

GIVE A BOOK

www.giveabook.org.uk

Registered charity no 1149664
2-114 Holland Park Avenue, London
W11 4UA

Evaluating reading groups in prison

About Prison Reading Groups and Give a Book

Prison Reading Groups (PRG) www.prisonreadinggroups.org.uk is part of Give a Book, a registered charity established to provide books and promote the pleasure of reading in the hardest places. Our work is primarily with prisoners and their families, and with children and young people outside, including schools, pupil referral units and secure accommodation and training centres.

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The opportunity:

This is a great opportunity to take a closer look at what books can do behind bars. Prison Reading Groups (PRG) sets up, funds, and supports informal reading groups in over 50 prisons nationwide. The aim is to build reading confidence and stamina, and to foster the connections that books bring with other people, with the world outside, and with ourselves. The emphasis in the groups is on sociability and reading for pleasure. Your responsibilities during the placement will be:

- to conduct a literature review of the benefits of reading for pleasure
- to plan and co-run focus groups to explore their perceptions of the pleasures and benefits of their groups for:
 - prison reading group facilitators (librarians and volunteers)
 - prisoner participants
- to co-create a survey around these issues, to be distributed to a larger sample of facilitators and prisoner participants.

Give A Book are keen to distinguish between the existing literature on literacy difficulties in the prison population where much of the current established research exists, and the benefits that an appreciation of literature can generate within those who are serving custodial sentences. One interesting outcome of the research could be the demonstration of a link between exposure to literature and positive rehabilitative outcomes.

This is envisaged as a six-month 0.5FTE (2.5 days per week) placement – but there is flexibility around this for the right candidate.

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What skills you'll bring:

- Research skills to conduct a thorough literature review with succinct and relevant summary annotation.
- Interest in books and reading across a broad range of genres.
- Interest in criminal justice issues
- Ability to engage and manage diverse groups of people.

What you'll gain:

- First-hand experience of the possibilities and challenges of reading-related initiatives in prison
- A greater understanding of the role of pleasure in becoming a reader.
- A greater understanding of how books and reading can connect prisoners and contribute to rehabilitation.
- Experience of conducting focus groups and surveys and their role in evaluation

Informal enquiries can be directed to Ali Palmer at Give a Book: alison@giveabook.org.uk

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