

City Bridge Trust – Monitoring Visit Report

Organisation: Clean Break Theatre	Grant ref: 9678 (Clare Thomas)	Programme area: 06. Positive Transitions to Independent Living\ (f) Resettlement of ex-offenders leaving custody
Amount, date and purpose of grant: 18/02/2010: £114,000 over three years (£37,000, £38,000, £39,000) towards the costs of a Student Support Manager providing advice and support to women ex-offenders in London.		
Visiting Grants Officer: Tim Wilson	Date of meeting: 30 April 2012	
Met with: Lucy Perman (Executive Director), Jacqueline Stewart (Assistant Head of Education), and Lillian Ashford (Development Manager)		
<p>1. Introduction to the organisation: Clean Break was established in 1979 by two women in prison in Yorkshire who wanted to use theatre to bring the stories of female offenders to a wider audience. After they left prison the theatre work continued, and eighteen years ago Clean Break established an educational programme.</p> <p>Today, the charity provides theatre-based education and training for women offenders, ex-offenders and those at risk of offending. Activities are designed to help students develop the personal and professional skills that will lead to education and employment. Clean Break's plays dramatise women's experience of crime and punishment, and have won awards.</p>		
<p>2. The project funded: City Bridge Trust awarded funds towards the costs of a Student Support Manager (subsequently re-titled <i>Assistant Head of Education</i>) providing advice and support to women ex-offenders in London.</p> <p>The proposal to the Trust was based on a target support to 80-100 women each year.</p> <p>The Trust-funded post-holder (who took part in this monitoring visit) works as part of the Student Support Services towards four objectives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fully assess each new student to identify learning needs and personal support requirements 2. Ensure all students have personal learning plans, and that achievement against these plans is monitored 3. Ensure support services meet student needs through user-involvement and structured monitoring 4. Help students settle in community and break cycle of offending <p>The last monitoring report received from Clean Break was in June 2011 and was rated 'good'. Audited accounts for the first year of work show the grant funding properly identified and the Trust acknowledged as a funder.</p>		

3. Work delivered to date:

In the first year of grant Clean Break supported 112 students, 84% of whom had either no or very low levels of academic qualification. The process starts with a first assessment done either in prison (HMP Holloway) or at the Clean Break office. This lasts for an hour and is intended to assess current needs, educational and personal history. Full disclosure of offending and substance misuse is expected. There is then a hiatus before a second, and longer, assessment with a Student Support Worker to discuss any areas that might have been flagged at the first stage. The charity asks for a referral form from at least two professionals (such as the client's GP and/or Key Worker), and then produces an Individual Learning Plan. Although it is unusual for Clean Break to turn prospective clients away, they will do so if there is genuine concern about a lack of disclosure. The number of clients supported is an increase on previous years and is above target.

4. Difference made:

Although all clients are aiming to increase their educational attainment and develop improved employment skills, Clean Break's approach is tailored to the individual. The charity has worked to develop its outcomes assessment method, and has participated in a study by New Philanthropy Capital and Arts Alliance on the cost benefit of arts and criminal justice work.

80% of the 112 students who took part in the programme completed their courses. All of the students reported that the courses were good, very good or excellent, and the charity provided a few quotes from clients to illustrate this.

Clean Break considers how to address breaking offending cycles and achieve settled living from first assessment. Student Support holds monitoring reviews throughout the year and run Moving On days. Clean Break report that many clients are anxious about moving on. The charity can make specialist referrals, such as to mental health organisations, where appropriate. Whilst Clean Break attempts to do follow-up monitoring with former clients, response rates are disappointing and so longer-term outcomes are harder to assess.

5. Concluding comments:

Clean Break has developed a flexible delivery model, tailoring work to the needs of individual students. Client satisfaction is high, and there is growing demand for the charity's services. It is not easy for the charity to maintain contact with ex-students, and so outcome evidence could be stronger. The charity would like to involve more of its alumni in helping current clients make a positive transition to independent living.

At a time of tight funding when many charities are cutting their services back, it was good to learn that Clean Break has just completed a three-year business plan outlining a programme of planned growth. The charity has just had its funding from London Borough of Camden increased, but overall, and to improve its stability, Clean Break is looking to reduce its reliance on statutory funding and diversify its income streams to Trusts, Foundations and Corporate sources.

The charity's work has been subject to a City Bridge Trust-funded film by Media Trust, and the Clean Break representatives who took part in this visit were very positive about the film.