies using prisoners. Close inspections of the working relationship between the prisoner and agency may need including, in order to decrease a negative experience.

VAR uses prisoners in many different jobs in the community, acting as a voluntary organisation it takes on many projects from the community. The prisoners are a major benefit to these jobs, as there is no cost and the hours they are available is effective. However, VAR would benefit the community further if an extra van was supplied to take the prisoners to their destination. In addition there is a need for a member of staff that could supervise the prisoners, and therefore decreasing the need for CRB checks or unacceptable behaviour.

Again VAR, at the moment give the prisoners enough trust to carry out jobs on their own, as long as the client is informed that the volunteer is from prison. With the aid of a supervisor the risk of any unacceptable behaviour or false allegations can be prevented.

A look into the hours that the prisoners are most effective at their placements could be initially established with the agency and prison, some agencies could benefit more if the hours that the prison volunteers were available would be extended or changed, i.e. at Rutland Water. The Owl Sanctuary most of the hard work is conducted during the afternoons and late evenings (7.30 pm), thus the prisoners would be very useful. This can be organised with the prison so the prisoner leaves later (12.00pm) and arrives back after eight hours completing the necessary work. If the agencies do decide that the volunteer should work later than normal, meals should be provided for the prisoner, as they would not receive food late in the prison.

Looking at the information provided by the potential agencies that were asked if they could use the scheme, many had questions about the safety of their clients therefore ensured that the prisoners have CRB checks. Other agencies did try using prisoners however found that they could not provide the transport to the prisoners in

order to reach the job. Educating or informing potential voluntary agencies in the community of the benefits of using prisoners could be advised to enable the scheme to be utilised by community organisations. Re-assuring the agencies of the reduced risk or using a member of staff to supervise certain projects where the client may feel vulnerable would lessen the risk and make the scheme more flexible. With the use of a supervisor and van, small task and finish jobs could be completed, or prisoners could be taken to urgent jobs in the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Clearer guidelines for voluntary agencies working with prisoners, and a guideline for Prisoners wanting to outwork. All protocols and arrangements with agencies need to be consistent and agreed upon.
- Money that could be spent towards
 1. Employing staff to supervise, and risk assess all jobs that are carried out in the community. This should decrease unwanted behaviour, and provide safety.
 2. A transit van with mobile health and safety kit, in order to help all community members in the Rutland area. This would be responsible to the Voluntary Infrastructure Organisation, in this case VAR, to ensure maximum benefit for the volunteers and community. Costs of these resources would approximate to £20,000 with on costs such as the purchase of the transit van, and insurance.
- In order for the cost of replacements to be kept at a minimal, an agreement about a minimum sum of money for petrol/replacements from the agencies that are being helped by the prison volunteers could be arranged to keep the resource sustainable.
- Resettlement unit needs more focus onto the experiences of the prisoners, weekly assessments or one-to-one meetings to establish positive and negative feelings. A small tick chart has been developed for the prisoners use in order to ascertain their skills and feelings. Check Appendix 1 for Prisoner self assessment chart.
- Certain educational schemes could be looked into for the prisoners, such as technical skills training, choices of NVQ's, and social skills training to help integrate and develop the prisoner's chances for employment or coping with life after release.
- To maintain open, honest and respectful partnerships with the voluntary sector, the resettlement unit should make efforts to communicate with each effectively and assess the opinions of the voluntary sector on their current prison volunteers (a few questions can be found in Appendix 1)
- 2 week trial periods for prison volunteers could also be used in order to see if both voluntary agency and prisoner are happy with the outcome.

WORKING TOGETHER TO BENEFIT EACH OTHER

The use of voluntary and community based groups is likely to grow in the prison service and is focussing more upon resettlement and reducing re-offending.

The need for voluntary and community based agencies to work alongside the prison in resettlement is to ensure the successful integration of offenders back into the community. The Prison and Probation Inspectorate (2002, '*Through the Prison Gates*') highlighted the link between social exclusion and re-offending and the importance of planning for a safe release. It established there was a need for employers and other agencies to support the work of the National Probation Directorate and the Prison Service to create, develop and deliver joint initiatives on both a local and national level, in order to improve the basic skills of offenders and help them get work. The role of the voluntary sector in working with prisoners, could be used both **pre and post release** to ensure the successful integration of offenders back into the community.

Prisoner benefits

The benefits for prisoners reported by the Ashwell volunteers are quite apparent in their interviews. A qualitative study of outworker volunteers was carried out to establish the benefits of Utilising inmates in the voluntary sector.

Confidence enhancer: Being able to work within a local community and being accepted among members of the community changed most prisoners' perception of themselves. Their confidence in their own responsibilities increased, their self esteem heightened and it gave the opportunity for individuals from low socio-economic backgrounds, or criminally associated social-backgrounds to gain the experience of a 'nice-friendly' community that helps voluntarily. This provides an opportunity not available to them prior to prison. This created positive changes in their attitude, aims for their release, and living within a community as a member. Being treated as a 'normal' worker and given the responsibility of taking care of something/someone, allowed the prisoners to feel appreciated in their role as volunteers. Simple 'thank you's' or friendly gestures enhance their confidence, which when adapting to 'prison life' and associating with dominating criminal characters may have led to a deterioration of their social skills and confidence, either through bullying in prison or social exclusion.

Social Skills Gained: A lot of the prisoners admitted that just talking to different types of people outside the prison helped them feel better. Having a normal conversation about day to day life is endearing to hear and also allows the prisoners to gain confidence about their social skills when released. Many prisoners state that it is useful hearing about something different to everyday life inside prison, where the majority of conversations are among prison officers or prisoners and the content is similarly associated.

Employment: The chances for employment are certain to rise with the work experience gained whilst on voluntary work. Some prisoners take courses in prison such as painting, brickwork which enhance their skills. If then applied

together with out working, the prisoner would also gain practical experience of doing skilled jobs, such as building, landscaping and gardening. This would also clearly bode well for future employment. Also working among vulnerable adults (disabled, children, elderly), they may find a new respect towards these individuals. The placement may find that they want to keep on the prison volunteer after release, due to the relationships and trust built through the out working. The chances for employment after release are aided and hopefully increased by 'Job Centre Plus' that runs in most prison services.

Basic skills: Most prisoners are checked for their basic skills in reading and writing when entering prison. The individual must reach their basic reading and writing skills level 1 before out working, although these will also be heightened in a working environment, and may result in the individual choosing more education.

Extra Courses and achievements: Certain work placements and prisons will offer extra courses such as NVQ's in specialist subjects, or even courses that allow the use of machinery at the placement. All this will be added bonuses in employment chances after release, and also be a positive skill and knowledge to be used by the individual in their own life.

Earned Community Visits and Wages: Although the wage for an out worker, at £8 a week, can be significantly lower than working inside the prison factories, the plus side is visits are gained. This enables the prisoners a day (9am-3pm) in town with their family, unsupervised.

Responsibility: The prisoners tend to accept responsibility and their work ethics becomes more personal. Most prisoners do the best job they can as it is an opportunity they do not want to lose.

Voluntary organisations and agencies benefit:

The fundamental benefits for the agencies and organisations that use prisoners are; more voluntary help for the community, upholding better relationships among the voluntary sector and prisons, reducing re-offending and increasing a sustainable aid to both community and prison. Funding does not cover the number of jobs or individuals that could benefit from the voluntary agencies. The lack of volunteers can also be a problem. Using prisoners as volunteers could substantially cut the cost of labour needed to complete a job. The only costs that need to be included are those of any travel, or materials used. Most small or locally based agencies do not have enough funding or volunteers to help them help their community members. Maintenance of houses, schools, local establishments, nature reserves, residential houses or charities can all benefit from free staff/volunteers completing jobs quicker. This would in turn mean that they run more smoothly. Benefits for taking on prison volunteers are the hours available to use them. The prison volunteers are available 5 days a week from 8am to 4pm and this brings continuity to a work place and regular help that can be co-ordinated. The voluntary organisations can then uphold their side of agreements and relationships to better the community and help all vulnerable members, including the prisoners. In addition the initiating and complying with Government principles will create a better commitment among the voluntary

sector and prisons.

The community benefits overall.

The work that is carried out by the voluntary sector within their communities brings substantial benefits to the community as a whole. The work completed may aid one individual, such as an older person or a single mother with a disabled child who may need maintenance in their homes, or a community project for public access. Sending an out worker will not only take away the cost and time of hiring someone to do the job, but also give a valuable resource that can be tapped at any time. Enhancing the skills of the prisoners also benefits the community as not only is the job completed to a good standard, but the prisoner is then adapted to a working environment before release, greatening their chances of employment and not re-offending. The community projects that are undertaken by some voluntary organisations such as Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre in Rutland provides an attractive area for the public to learn and enjoy. Without the amount of man power and voluntary aid that is offered it would not cope with the extent of maintenance required. Using prisoners has proved beneficial to the work that is carried out there, from the hours that are available, the working standard of the prisoners, and the mutual respect gained on both sides. The community has gained overall as it is a beautiful place to visit, and the facility is used by other agencies/charities (disabled, mental illness, children, elderly), schools, as well as members of the public, bird enthusiasts etc. The community hopefully will also benefit from a lack of crime or re-offending as most of the prisoners chosen to undertake out work are thinking of employment after release, or have good or improved behaviour.

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES for Voluntary and Community-based Organisations and Inmates WORKING TOGETHER.

“Utilising” inmates as Volunteers

The term 'Voluntary sector' is used to describe a wide range of organisations with diverse ways of working. At one end of the spectrum, are some organisations that are professionally managed, such as drug agencies (which may hold contracts for assessment and treatment in prison), these usually have highly trained and paid staff and make little use of volunteers. At the other end of the spectrum to these are small, locally-based organisations that are run entirely by volunteers. In between are many organisations using some volunteers but also relying on paid staff to maintain the quality of service. The voluntary sector is united by the way in which it is managed rather than the type of work they carry out.

Voluntary organisations are usually:

- Non-profit making organisations,
- Registered charities,
- Have Management Committees made up of volunteers (who are responsible for the management and financial organisation of the establishment).

'Community-based' organisations also include the voluntary sector, as well as incorporating others such as health promotion units or social services projects (which are part of the statutory sector). Both are on common ground in terms of their relationship to prisons.

The **Joint Principles declaration** in COMPACT between the Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector - '*Getting it right together-Compact relations between Government and the Voluntary and community sector in England*' (1998, published by the Home Office, signed by The Rt. Hon. Jack Straw MP and Sir Kenneth Stowe) constitutes that;

- Voluntary action is an essential component of the democratic society.
- An independent and diverse voluntary and community-based sector is fundamental in the well-being of a society.
- There is an added value in working in a partnership towards common aims and objectives. Meaningful consultation builds relationships, improves policy development and enhances the design and delivery of services and programmes.
- Both Government and the voluntary and community sector acknowledge the importance of promoting equality of opportunity for all people, regardless of race, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation or religion.

The **Healthy Prisons concept** of an active or constructive regime for prisoners, works at;

- recognising their humanity and promoting their self respect and sense of responsibility.
- promoting their health.
- addresses the factors associated with their offending behaviour.
- fostering their family and community ties.
- enhancing their ability to lead autonomous, fulfilling and law-abiding lives in the community, and
- minimising the likelihood that the loss of liberty, which is the essence of imprisonment, leads to a reduction in their mental or social capacity to cope with freedom on release.

The Hon. Paul Boateng MP (Minister of Prisons), stated at the Prison Service Conference in February 2000 that;

'The use of the voluntary sector is rapidly increasing throughout the Government, and the potential for developing partnerships between prisons and the voluntary organisations is enormous. The significance of these partnerships in helping us to deliver constructive regimes and meet targets cannot be overemphasised. Voluntary organisations are an invaluable and currently under-used resource, and it is vital that we involve them in our work wherever they can make a contribution.'

Some of the joint principles between the government and voluntary and community sector are stated above, however, if working within an individual prison, the following principles should also be acknowledged and integrated into any commitments made by a prison and community based organisation:

- As resources differ to each sector, and policies developed must reflect this, as all funding or contractual arrangements between community based organisations and prisons should be transparent and clearly stated.
- Community based agencies should follow the principles of good management, but not be expected to take unacceptable financial risks in order to provide services to the prison.
- Active work towards developing roles for the black, ethnic minority and other excluded or under-represented groups within prisons and the community sector should be worked on by both parties.
- Both organisations need skill and mechanisms for developing effective policies. Thus all information should be exchanged in an honest and co-operative way.
- A commitment is important and necessary to develop an infrastructure that will sustain the community-based sector's contribution to prisons beyond the life of any particular project or initiative.

- All management should promote and take responsibility for positive staff relationships and not collude with the negative stereotyping that exists in both sectors. Respect for different roles and professional standards are essential.

THE AIMS OF A RESETTLEMENT REGIME ARE TO

- Concentrate on the preparation for release and resettlement;
- Reduce institutionalisation;
- Require prisoners to exercise considerable and increasing levels of personal responsibility;
- Accord prisoners considerable and increasing levels of trust;
- Progressively test the ability of prisoners to function independently and in the community; and
- Enable prisoners to return to the community with a reduced risk of re-offending and risk of harm to the public.

The sentence planning process works in order to:

- Build on progress made earlier in the sentence;
- Provide a means to greater community involvement;
- Address the full range of criminogenic needs as far as is possible;
- Arrange and support contact with home probation area; and
- Help to facilitate housing and/or employment on release.

Good Practice Guidelines for voluntary agencies and Community Organisations using inmates as volunteers.

UTILISING INMATES AS VOLUNTEERS

Are you a voluntary organisation?

Are you a community-based organisation?

DO you have any maintenance problems?... jobs need doing? Painting, decorating, gardening...

HAVEN'T GOT THE FUNDS???NEED A VOLUNTEER?????

One of the important factors for the successful integration of inmates back into the community is the ability to work. However, employment is not the only benefit. The social integration amongst a 'normal' community serves in building individual confidence and a sense of social responsibility. Within your organisation there may be an opportunity for everyone to gain. These are good practice guidelines that could be followed when using prisoners in your organisation.

These guidelines have been carefully put together to provide any helpful information for voluntary organisations that are planning to utilise inmate/prison volunteers.

The overriding duty of the Prison Service is to protect the public from crime and any serious risk of harm. In discharging this responsibility – selection for a place in the resettlement estate and/or outworking is focused on reducing the likelihood of re-offending and the risk of harm.

The out workers are carefully assessed inmates that have completed all offending related courses and comprehensive risk assessments, and will have been subject to close observation during their time at HMP Ashwell. Each inmate on the resettlement unit should have demonstrated freedom from involvement in drugs, achieved enhanced status on the earned incentive scheme, and be adjudication free for a minimum of six months.

All prisoners working outside of the prison do so on licence from the prison. They are required to have a copy of the licence with them at all times.

An organisation using prison volunteers can only utilise an inmate or inmates for jobs that are UNPAID. Most of the work undertaken by prison out workers tends to be maintenance jobs e.g. painting, building, renovating, gardening etc, however many others have also undertaken administrative work, in short whatever skill the prison volunteer can offer, it can be used. (Costs to the organisation would be based around the materials or expert help used in completing a job, as the prison would not supply this).

First

Before utilising a prison volunteer, check with all staff within the organisation that there is no discrimination or negative staff morale against working with a prisoner.

Begin your relationship with the prison. Set up appropriate contact details with the voluntary organisation that may work as close liaison with the prison (in this case Voluntary Action Rutland). You will receive telephone numbers for contacting a member of the resettlement team for any queries or emergencies that may occur.

Voluntary placements and jobs that are available for inmate volunteers can be organised and discussed with the prison before meeting the volunteers, this should allow the resettlement unit to select the right out worker.

Set up dates for Health and Safety checks at the placement that can be done by the prison. Formal agreements between prison and the voluntary organisation on Health and Safety issues and responsibilities should be made clear. Inspections of placements by officers should be made prior to any new job and get the all clear.

Depending on the type of job or type of client, your organisation may need to make Criminal Records Bureau checks prior to any employment.

Utilising....

An informal interview or meeting will be set up with the prison volunteer at the prison. This is the organisations chance to meet and interview the prisoner on their skills and aims to help as a volunteer. This meeting should be approached in a friendly and open manner as it is a chance for both prisoner and organisation to get to know what each other can do. The aim is to begin the employment relationship comfortably and honestly for both parties.

The voluntary or community group or employer should fill in a formal 'Agreement between the Governors' of the prison on the terms and conditions, which will be checked and signed by the Governor and the organisation.

Inform and ask those who will be working alongside or benefiting from the prison volunteer if they are satisfied and comfortable working with a prisoner.

When working with a prison volunteer, treat them with RESPECT and as any other volunteer or employee. Tact and dignity should be employed; it is the choice of the individual to disclose any information about themselves.

Discrimination and prejudice are common towards inmates of a prison. Be aware that these individuals are coming into the community after a long period away from society which makes them vulnerable individuals. They are entering your work place as volunteers and are part of your team; they are also being integrated back into the community. It is your responsibility as an 'employer' to monitor any perceived levels of discrimination and take appropriate steps to eradicate any problem areas.

A further aspect of inappropriate behaviour from staff at your establishment towards the prison volunteer that you should be aware of is 'over-friendly interests'. There may be staff members that have an interest in sexually befriending the prisoners. This is not appropriate behaviour as it could risk the safety of both the member of staff and the prisoner. Some prisoners may read body language or over flirtation in a 'wrong' manner. Conversely, the prisoners are also vulnerable, and false accusations can cost them their freedom. Be very aware of body language, overly flirtatious staff and naivety among staff members/volunteers and the prisoner volunteers, and also inform and advise staff to keep relationships professional.

Equal Opportunities must be employed and practised by your establishment.

Equal opportunities ensure fair and equal treatment for everyone, tackling discrimination wherever it exists in our society. The fundamental principle is: employment opportunities and service provisions should be free from bias, and equally available to all. Equal opportunities involve the breakdown and removal of discriminatory structures, biased policies and prejudicial practices in organisations and individuals. It seeks to replace processes that perpetuate inequality with fairer and more effective ways of working.

Equal opportunities are about:

- o The elimination of discrimination
- o Maximising potential
- o Taking positive action
- o Implementing change
- o Better ways of working
- o More effective service delivery

Equal opportunities are targeted at tackling discrimination, which can occur for many reasons. In our society, discrimination often occurs on the basis of: sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, national origin, disability, sexuality, religious beliefs, political opinion, age, marital status, economic status or social background.

Keep communication regular between your organisation and the prison. The prison will monitor compliance and progress through telephone calls and visits. The voluntary organisation should try to provide information on conduct and performance of the prisoner.

During the Placement...

The prison volunteer will arrive and leave the placement the same way everyday e.g. bikes; any change should be advised by the prison prior.

The prisoners are issued a t-shirt and jeans for their work clothes. If there are any jobs that need more professional items of clothing, i.e. wearing a shirt and tie if on reception, please make these available for the prisoner. It is important for your voluntary organisation to involve the prisoner as part of the organisations as a professional team member, thus increasing morale towards the job and workplace.

If arrangements have been made with the prison to keep a volunteer later than normal hours; please make the necessary food arrangements, as the prisoner will not receive any food at prison after dinner has been served.

If a prisoner fails to work, notify the prison; the organisation is able to stop the prisoner getting paid if justified.

If a prisoner fails to arrive at work when expected, notify the prison.

Do not post letters for any prison volunteers nor let them use the telephone.

If the prison volunteer justifies using the telephone with a compassionate story, inform the prison first.

If the prison volunteer gets a visit or receives a parcel of any sort - inform the prison.

If a prison volunteer runs away or absconds, Do not stop them; the organisation has no authority. Contact the prison and they will act as necessary.

All prison volunteers are given a packed lunch to take with them on placement and get their main meal upon return to the prison.

Should a prisoner have an accident at work or take any medication, ensure the prison is advised or the prison health care centre.

An accident at work needs to be recorded in the prison files as well as the voluntary organisations files.

Most importantly, DO NOT DISCLOSE ANY PERSONAL DETAILS e.g. addresses, telephone numbers WITH THE PRISONER.

Considerations that need to be taken into account when working with prisoners.

If there is concern that a prison volunteer is at risk of self harm, it is very important to inform the prison so as they can act immediately.

Indications of being at risk of self harm include:

- Depression
- Change in behaviour
- Talking of self harm or suicide
- Sorting out his affairs and arrangements
- A sudden feeling of euphoria by someone who has decided to kill themselves and their problems are now released
- Being introverted and unwilling to talk

Good Practice guidelines for Prisoners

Working for a voluntary agency

Being able to work as an outworker allows you to leave the prison daily for your employment in the community with a voluntary agency. It is a great opportunity to build upon skills and employment chances and also gives you time back in the community. Follow these guidelines for a clearer route to becoming an outworker.

Outworking is a special opportunity for those prisoners entering the resettlement period of their sentence. Each inmate chosen to work on the out working scheme should have demonstrated freedom from involvement in drugs, achieved enhanced status on the earned incentive scheme at the quarter of their sentence stage, and be adjudication free for a minimum of six months.

Other stages to complete before outworking:

Before beginning outworking all targets must be completed on your individual Sentence Related Plans and courses associated with the rehabilitation of the offence (e.g. alcohol awareness...) must have been completed.

All prisoners should have their Basic Skills level 1 or above, for employment purposes, unless otherwise authorised by the prison.

Within Ashwell resettlement unit, there may be levels of work/duties to perform before outworking, such as Mini Sentence Plans. This will enable the unit to run more successfully and with a higher number of prisoners. It should also establish a better work ethic among the prisoners and make them aware of their responsibilities on the unit.

Prior to getting accepted to undertake out work, be aware that a lot of attention will be paid to your behaviour on the unit and the associations kept by yourself with and amongst the prisoners. There is a high risk that certain minded individuals will bully others into 'doing them favours from the outside', this will not affect your chances, if you do not adhere to the proposals. Be aware that if you are likely to associate with 'notorious' members of the prison then you are likely to be seen as a risk. Observations made are not condemning. Reports from key workers within the prison, Probation and Police reports are requested before a decision is made on your suitability to become an outworker.

Issues that are problematic can often be in forms of bullying or pestering from other prisoners to the outworkers (e.g. to bring in or take out any packages). This is a very big concern for the prison and for your safety. If there are any concerns, or if you are approached by any individual either within or outside the

prison you should inform a member of the resettlement team, at the earliest opportunity.

Beginning Outworking...

After filing an application form for the outworking scheme, a small interview/talk between you (prisoner) and a member of the resettlement team should take place. Here you can establish what you would like to gain from the experience and ask any questions that you may have in regards to outworking.

If all goes well, you should be 'outwork' ready. Next, a small informal and friendly interview will be set up with the placement manager. Within this interview you should be informed of what, the organisation is about or its location, basic explanations of the jobs entailed, and your role as a volunteer.

- Be sure to ask questions of the voluntary agency if you are unclear or unsure of anything. This could involve the type of job/ location/ or type of client you may work with. Know if you are comfortable, the reasons for the initial meeting are to begin the new working relationship.
- Tell the employment agency **YOUR SKILLS**. Those that you may have gained prior to prison and those gained inside, all these should aid you in keeping your employment flexible, consistent and your skills more available to utilise.

Then when all members are satisfied, i.e. the prison, voluntary agency and prisoner, work can begin.

You may be asked sign a copy of the work protocol given to you.

Be aware that some work placements may ask for **Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure checks**, , this is due to new Government laws in place to protect vulnerable individuals such as children, the elderly, or individuals that are unable to care for themselves, in order to ensure that they are not at risk from the person that works with them. The level of CRB check will depend on the nature of work the voluntary agency has for you.

The Two Levels of CRB Disclosures

There are two current "levels" of Disclosure: "Standard" and "Enhanced".

Standard Disclosures show all convictions held on the Police National Computer, including "spent" convictions, together with cautions, reprimands or final warnings held on the computer. For work with children, it includes checks on the Department of Health and Department for Education and Skills lists of people who should not work with children. A Standard Disclosure has to be applied for in relation to a specific job or role. It is required for jobs defined as 'regulated positions' by the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000- i.e. regular contact with children or vulnerable adults. In services regulated by CSCI, Standard Disclosures are needed where there is such regular contact, but the job does not involve directly working with, caring for, or supervising children or vulnerable adults – such as a job

as a domestic, catering or maintenance worker.

Enhanced Disclosures contain all the information provided by a Standard Disclosure, but also include information held on local police records which the police consider relevant to the post to be held. Like Standard Disclosures, they relate to a specific job or role only. An Enhanced Disclosure is required for jobs which involve regularly caring for, training, supervising, or being in sole charge of children or vulnerable adults. Anyone registering with CSCI as the provider or manager of an establishment or agency must have an Enhanced Disclosure.

Implications of a Criminal Conviction

If an offence or other information is disclosed, this does not necessarily mean that a registration or other CSCI approval or consent will be refused. We will consider fairly in each individual case whether the offence or other information indicates a significant risk to children or vulnerable adults. We will take into account the nature of the offence or other information disclosed, the role the person concerned is to fulfil, the type of service for children or vulnerable adults involved, and the nature and needs of the children or vulnerable adults likely to use the service. Decisions are to be made on the basis of an assessment of any possible risk to children or vulnerable adults, rather than the simple fact of a conviction or other information disclosed. Where there is significant doubt, the decision will however always favour the welfare of children or vulnerable adults.

(COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL CARE INSPECTION GUIDE TO CRIMINAL RECORDS BUREAU CHECKS on service providers, managers and staff. Revised 1 April 2004).

Before you begin working at the new establishment, a member of the resettlement team at your prison, will accompany you to the voluntary agency. This is to establish where and how you shall be working. It is important to remember that this is a responsible position within the establishment, and to respect and not abuse your role as a voluntary worker.

Precautions for your health and safety at the workplace will have been considered and put into place. Rest assured that the placement you will be working at, will have received checks or information to ensure that your vulnerability as a prisoner is also protected.

You as a prisoner also need to be aware of colleague's advances towards you. Body language, flirtation, sexually be-friending, invasions of personal space can all be encountered by prisoners. Although the attention may seem pleasant, be aware of your own vulnerability in the position. If a case of abuse, or complaint was received (even alleged remarks/gossip) this could be damaging to your out working and may even harm your release. If at any time or under any circumstance you feel uncomfortable, please inform higher forms of authority i.e. your manager at the voluntary organisation/ member of the resettlement team).

The members of the voluntary agency or clients that you work with will be aware that you are a prison volunteer. This may cause some forms of prejudice or discrimination towards you from other volunteers (most prisoners have found that they were quite shocked at how 'nice' people were, although they expected different). The chances of discrimination against you are low; however, if you do feel uncomfortable, please discuss the matter with someone in higher authority. Be aware that you **DO NOT HAVE TO RELEASE PERSONAL ANY INFORMATION ABOUT YOURSELF** to any person/s you work with. It is your choice to disclose any personal information.

Also note: Protect and Look out for yourself: If you find yourself in a position, where you are alone in a vulnerable situation, take yourself out of the situation to somewhere safer.

All establishments or organisations that employ you will have Equal Opportunities in place.

Daily working...

Sometimes there is not always work to do. Sometimes there may be a number of different jobs for you to complete in different areas and establishments. Sometimes you may be based in one voluntary agency and assist them with day to day duties. This is now your work place, respect and care for it. Enjoy working, be friendly, your work is beneficial to the agency, its staff, and most importantly the community members.

The hours of work are every Monday - Friday, 8am to 4pm. Payment for being an outworker is currently £8 a week.

Daily security checks and searches are adhered to every morning before leaving for work and when returning back into the prison.

You will be issued with the means of transport, i.e. bikes or supervised lifts to work placements. Please be aware that you are responsible for any prison issued bikes, please report any problems you encounter with them and report any repairs that may be required.

Once you have reached your work placement, sign in, or carry out the appropriate activities that the voluntary organisation has set for you.

You are not supervised all of the time, you are free to walk around and do your job.

You will be issued with a packed lunch from the prison.

You will have no authority to make personal calls from the work placement.

Do not arrange to meet any persons at your work placement.

Do not receive any parcels for anyone inside or outside the prison.

Leave your work placement at the time authorised by the prison. Take the same method of travel back. Do not ask or accept lifts from anyone unauthorised. If you are expecting to return late to the prison try to inform someone at the prison by means of reverse charge telephone call. The number is on your licence.

This should be a helpful guide to your arrival as a volunteer and outworker. Another useful tip on getting to know your placement better, is reading... You may be supplied with reading material about the organisations, what they do and how they help. Familiarise yourself with your employer. Other benefits from some organisations are certified courses that can be attended to broaden your knowledge and improve your skills. Most work placements should give references to you when you have completed employment, if not, you can ask for one.

The Prisoner Self Assessments

In order to establish the improvements to the prisoners using this scheme, assessments on their experiences should be recorded.

The outcomes from the assessments should indicate any changes in the individuals. The changes in the levels of individual prisoners' basic and key skills are usually monitored, but the achievements or change in the prisoners' working within voluntary organisations, such as building confidence, self esteem and the ability to work with others are just as important but had to systematically monitor.

A simple chart, has been developed from 'Learner Self-assessment Checklist' in the Clinks publication of 'Reviewing voluntary sector activities in prisons: A Guide for Heads of Learning and Skills and Managers in the Voluntary sector.' The chart is to be filled in by the prisoner on a completed job, or at an agreed meeting/review date in order to establish individual feelings of improvements or negativity, which could be collected onto a register, or used to analyse beneficial improvements.

It is important to allow the prisoner at least ten minutes to complete the chart, and explain the aim of the chart. Offer any help in reading or understanding the questions and re assure them about confidentiality of their honest responses.

It is important that the opinions of the voluntary agencies using the prisoners are also gathered to ensure they are satisfied with the volunteers, telephone calls or review meetings can be set up in order to make this possible.

Questions could centre on;

How well the volunteer is doing?

How did the volunteer respond to learning new skills for the work carried out?

Would the organisation re use prisoners?

Were there any problems the organisation found whilst using prisoners?

How was the level of attendance and punctuality?

Voluntary Agencies currently using Inmate Volunteers

Four of the voluntary agencies currently using inmates were interviewed through in-depth interviews, telephone calls or conversations on their opinions and experiences of using inmates as volunteers.

Willowbrook is a residential home for adults with profound learning disabilities. Pauline Brown was called and asked how prisoner volunteers had benefited Willowbrook. Her response was that the scheme had been 'very helpful' and she wants to 'keep it going'. Willowbrook has a partnership with HMP Ashwell and works direct with the prison to gain the volunteers. The prison has helped in fund raising and supplying equipment to Willowbrook, enhancing relationships amongst both organisations, awarding HMP Ashwell with excellent feedback, described by Pauline as 'brilliant'.

Willowbrook conduct Enhanced CRB checks on inmate volunteers, and before taking on a potential volunteer asks them their crime. If the inmate decides not to divulge that information, it may work against them. This may be a trust issue that is gained by the honesty of the inmate to their potential employer, if they do not tell them the nature of crime committed, then Willowbrook will not take them on, Willowbrook work towards Equal Opportunities, but for the safety of their clientele they work on that basis.

The feedback on the prisoners that they have already hired is very positive. 'Exceptional', 'he was not just a volunteer, nor a prisoner, but a member of our team.'

Past inmate volunteer's have sent in donations, and kept in touch with Willowbrook showing the respect and care they had for their work placement. This also boosted Willowbrook's response in taking on more inmates, and the feedback of the current inmate volunteer is encouraging.

Voluntary Action Rutland have taken inmates for many years and have built a trusting and lengthy relationship with HMP Ashwell, their response in taking on inmates is that it is beneficiary for the community, for building the prisoner's skills and confidence and it is a necessary aid. They treat the inmate volunteers with respect and as a volunteer, and feedback from inmates that have worked for VAR has been exceptional. All inmates stated that the nature of work that is conducted by VAR makes them feel happy about working for them, and the people working there, have intensified that feeling. VAR uses prison volunteers in their own establishment as handy men or for jobs in the community where their help may be useful. However, VAR has had problems with some prison volunteers, this has always been dealt with by the prison and the volunteers were taken off the scheme. VAR does feel passionate about helping their community and finds that the response of clients using the prison volunteers is positive. VAR always checks beforehand with a client if they are satisfied using a volunteer from prison. In some cases such as when there is a job in a home i.e. with a single mother/children, VAR have sent members of staff to the job in order to establish the situation to make sure that there is no risk sending a male prisoner to complete the job. VAR has established that it can be challenging when a job cannot be completed due to a shortage of travel facilities. The preference for them would be an extra van in order to drive volunteers to jobs that need completing. Much of the work that VAR undertakes demands manual labour or maintenance work, thus prison volunteers are very useful. However, they do not have enough resources at present for the volunteer to be supervised and driven back. This means every job must be chosen very carefully, or referred to HMP Ashwell if there is a

need for a longer placement using a prison volunteer. If there was a staff member to supervise and drive the volunteers to placements, more jobs could be completed.

MARTIN ASPINAL was interviewed from the **Anglian Bird-Watching Centre** in Rutland, for his opinions on the uses and benefits of prison volunteers at his establishment. Martin has used volunteers from the prison for 8 years – then stopped, due to problems inside prison with the outworkers.

There was concern that the outworkers may be approached for drugs and therefore the scheme was stopped for 3 years. Martin was approached 2 years ago by HMP Ashwell and re opened the scheme at Rutland Bird watching centre and Rutland Water, at the moment he has three prison volunteers working for him.

Martin is responsible for all the volunteers at Rutland Water, the intake of volunteers is phenomenal at 33,000 volunteer hours recorded in 2003, and an inflow of approximately 50 volunteers a day is now estimated. The nature reserve welcomes any member of society from the mentally/physically challenged to the pensioner, community service users and schools to members of public and bird enthusiasts.

Martin and the prison volunteers are responsible for the maintenance of Rutland Water and the Bird Watching centre. The feedback from all three Ashwell volunteers at the reserve is completely encouraging in their interviews, and they have been successfully accepted as useful and responsible members of the team. Martin carries out risk assessments on all jobs at the reserve, and provides volunteers with all safety equipment and materials for completing jobs. Martin is also mentoring one of the prison volunteers' in a NVQ level 2 in the countryside, in order to help the volunteer gain skills and knowledge for the job that has been offered to him at Rutland Water after his release.

Martin discusses how he uses and perceives the volunteers from HMP Ashwell; the volunteers have been responsible for many different jobs and have completed them to Martins satisfaction.

'Yes we do risk assessments for all the jobs, but I don't do specific risk assessments. I mean as far as I'm concerned, they are the Ashwell Volunteers. That's what they are.'

'I don't see them as anything other than that. They are Ashwell volunteers, as I have volunteers from Oakham, volunteers from all different, but they are often younger than some of my volunteers, and if you like, I can use them for jobs, I mean we do everything ourselves here, we build all our hides, everything is built by us'. ...

'It was a heap of rubble and they've re-built it from start with no materials, I mean they've re-built this barn, they've done a fantastic job of it, they really have, and they're rebuilding this huge stone wall. I mean I let them, but again I use them, like today... I had these groups of 30 school kids, er, (some of them aren't coming out tomorrow), but I get them to help me supervise them, you know, and as far as I'm concerned they're Ashwell volunteers. Obviously, I have a responsibility to those kids, so I have to keep an eye on things, you know or I'll have somebody there who is a volunteer here.'

Martin realises that the volunteers are from prison and that he must remain aware of where and whom the volunteers are working with. Martin established that there were many things that needed to be kept under consideration whilst working with prison volunteers, such as, staff morale and compliance working alongside a member from prison, and the vulnerability of the prisoners and the clients. He advised that whilst working with male prison volunteers, relationships among female staff working with the prisoners must be kept professional, he found that this was a problem with some of his female staff getting too flirtatious or attached to male prison volunteers. Martin believes it is a matter of trust when working with any of the

volunteers. He believes that volunteers should show that they are able to work responsibly and have an interest in learning and caring for their work.

Martin has felt used in the past, by some organisations 'dumping people' on him when he wasn't always told the truth about the volunteers he accepted. This caused an emotional strain on Martin to be responsible for volunteers that he was not fully informed about. Due to being manipulated in this way, Martin holds a strong belief in TRUST; in trusting the organisation sending the volunteers; and trusting the volunteers themselves. The volunteers he has from the prison he feels are trustworthy (through the work effort they have shown), but encourages HMP Ashwell to assess potential outworkers more carefully and inform the placements of any useful information about the volunteer.

Martin regards the relationship he has with HMP Ashwell as beneficial and the response from the prison when notified of problems has been helpful.

Chris Lawton was also interviewed from **The Owl Sanctuary** in Rutland. This wildlife reservation is open to public members and receives help through the efforts of their volunteers and Chris. Chris began his relationship with HMP Ashwell in 2002, after resettlement approached him with the scheme, he accepted on the reasoning that it was beneficial to the prisoners and helped the wildlife at his sanctuary. Mr Lawton has had very efficient and capable volunteers from the prison, some of which still keep in touch with the sanctuary and himself, he also has a skilful and accomplished worker at the moment that can work with the wild birds responsibly. This has given Mr Lawton positive encouragement in the scheme, however, he has come across some difficulties involving the resettlement unit in the past. Due to bad communication and lack of information Mr Lawton felt wrongly accused by the Prison for not informing them of the absence of a prisoner at his establishment. Mr Lawton had had confirmation from another prison volunteer that the 'missing' prisoner, had fainted outside the prison and had been taken into hospital by the prison service. Mr Lawton assumed that the prison would notify resettlement, and maintains that the protocol did not make clear that the prison must be notified of absences. He was told by resettlement that he should not rely on the word of a prisoner and that he must always notify the prison of absences. The nature and conduct of the phone call to Mr Lawton by resettlement displeased him as he considered ending the partnership with the Prison, but decided not to as he felt obliged to the prison volunteers he had at that time. This incident could have been dealt with better by Resettlement, and tact could have been used when handling the phone call to Mr Lawton. It seems that there needs to be a greater focus on the communication necessary to sustain relationships with the voluntary sector that is helping the prison, and in addition enough information about using a prisoner and their handling in the establishment needs to be customary, i.e. Good Practice Guidelines.

It was found that Mr Lawton does not receive the initial interview with potential prison volunteers, instead a volunteer from the prison is brought to him by a member of the resettlement team, and is shown around the establishment by current volunteers. This is not the standard practice that is used for the other voluntary agencies, Mr Lawton and the volunteer should have the opportunity to meet each other in the prison and then make a decision on employing them.

Mr Lawton has had some negative experiences working with the prisoners that have been sent to him. The descriptions of 'bad' volunteers seem to stem from the attitude of the individual that is outworking.

Mr Lawton is convinced that the helpful prisoners he receives are an aid to his work, and that he is willing to take on more volunteers, however, he feels that the rehabilitation unit needs to direct more attention towards the type of work that is carried out at his establishment and the type of individual sent to help. He feels that if the individual is interested in the work and possesses the right working attitude, the scheme would then benefit both users (agency and prisoner). Mr Lawton feels that as most prisoners at their release return back home, and there is less opportunity to employ them, however, if they build an interest in the wildlife and the work that is carried out, it would prove beneficial to them instead of being inside prison. Mr Lawton also discourages the prisoners from talking to members of the public, UNLESS they show that they have knowledge of the wildlife at the sanctuary, this is not to say that he does not allow them to talk to members of public, but he feels that unless they are informing them about the establishment or the work carried out there, there is no need for them to be involved with the public.

Mr Lawton also claims that in order for the prisoners to gain knowledge he provides books and educational material on the animals, it is however, the responsibility of the individual to take an interest. The owl sanctuary gains from the use of prison volunteers through increasing man power and this provides inexpensive labour. Another point made by Mr Lawton is the hours that the volunteers are available for are not always most suitable or useful, his establishment is busiest on weekends and some late evenings, and although prison volunteers are available for these days, more notice must be given to the prison service.

The Owl Sanctuary keeps endangered species and is soon to house big endangered cats, thus proper care must be taken when working there, knowledge and interest in the animals is essential, and trust and responsibility are greatly important issues.

Mr Lawton does give references for all his volunteers, but finds them his optional choice based on the behaviour and work of a volunteer. He has suggested to the Governor of HMP Ashwell, that it would be useful if the prisoners were to make bird boxes for his establishment, this is currently in negotiation. Mr Lawton also establishes that the relationship between himself and Ian Baken (Head of Resettlement) is good, and he feels that he is listened to.

Conclusion

From the responses of the voluntary agencies using volunteers from the prison, the overall message received from most was that it has proved beneficial in the completion of jobs undertaken by the agencies. Willowbrook, Voluntary Action Rutland, Rutland Water/Birwatching Centre and The Owl Sanctuary have all used the volunteers and have found that many have become part of the team and staff has enjoyed working with members from HMP Ashwell. All agencies agreed the benefits that the prisoners could gain from working amongst the community are exceptional, as it keeps them out of prison gaining skills and integrating better into society. It proves very useful for the agencies and clients as there is no expense to the establishment in gaining extra staff.

Issues that need tackling centre around

- Increasing information to agencies using prisoners or issuing customary guidelines for good practice, to voluntary agencies and prisoners.
- The need of travel facilities and a driver/supervisor in order to reach all clientele in all areas of Rutland.
- The need for better and more regular assessment from resettlement of prisoners' interest in the work they are doing, and the response of the agency on the conduct of their volunteers.

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APPENDIX 1 – Prisoner Self Assessment Chart

Prisoner Self Assessment Chart

After completing employment/job	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel better about myself					
I have more self confidence					
I am better at talking					
I am a better listener					
I am better at getting on with people					
I am better at understanding other people's points of view					
My attitude has changed for the better					
I have more self control					
I am in trouble less					
I did something I never thought I could					
I am keener to continue learning					
I am keener to continue this type of work					
I have made better use of my time at prison					
I believe that this will help me gain employment on release					
I believe I will lead a more productive life on release					
I am better prepared to get work on release					
I feel more positive about the future					
I am taking more responsibility for my actions					
I feel accepted by my work placement					
I feel discriminated against because I am a prisoner					
I do not feel trusted at work					
I have negative concerns with my placement					

REFERRAL FORM

ORGANISATIONS PROVIDING SERVICES TO PRISONERS

Please complete this form and send it back to Voluntary Action Rutland.

1. Organisation/Agency
Name.....
Address.....
.....
.....
Telephone number.....
E mail.....
Contact person.....

2. Is your organisation a () Registered Charity (number.....)
() Non-registered voluntary organisation
() Other (please specify).....

3. What is the nature of work carried out by your establishment?
.....
.....
.....
.....

4. Do you offer Equal Opportunities at your establishment? Y () N ().

5. Are there appropriate Health and Safety Checks at your establishment, i.e. safe working practices/risk assessments?
Yes, we assess all jobs for risk ourselves ().
No, we need assistance in assessing risk ()
Other.....

6. How many Prison/Volunteers do you require?

7. What are the hours the volunteers would be most useful?
Full time 8am-3.30pm.....
Part time (indicate hours and days).....
Other (e.g. community project).....

8. What date do you intent to start work?
.....

9. What date would you like the job completed by?
.....

10. Please provide a small job description.
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

11. Do you require any CRB checks on volunteers before accepting them?
Y () N ()

12. Are all the materials/safety equipment provided? Y () N ()

13. Do the prison volunteers or users of your establishment (children, elderly etc) need to be supervised whilst completing the job? Y () N ()

13a. Are you able to provide the supervision? Y () N ()

14. Do you have to travel to jobs with the volunteers? Y () N ()

14a. If yes, do you provide travel facilities for them? Please indicate of any problems with travel arrangements.

(note: the volunteers have their own transport to reach your establishment if in the Oakham area)

.....
.....
.....
.....

15. Are there enough toilet facilities at your establishment? Y () N ()

16. Is there a First-Aid kit provided by your establishment? Y () N ()

17. Will you provide and special clothing appropriate for the job entailed by the volunteer, (e.g. Waders, Wellington boots for outdoor or shirt and tie in reception etc).

Y () N ()

18. Are there any technical requirements needed to complete the job/s?.....

.....
.....

Thank you for completing this form. Voluntary Action Rutland shall act as a liaison between HMP Ashwell and your establishment and provide you with a volunteer. If there are any questions or queries please call Kathy/Chris at VAR on 01572 722 622, or refer to the 'Good Practice Guidelines for using inmates as volunteers'.

APPENDIX 2- All transcribed interviews

LT,
RB,
RF,
RT,
AC,
AV,

Martin Aspinal (Rutland Bird Watching Centre)

Malcolm Bull (Senior Officer at Resettlement)

Interview HMP Ashwell volunteer

Interviewer: Mandip Panesar (I)

Ashwell volunteer: RT

I: Interview with...

RT: Robert Taylor...

I: How long have you been working for Robert?

RT: a week...

I: How did you hear about it?

RT: I, I spoke to people who are doing it, and they talked about it.

I: Did you have any questions before you enter the voluntary service on the jobs or people? What were your thoughts and feelings towards this? (tape skip)

RT: I like the jobs they get us doing all sorts of jobs (tape skip) like I have said...

I: Did it help doing the interviews with Kathy before having to go on the outside knowing what to expect?

RT: yeah, yeah that was good.

I: Did you like the fact that it was informal?

RT: yeah!

I: was like a friendly kind of talk?

RT: yeah, yeah it was good yeah,

I: Would you have felt pressured if it was formal may say well "what can you do for us etc..."

RT: I think people would feel a bit more pressured (tape skip) and Neil was quite good as well.

I: And did it help you to sort of get to know them?

RT: Well yeah

I: And help you feel comfortable of knowing you would be working with...

RT: yeah, yeah

I: Did you have to complete all your sentence related courses?

RT: No, I would have if I had any (begins to laugh) but I didn't have any courses to do, if I did yeah I would have had to. It wasn't really a problem.

I: So you were openly free in your sentence and your report?

RT: yeah, I was just pottering around doing this job and that job really...

I: yeah...

RT: I was kind of free to go ahead...

I: Did you complete any courses inside the prison, because I know they do have courses such as brick work etc...

RT: yeah, the better ones are the brick work painting and carpentry I thought about it for a little while but my appeal was going on at the time...

I: yeah

RT: well I had a certain sentence and I had been in prison 18 months beforehand, so I couldn't really think too much about, that sort of really occupied my head for a while, so it's only when I got what I wanted, that's when I started to think about how much time I had left and what I could do with it...

I: So you knew the time you have left...

RT: Yes! I knew exactly what I was facing so I wanted to give it a go...so I chose outworking. Yes, yeah

I: Great, so did you receive any first aid or health and safety checks when you started this...

RT: well, I had to do it in prison...

I: Did you 'have' to do this in prison or ...

RT: no you don't have to do them, I chose to, like, there were some I had to do like a health and, food, food hygiene course...cause I was working with food I had to do it.

I: well, it does help when you go into employment so it would be a good thing really...

I: How do you feel then, about working on the outside helped you like emotionally in your own personal development?

RT: well yes its good isn't it, because I mean, you can come out, well while I am in here, I'm not in prison for a start, erm, dunno some prisons aren't all that bad, I mean your not inside, its quite a nice feeling to be coming out and mixing with normal people again, and I'm not saying that everyone in prison is strange or anything like that, cause they're not! But it's a certain environment, when you come out; it gives you at least half of your day, where you're free for a bit although you're not completely. It's much better, but I mean working in a place like this where your doing a lot of good, you know, its quite rewarding...

I: Seeing the community working together, how does it make you feel knowing that they don't have any expectations from you?

RT: yes, I think it would be different if I like was working for a sales company, cause they isn't much point in that, other than to the company making their money, so I think it'd be different if I was working for somewhere like that, but to come here and the people are very nice and they do, do good. It's worthwhile, I think, which is great, it makes a difference...

I: Are you from a similar community background?

RT: No, I from mars (laughing as he says this)

I: Really!

RT: no, I am joking but I do come from a community, a small town, so it feels good to be in that situation again...

I: Do you think you would gain a lot more skills while you are working here?

RT: yeah, already have, I already have ...

I: great!

RT: I've done quite a lot since I have been here, I mean, I have answered phone calls, type things up which have done with admin a little bit here and then...

I: good

RT: picking tables up, also doing a bit of weeding, err, there's always something you can do, picking up fag ends ... I don't mind doing things, trying to make the place look tidy there's always something to do might not want to but its alright ...

I: Did you find that you were given respect in the work place?

RT: yes, everyone is nice to you, treat me well, and they have given me the chance to come out and work because I am helping them out as well as them helping me out. You might get people that take advantage and sit around all day with nothing to do, I get bored, so...

I: How did people at work treat you, were they any time that you can recall anyone discriminating you because you are from a prison?

RT: well, there was this one time when someone threaten to the bat on me? Well I said you can't I am sure it's against human rights! (laughing)

I: well, (laughs) you could have done something about that.

RT: No, no they haven't discriminated against me, don't think they all know where I'm from, a few of the volunteers here don't, no-one really asks me, but no-one has ever discriminated against me.

I: It's good that they don't because that could make it quite uncomfortable for you.

RT: I guess it would...

I: If your co workers knew that you are from a prison, do you think it could have an effect you?

RT: no, it wouldn't; not really, I'm not a person that cares...

I: Do you get the same jobs to do as other volunteers?

RT: Yeah, because if we didn't do it, someone else would do it anyway, cause it has to get done...

I: Was there anything that has bothered you while you have been working and do you have anyone that you could go to if this situation arises?

RT:

I: Do you think you should have some assist when out in the work place?

RT: No, don't think I would like that or to be honest need it, well that's exactly how you feel when you are in prison, well to an extent you've always got someone looking at you, I suppose in prison you get annoyed with the jobs. (tape skip)

I: How do you feel about keeping a diary of self assessment and you could fill it with daily jobs and skills achieved?

RT: erm, no cause one day you may do more, or one day you maybe do less, you'd feel like you didn't have enough to put down, you'd feel pressured again, thinking oh, I've got to get this done, I've got to do this, nah. Yeah over time, maybe a month, and you could say what you had been doing this month, then you could sit down and think, I did this, and I did this, er not a daily thing, a monthly thing or a ten yearly thing ... (laughs)

I: Do you feel working as an outworker is helping you integrate back into the community better once you have been away from it?

RT: I'd say, yeah definitely, if you, cause I've spent two years and its progression isn't it, you want to do good, and like I say, you get to speak to normal people again.

I: suppose two years, talking to just prison officers, these ladies and chaps are nice people, but when you're in prison you only speak to prisoners and officers, it's bound to be to suffer really (laughs). I can imagine it can be difficult to get back in, yeah I would have thought so, but day visits help and I get to see me friends and family, and that's another aspect that helps you get back into it. (tape skip) I was a little bit mad before I came in here to be honest with you, not mad! But you know what I mean, a little bit, but you do go, it does make you go, cause there's nothing to talk about, and you end up talking about strange things, mad, not about your day. It's a strange world, a totally different world.

I: Do you think it has improved your employment chances?

RT: I don't think it will solve it, but it can't do any bad, at the moment, I mean its still gonna be difficult, as least they know that a long part of your sentence you have been working and getting out and doing things.

I: do you think there can be any improvements to the way the system is run?

RT: They can change the pack lunches, I need more food, but erm, I have no money; I get a canteen meal card.

I: How do you feel about the change of unit to be locked off from the rest of the prison?

RT: I'd have to see what its like is, but the idea doesn't really, no cause being locked away from everyone else you might feel alienated.

I: Do you feel like you have had choices whilst inside?

RT: yeah, I chose to do this, I went into education for a while, I mean some people might not have a choice, if you smoked tobacco and wanted phone calls and you had

no outside help, then you couldn't take this job, you'd never be able to buy anything else but your tobacco, whereas in my respect, if you have money being sent in. If I didn't have help I would have to call home not so often, and give up smoking, or take up one of the jobs.

Outworking definitely is a goal to work for, I mean it came up for me at the perfect time, I'd got no courses to do, got my sentence reduced and there's nothing keeping me, I could have gone to a D category, but this was there it was available, but a lot of people have their courses to do, and if they think I've got this to do then that, then its definitely a goal to work for.

END OF INTERVIEW

Interview with Ashwell Volunteer AV at Rutland Anglian Water, Birdwatching Centre.
Conducted by Mandip Panesar (I)

I: How do you travel to the destination of your placement?

AV: I think there's about 10/11 bikes, but when you first come out, you get on of the old bikes. You get promoted out there! The old bikes have got one gear... it's horrible. I've got me own bike, mum and dad bought mine, so I use my own...

I: So that's how you were funded for travelling? Cause I know that there is a lack of bikes.

AV: That's right. Kathy at VAR, erm, is buying a couple of bikes for the lads, which is...which is good cause the prison, they say they can't afford this, and can't afford that, so.. we end up loosing out in that respect.

I: Because you want the facilities, but Malcolm says there's no funding?

AV: No funding whatsoever...

I: Has your responsibility as an individual enhanced? Do you feel more responsible?

AV: Yeah, yeah, I don't know... Did you meet 'Burma'? Did he bring you down in the Land Rover? with Eddie and David, they're special needs..

I: yeah...

AV: and Eddie's a bit more open, can have a laugh with you, tends to repeat a lot. David's really, he's more shy; his brother, younger brother, he's really shy but he's got a little bit of confidence if he knows you. And, when Burma's round here, he'll say to me and Liam (other Ashwell Volunteer) 'can you look after Eddie or David?' and, and it does mean quite a bit, cause there's all these volunteers out here and he sees you as one of the responsible ones to actually look after him.

I: So he sees past everything else, and sees you as a responsible individual?

AV: Yeah. We went to Derbyshire on Tuesday, we took the lads up there, and Burma, he's got trouble with his leg walking, so he says ' Go with the lads and I'll follow along in the van.' Erm.You're looking after the lads and that's nice to know.

I: And they've built a relationship up with you...

AV: Yeah, there's a couple more, there's Heidi. She comes down from, she lives in Oakham, but she comes down from Melton college, and she's had trouble, we've looked after her.

I: That's nice. Working alongside vulnerable adults, would you have a problem having a criminal records bureau check, in case of working for any other voluntary services?

AV: No, no...

I: There are certain jobs that may need you to being in a house individually with someone? Would you mind?

AV: No, no I wouldn't have a problem (inaudible)...

I: So are you looking forward to your release?

AV: Yeah, can't come too quick at the mo...

I: Are you going home thinking about employment?

AV: Yeah cause I'll be... I was self employed before I had a, it was death by careless driving. Alcohol, so it was Sunday afternoon, it was absolute stupidity, 'ah It'll be alright', had an accident. It was a motorbike, so erm, yeah, I was self employed, just started sorting myself out, getting some money in, and this happens... But, I'll start again when I get out, I've got a couple of jobs lined up for when I get out. Me dad's a builder,

and he says 'oh yeah, I can save you this bit of work,' and me friend's a builder and he says 'I've got this bit for you....'.

I: Brilliant that you have that to go into. Do you think if you did not have your dad's help, this work (outwork) could have aided you?

AV: Yeah, Definitely! I learnt...

I: Do you think there is anything the voluntary service could do for you to aid, for example, references?

AV: With references and stuff, they possibly, possibly could. I don't know how...when they go, I mean, me personally, I've got a job waiting for me, but a lot of people don't have that, and LT's (Ashwell Volunteer)had to go out and, and look for himself. He found it, and he's looking for property in this area as well, which er, Prison Service Plus are helping with.

I: So there is lots of help? is there enough or not?

AV: There, (sigh) there is a lot, but they tend to... I don't know how to word this, but, they'll say 'Yeah we'll help you!', but then they've got, all, a lot of work to get on with, and you tend to get pushed a little bit and left to the side, until the last minute.

I: That isn't fair for the individual.

AV: No, no, I mean they do, do try and help you; they're a great bunch of people in there...

I: There is just not enough people there...

AV: to help.

I: to keep it going in a continual way. Everyone gets backlogged.

AV: That's right, yeah. They have to look after a lot of people in the prison as well, so they've got people coming to them constantly during the day.

I: Do you have any recommendations? Anything they could improve on?

AV: erm...

I: As I heard, Malcolm wants Langlam unit to turn into a 40 bed resettlement unit. Do you think this is a good idea?

AV: It is a good idea, but... It's nothing against them there, but, but they struggle with 8 or 9 of us. They struggle to search us and 'cause we have to have strip search in the morning and at night...

I: Ok, you do, before you go out and when you come back in?

AV: go out and come back in, yeah.

I: So they are the daily security checks basically.

AV: Yeah, strip search in the morning, strip search at night, but it tends to take a lot of time, and whether or not with the, er, resettlement unit, 'cause they are going on about segregating it from the rest of the prison, well, I don't know if they'll be able to, 'cause of the gym, the library, the kitchen... they might have to make a whole new, bit for it.

Which is going to take a lot of time, but, I don't know, but the only trouble I can see, that they got a bunch of people in there, 9 of us, yeah you can trust, but when you start getting more and more and more, there's gonna be a few slip through the net.

I: Do you think they need more security checks or harder checks to come in?

AV: The thing is that, they only thing they did, really, is dip testing, MDT's and drug testing. And the security, but that's the only thing they can do, because there's not a lot else. If you can talk the talk, and get yourself out here, and then do what you want to do. But, I can't see how they're gonna, if it's gonna happen, it's gonna happen.

I: mmm, it's a risk isn't it?

AV: It's a risk they are gonna have to take, yeah. I think, that's why they want to segregate it from the rest of the prison.

I: Yeah, so they don't have the influence of the others going 'bring something back for us....'

AV: yeah, cause there has been a couple of lads that asked, asked a few. I mean, they asked me and asked LT, but, No! then, they don't ask you again, but some of the others they tend to pester a little bit. They try and get their own way...but...

I: it's something that...

AV: ... it's something that needs looking at, but I don't know how you'd go on about it. 'Cause, it's gonna happen wherever you are.

I: Yeah. Did you have a health and safety check before this?

AV: Er, not so much a health and safety check, but I did get a health and safety course on Education.

I: (laughs) Well as long as you have it, it makes it wider, as if you went to an individual house then they'd have issues about health and safety. I need to know you have...

AV: Yeah, down here, they do risk assessments on each job, so...

I: Who risk assesses them?

AV: Well, Martin or Tim, whoever goes out to do the ...

I: just checks if they are ok...

AV: Yeah, erm, they have, most of our jobs get done through the winter when the breeding season of the birds and all that. But they go out and see what we need, see what safety precautions we need to take and stuff like that, and then they only let people use the strimmer, who have been trained. If you haven't had the training you obviously don't get to use it. Its little bits like that, we don't get to drive the tractors or cutting machines.

I: Brilliant, so there are stages you can go up and train on. Tell me about your confidence.

AV: I'm quite a confident person but thrown into the environment of the prison. I'm not criminally minded. A lot of people can handle it but you just tend to sit back and watch what's going on. But, yeah, it's given me a lot of confidence coming out here, in me. Like I keep saying, on the Rutland unit, it's just like a block of flats basically, because everyone just knows everyone; you eat together and stuff like that. It's a bit different from being down on B and C wing... and coming and going...

I: You live in D, Rutland, Langlam...

AV: Rutland unit, no, actually I've been changed to Langlam. I've been moved, I wasn't happy about that though... (laughs)

I: You weren't? Why?

AV: Well they erm, I'd been on the Rutland unit for 16/17 months ...

I: Ok, so you got to know your place,

AV: Yeah, and then they said like, cause Lamglam's gonna be a resettlement, we're gonna have to move you there. I've only got 8 weeks left, so its not gonna become a resettlement unit till long before I'm gone, but they say, 'No, the Governor wants it.'

I: So, how did it feel when they moved you around from unit to unit?

AV: Erm, Bit horrible, 'cause you get to know all the lads and got your room nice, bit of home, got your plants there and your cupboards there...

I: So that's what mostly matters, because you have been put into this institution and the

one thing you keep searching for is home.

AV: Exactly. It's when I tell me mates, you know, put your own duvet cover, and you got a big comfy chair. You got your own shower and your toiletries on your shelf and stuff like that,

I: Makes a difference when Langlam offers en suite...

AV: ... makes a hell of a difference.

I: The other ones must have felt mad to do that...

AV: erm... Nottingham, when I went to Nottingham, no curtains, bars, and broken glass in the windows. It's terrible and when you're thrown into that environment, it's an eye opener. Nottingham, definitely but I was only there a month and a half, two months, and I got a job in the kitchen, then they moved me to Ashwell. And, I mean, when I first got to Ashwell I wanted to go back. I was thinking, Oh no, I don't know anybody again. Changing again and again and I don't know anybody, but you get to know a few faces. The staff here are much better than Nottingham, 'cause at Nottingham it's an erm, allocation jail, they don't really want to get to know you, you're just there for a few months.

I: Ok, so it's a move on jail... Did you find that people treated you differently, well, even the officers when you started working?

AV: I think it's only because you're in and out of reception each day, and you get to see quite a few of the officers at reception, and they tend to have a bit of banter with you. And, it's nice to have a bit of banter with someone, even it's the officers or anybody, 'cause in there its them and us! I can't get on with it but... its good to know you can have a laugh with people, makes your day go quicker.

I: I bet, what time do you finish here everyday?

AV: Erm, finish at half three to cycle back for 4'O clock.

(Inaudible)

I: Anything else you'd like to add for the term?

AV: Perhaps, the town visits as well, because that is one of the main incentives that people come onto the outwork. It's nice to be out of the prison environment, but a lot of people could have gone to D cat, erm ...

AV: Which is the open prison...

I: ... open prison, where you can walk around, and you can get a decent job and a decent wage, and your town visits are from 8'O clock in the morning till 6'O clock at night. So, some people give that up, cause they haven't got quite a lot, I'd had just under a year to go to my parole date, and that's why I thought I'd stop at Ashwell cause I like the environment it is. They could look at changing the times on the, erm, on the town visit. Like I say,

I: Lengthening time...

AV: yeah, lengthening time and gym and the library and stuff like that.

I: Thank you for your co operation in this interview

END INTERVIEW- END TAPE.

INTERVIEW – AC Ashwell Volunteer at Rutland Anglian Water, Birdwatching Centre.

I: Ok A, how did you hear about the out work?

AC: Through my manager in the, when I was doing a brick course.

I: A brick course, ok, was that a course you chose to take? Why?

AC: Yeah, cause I wanted to learn something positive while being in prison. Instead of just being a robot, by doing something efficient.

(inaudible)

AC: Yeah, I wanted to learn something beneficiary to me, which would benefit me and I also did an electrician course. The basics, until I got through the security checks to err, become an out worker.

I: You chose it yourself in your own time?

AC: Yeah, I wanted something that would be worthwhile and benefit me and family, basically when they want odd jobs doing.

I: (laughs) You'll be the odd job man, fit in the new cabinets...

AC: Well, I can do that, but its best to know how to do it properly.

I: Right, So this does benefit?

AC: Oh, Positive! Yeah, Big Positive!

I: Great. So what made you think...? Did you work inside the prison as well?

AC: yeah I worked, well, when before I could go on to the brick course, I had to go into the shops, the workshops. Basically, if you want to earn money, yeas you can. Only, but it's a robotic job, to me it wasn't beneficial. Ok, the money's there, but I thought... learn something which was going to help me in the long run. Which it would do. I thought, they, ... my erm, feeling is I think people would go to skilled job such as electrician, carpentry and bricklaying, but because the courses only pay a very basic wage, they tend to go to the workshops where they can earn the money.

I: Right, so to go to a course you get a basic pay as well.

AC: well, you get £7/8 a week, where as in the workshops you can earn £20/30 a week, and people smoke or whatever, they, that will er, basically help them. But, I think it would help them even more if they had an incentive of a bit more money to work in the workshops and learn a skill, and basically, they wouldn't go out of prison, it would benefit them in getting a proper skilled job.

I: Yeah, cause a lot of people don't have the chance before they enter prison.

AC: But while, exactly, while they're in, they're not going no where, they could gat them skills.

I: Do you think it was hard to be chosen to get outwork 'cause there is only 6 to 8 of you?

A: There is 11 of us now, yeah numbers are coming up. Yeah, you have to go through security checks and...

I: ... every morning or...

AC: Yeah, every morning you get checked in, and out. Coming out and going in. but I mean, they check with your probation and outside, whether your going to abscond, basically, and not come back. If you're into... you know.

I; into drugs/

AC: Well, this is it; I don't even smoke so,

I: Ah, clean as a whistle, healthy...

AC: Yep, I think so. Nearly 46 though

Interview with Martin Aspinal – Head of volunteers at Rutland Anglain Water Birdwaching Centre.

- Taking prisoners for 8 years – then stopped, due to problem inside prison with the outworkers.
- Drugs. Taking inside-outworkers may be approached thus had to finish for 3 years.
- Then approached 2 years ago- Martin told by the prison, the problem was sorted and would he have more prisoners. Had 1 prisoner- now has 3 outworkers.

I: Are the prisoners a helpful thing?

M: Definitely yes. Had 33,000 volunteers at Rutland Nature reserved in 2003, May have 50 volunteers a day from different places.

I: Why are you ok about prisoners?

M: Have people from Mencap, who come out 4 times a week with minder, learning disabilities. 'Cause there is a lot of members of our society, they live on the doorstep; hopefully some will get a different view. LT (Prison volunteer) who you haven't met, he was a very violent men and he grew up in a certain way of life. He's seen a totally different way of life here, and it's changed him completely.

I: Do you like the change?

M: yea, yea definitely, he's now not going to go back, when he gets his parole, he's gonna stop round here. He's got a job round here now, in the same sort of state trade that he's learnt while he's been here. He's done his NVQ level 2 here, and he's not going back to where he used to live with his old friends and his old ways. He said to me the there day, he said, 'You can't believe 18 months ago I shuffled into Grantham Hospital and I was manacled, my hands were manacled, there was a chain round my legs and I was chained to a prison officer and I shuffled into the hospital to have...', well, he's been stabbed lots of times and what have you, and so I mean, he was a really violent person and he's been dealing with violence all his life, and he's totally changed now. He's got an interest in wildlife and he's doing his NVQ level 2 in the countryside, which I assess him. I'm an assessor for NVQ level 2, so quite a lot of voluntary people that come here, volunteers, they can get their level 2. LT doing that, and he's changed entirely and he'll hopefully go out there and be a good citizen. He's seen a different way of life, the people that work here, there are so many facets of people that work here, and he's seen them work here. People who are retired, and they, not even 50 some of them, got a good pension; they come out here 3 to 4 days a week and give up their time, you know, to help people. He's met a whole variety of people, and life that he never knew existed. You know, he's an inner city lad, erm, so you know, I find it fulfilling in that way.

But, I have to be careful who I take on. We have some children, who are excluded from school for instance. You know, I'll interview them first, then they'll come out for a week's trial, we see how they get on. We had one lad called back into school and congratulated by the Head Master for how well he's done. So we do change people's lives.

(Another case is a young lady, started few years ago, aged 23/24. Wouldn't speak to anyone. Volunteers thought she was ignorant for not speaking, but she was unable to work due to not speaking. She couldn't shop, she worked alongside Martin and the other volunteers for three years, and begun saying 'Good morning'. After that she phoned

Martin and told him she had been employed at the local hotel. She gained confidence).

M: Sometimes I have to be careful, it does take its toll on me. I mean, I wouldn't say I've had a break down or anything, but I had a few weeks off work because the volunteers tend to draw on me emotionally, and I was being used badly by the social service as well. They were dumping people on me when I wasn't aware, and I wasn't always told the truth about people. And I got no way of unburdening myself, you know social workers all got someone they can turn to and discuss it, well none of these things were in place for me...Some of the volunteers especially when social services approach you and want you to take volunteers, and they don't always tell you the truth. You know, No... I had one social worker turn up with a young lad; well he was going to court the very next day. This is on the Tuesday, he's doing court on Wednesday, and he was due to be sent to prison. She said, if you take him here as a volunteer, he won't go to prison. So, I did, yeah, and he didn't go to prison, but again that's, if you like, what's that saying to me. I believe in everybody in this world should have a chance you know, I was given a chance and I think everybody should be given a chance, and I find it difficult sometimes with squaring it with other volunteers as well, because they work here, and they perhaps don't want to work with too disruptive a people, so, you know, its a battle half the time.

I: Well, with such a big staff for a day, you have to know if they get on.

M: So it does have its difficulties, the 33,000 volunteer hours has been going, now I've been here 12 years now, so that has happened for 7 years we've had that number of volunteers. It's not just a flash in the pan but now I'm very much aware of, you know what people try and do, and how people try and unload on you. I'm far more aware of that, then 5 years ago.

I: How do you feel about the security checks done on the prisoners? Are there any specific checks done here? [Risk assessments...]

M: Yes we do risk assessments for all the jobs, but I don't do specific risk assessments. I mean as far as I'm concerned, they are the Ashwell Volunteers. That's what they are.

I: You don't see them as...

M: I don't see them as anything other than that. They are Ashwell volunteers, as I have volunteers from Oakham, volunteers from all different, but they are often younger than some of my volunteers. And if you like, I can use them for jobs, I mean we do everything ourselves here, we build all our hives, everything is built by us. If you have time, I can show you a barn these prisoners built. It was a heap of rubble and they've re-built it from start with no materials, I mean they've re-built this barn, they've done a fantastic job of it, they really have, and they're rebuilding this huge stone wall. I mean I let the, but again I use the, like today... I had these groups of 30 school kids, err, some of them aren't coming out tomorrow, but I get them to help me supervise them, you know, and as far as I'm concerned they're Ashwell volunteers. Obviously, I have a responsibility to those kids, so I have to keep an eye on things, you know or I'll have somebody there who is a volunteer here.

I: So you do have in the back of your head- there are vulnerable adults here...

M: Definitely yes... I mean that, I have to be aware of all of the time, with not just the prisoners, but with all the volunteers. With the volunteers, I don't know, err, you know and we get young girls come out here. You know, and again, I'm very aware not to, make sure erm some of the volunteers are not allowed with young vulnerable people. {Case of young girl - learning disabled, special needs. Came to Nature reserve, very

hyper and very loud but working toned her down and seemed to calm her personality. She is now getting a flat on her own away from secured housing, has got herself a NVQ level 1 and now trying for level 2. Socially she has adapted well.}

M: ... Case after case of people who have worked here and gone out to become good members of society, it's the same with the prisoners. You know, if they are hardened criminals they just get a different view of life, you know to think these people, I mean one of my volunteers...he is out this morning, and {his mother was taken into hospital yesterday, rushed into hospital, Had been told by martin not to come in today, but was}...determined to come in and help with these kids, and he came out this morning and got called back in. 'Cause the hospital phoned and said he's got to go back there and his mother died before he got there. He is a dedicated volunteer and he's been volunteering here for me for the past 20, well, not for me personally, I've encountered volunteers right from when it started, that's how I got in this business, by County Vol, and he's county vol with me, and I've known him for a long time and he comes out 3/4 days a week. He was injured by cement blown into his eyes by a big cement lorry, spent a lot of time in hospital getting his sight back. He has had his problems, sees a psychiatrist, but he keeps coming out and this is his way of...

I: Coping, having something external apart from...

M: Yeah, if he'd stopped at home all the time, he'd gone into himself, he would have. He's totally dedicated, trustworthy and loyal you know. I mean, I've met some really nice, nice people out here. I have one chap out here, he's an ex director of Brushworks at Loughborough, and he's taken early retirement and he's about 40/48 and gets a good pension, about 30 grand a year. And, he comes out here and gives a tremendous amount here, he comes out here 3 days a week during the winter, but in the summer time he doesn't come out and work for us actually, but he's here, he's here at night time and he does moth trapping, bird trapping he does all these things at night through the summer, all the recording and then comes out with us in the winter time. But his knowledge and skill is quite extraordinary and he teaches the volunteers how to do things and he teaches them in a proper way.

I: You pay for materials that are used around here?

M: Yeah. All the materials and that. And you think if they want specialist clothes, again, we'll buy waders, we'll provide them for them, they're £65 a pair, and we're a registered charity. I work for Leicestershire Wildlife Trust, who is a Registered Charity, and we, it's... a tool shrinkage we suffer from, a lot of tool shrinkage... [INTERRUPTIONS from walky talky]

I: Assessments and references on skills, there is much that they do, with building, maintenance and their skills build. Would it be extra work for you to fill in a form?

M: If the forms written out its a tick box, its no problem, but again, we do write references for them and when they come up for there parole or whatever, we'll write a reference for them and when they come up for their parole or whatever, we'll write a reference for them to say, you know, and erm, certainly the prisoners we've got at the moment, I mean I can't fault them at all. And...

I: I think it's a good motivation for them when they are in at work to do a job properly because people are depending on them.

M: Well that's it, and I've certainly found this, and so you know, its like me saying to you I'll come pick you up from the station, but I'll go and talk to a group at night time or

something like that, and they say how much do you charge, and I say I can't really charge you can I, you know, because of the volunteer effort put in. So again filling forms in for them, or taking the time out to do something, is something Yes, yes we'll do that. That's not a problem, but it's the amount of hours it'll take to do, if its simple tick box, or if its writing out what they do, they should, I try and encourage all volunteers that come here to keep their own diary.

I: They could just keep a diary and you could sign it and say that's what they did today...

M: ...that's what they did today, yes if they have the responsibility of writing it up, I mean they go in at night time you know, and I know sometimes they go in and they take books from here, books about the job, you know, cause they have got manuals and things lie that, and they look it up in their own time because they haven't got much else, well, you know... they go to the gym and watch TV, so you know in a way its better for them to fill in their diary and I'd sign it once a week or two, to make a record of what they do.

I: Do you think there is anything lacking in the relationship you have with keeping communication going...

M: No I think, I, Malcolm phones me up, and Bob Ray, they phone me up and I phone them if I've got a problem or anything.

I: But you trust who they give you as they are planning to make it bigger.

M: No, between me and you, I don't trust anybody, but then again I judge people I get to know people. I give them a chance and I get to know them. To give them the chance you know, I mean I don't look at them like prisoners I don't look at them as, they usually end up telling me what they've done, but that to me, is you know, is not important. It's what they've done in the past, that's the past; it's what they do now that I'm interested in. And for the three lads that I have here, I would trust them, you know completely. But only, because I've got to know them, you know. 'Cause it's only Colin and Adi who you spoke to, I mean you know, he's very sound, he's very loyal, you know but saying that he takes the micky you know, and its you know and he's high spirited and same as LT and Tony and all of 'em, all have a bit of a go and what have you, but its all part of life, but when it comes down to it, they do what they are told, you know and if they think that it'd be better done this way, they would soon tell me, and that it's done this way.

I: Do you think they are good at getting in on time, you trust them as a good worker as an employer?

M: Yes, if they work for me as well as they do for an employer, definitely, no problem. I mean if I, if I was to set up myself in business, I mean even from prisoners I've had in the past, you know I wouldn't hesitate to employ them. You know if I was to set up as a contractor in the, in this business I wouldn't hesitate to employ half of them same as Liam, so I mean, you know, he's come here and erm, being the person he was and you know he's turned into a human being hopefully you know, he still misses the spray with CS gas, you know..

I: (laughs)

M: ...often when he sees the police about, you know, he says, he often goes up to them and asks them, 'spray for old times sake'

I: (laughs) he misses the smell..

M: misses the smell yeah, and a beating over the head with a truncheon. He misses that a bit, you know but he's getting over that, but I think, I've often gone in there and talked to the lifers group, I used to go to erm, (what's the other prison up the road bit further?).....

you don't know the other prison, you know Ashwell, well the other prison is a more bang up place than Ashwell Prison...***** Prison up the A1 a bit, yeah, I used to go there and talk to the lifers groups there about conservation, so I'd go there and so I'd go into and talk to them about conservation, talk to them about the state of conservation and thing like that. Well, its not only that, it's something I give back, if you like, to volunteer people er time here Me you know giving something back. Its might, it might work and it might not and I mean I've been battling for a long time here to keep under 16's here because the chance is changing all the time, its more and more difficult to get kids here, and we have kids here on work experience, erm, and some of the volunteers are not happy with it. you know, but you know they want everybody to be over 16, but I think, myself, we need to get them before they are 16 because by the time you get to 16, in your case you discovered boys a bit more, and you know, but when your 13/14...

I: ...they are so much more interested...

M: Exactly,...so in conservation, yeah, you know and that's sort why I'm determined and I have been battling, I some times feel like I'm on me own, but getting these young people to work out here ere I mean I've had some of my volunteers CRB checked so they can work with them, er because some of the volunteers are dead against it, you won't believe this but some are dead, ... but...

M: As far as I'm concerned it works very well and its ok as it is, but saying that I don't always trust what people say to me, I'm afraid, um either be it, be it them or be it the prison. I don't, no ... what I see and the way I treat it, the way that they come over to me, that's what I judge everything on, NOT what people tell me. I've been, I've been lied to, you know so many times by you know, social services, by people that come here, so, they have an agenda, and they don't tell me what that agenda is and they have problems with me. I had two students here, from er a place in Dorset, and er I had problems er with both these students, one for different reasons, and one for different, two different sorts of reasons, and their tutor came to see me, they'd been here for six weeks work experience, and he came to see me, and started talking see, he said 'well, both of these girls have tried to commit suicide', right, and I says 'you didn't think you should tell me that,' he said 'well its fairly normal practice in college', I said 'What!' I said 'what sort of college are you running? Attempted suicide?!' he says well it is...I said you need to tell me that, you know, I said, perhaps that explains a lot of the behaviour that's been going on, and I said you know, 'Well, well we found it quite common.' ...and I though God, what's the world coming to, where, where these young girls, you know, who are sort of 19/20 years old and the college they're at consider it to be fairly normal they try and kill themselves!

I: That is really bad help...and ignorant to someone's needs

M: yeah... that's what I thought, yeah...

I: So even with the prisoners, some are on suicide watch or have been, would you like a background on something, or would you prefer not...?

M: Well, no, obviously again depends what they were in for, if they are vulnerable, because we found that was the problem with the last one, we had a very strong prisoner out here and we had a very vulnerable prisoner and they worked together fine, and the strong prisoner went on home leave so this is when we had all the problems with the drugs because the pressure was put on him, because if you like his body guard had gone home, you know and if there are vulnerable, it is and they got at him, cause ...

M: Yeah the first prisoner we had out of here erm they phoned me up to say they were

volunteering, that wanted to fetch him back. So I said his working at (inaudible) and they said, as far as you know nobody'll speak to him, I said no, I certainly won't, they says well, don't say anything to them, we're quite happy to nab him when we get back into prison. He'd been working for VAR in Oakham, so he was doing computer work for them, and he'd gone onto the internet and he was, cause they phoned me up and asked if they could speak to him, cause he'd put a code on this computer and nobody could get into it, then he'd get access to this computer. And, privately I think he'd been going on to the internet, and he'd been looking at very dodgy sites when he gone in there and I think he'd run up a bill for 300 or 400 quid.... So that was my first experience this time of him, sort of being nicked erm fairly smartish, he was here one day and gone the next, if you know what I mean, but I think you know, cause there are vulnerable prisoners, erm something's. I mean, sexual predation is one, people tend to think its male - female, but its not, there are female sexual predators as well who will, I'm sure who...

I: Will pick on prisoners and try and see if they can...

M: exactly, yes, yeah you know so, that's a problem that they perhaps you know, perhaps would never think about... I mean that's something, you know I keep an eye on the prisoners who they work with, I mean my assistant's female, and you know they get on quite happy, she goes off with the prisoners, if she's quite happy to go off with them you know she's quite happy about it, but she can look out for herself I've no doubt about that you know but again its a matter of trust, trust ... in the prisoners, which I do. But again, its, that's the important thing being aware of what's going on, although I think you'll perhaps find this hard to believe, I'm a very sensitive person, I can sense changes in people, you know someone comes in er with a mood, I can very quickly pick up on, you know what's, you know I try to talk to them for what's wrong, usually the first thing I say, is don't your not on a soap opera so don't say nothings wrong cause I know there is something wrong, you know. So if they come out having a problem, I like it think OK, I might miss it sometimes, but I like to think that I, same with all the volunteers, something's wrong with somebody, you got to talk, what's wrong. Cause they don't all like each other, they don't all like me, its like families and like life, you meet everybody, you don't like everybody in your family, you don't like everybody, who you work with, and so you know you got to get on together and there a, that's what I try and do, keep aware. some I've got some very loyal volunteers who tell me that, you know things do go on behind my back you know, I get told about it mostly, obviously I don't know the things I don't know about. Out of the volunteers there are 6/7 that are key volunteers, they are the ones who come out most times, who come out here for a long time, you know and I know that I trust them, you know and they tell me what's going on, hopefully.....

M:you've got to be able to talk to someone about problems with the volunteers, we've put that into place now so that's

I: So if there was a problem with a prisoner you know you could talk to Malcolm about it...

M: yeah, yes, if I you know, if I want help with anything I wouldn't hesitate to phone up, but luckily it's worked so far, you know, but the pressure with 40 prisoners in there erm, that might come down with the pressure to sent out people that perhaps are not quite ready to come out, you know I say give everybody a chance but if it didn't work on both counts, we could they'd say so. At the moment I feel that I'm ok to say so, hopefully the

prisoner's ok to say so. I mean years ago we had a prisoner come out here and he didn't like it, you know and he didn't come out he went home day and I got a phone call saying he didn't want to come out today and I got a phone call saying he didn't want to come out anymore, you know he was fine in prison.

I: Thank you

END OF INTERVIEW.

Interview with LT at Rutland Waters Birdwatching Centre

Interviewer : Mandip Panesar

LT

I: How long have you been an outworker for?

LT: I've been outworking since February last years, so its come up to about sixteen months, now.

I: And why did you decide to become an out worker?

LT: Right. Erm, two reasons really at the time I was working in sport, where I'm quite keen on sports, weights especially and fitness and my original plan was to work at the gymnasium, sort of fitness, however, because of the area there isn't any gymnasiums, there's one at the college so no, basically I got accepted onto the out work with nothing to actually do at first, and then because of someone's down fall, it got token off him, I got put onto Rutland Water a lot quicker than what I perhaps would have, so basically I accepted it and I came here from then.

I: Did you get a first day to come and look at it?

LT: yeah, I had me interview with Martin, I was quite nervous as well, I'm not really doing a really lengthy sentence, and I haven't been here that long, but yeah it was quite strange to be sort of coming out and er speaking to people that were willing to sort of, think about it, it took a while to sink in, that in actual fact I'm actually going to work for them. Kathy was really nice when I met her, I was a bit er, not sure.....

(INTERRUPTIONS)

I: How did you feel about people taking you...?

LT: yeah, I'm not, I was quite nervous of that, people tend to think that if you're in prison, straight away that you're a burglar or that sort. I mean I didn't get any of that from here, and I mean I've always been quite open with anybody that wants to know, welcome to know.

I: were there any main worries?

LT: erm, people's opinions, having to deal with being out, in prison you just get used to living. You work here, and suddenly you have to start thinking about your language, you can't swear, well try not to swear, whereas in prison that's sort of the lang., the sentences are, most people that speak, speak with a swear word involved, and when your out here it takes a while getting used to, sort of watch what your saying. I didn't want to offend anybody so I was like, I used to go back and think 'I hope I didn't say anything,' cause in prison it doesn't matter, well it does matter but obviously people just don't take things in that way, where as here you had t consider other people a bit more and I soon got into it and I haven't had any problems since.

I: do you feel your social skills decrease in prison?

LT: yeah, definitely, I wouldn't say it decreases a lot, you sort of have to put them away cause you have to sort of get accustomed to it, being a bit of a person not everybody does but erm I don't know, a lot of it is this sort of macho sort of vulnerable, where you don't come across like you feel vulnerable or not, but you just get that used to doing it that you just, sort of forget that there's another way of being...

I: ...because you were in that environment...

LT: yeah, yeah, I mean you think that if you drop the front then you become vulnerable then you just get that used to being that person that you know you don't realise that.

I: So it's important for prisoners, you think, to come out and integrate into the community through outwork?

LT: Definitely. Yeah! Without a doubt...

I: to improve confidence...

LT: Yeah, I mean prior to release yeah, I mean this has been a very big help for me more than one hundred percent, if I'd just been released into it, then I wouldn't have, but because I've been released into it gradually I think it's been a big help in a lot of ways yeah.

I: Do you enjoy working out?

LT: Yeah, definitely yeah. Fantastic place...

I: Why did you not choose a D Cat?

LT: The thing with a D Cat. Is, I mean I sort of believe that the grass isn't always greener on the other side and you sort of, people go to D Cat, in some ways for other reasons, I mean they go there for home leave or town visits, and I sort of come to a decision on the sentence that I didn't want another sentence after this so, but I wasn't really just looking for the quickest way home, I was looking for the best way of solving my problems you know. At the time, I'd, the people really hadn't... I'd been at Ashwell for nearly three years now so I knew really what I was doing, I've got a good report, I've got a brilliant wing history I've never had, touch wood, I've never had a problem in the jail, and I get along with everybody so ... I didn't see the point in moving really, I was quite comfortable here and so I decided to choose the outwork yeah.

I: Do you think you have learnt new skills whilst being an outworker?

LT: Yeah, Massive! Yeah, well far too many, yeah I mean there's certain things you can't do with inside prison, that you deal with out there. So, emotions, I've never been a person for emotions but working out here you do go through a lot of emotions, you know you have to sort of, change you who you are, you come out here and you lead one lifestyle, part of the day and then at, sort of, ten to four, just before you go back through the gate you switch to a different lifestyle otherwise you are gonna get into problems through it, but you have to realise that you're still a prisoner, you can't go back in with the wrong attitude and so yeah emotions...

I: Emotions...as in understanding others emotions or your own?

LT: yeah, I didn't used to deal with criticisms very well, but since being here I can deal with...yeah because of my lifestyle I've never had constructive criticism it's always sort of been...really negative, which has here, it's very constructive you know, if you do something wrong, you know, they're quite willing to show you've done it wrong, or explain a better way not necessarily make you change what you have done but just say that next time you do it, this might be a better option, so it's a lot more constructive, so I certainly feelings and changes I couldn't really list them all to be honest with you.

I: Yeah, ok. That sounds like it has opened you up as well.

LT: yeah definitely, a hundred percent yeah.

I: Were there any problems inside or outside the prison?

LT: No, no not at all.

I: How do you feel your relationship with Martin has grown?

LT: Without trying to sound too corny and not, Martin's been a really strong father figure to me since I've been here, and I know I've only been here 16 months but I think anybody that you asked about my relationship with Martin they would say exactly the same. He sort of, he always had time for me to chat with him, not just necessarily, yeah cause my sister is my co-accused, and my sister's in prison as well, and that's always been a big issue cause recently I got my parole and I can approach Martin with things like that, you know family things all the things, and he's

encouraged me a lot, like I'm doing an NVQ at the moment in conservation, something I perhaps wouldn't have had, prison do NVQ's, but they're really basic you know, most people could achieve them, whereas that needed a lot to be done for it, and he has helped me get through it a lot, you know he's quite down to earth, he's sort of, ...without sounding too sort of like to mad, he's from my sort of lifestyle how I used to live, you know he's down to earth, he's... you know...I'm not quite sure what the right word, yeah he's down to earth, he's easy to talk to, not a problem. When I first came to the country I sort of believed that I wouldn't be able to talk to people like that, I didn't think I'd have that much, because of who I was and where I was from and my background, I was quite narrow minded towards people, but I've noticed that they're a lot different, they're a lot more broad minded with people like myself so, yeah he's been a really strong figure and that, obviously I don't have much to do with Tim, cause he's management side, where as Martin deals with the volunteers. Yeah, I mean the trust and stuff that he's put into me, for me to actually lead teams and stuff like that and you sort of think you're a prisoner, you don't expect to be in charge and you think your gonna be, sort of like, put in the back and you know I've led groups or I've been asked to do things that your not, like they had this big event here called the 'Bird Fair', it's the biggest birding event in the country and I was part of the security team in that, now that sort of shocked me, a prisoner being asked to, but I wasn't just sort of, security, they had a main opening event, and there has to be one of two main security people for that opening ceremony, which was quite an important ceremony and them trusting,... you know, and the people that they let you mix with, you know you just, it doesn't matter, but I think they might have, sort of, pulled you away from certain people, you know like men, women, you're a prisoner perhaps they didn't want, but I come work at the centre with Julia and they're all quite happy for me to be here and they treat me like anybody else, there's no...whereas I thought that would be a problem and it hasn't been, the trust element from everybody is been fantastic, which has really boosted my ...

I: As a prisoner you are vulnerable too. Have you ever been put into a position where you have felt this?

LT: No, Never. Na, everything is completely optional here, you've got so much space here to, if you felt uncomfortable you could just say I prefer to do that. No particular reason and, you're a volunteer here; you know they all make you feel like a volunteer, they don't make you feel like you're a paid member of staff so you *have* to. If they sent you to do something it's not, they can say, I also thought because I'm a prisoner I'd have to do things, but they're quite, you know as long as the work gets done, they're quite happy for us to sort of, have an extra half hour at lunch, or just enjoy a walk on the reserve or outside sometimes when there's not many people in, its like you can just have walk about...

I: So you have the opportunity to take the work place as yours and...

LT: yeah yeah I mean a lot of, a majority of the work places that our outworkers don't get that freedom, they're inside or they have to work and, you know because of the vast space we have here I don't know, they're happy for us as long as the work gets done and you don't sort of, abuse the fact that you're out, you know you're here because of what you're here for, but they're quite happy for you to enjoy a bit of time to have a walk about and a bit of a joke and...yeah.

I: It is good that they let you walk around because it is so big.

LT: It's vast yeah.

I: how would you feel if there was more supervision on you?

LT: I don't think it would. It depends how you've been started off on the course, how you've been on out work, I mean I've been, at first you feel like your quite closely supervised but then you realise that's just people getting to know you. Whereas if that supervision would have stayed quite intense then you wouldn't have really knew the difference anyway, so I think you'd have still outworked you'd have been more wary about things...

I: ..constant eyes on you...

LT: yeah, I mean if it was to happen now then I'd be a bit concerned about it because your that, for the length of time I've been here and the way people are with me, then you'd sort f doubt things a little bit, but I mean if it was constant from the word go, then it would have..

I: do you think that given the task to do yourself helps you more?

LT: Oh yeah, yeah I mean one of my biggest problems was mix matching confidence with arrogance, I was always quite an arrogate person before I came to prison, which had landed me where I'd been, whereas now I'm quite a confident person but because of the trust they give you, you can see that people are seeing the good in you. When I grew up I was quite a negative person, you know how you get your, sort of like, praises and all that, you know, I've never really had that before so perhaps we get them from here has been praise.

I: Is it hard to deal with praise?

LT: yeah like I said with emotions and that, you think 'oh' I used to get back and think, its quite strange that, for people to actually say to you, you've done a good job or you know handled a situation quite well. I mean there's two lads that work here called Eddie, David and with Burma, and I've become quite close with them, and I mean, they feel quite close to me actually cause I feel I treat everybody like quite family really. I mean there's certain people that are here everyday of the week and you do get to know them as if they were family because you know you're not going to get paid, so you're here voluntary. So its not that people *have* to be here. People are there because they enjoy being there, and they obviously enjoy being there because your part of that enjoyment so, which makes it a big sort of like, ego boost sort of like thing, people come there not because of the place, but people make the place as well, so makes you feel quite good about yourself.

I: yeah it's nice with all the volunteers...

LT: yeah I mean we had a day out to erm the peak district, as a sort of like thank you for the winter work and to have a look at another reserve, and sort of there were twenty six of us who went, minibus and cars and it was just fantastic. I mean I was, it was quite hard actually cause I sort of forgot where I was that day, so... come five O'clock you think 'oh gosh in two hours time you'll be going through the gates again' I found that quite hard, but it seems to be getting easier.

I: It seems entering back into prison is harder now you are so integrated into life.

LT: yeah, because so much of the day you feel like a real person, and a better person I've never had sort of, I've never done the sort of things I'd done before, worked honestly and things and then go back...

I: Everything you are describing is very positive

LT: oh definitely, a hundred percent yeah.

I: Do you think your employment chances have improved?

LT: I've already been offered work since I've been here so I'm already going to be fully employed when I leave prison. Being a tree surgeon, landscaper and I've already got in writing...

I: Is it anything you would have thought of getting into before outworking?

LT: Nay, never, I've done a chain saw licence and stuff with my NVQ, so that's all bettered the fact of the job, and then I've already had it in writing that he's written from the day I'm released I can work with him, so ...

I: I heard that you have tried to find yourself accommodation around here.

LT: yeah, cause I don't drive that would be a problem so I'd really need to be local so I'm liaising with them through resettlement...

I: so you're moving for your job?

LT: yeah, well not only that but my live, if I go back to Lemington my lifestyles likely to be...

I: ...back around that...

LT: yeah I'd like to say that it won't be but you can't... Even with all the changes that I've made, but I just enjoy this lifestyle better. I didn't realise there was another lifestyle like this. You grow up in sort of, Lemington, Birmingham, Coventry and you just get used to, well that's just your life, and then you come to a little country place, you don't realise that such a small place can be so much fun and so much enjoyment where you can get the same sort of effects off it as you could back there and going out drinking every night.

LT: I mean, if you'd have spoke to me five years ago and said that I could go out and bird watch rather than go out on a Friday night and get drunk, they wouldn't know what to say, I sometimes say it to my mum I can't believe that.

I: So do you think that it was the outwork that made a difference or your whole time at prison?

LT: Outwork. The time in prison was better because there's more on offer at Ashwell, but I think that when I first started the sentence I think when you do a parole sentence, the only thing in your head is getting parole, so you sort of toe the line because you want parole, and I think any body, they'd all say the same thing because they want to get out that year early, because they don't want to go another year in prison, so sort of like, when I first came up, 70% of me was just working to get my parole, then sort of, I'd just been hit with sort of, I don't know it just took over and now it became a bigger part through that to actually change, and I supposed to be 70%prison and 30% here, it sort of switched round to being 70% here, and 30% prison, so it's a vast change.

I: How would you feel if you had to stay back at the resettlement unit and complete tasks there ...

LT: I think if you were genuine enough about being on the outwork, about bettering yourself, I think if you're rushing that much that, there may be alternative motives. If you're that genuine about making that change and enjoying what they can offer you, as opposed to being locked up in your room all day, they've got this! You know tonight I'll probably sit down once I've been to the gym and got back, most nights now I still feel like its an unreal, I think back to what I've been doing at dinner time or one o'clock and I can't believe that I was doing that today, although I'm sat here again. To be honest, you just can't wait for the night times to pass, the weeks just go brilliant but the weekends tend to take forever, cause your inside on the weekend unless you have a town visit, you know but...

I: Do you think there are any disadvantages or improvements that can be made to the outworking?

LT: I don't think so much the pay, because a lot of the places are voluntary places, so don't get any people so pay is not an issue, but I think the problem I've had the most has been the housing side of things, although I've got a lot of people backing me, you feel sort of, like stuck for a little bit, if I hadn't had got that job offer I would have

been quite confused to how I was going to survive, in this area. I felt before I had the job offer, I had like a situation, I wanted to get my parole to start that job, but I couldn't secure my parole so I couldn't get the job, and I couldn't get an address without having a job, and it was a really mad circle. But now through being offered a job, I'm hoping to be able to secure housing, like my mum and dad have offered to help me quite a lot with the money, put down a bond, that I can pay them back at a later date, so everything sort of clipped in together, so basically it's a waiting game for another four weeks, till somebody says you've got your parole. I have four weeks till my answer then a further six weeks after that hopefully so, 11th of August.

I: Any jobs you wouldn't like to do, if you weren't at Rutland Waters?

LT: no, not really, I mean it's hard to say till you've been in that situation, but it depends on your genuine want to do that work, you have to learn that, if your put in that situation and you want to be out of the prison and learning something. Basically when I first came, I was going to do some day keeping – catching birds and killing birds like Magpies, and I weren't very keen on the killing, but then I sort of though, I should kill it, or I'll be in my prison cell all day, so I had to learn it, you just have to learn that skill ,like if you had to work in a kitchen you'd have to learn a skills there so, I think it depends on how genuine you are about not being in the prison.

I: Are there enough people to talk to if problems o drugs or bullying arise?

LT: yeah, Malcolm fantastic. When I first started the outwork with my length of sentence, he said 'I'm really am giving you a big chance here' and luckily touch wood, I think I've proved him, you know, likewise the other lads too I'm not just singing my own praise, they give you a choice and I have sort of, given it back.

LT: yeah, cause there were some people that knackered it all up, but I can't understand, when I first worked here, the person before me actually that lost their job sleeps in the room opposite me, and I used to struggle sometimes to actually go to look him in the face, speak to him,..why did you give it up? I just couldn't for the life of me, you know he'd repeatedly ask me how people were, he obviously enjoyed it, so then you think why, why just...

I: Did he get taken off the scheme?

LT: yeah, not here, at VAR, I think. But I couldn't understand and numerous people have done it as well...

I: Do you think there is a pressure on them?

LT: I think you become complacent, a lot of people do, I mean I've done it myself, you know you get complacent and forget you're a prisoner, and then you have to sit down and take a reality check and think hang on a minute I'm still serving a sentence.

I: So would you have to watch yourself a lot?

LT: erm, I wouldn't say watch yourself, sometimes you can let your attitude run away with you, where you sort of forget that, you know you'll get spoken to by somebody and you, you feel quite angry about the way you've been spoken to, but you remember hang on a minute I'm no different to no body else. Do you know what I mean, it's like you think I'm doing my bit back now, and you can become quite complacent to it, but you just have to sit down and take a reality check or a chat with a mate. Cause me and AC are quite good friends we're always having a laugh and a joke. I mean, I was mates with AC before we started working here; the friendship we've built up you know from working out here, has been a lot stronger.

I: Do you trust it more than other friendships in prison?

LT: yeah, definitely, I tell AC things about anything really, you know, ...

I: Any other improvements?

LT: I think the times could be looked at, if the wing is going to be specifically just for outworkers, you know one of the problems that we are coming across at the moment is the time limits, you know being back at four. With working in agricultural stuff as we do, like four o'clock is just not realistic, when we start hay bailing and the end of the breeding season of the birds some people work, I know we can't work till nine/ten at night, but you know its quite manual work, their quite short of people you know the hay bailing has to be done, if it rains it spoils another week till it dries again. Although there's reflexibility of it, and you g to Malcolm and you say they could really do with me till seven o'clock tomorrow, then there's not a problem with it if you notify them. But I think they need to sort of, the time scale being looked at. And although that might seem unfair to certain people they could consider options of well, if your going to be but till seven, then you don't leave the prison till twelve. So you'll still do the seven hours but your more use to the person that your working for because in some months, like the summer months the latter evenings are more important to breeding sides of things with the birds, whereas the earlier part of the day really isn't that beneficial, really its just sort of, general tiding up, so being able to fit where your needed.

I: it really comes across that you respect this place and want to be helpful and needed

LT: ...it can be quite frustrating when your half way through a job, and then go 'oh I have to go now' half three, quarter too, and it is frustrating. A lot of the building stuff we do, like when we build hides and stuff, its not very often we'll see a job start and finish, we'll start it, we never get a chance to finish it. It can be quite frustrating, cause everyone puts in the work, and the next day your on a different job anyway, that job's been finished, its sort of like three or four weeks before you get back there and you think wow it looks quite good actually, and by that time you've forgotten so much about it that you know...

I: Are you happy with all the risk assessments done?

LT: yeah all the risk assessments are done and your made well aware of, yeah.

I: So it's been a good aid for your time in prison?

LT: yeah definitely, its been a lot more constructive than just being in the prison, I don't think I would have changed, I don't think I'd have done anything different, I think I'd still have been positive enough to want to change but its helped, you know, the actual chance that people have given me, has made me, before I've always been quite negative about people, I've always had a low opinion of people, I've always you know, you don't really matter to me, it doesn't matter if I upset you or I don't, whereas here, the way I feel about people it annoys me if I don't pull my weight or I upset somebody, I feel quite bad for that for quite a while, where as before on the street if I had upset somebody, there was no guilt there, I'd just get up the next day and go about what...I just get drained quite bad, I feel it quite bad, like I said, I never really had to deal with emotions so that has been a good part of it. You do feel quite guilty sometimes if you let people down, you do feel bad about it.

LT: I definitely have a desire to have a live here, without a doubt, yeah a hundred percent yeah.

I: thank you for your help.....

INTERVIW ENDS.

Interview 1: Malcolm Bull

I: Interviewer

B: Malcolm Bull

I: Shall we establish the aims of the unit?

B: Well... the aims of the unit were set up many years also at Ashwell and we had to stop it...

I: right...

B: basically because a big problem in prison is drugs and getting them into prisons, and unfortunately we had a particular group of inmates in at the time pressurising our outworkers to bring things in... and it got to a point where they were meeting them at the placements or people, you know they were arranging for people to meet them, threaten them with violence, and even threatening the families..

I: Wow..

B: so we had to stop everything cause it wasn't fair on the placements. It wasn't fair on the guys that went on the job, so we just stopped it. It was off. Over two years and then we decided, we got a letter from Kathy...asking us if we could help with a volunteer...now then for some reason it landed on my desk, (inaudible) see if you can do something with that, upon that we took very tentative steps so.. trying to eradicate that problem with the drugs and so, we let flow with Kathy for a bit while we got the scheme right, and the we put a couple out on their placements, and we've been very very careful in the selection of prisoners we've taken on.. I've spoken to you earlier...

I: yeah...

B: We really select in who goes out, not only in the offences bit, but who they mix with,

I: Ok so you keep a big eye on the social circle around them...

B: yeah, like the guy interviewed today, I checked with his wing staff to see what his behaviour was like on the wing. If they think they've only got me to fool, then that's quite easy, cause I only see them in flashes around the building, but the wing staff are with them nearly all the time, so I ask the wing staff what they're like, you know, do they mix with the more dubious element of the population, if they do then I don't usually take it much further

I: OK.

B:...err...because there's that risk element involved, you don't want to take too much risk, and from that if he passes that little bit, I'll look at, drawing a sentence plan, it's a probation form er...bring them up on our computer system, if they've got any adjudications, which is when they're put on report in the prison files,

I: Right...

B: then the offence must be disciplined... and they must be six months clear from adjudication before, before we can consider them. We had a particular case two month ago, and a guy had cleared every drill, and he was just about to start working out and he got placed on report the weekend before, so that put him straight out, and all that work had gone to waste and you know he blamed everybody, but I says to him 'No, you chose to do that, its your choice'; which is one of the things we get through to them, you know they have choice, and its down to them how they lead their life, (you can do what you are

say we'll look at it next week,) you know if they choose to mix with people who don't get involved with the drug culture then it is a big step towards, towards leaving the rest of the party out.

I: Yeah...

B: um.... I do get some applications from prisoners, probably about a dozen a week, you know at worst, if I'm walking around the prison they'll, they'll approach me or they'll turn up at the door and ask to see me and talk about out work. Which I do tend to give, give them a few minutes and tell them if I've taken it, and then as of when we'll let them ...I think every month, ..we'll see who we've got lined up. We're actually going to formalise it now, and designate it as 'Stage one -Resettlement'. Which is a structured programme, er, what we're doing is we're turning our 'Langlam unit', which is a 40 bed unit into a resettlement unit. So we'll have 40 places on resettlement, which doesn't mean we'll have forty people working out, what it means is that every body who works out will go through that system, and its, its a system based in trying to give them some responsibility for themselves, and what the criteria is the earliest we can take them is two years from their parole date, or twelve months from their date of release, if they say, doing the four years, means they haven't got a parole date.

Well under four years they serve half of their sentence towards their...er to their EDR's or their CRD is it? Err... their Actual release date, that's their aim. If they're eligible for electronic tagging and if they're doing, say three years nine months, and at the moment its four and a half months tagging so that's...

I: ..a tag four months before...

B: ..Before the CRD, yeah so... they'll get the tag for that, so, we will take them on to resettlement twelve months before the CRD, which will then give them if they're going to get tagging, about five months...

I: before hand...yeah...

B: that they can work with us, five to six months that they can work with us in resettlement and what we would aim to be doing is; before acceptance, all their offence related work should have been done, ...if they're convicted of something like, death through dangerous driving, or hopefully (inaudible) it, then one of the things at resettlement sentence plan is an alcohol learners' course. So anything like that, they would have to have completed all of that, all the offence related work....they will have to complete it now before we will take them on the scheme. What we look for in the scheme in addressing the other side of successful release is we...we want to bring up the basic skills, to a level, Level One of the curriculum. Erm...We might go just about to Level Two, but we want to be bring them to such a level that they can actually go out and get successful employment. So we'll be dealing with all that kind of stuff, hopefully this will be starting before they come to us, and every prisoner that's coming to Ashwell at the moment, they are, everyone is given a test, by induction of education (inaudible) reading pages. We're getting a computerised programme that will be done on more of an individual basis for them, and then from that, we're hoping to do what's called 'Individual Learning Plans.' for every prisoner coming in.

I: Brilliant, so it all comes through a computer..

B: That is the aim, so that everybody comes out, and as part of the sentence plan at the moment we only make you do alcohol awareness, you do enhanced technical skills, anger management, what we want to be doing now is say that you will go to detention and bring

up your, your reading skills.. and that's what we want, aiming to make them more employable...so...When they come up to Stage One resettlement, and they've done the offences related work they should be working on the other side of their skills. They come up, come up working in the work shops and things like that, when they come up to our unit and day...they have a core day based around their week. Now out of the forty, we looked at something like fifteen to twenty of them for the out working community. Erm, another, probably five or six of them will be doing cleaning duties during the week, again where we are going to differ there at the moment, is the prison officer supervises cleaning, we're going to nominate a prisoner 'Duty, Duty Officer' for a week at a time and it will be their responsibility to make sure that everything is cleaned. They will detail the work, the officer will have a walk around, if it's not clean enough he won't get the guy who's done it, he'll get the guy who's in charge. For, for the vast majority of them it's the first time they've ever been given any responsibility like that,

I: Yeah..

B: So it's just another little tester.

I: To see how well they cope getting organised, organise people it is a good skill to have...

B: yeah and how they can negotiate, cause we got people who don't want to do anything, and see how they get round that then.

I: If they have more responsibility, do they have more points...

B: Well, each one coming in, into the wing will be given the planning's at the moment and we'll do a mini sentence plan of while they're in resettlement unit, then they look at what they have to do and each set stage be successful.

I: so they have aims and goals...

B: yeah all the way through, bearing in mind when you might have someone for a year he's not going to be looked at to work for at least six months so he's got six months of time to fill, with, ...err we're looking, our Head of Learning Skills at the moment is trying to put a bid in to get some laptop computers, that we'll have on the unit..

I: to build on computer skills?

B: yeah, and its all based around, not playing games on 'em, but doing projects doing anything from, from basic education to open university.

I: So broad range...

B: yeah that will be, there a couple of tutors, again it's all got to be financed but we're putting bids in. From that, they'll graduate to probably the outside gardens for a few weeks, we let them just be around the prison outside, start tidying it up a little bit, from there, as long as they are ok from there then we'll re-categorise them to D camp (bearing in mind this is a C camp prison), we re categorise them to D camp which is an open prison, From there they will then work in the community, on unpaid work. Which is, we can't do any work which somebody will be paid to do, like an example, erm...one of the local headmistresses asked me if we would paint their school for them, they were having a re-build, she wanted us to paint the school. Now we'd been and worked around the grounds, which is ok, (inaudible) so we did that, she wanted all this re done re painted by our lot, and I found at she had quotes for up to £6000 quid to have this job done, but she gets a budget to do that, and if we'd let our guys do that people outside, the tradesmen who've lost that contract would quite rightly have not been very happy, and if they'd have complained then we would have been in trouble, because we cannot touch ..

I: paid money...

B: which is the idea of your project is to set out a protocol, a few ground rules on what they can do and what they can't do. So, so basically it is for the community sector erm, people who cannot afford to get, they don't have to be ill, if they can prove that they can't get this done, get the job done...

I: How do you risk assess the service inmates?

B: well, at the moment I don't, places like Voluntary Action Rutland, have got health and safety certificate and all the big, er... we go to the falconry centre (inaudible) that's got health and safety, Willowbrook which is a residential home for adults with mental or physical difficulties they've got their own health and safety. So all these places have got their own health and safety, if somebody wants us to come and do a job on an individual basis,

I: like a school...

B: well, schools have got their own health and safety ...its like erm...Kathy asked us to do a house, it was a lady down in Oakham who'd got a four year old daughter who'd got a terminal illness, she was given a new council house but the people who'd lived there before looked like 32 squatters had lived in it. Everywhere was graffitied, damaged, the council had attended a new bathroom downstairs for the child but it all wanted decorating and, and they bought the paint, and our boys went out there and did it ... and that's the kind of thing we're looking to do...

I: Ok so helping out those places that really need it, that's where you can push more potential...

B: yeah. Erm... we painted an old age pensioners flat in Oakham, again cause she couldn't do it,

I: So it is helping the community and involving a lot of the community members to accept what is going on...and make it easier for people to be integrated into the community. How do you feel about the social skills and helping them promote themselves? Is there an assessment form they fill as they go through the work?

B: We see that through the work, but no official (erm) paper work for continual assessment as we go through, you know if we highlighted difficulties then, we, we keep an eye on them, we visit every placement on an irregular basis erm we talk to the placement first and phone them,

I: yeah is that how you keep in touch with the placement...

B: Yeah the ones that started at Stanford today, before, before I go off duty I will ring that place to see how they've got on...

I: a daily check up...

B: We don't do it daily but because its the first day, today, I will check today to see how he got on, and ill make sure, you know, we'll check 'em a couple of times over the first couple of weeks and then its usually once a week that we will either visit them or we'll check by phone. Er just to make sure everything's ok. We do ask the prisoner as well, 'how are they getting on?' you know, have you got any problems, erm...are you enjoying it, how are they treating you? Those kinds of things...

When they go to Voluntary Action Rutland, they don't go as a prisoner volunteer they go as a volunteer, and that's what we ask of most of our places that they treat the guys who go out the same as they'd treat anybody else. Erm...and I think they usually are treated exceptionally well, and they do take to work quite hard we've got, a guy by the, I might

even introduce to him sometime, by the name of LT. He works down at Rutland Nature Reserve, he's been there now about a year...LT a young lad whose twenty five, he's doing his second long term sentence, he's serving six years for quite a serious offence and he's done a previous five years ...

I: So he's spent a lot of time in prison...

B: Yeah..and erm he'll quite, not happily tell you but he, he will quite openly tell you he was a thug, er..baseball bats and in his youth he was a thug. He, he went through everything we'd asked, he'd fulfilled his sentence plan, he'd met all the criteria and he was, he was our first placement down at the nature reserve, because it was at the nature reserve that they were visits when we stopped it, and they were a bit..

I: right ok, so it was a bit wary...

B: ..a bit wary of starting it. Any way it took Lt three days in a week, which was in a month up to five days a week, he's been there twelve months, he's doing an NVQ in he loves his work, his paroles in august and it looks like odds on he's going to get it, he's got a job offer down Rutland water, he was taken out by Mark our Netro bloke, last week going round the local estate agents you know, for rental places because his grandparents are so pleased, the effort that he is making that they are going to give him the deposit..

I: this structure and these aims they are given, they are very good to bring about a new way of thinking ...they've never had that before... well a few may have a few may have not had jobs, but then again they ..

B: yeah...well he's said that as far as he was concerned this was a total new way of life, he didn't know that people who didn't mix in criminal fraternities existed, because he was from inner city Birmingham and...where he lived that was life...violence, crime...erm...when he first started erm at Rutland Water he didn't talk to people because he thought that people was looking at him like he was a convict...

I: Right...so he didn't open up...

B: yeah..he had his own prejudices but he turned around and says slowly by mixing with, he didn't realise that people like that, who lived a normal life or what's is a normal life existed ..again now he's got the opportunity to put this at the back...the thing that should make him a success he's not returning back to his old environment, because that's the difficult stage when people get discharged from prison, if they go straight back to the area that they committed the crime, its more likely that they'll get into it.

I: How do you feel about that?

B: We can give them the tools but, but you can't change somebody that doesn't want to change; you cannot rehabilitate somebody that doesn't want to be rehabilitated. Now I've found, I've been in this 23 year and I find that eventually the majority of the prisoners reach that point being banged up some of them fortunately its in their twenties then again some of them its in their fifties, that they reach a point where they realise that they wasted their life. What happens is, we get hold of these that reach that point and try to give them the tools to work with, we don't ignore the rest we will work with them... but they have to make that...

I: it's a motivation that they can go to work or they go down to basics...

B: yeah... It doesn't matter what the Government comes out with saying we're gonna do this, this this and this, unless the individual wants to do that, you cant make them, and that's reality you can't

I: You do get some positive prisoners that want to work, are there negative?

B: the negative is the ones who come in, I'll give you another for instance, a guy by the name DR who put him on a Princes Trust course, he was our first one on to one of these 12 week courses, they are based on making you learn by yourself and accept responsibilities, DR had a tagging date in early April and the course started in early March, he gave up his tagging so he could do the course and he absconded, yeah well he was about five weeks into the course, he passed his tagging date he'd been extremely successful group leader contacted several times on how good this guy was, they had offered him a job or to get him a job in the area and they were going to take him on as a deputy leader on the courses with a view to care on the group, and he absconded. Again, he's back in prison I got message this morning from Alyestone he's back there...

I: So he's back in prison now, he won't have a chance to go out for a long time...

B: Not if he came back to this cell, if he came here in the next the next two or three years, its too much risk...him doing that jeopardises the chances of other people going out, I mean if he'd have gone out and committed offences, then the publicity that we would have got would have been horrendous, and quite rightly so. The whole lot would have been taken, that's why you have to be careful...

I: .of who goes out...ok so is there anything that you would like to achieve from this project, what you would like to know from the prisoners?

B: Well I'd like to see how many of them genuinely want to work out for the right reasons... and not just because they can get to go out on town visits...but that's ok, but its people like LT who genuinely want to change their lives. See we got a guy at the moment that goes to college doing equine studies, and he's a lorry driver,

I: To use this opportunity to really future themselves...

B: He works at the falconry centre but from there, his future, he's fifty, fifty odd, and he's a lorry driver and he was caught with a million pounds worth of cannabis in the back of his lorry. When he gets eventually released, he's not going back to lorry driving and his son had bought a stud farm, yeah... (I don't know where he got the money for that)

I: laughs

B:.but his son's bought a stud farm, so its M (inaudible) and so, he's now doing an equine studies NVQ so that when he's released he can work with his son, and it then takes him out of getting involved with crime .. M hasn't got...in fairness M didn't have a long criminal history, it was just a serious offence (a millions pounds worth of cannabis) its a serious offence its not playing at it, he freely admits he was greedy, he saw a chance to make even, he tells us its his first time but..er..

I: he has no record...

B: No he hasn't but it's the first time he's been caught. Another Out worker, SM...

I: (Laughs) good name

B: yeah he's a black guy, so no relation but, SM...I'm doing a RELATE course in a fortnight, doing a work shop, and on that course we've got SM and SK...they'll be taking part in the work shop, they have their partners coming in, and it was another area we looked at, these statistics showed that anybody, you know, a man going out of prison, if his relationship breaks down he's got six times more chances of coming back to prison. So what we looked at putting something together with RELATE, and bringing in the partner scheme, where we look at two options one was: To look at the problems you'll face when you get released, to integrate with your partner, but the one I was more in favour of was the longer term prisoners in How to make your relationship survive, which

is important. That went better than the integrating, we found that the short term prisoners on that one, saw it as an all day visit...and wanted to spend it...they are expensive courses, our department in here although it looks nice, has got no funding, absolutely zero.

I: really!

B: yeah, and everything that we want to do, which is (inaudible).

I: This project...

B: What we are looking at we need a pool of bikes, only about 15 bikes, if we have 15 outworkers we need 15 bikes, we've talked to the local dealers, a small one not (inaudible) a small local one in Oakham, we can draw up terms with him where he will supply the bikes and a service programme. I mean I was down there Saturday and ordered 2 bikes, cost £100 each, well £80 but with helmets and ... What I want to look at I want him to do is, draw up a service agreement of how much he would charge us to get the bikes serviced for three years which is probably as long as they'll get, so Its about 20 quid a year to have a service, so your looking at 160, put that with an £80 quid bike every three years ...

I: Oh no, bit much for the funding..?

B: It is when you haven't got any, ...So Kathy's idea would be to put in a breakdown of costs and if somebody is taking one of our out workers, say like the falconry centre, so charge them something like £2 a week for each one, it will then give us the money, for maintenance, then after may be three years buy some more bikes, there's also the protective clothing, for a start so its self fundedagain this would be payable to Voluntary Action Rutland, not to us, cause if it came into the prison we wouldn't see it, it would get swallowed up with the rest of the funds..so if it goes to Kathy they...will keep the maintenance costs, its like we've got somebody who spends a bit of time down in Langham, J, who helps with the kennels ...and we're doing a conservation project down there, that would be the only costing, that would be the full costing, just that, £2 a week. We figure £2 a week is a good thing, its not expensive, which will then make it self funding,

I: Mm, £2 a week is cheap, who is paying for this?

B: The placement,

B... Again, although it is a good service that we provide, it is a, a major headache to try to keep it going, I mean, I was begging practically off Kathy on Friday to direct me to anywhere I could find any..we did buy 4/5 bikes last year, but some of the bikes they're going out on, I mean, they need replacing. ..

I: That's no good if anything happens,

B: To keep us in touch with our team, we are responsible for these guys, so we do need to have this, if you could get that in...

I: If I can say something about the bikes, and a recommendation would be...

B: Bikes and Protective Clothing.

I: In regards to health and safety, does it need to be included for prisoners on placement?

B: yeah...try; try to work it out in unity, that they do all the health and safety course. A lot of them do it when they first come into the prison, so a lot of them could have done it. But to try and get a health and safety course, I mean sometimes it doesn't work so not make it hard and fast, but a recommendation would be they should, not that they must...that they should complete a health and safety course, they might knock somebody back, and its not their fault its not our fault, its not on at the time and we cant get them on

it...

I: Ok, Thank you that is all the questions I have, thank you for the interview I will get in touch with you.

INTERVIEW ENDS.

RB

I: Interview with

R: RB...

I: and do you mind getting taped?

R: No I don't, no...

I: I am going to talk to RB about his time that he spent working for the voluntary action...

R: yeah...

I: If we start from the beginning, how did you hear about being able to work outside from the work that goes on in the prison?

R: I was called up by me personal officer, who also works in resettlement err she's been up for a while, and she asked me how I felt about working out. So I said, well...I was a...a little bit sort of, I didn't really know I said ...'sounds ok ...yeah' erm...and it was all sorted out from, from, from that sort of meeting...

I: Were you in resettlement when it happened or..?

R: yeah... yes I came down...and she just said 'how do you feel?' you know, er 'working', er and I says 'Yeah' and they said 'we think it will do you good,' which it has! ..yeah... they thought it would do me good.

I: How did you feel prior to working, and how long were you here for before going out?

R: well I've been in thirteen and a half months, err but I've been in this prison since October, erm... and I haven't really...you know I've had a few scrapes from time to time, I've been quite on edge, you know,..

I: yeah...

R: throughout, erm... me time here, and erm, they said it would do me confidence good, which I agree, but er it was really good, I enjoyed it.

I: How did you feel about the way people perceived you, or how you would perceive them, as you hadn't worked for a while, and the responsibility?..

R: Yeah I was very nervous, but according to the interview I had with, d'you know Chris...

I: Chris from VAR?

R: Yeah, he come over really well, nice, you know made it sound like something I could do, you know cause I can't really, I didn't want to take on too much, you know, so.. I think, I think () picked the job for me, I was lucky cause I never even gave it a second thought. Like I've just being in education, since I've been here at this prison, and er... I was a bit, a bit worried, you know, how I'd feel, d'you know when going out there. Problems can arise from going out, pe..people can you know, ask you to do something's what your not supposed to do and that, so you've got to be careful...

I: .And did you made sure that people knew that was a problem, and you had enough support?

R: Yes! yes, the...what they've done they got a letter together, what they showed to the Governor, and I got a copy, and it was certain people I could approach like officers, (inaudible), and if I had any problems or concerns I could approach them..

I: These are people that would say 'right we are fine you can.. .'?

R: Yeah...yeah they'd help me through the situation if anybody asked me to bring things in, which...

I: which there...was there a big weight on you to bring things in, a lot of pressure?

R: yeah I'd say that yeah...

I: this is your living space, you had to see these people every day...

R: Yeah! yeah, there's a lot of pressure, there's a lot of pressure, I suppose not just on me, but on all the out workers but erm..

I: It's to weigh out your positive benefits from it...

R: I found the best thing was to stay on me wing, keep, keep I really just used to stay on me wing, er, and stay in me room a lot. That way I wasn't coming out into the main jail, I wouldn't get any problems...you know, so, in a way I suppose erm, you know, I had to give up a far bit, but in return it was worth it. It was nice, you know, I really enjoyed it.

I: So how did you feel when you were out to work, and someone asked you to do this or do that..?

R: yeah, yeah at first I was really nervous err, you know it's quite scary...

I: what made you nervous, talking to the people or doing the job or..?

R: Well I was nervous about doing the job and nervous about the people, I had, sometimes had to come in contact with several people in one room, that was quite scary...and.. um...

I: How did you overcome this?

R: Well, I worked with another lad, so at first I was getting him to talk, but then me confidence seemed to grow and...

I: ..inside you?

R: yeah! because they were really nice to me, the way they treated me was really nice, Kathy was ever so nice, and Chris, all of them really...really nice to me...yeah...THEY REALLY ARE NICE...

I: Was it nice when people said you did a good job, did you get any positive feedback from anyone?

R: yeah, yeah um, yeah cause they always said thank you. And you know it's nice, you know, so I was always a bit worried. It seemed to go well and then when I was finally left, you know, they were really pleased and then if I knew then I'd done alright. Up until then it was always in the back of my mind, you know I wondered if I did alright.

I: So you worried if you were doing things right, and whether it was ok...

R: yeah I worry...

I: Ok how do you feel they used your skills, do you think they grew?

R: yeah...

I: Did they put you in things they knew you were good at?

R: I think they more or less knew what I was good at, sort of, if I couldn't do something then say, yeah, it was ok yeah... cause I worked with another lad called J, he's a nice lad J, he, he sort of does a lot, you know what I did, yeah it was good, yeah. Did a lot of gardening and that cause they got lovely garden, have you been up there?

I: oh yeah the different gardens...

R: yep, yep,

I: Which ones did you do?

R: I did them all, made it really nice yeah,

I: It is nice; a lot of hard work has gone into them...

R: yeah I really enjoyed it you know, so...

I: So you would look forward to getting up and thinking I'm going to be in on time,

R yah,

I: was there any thing preventing you

R: No not really. cause I really looked forward to going the next morning and that, yeah, looked forward to going, even if it was raining,

I: because saw you in that way...

R: yeah... it just felt good you know, cause i was around people who were er, nice to me, you know nice.

I: Do you think any thing could improve, maybe not in just the voluntary centre but maybe here, some sort of assessment where they see your skills gained, you can talk one to one with them...

R: I think they should have a meeting where you're involved. Where you can talk you know, then it puts your mind at rest, you know, you're unsure and you're going the right way... yeah, yeah. I mean they were all very happy with me gardening...

I :(laughs), How long did you work for VAR? Did you do lots of different jobs?

R: yeah...

I: So it was a constant rate of work?

R: yeah I used to just go Mondays to Friday, erm go Monday to Friday from...

I: Make your own way there?

R: Yeah, go on the push bike, off to work with J, erm, cause J is a good like, he gave me confidence you know, cause he's a nice lad, he's a very nice lad, so he gave me confidence and that helped me I don't think, I think it would have been a bit, I don't know how I would have got on if I was on me own, but because I was with J, it was good. J's nice...

I: it was nice to have someone there?

R: yeah...

I: Ok thank you for your help in this project, good luck with the move. Thank you.

R: Thank you.

INTERVIEW ENDS.

Interview with HMP Ashwell volunteer RF

Interviewer: Mandip Panesar (I)

Interviwee (prison outworker) : RF

I: Do you mind being taped through this interview RF?

RF: no

I: Do you enjoy working?

RF: I like nature anyway, so it's given me an opportunity to work with animals all the time. I just, I just enquired about the job on outwork, erm my reason for that really being that I was in a kinda catch 22 situation between, I live at Langlam, that was the thing, I'd moved up to Langlam before that,...

I: before the six months...

RF: yeah, and so I also thought to myself if I go to a D category, well lets be honest, its about being comfortable and feeling comfortable as well, and settled. If you go onto a D category (Tape skip)...

I: Did that actually influence you more onto staying rather than wanting to go onto outworking?

RF: no it was a contributing factor, you know I wouldn't say it was more one than the other, erm but it did play...

I: ...so you did want to work, Why did you choose outworking rather than working inside an open prison?

RF: It probably sounds really stupid, and kinda crawly,

I: crawly?

RF: crawly yeah, erm..... I,I, I feel very guilty for having, ... for what I did, and having been put into prison, and part of that for me, was to exercise the guilt that I felt, and so I thought by working in the community, it would re-pay, really feel towards society. You know, giving that little bit, I mean its not, I know it doesn't wipe the slate clean, but at least I, I feel its gone someway into helping society and repaying my debt rather than just being locked up and .. which, I just though it would be nice, and also erm I thought it would be a good way to help me re-integrate back into society.

I: Did you feel that you needed that, do you feel you miss out on the whole...

RF: See its a difficult one, because like erm I wasn't dealing particularly well with the pressures of life well, on the outside and in prison you get used to a certain way of life, your kinda cocooned in a way, although its, you know can be quite harsh,

I: Did that affect the way you were before you became an outworker about how people would see you?

RF: I obviously thought that, that I'd have this big sticker on me saying, you know criminal, scum, or whatever, and so you know I wanted to allow myself to gradually get back in and feel kinda normal...

(inaudible)

RF: ... and also when your dealing with prisoners its not like dealing with everyday people, I mean, yeah yeah, I mean because there's a whole code of conduct, there's a way you behave, there's things you say, there's the way in which you say it, I mean, its a whole different world. I mean you couldn't (tape skip) ...in as you get towards the end and wanting to go back out and hopefully your parole, (tape skip) and hopefully you start

refamiliarising yourself with how you're supposed to behave and...

I: So you actually recognise the whole thing...

RF: yeah, I mean part of having been in prison is, for me anyway, I, I've seen a psychologist in here and I've gone to CARROTS, because I had a bit of a drink problem,

I: So constantly self focusing as well...

RF: yeah yeah, It's been good for me, I certainly am not the same person I was even six months ago, so I, Its, its made a big difference and working out has, although working out brings its own kinds of pressure. You get a little bit of something, and...

I: ...why?

RF: I think freedom wise, you know, you're given some so therefore you kind of get used to it. When I first went out it was a novelty and then the novelty starts to wear off and you think, well I'd much prefer to be out here, I mean I still think that there's stuff that I will continue to work on anyway even when I'm released. Whilst I'm doing the two, it's, sometimes I resent coming back into prison? (tape skip) I'm working towards my release so its kind of an uncomfortable period for me, someday I feel really good about it and other days I can't wait for it to come.

I: That's a difficult thing...

RF: mmm, it's a transitional thing, it's a journey, you know I knew it would be but obviously for different people is different things, but I mean that's how I personally think about it how somebody else will?

(tape skip)

I: Do you feel stressed as a worker?

RF:The reason, I don't want to be too personal cause its not fair of me and the other individual isn't here to defend himself, its just that working at the owl sanctuary, the boss there is a character, is what I would use, he's an individual who takes a lot of getting used to. Someday he's easier to kind of get on with than, than others. I would normally class myself as quite passive erm apart from having come to prison, before I became a criminal, before I committed all of that, I'd class myself as a fairly passive, easy going, (tape skip)...I think so, so for those people that are employing us out there, making us feel, I think sometimes that we are worthwhile is, is, (tape skip), not, not 'Great!!! Brilliant!!!' all of the time, you know, but occasionally,

I: a thank you or a gesture...

RF: a thank you or some kind of gesture, and some of the other guys, sometimes some people here work out later than normal, they work out till seven and miss the dinner, they say there buy them a can of coke or, whereas where I am, he's very rarely, very rarely grateful, he has a very strange attitude, you don't, perhaps money is tight for him which I kind of understand. I was out late Saturday till seven, and I missed dinner here, he didn't even offer t buy me a bag of chips, it didn't happen. Thos are the kind of little things that I think to myself, well if I was outside, ... no I wouldn't be pissed off, I wouldn't put up with that well, I'd feel more able to raise, say you know look, I don't think...Even if they are your own employer on the outside you are still entitled to an opinion. If them people are nice about it, all the other people here, when they do it they get all that, whereas us up at the owl centre we don't get that kind of... (tape skips) but you know he doesn't pay for it,

I: No, its voluntary work he should be very thankful...

RF: If he didn't have us, I mean sometimes he'll go 'Oh, sometimes I think I'd be better

off without you guys', and I'm thinking to myself, well hang about I don't think you would be.

I: That's not actually friendly or creating good staff morale between the volunteers.

RF: No, no. I mean having said that, he's had a couple of idiots work up there in the past, so I think its hurt,

I: from the prison?

RF: no, that's what I mean from the prison so,

I: you have to take each volunteer as an individual or as an employee.

RF: I mean, take for instance I'm going up for my parole, I know I'm going on a bit, but I'm going up for my parole, and I've been working up there three weeks and, anyway, parole asked me if I would ask him, if he would do some kind of report. S, so I asked him an he said I haven't been working there five weeks so how can he expect me to... and I, and that epitomised for me his attitude towards us, so yes we are,

I: How many volunteers are there from Ashwell?

RF: Two, currently. He's a bit easier going on Max, cause Max has been there like 15 months, Max is... (tape skip)

I: but you feel a bit 'errrm' towards him, How does that make you feel about going work, or do you feel like why should I put so much effort in when its not appreciated?

RF: Some days I feel like that, but other days I kind of go, 'I'll show you, you bugger!'

I: (laughs) 'I'll prove you wrong'.

RF: No, not prove you wrong, but I'll work hard all day long and you know I don't take that many breaks, like Max, the other guy who I work with up there, the other outworker, he says 'you never stop'. And he can't understand why he's...funny specifically with me or, or doesn't seem to cut me much slack. So, so I don't understand that one but, then again I put it down to, one, his character and two, that he was messed about with some other people just before me, so perhaps I'm paying the price for that. Which isn't, is a little bit mean.

I: Could you speak to someone around here (the prison/resettlement) about this problem?

RF: I've spoken to Malcolm. Malcolm says you know try to bear with it, whatever. In a way I find it good exercise for me cause if I can put up with, I can't put up with most things.

I (laughs) Very true, most really bad employers.

RF: But its one of those things that, because I also think to myself well, hang about I'm a normal person, if I'm a normal person, then a normal person wouldn't put up necessarily or make a statement and so therefore, if you do these things I feel like if you do that then make a ... (tape skip) yeah yeah, if you do, so there's a bad report coming about you, and I'm, well I don't want that. So I kind of tend to sit there,

I: Is there a lot of pressure before your parole, to keep your report clean and not cause any waves?

RF: But I wouldn't anyway, it's like...

I: I know, but do you feel like you shouldn't say them because it affects my position I'm at.

RF: yeah, and therefore the resettlement issue of like, rehabilitation, I think that's were it butts up against the reality of life. Whereas in the other jobs...but I think working out is a good thing and I think its a step towards rehabilitation for most people, Cause of the element of trust, erm and being able to cope by yourself.

I: yeah, right, and your own responsibility. What do you think about the confidence and self esteem that has been improved in a few prisoners?

RF: For some people especially if they are weak, will struggle....I think every single outworker has been asked you know, once maybe twice or whatever, and the thing is, I mean wake up this is prison. In one way I was shocked but on the other hand I think I was naive to think that just because they're my friend they aren't not necessarily going to ask me, but I think I'm lucky because I think I'm in a position whereby I don't need that, I think I mean I have err money waiting for me when I get out and so (tape skip)..But I mean I still found it hard to say to people, you know, 'Look! I'm not interested.' Not angry, that's not what you want cause that can cause other problems, it might be volatile but like, normally on the last time I'd go like 'I'm not interested. Don't ask me anymore!' I'll actually say 'Don't' ask me anymore...and make it plain and like I haven't had anybody come back to me, so I think that's kind of worked.

I: It must be quite a pressure living there among these people, and getting pestered, or watched...

RF: You don't necessarily know who you're dealing with, some people in previous or current lives are actually quite nasty people, you know. They're perhaps towards the end of a fairly big sentence, and so therefore they could have been in here for manslaughter, could have been in here for various violent acts, you just don't know.

I: You don't know what members of society are there, did prison open up your eyes to the variety of different people there are in prison?

RF: You look at some people and you just, I can't help it, I find myself looking at people going 'he looks criminal',

I: (Laughs)

RF: ... he definitely looks, even if we weren't in prison, I'd be like, 'Yeah, you're up to no good!' so...but there is some people you look at and you go 'I wonder what he's in here for?' you know they just don't look the type. I mean, cause I've got a fairly rugged face anyway, I know I have, I've played rugby, I've had the odd fight in my life, and whatever, I carry a scar from that for when I was actually attacked by a gang of people, but erm, so therefore to a degree I kind of fit into the looks of a villain, for want of a better word, whereas my attitude when I first came in wasn't necessarily like that, I was kind of quiet. It wasn't till people started to look at me as being a possible target that then you, I was lucky I had a couple of old guys that I got put in with.

I: Can we talk about your vulnerability as a volunteer in the community; do you ever notice yourself feeling in a vulnerable position alongside other members of the community?

RF: We set up the show up the road but no, I don't go anywhere else from (tape skip). But you do have other workers, and volunteers plus you have some people who are doing community service erm...and also members of the public are coming through at all times so, erm ...

(tape side a - ENDS)

I: We can talk about the skills that you feel you have improved upon.

RF: I used to be a caretaker for Tower Hamlets Counsel, and obviously part of that was that you did various little DIY jobs, once upon a time although the job changed while I was there, being semi-skilled to broom pusher basically, cleaner. And it just went down hill cause they took away all the skill levels we used to do you know, a bit of plumbing a

bit of woodwork and you know a bit of this and that,

I: yeah, a handy man...

RF: yeah that's what you were, then they changed it, and so they did that and I tried climbing the runs of responsibility, ended up being responsible for a whole chunk of Bethnal Green, caretaking and shift work and all of that...but then I started to become a bit..ohhh...

I: pressured?

RF: Not pressured, I'll be totally honest with you, I actually do believe in positive discrimination, but what I don't believe in is positive discrimination on the grounds that you have somebody that's not capable of doing the job properly, and you put them in there simply because of the colour of their skin. I think if you have two people who are equal abilities then that's fine, the colour of their skin tips the odds that I have no problem with at all. But when you have somebody that's not able to do the job, because one, they don't have the knowledge and two, basically they are just not capable of doing the job, and they are promoted above you, even though that they've been there for less time. I mean it might sound like I'm being bitter but I don't mind calling, its a horrible word, but I will call a spade a spade, and I have no problem with positive discrimination, never ever did erm but it started to get in such a situation with in Tower Hamlets Counsel, that that's what they were doing. You know I offered to go on a Bengali speaking course, because I thought it would help communication because predominately within Tower Hamlets there's a lot of Bengali's. So again, I didn't have a problem but there wasn't any of that forthcoming where I found people then being put above me and thought.... I kind of understand it, but it does make, leaves a sour taste in your mouth when you have the people that have been put above you, come to you and then they ask you to do stuff, that they are supposed to be doing or they ask you to do stuff because they are not capable of doing it then it wrankles even more and so I, I don't have a problem with the individuals who have been put into place, I have a problem with the people who made those decisions. And in the end they wonder why this service starts to fall down, well because they have put inappropriate people who cannot do the job to do that. Well, that's my little gripe about caretaking but I'm not going back to that. Erm...

I: your skills improved here?

RF: Yeah, I'm not back to doing tools up there because I have to do things like repair the er, we've got loads of little bridges over streams and brooks and stuff that is up there, we have sheds, we have some machinery and the generator up there, and so part of my job is to keep that going as well as cleanliness as well, its kind of like stepping back onto an earlier form of caretaking.

I: Do you feel you have respect for the workplace in which you work?

RF: I do but I'm annoyed that you know that... I feel like its scrap heap challenge where I work, and its a bit like Blue Peter, sticking things together with blue sticky back paper to repair something major, it's just like he doesn't want to pay the money and the place has reached a point where its starting, certain parts of it are starting to fall down, wood rots and its very damp up there during the winter, for a lot of the time so after a while the wood will rot, and start to wear out, you need to replace it, you just can't keep putting band aid over band aid over stuff in order for it to be... British Rail! Which is why it's fallen on its arse, years of neglect of maintenance. They did a 'just enough' job, and sooner or later just enough is not enough. So going back to that, I've had three offers of

work for when I get out, I used to be gym instructor many many years ago, but my friend who stayed there, he's the manager and I got on well with the owner, has offered me a position there on a sales stroke handyman ...work so I've got that, I've got one of my cousins, her husband has his own electrical company and so store person stroke driver stroke er if I want to, he's willing to sent me to college, I'm not sure, I've never liked electricity, its the one thing, give me water, give me gas but electricity - don't like. It all comes from a stupid thing, when I tried stripping a wire with my teeth.

I: What do you think of the choice of courses the prison has to offer?

RF: I wanted to go into plumbing I don't think they have enough of that kind of courses here at the prison, err I know we do a brick work one but I mean, I mean outside they are screaming for trades, extremely, because we are loosing them to, I watching a programme last night, we are loosing to places like Spain, they have got like, 30,000 of our ex pat workers, plumbers, plasterers, bricklayers you know, you name it chippies, they're all in the Costa.

I: yes, I've know a couple of workers that said, right we've had enough and we're setting up in Spain. But there does seem to be a decrease in skilled workers...

RF: So I mean having said that, we are getting Eastern Europeans in and Africans who are coming in and trying to do that kind of thing, whether or not it makes up for it, but within prisons...

I: we can re build upon those...

RF: You know those are skills that people need out there, and pay good money, which is more to the point, because if you get people like in prison, who have only been in prison and sticking the sole of a shoe to...when they get back out, I mean what skills level have they got.

I: Talking about skill levels, how would you feel about a self assessed diary that you could fill in everyday, to say this is what you like, what you learnt, what you felt...and get them signed off,

RF: That's like hard work, that's like, I have an adversity to paperwork, always have done, but I do it begrudgingly cause I know that, I used to save it...

I: ...to build up your report?

RF: no, no I hate that, well I did that for a while thinking I'll leave it, and leave it and leave it, and then suddenly you find yourself with a whole week...so a little bit during a day, but I think within prison, some people might find that its perhaps Big Brother,

I: ...like your being watched and you have to write down notes...

RF: yeh, its catch 22, I know people would like to know what you have been up to,

I: well more of a self assessment to keep track yourself of what skills you have gained...

RF:.. and lets not forget the educational abilities of people within prison, although you have some very very clever people, you also have some very very below average er...so perhaps some kind of...tick box yeah, what do they call it, some kind of multiple choice, how was your day going, was you busy, did you get the targets done, tick, tick, tick, tick wouldn't be too bad, as it don't take too long, and if you've got any further comments.

I: How do you feel about divulging information of your sentence to those around you, do you feel you have to tell people, as you don't have to tell anybody what you did.

RF: No, I'm pretty, to be quite honest with you, initially I was obviously ashamed, err I mean, I'm in for robbery erm which is like er mugging, erm I'm still ashamed and embarrassed by that and in fact previous to that I would have thought somebody who did

that would, well I did, they were scum, you know I thought there's no way on earth that I thought I would ever stoop to the level of trying to rob somebody... and so a part of me initially wanted to keep it within, and then I've reached a point where by I'm like, this is what I did, I've got to be honest about it, this is what I did, you know I still am ashamed at the fact that I did that, but that's what I did. I know people will show, that's how people are once you tell them, they like 'ah mm, he's a mugger', but then again here's worse things in life. I've got to come to terms with it, let's be honest I can't hide it away, I mean part of my problem was, once upon a time I used to hide stuff away and put stressful stuff away and then it builds up, you know what's the point, take me for what I am, if you can't make up your mind after a while about the kind of person that I am, then, then it's your problem, you know I'm being truthful and I'm being...

I: From what I hear about your offence and the things leading up to it, shows and tells me more about the position you felt in, or what was going on in your life for you to make that kind of a decision. It's not something to feel guilty about, well it is, maybe in your own personal morals and beliefs...

RF: You have that anyway, for me it's a pin prick that's always gonna be there, you know.

I: But do you think coming into prison has helped you in certain ways, given you the time even to deal with issues in your life.

RF: Saved my life in a way. The two years leading up to the offence were probably the worst two years in a way of my life, apart from when, I was really young. I mean I've had to come to terms with some stuff that happened to me when I was young, but I never ever thought I would be able to, but, having faced those I've put them aside now, you know when I'm not, Obviously to a degree I'm careful about who I go and say these things to, but having said that part of the problem was that it was a secret. And secrets in themselves have they're own pressures and you know it's not something that you, 'Oh! you know This happened!!!' born again! this is what happened to me when I was young, and whatever. No, that's not that, but on a personal level I'm able to say, you know, this, this happened and... of course I'll always be a little bit angry of that but I'll deal with it, I faced it whereas I didn't before, nobody knew. You know so I've dealt with that and come to terms with that.

I: Do you feel you are more able to socially integrate with the community now?

RF: yeah, it's helped me, because like I said earlier in the interview, you know you get out of the habit of how you interact with people, with because how you interact with people, like prisoners and officers is very different to the way in which you integrate people within society.

I: Anything you think could be improved on the outworking scheme before lots of people are allowed onto it?

RF: I, I, I, think they should look very carefully at who they choose to go out. I think there should be more checks into who they are, and what they've been like in prison. We know they do reports, but also I know it sounds awful, but I think that the unsaid things that the officers do know, cause there is always, Look, what they put on paper, what they have proof of and what they have suspicions of are two different things. You know, and I think if somebody has, I know you could be open to abuse but I also think, by, by offering up that kind of, look let's be honest, do we think that this guy moves sometimes with some of the wrong people, that we know aren't moving right and are up to no good.

In which case it may be shouldn't, they shouldn't put them in that position whereby they might get pressure from their close friends or people that they associate with, in order to do something, and then end up re-offending and actually causing the system to fall down, cause if too many people get caught ...

I: ... it's going to stop.

RF: Its going to stop, erm, I think they should be more aware of where they are sending these people, I think that they should er, I think the prison should have a responsibility to check that the environment that they're going into is a safe and health. Healthy being, both mentally and physically er situation erm I'm biased because I'm there.

I: no, but you've found that...

RF: I've found that, there's some people might, would find where I was,...

I: difficult.

RF: ..difficult. I find it difficult and I find myself fairly capable

I: ...yeah and you find yourself sometimes resenting that person,

RF: yep

I: you seem to see past why, you do that. Some people may react to it, they might take it onboard too much or

RF: I'm sure people who are perhaps not as far gone as I am, 'Shove You Job up Your!!!!' you know what I mean, 'Who do you think you are?! What you want me to do that?! What do you mean it's not finished yet?! you only gave it to me five minutes ago, you haven't got the right equipment!!' You know 'Your not providing this for me, your not providing that, How do you expect me to do a good job?!' So I mean therefore, I think mine is an individual case anyway where I am. I think the other places are perhaps different, but er yeah and a closer monitoring of, on the places that they go. I think visits there to see what's going on.

I: Ah, cause I know there is a few visits and Malcolm phones up for checks.

RF: A few, yeah, but it's not the same as turning up on, on the cusp, and...not so much an inspection, but a wonder around, there's more than one way to keep things on their toes. Perhaps the prisoners wouldn't necessary like being checked up on, but on the other hand it's for their benefit as well.

I: Which they could know, it's to keep an eye on them as well, as your vulnerable.

RF: yeah, make sure liberty's are not been taken, yeah, course we are, we're vulnerable, We're under pressure out there, if they want us to do stuff, We're in a situation if I tell them I don't want to do it, they're taking liberty's with us.

I: You might find pressures that you can't say no, or that you have to be a 'good' prison worker.

RF: yep, perhaps maybe a lot of it tends to be handy man stuff and physical labour so I kind of understand that, but perhaps other kinds of placement, ...admin, because some people are not necessarily just into physical skilled, that way, but if somebody can do office work, even junior office work - photocopying, whatever. It's a different kind of skill, but some people that might suit. You know, other kinds of skills might be sales, you know I know it means trusting people with perhaps money, but I'm sure there are placement within those kinds of situation where your monitored anyway, and to a degree, that's where the element of trust comes in and about whether or not they trust you.

I: Thank you very much.

RF: The other thing being that I think people who run the scheme should also be people

who are.... in full belief of, of what they are doing in so much that this is about rehabilitation, this is about re introducing people into society to give them a chance. Erm we know that there is a big failure rate but, you still need people who have a positive attitude towards what they are doing and what they are offering here, and not...

I: So a nice supportive group who...

RF: ...who realise that it's not about them so much, it's about the prisoners, because like, at the end of the day they don't really want to send people out there who are going to fail, because of lack of support and lack of understanding, you know. I think...

I: At the moment they chose really, really well, because they haven't got a lot of out workers going at the moment...

RF: There's not so many people here, I think the pressure to, and, and perhaps slipping in between the cracks might happen more often the more people they get. Although again, it's important that you have the right staff in place to monitor, and to give support and actually believe, I'm not just saying, but ACTUALLY BELIEVE in rehabilitation, there's a big difference.

I: OK.

RF: OK,

I: Thank you that was brilliant.

END OF INTERVIEW.