

IMPACT REPORT 2020-21  
FINDING RHYTHMS

# CHANGING LIVES THROUGH MUSIC

Creating Songs Together & Improving Lives



## WORDS FROM FOUNDER: ROBIN HARRIS

In 2012, Finding Rhythms began the extraordinary journey of sending professional musicians into the UK prison system with the aim to provide transformative dynamic music making workshops. The outcomes have always been to produce high quality recordings of original ideas and to draw learners through a process of intense self-reflection and collaboration. For so many, this musical creative process is often the first time they get the opportunity to achieve goals and attain qualifications which are meaningful and they themselves value. We are now faced with new challenges and it's essential that our courses reflect the growing needs of individuals who desire to move away from offending and/or be better prepared for employment. Ultimately courses with amazing hooks and a focus on creative thinking like ours, can help change people's lives for the better.



### Staff:

**Creative Director** – Robin Harris

**Business Director** – Dami Solebo

**Operations Manager** – Louisa Austin

### Trustees:

**Chair** – Jonty Kinsella

**Treasurer** – David Jenkins

John Reiss

Mykaell Riley

Kieron Tilley

Mike Conway

Robin Harris



## ABOUT FINDING RHYTHMS

We deliver collaborative music-making courses for those at risk of (re)offending either within the prison service or in the community. Our creative courses utilise music industry professionals and coaches, empowering disadvantaged individuals to improve their lives. Our distinctive approach gives beneficiaries confidence, self-belief and soft skills preparing them for a better future in society and supporting desistance. Since 2012, we have worked with 25 UK prisons in addition to building vital partnerships with like-minded charities, schools and alternative provisions and probation services. We have empowered learners to create over 600 songs and 50 albums of original music and 300 participants have achieved qualifications.

Our interventions are predominantly targeted at young people and young adults at critical points in their lives who need a high quality and person-centred intervention. We generate strong outcomes by giving learners opportunities to take ownership in the creative process. Our work has a preventative focus, which includes partnerships with alternative provisions, homeless shelters and community groups, and a rehabilitative focus which predominantly involves partnerships with prisons. Our aim is to support these organisations in their efforts to help individuals on their journey towards personal development and healthier choices. We do this by creating light bulb moments, empowering individuals to view themselves more positively.

## IMPACT OF COVID ON ACTIVITY

The Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the charitable sector, and Finding Rhythms has not been exempt. The Prison Estate has been closed to external organisations since March 2020, and this had a profound effect on our delivery model, which has historically focused on supporting prisoners. Our response to this was to:

- 1) Expand our prevention focused activities, building relationships with organisations supporting young people at risk of offending (e.g. alternative provisions)
- 2) Work more closely with community organisations and charities providing Through the Gate services for ex-prisoners.
- 3) Explore alternatives to in person delivery.



Prison estate restrictions had an adverse effect upon our income generation, as we were not been able to secure commissions from this source. However, we earned fees from schools, community organisations and charities. Moreover, we received significant funds from Trusts and Foundations, including two large contributions from new funders. As a result, our income for the 2020-21 financial year increased from the previous 12 month period.



## PARTNERSHIPS

Finding Rhythms made a concerted effort to build partnerships with community organisations supporting young people and young adults at risk, in the following areas.

- 1) Rehabilitation and Resettlement – Supporting organisations providing key services to ex-prisoners.
- 2) Homeless Shelters – Working with organisations tasked with helping residents move towards independent living.
- 3) Schools and Alternative Provisions – Providing a key engagement tool for young people at risk of exclusion.
- 4) Community Groups/Youth Charities – Providing a key service for organisations offering extra-curricular activities to young people.

A key part of partnering with community organisations has been a greater emphasis on working collaboratively with senior leadership teams and ensuring our practices and communications reflect the needs of our beneficiaries to ensure that our services are meaningful and designed with the user in mind.

## IMPACT IN NUMBERS

10 Musicians and producers engaged in projects

78 People participated in our intensive programmes

11 Projects delivered, including programmes with 6 new partners

2 Former beneficiaries took up roles in the organisation as ambassadors

2 Former beneficiaries took up roles supporting our delivery and recruitment processes



**95% of participants said the project helped them feel more positive and optimistic.**

**89% said the course helped them to work with other people.**

**88% of participants said that they had improved skills to deal with problems.**



## SYSTEM DEVELOPMENTS

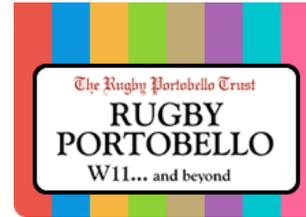
At the start of the pandemic, the Board decided that the organisation should use the lockdown period as an opportunity to improve the benefit to and impact on our participants. As a result, we carried out the following.

- 1) A Prince's Trust qualification was incorporated in the delivery model and utilised as a foundation for a new workbook assessing the development of participants. We successfully delivered our first project with Only Connect where 6 participants achieved a Level 1 qualification.
- 2) We developed a new training model, focusing on equipping practitioners with the competencies and tools to offer more holistic support to learners focusing on awareness, reflection and greater personal accountability.

Our new guidebook was designed to crystallise the delivery approach utilised in our programmes and use this as a guide for practitioners to deliver courses both in person and on online. Our long term ambition is to utilise video technology to offer personalised 1-2-1 engagement to individual prisoners. During the year, we did the following to further this ambition.

- 1) Piloted personalised remote delivery in schools and in community organisations supporting young people at risk of offending. This allowed us to test the efficacy of this form of engagement and address any technology issues.
- 2) Worked in close partnership with Unilink, a technology provider in prisons to explore the viability of trialling a pilot in UK prisons.
- 3) Presented at the International Corrections and Prisons Association about the potential for remote engagement.

We were fortunate enough to work with a range of voluntary, statutory and community organisations across the South East. Our aim is to build upon these partnerships, working more closely with senior leadership teams and co-producing programmes.



The Finding Rhythms programme had a performance element which really got our boys writing lyrics talking about their experiences, environmental impacts and influences. Our team was then able to use this as a foundation for some really tough conversations. We didn't think this would happen, but I'm really happy that this unique programme helped us form a more effective support network.

Project Turnover

“Having programmes like Finding Rhythms helps a young person stay off the streets, and gives them an opportunity to master their talents”  
Rugby Portobello Trust

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## HOW CAN YOU FIND US?

If you would like to get in contact with Finding Rhythms or find out more about our work, you can do so through the following links.



If you would like to listen to our rich catalogue of music, you can do this at [FindingRhythms.Bandcamp.com](https://www.findingrhythms.bandcamp.com)



If you would like to see our updates on Instagram, you can do this at [@findingrhythms](https://www.instagram.com/findingrhythms)



If you would like to see our updates on Twitter, you can do this at [@findingrhythms](https://twitter.com/findingrhythms)



If you would like to listen to our podcast series, you can search **Finding Rhythms (Presenter Robin Harris)** on Spotify

You can get in touch with the team by emailing us at [info@finding-rhythms.co.uk](mailto:info@finding-rhythms.co.uk)

Finding Rhythms is a CIO registered in England and Wales, with charity number 1151872

