

14.10.2021 VOLPRIS Study Visit:

Future of Volunteering in Prison Activity Results

In your group, sum up what your ideal future looks like for volunteering in prison...

...In the Community

- We ask for prisoners' input into volunteering service design and delivery
- Prison becomes part of the community more, and I know former prisoners just as my neighbours.
- My neighbours understand the need to embrace former prisoners into the community once they are released.
- My community knows what's going on 'inside' the prison
- Increased volunteering in prison has led to reduced fear and prejudice of people on release and increased acceptance of their difficulties post release.
- My community know the difficulties of the families of prisoners in the local prison, and makes an effort to involve the parent/ kids/ partners of prisoners.
- There is acceptance that people make mistakes and that the families and kids should not additionally suffer/ be blamed.
- There is no stereotyping of prisoners, just open-minded involvement and love ☺
- There is a readiness to employ ex-offenders.
- Volunteering competencies are recognized and there are job opportunities which arise in the community from volunteering in prison (as a former prisoner or not).
- There is a one-stop information point (e.g. a website) which connects open minded employers with roles for volunteers from the community or former prisoners.

...For staff and governors in prisons

- Staff and governors ask 'how can I help?' with volunteers.
- There is space and acceptance for mutual learning within and between staff and volunteers: Team work is encouraged by the governor.
- There is a training center where staff and volunteers/ voluntary organisations can organize mutual training sessions.
- There is a 'career path' for hiring and retaining volunteers.
- There is academic involvement so that implementation/ evaluation etc. of volunteer involvement can be professionalized and shared.
- The multi-agency approach is embraced from top to bottom and fully implemented.
- There is some budget set aside to facilitate the recruitment and retention of volunteers.
- Staff are all trained to work with volunteers.
- Coordination staff are well paid and respected.
- There is a lot of room in the timetable for volunteers to play sports with prisoners, organize theatre, have meetings with families etc.

...For prisoners, to support their rehabilitation

- With increased volunteering comes a sense of belonging to a community: there is more love and acceptance ☺
- The pathway to rehabilitation becomes more 'owned' by the prisoner: there is free and individualized choice of what they do and how they do it.
- There is a therapeutic community approach.
- The collaboration between volunteers and inmates leads to greater peer support between prisoners.

- You hear lots of positive testimonials about when volunteering has worked in prisons – from the point of view of prisoners, from volunteers and from prison staff.
- There are training programmes for prisoners to volunteer
- There are proper debriefing sessions when prisoners have been engaging with volunteers, or when they have been volunteering themselves.
- Prisoners and the prison are open to new ideas for volunteering, such as online and multi-media tools.