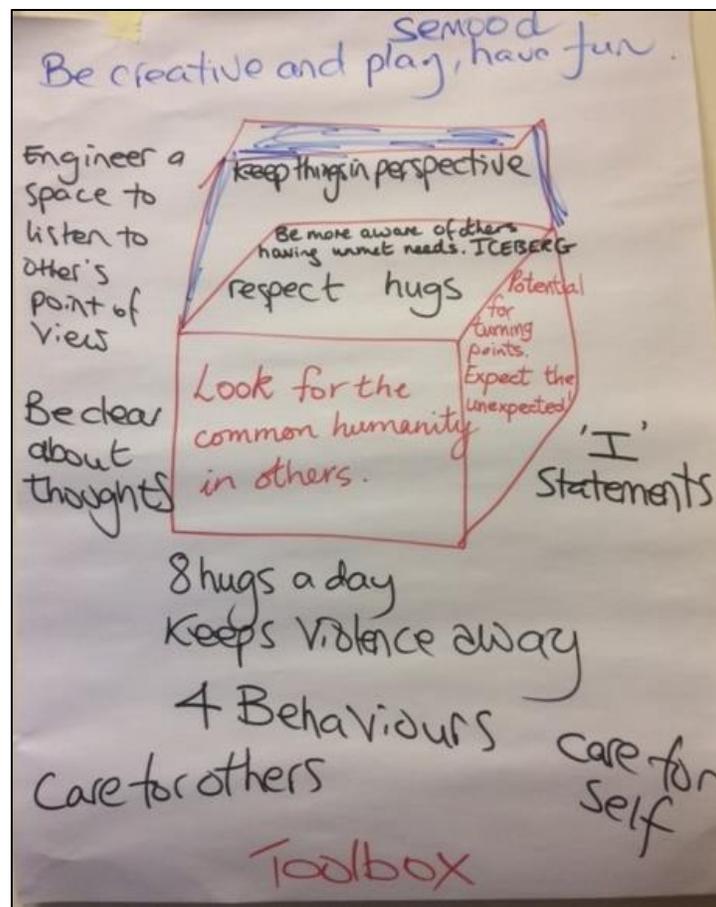




Alternatives to Violence Project



Annual Review 2018 – 19



Statements from our Patrons

I have been the Patron of the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) since 2009.

Nine years later I continue to be an enthusiastic supporter of its work. Since 2009 the world seems to have become both more violent and more tolerant of violence. In these circumstances the work done by AVP has even more importance.

It is particularly good to see that AVP is working so actively in prisons. Prisons in Scotland are hosting workshops and interventions for prisoners in England are also being provided through our correspondence course, Facing up to Conflict.

I commend all those who work with AVP for what they doing, I admire the work AVP does in many parts of the country and I hope this report will be widely read.



Baroness Vivien Stern, Crossbench Peer, House of Lords

Prison experience is dominated by Fear. Through the deprivations prisoners suffer as a result of the loss of their freedom and the nature of the culture of many prisons, the experience is frightening. In order to survive people have to adapt to the slow trauma of the setting. The way to overcome Fear is by Trust. Developing trust in prison is difficult but there are opportunities and regime elements that are designed to help. Clearly AVP provides a means whereby people can learn about managing fear through developing trust and reinforcing resilience



Tim Newell, Former Governor of Grendon and Spring Hill prisons, restorative justice practitioner, consultant and author

About Alternatives to Violence Project

The Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) was first developed in a prison setting in the US in the 1970s. The programme came to Britain in 1989 and AVP was registered as a charity in 1997. Over time it has grown and is now an international movement, with independent branches in approximately 70 countries across the globe, AVP Britain being one of these. AVP Britain is a national charity, committed to working towards a nonviolent society.

AVP aims to support participants to gain the necessary awareness and skills to handle conflict better and build better relationships. This is done through interactive workshops which combine experiential learning and self-awareness with the practical development of skills in conflict management

AVP beneficiaries include people of all genders and ages, from multiple cultural and linguistic backgrounds and from across the class spectrum. They include prisoners, on short and long sentences for a range of crimes related to violence, men denied access to their children, people interested in handling anger in constructive ways, survivors of domestic violence, staff in the front line customer service and caring professions who want to learn skills to enable them to defuse potentially violent situations.

AVP workshops are open to all adults who wish to improve how they deal with strong feelings and conflict. However, priority is given to people whose lives have been affected by abuse and violence including;

- People in the criminal justice system, at risk of offending or ex-offenders;
- People who are affected by domestic abuse
- People who are affected by violence or abuse which undermines their mental health.

Workshops in handling conflict are delivered by teams of trained volunteer facilitators over a minimum of 15 hours. Taster sessions are also offered. Using exercises, discussion, games and role-play participants explore five core areas for handling conflict and building healthier relationships:

- Increased self esteem and self awareness
- Improved communication skills, especially listening and assertiveness
- Greater understanding of self and others
- Enhanced skills for handling conflict in the moment and solving problems in relationships

Crucial to the success of the workshops is the way that trust is established amongst participants and facilitators. Positive relationships are key to learning and the acceptance and validation of participants' experience is an important means of achieving this.

The Need for AVP

The vision of Alternatives to Violence Project is a nonviolent society. Our mission is to support people to handle conflict constructively and to build better relationships.

Recent Statistics show the magnitude of the problem we face in the UK. These statistics illustrate some of the tensions in UK society, so that interventions such as AVP which support people in dealing with conflict constructively are increasingly necessary. Some of these are quoted below.

¹The context in which AVP now operates is one where anger, hate and violent crime are on the rise in the UK. For example, The Office for National Statistics (ONS) revealed knife crime in the year to September 2018 rose by 8% to 39,818 offences with 29 out of 43 police forces reporting an increase.

²Domestic abuse is widespread. In the year ending March 2018, an estimated 7.9% of women (1.3 million) and 4.2% of men (695,000) experienced domestic abuse within the last twelve months.

³A report published by HM Probation Service in June 2019, stated that: "Reducing prison violence is a priority for HM Prison & Probation Service (HMPPS) and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). What we know works to help reduce violence in prison is; improving the physical environment of prisons, setting and adhering to standards; expanding prisoner activities and intervention programmes and staff training initiatives"

Although AVP workshops are never a panacea, they can support people in developing the self-awareness, knowledge and skills to help them understand the roots of violence and the way they respond to conflict. Based on this understanding, participants can practise new skills and behaviours which can break the cycle of violence and lead to more positive outcomes.

"I think the course has been useful and given me insight into situations and how to overcome them in different ways to how I have previously fixed them. Also I have a better understanding of other people's views and day-to-day feelings." AVP workshop participant

Manchester Jan 2019

¹ The Telegraph Newspaper January 2019

² Domestic abuse: findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales: year ending March 2018 Office for National Statistics.

³ HM Probation Service : [Violence-reduction-in-prison](#)

Workshops and Courses 2018- 2019

Between April 2018 and March 2019 (the period of this review) an estimated 45 workshops have been run across England, Scotland and Wales, with over 400 participants from diverse backgrounds. Of this number 36 were community workshops which were held in a range of venues across three of our six regions.

There were nine workshops in prisons in Scotland and Wales. 'Facing up to Conflict' (FUTC), the correspondence course which brings a version of the AVP workshop to prisons, supported 470 prisoners to complete the course. Altogether 719 prisoners from 73 prisons across England, Scotland and Wales enrolled on the course.

"It made me look at myself and to think that I need to behave differently. The hardest part is putting it into action and making the change."

*"The course really made me think in great detail about my life and the areas I need to explore more." **FUTC February 2019***

In addition, 20 facilitators were trained during the year. A new 'fast-track' approach to facilitator training was piloted in South Wales. There is a need for more lead facilitators in all regions.

Some Developments in the Regions

AVP Britain is currently divided into 6 semi-autonomous regions, with a National office in London, and a Board of Trustees providing an overall structure and support to the regions. The aim of each region is to deliver a programme of workshops in the community and / or in prisons arranged by Regional Committees led by a Regional Co-ordinator. Each region also arranges publicity, local fundraising and other activities. In practice there are currently 5 active regions in AVP Britain: in the North West, London, Scotland, Wales and the South West.

The South West: FUTC Assessors

The South West has recruited new assessors for FUTC with the idea of starting a community programme. However, it has not been possible to develop FUTC in the community due to lack of resources. In the meantime the assessors have become involved in the FUTC prison work, which they are enjoying.

The North West: Working with Social Services, CAFCASS (Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service) and with Solicitors

Over the last ten years AVP North West has established and cultivated good working relationships with social service staff across the region, who regard AVP as an effective means of supporting their clients to reunite with their families, from whom they have been separated because of difficult behaviours. The same applies to a limited number of CAFCASS staff, and a few solicitors. However there is a constant need to remind these professionals that they cannot insist on their clients coming on AVP courses, as attendance is voluntary.

This means that on every course there are a few people who come resentfully because they have been "sent by the Social". Every course is now run with an explanation that attendance is voluntary, and participants are given the option to go home should they not wish to stay. Up to now no one has taken up this offer, and by the end of course they are usually pleased that they'd stayed.

The downside of this is that the majority of attendees are youngish men, with one, two or no women participating in courses. Discussions are ongoing with two agencies which have suggested running courses in the middle of the week during school hours to attract more women. If this is to be developed the North West will need to recruit more women facilitators who are free during the day.

London and the South East: Women's Workshop

AVP London ran their first women-only workshop in July 2018. Nine participants started. For various reasons, including tiredness and illness, only six returned on the second day. The participants came from varied backgrounds, although several had experience of domestic abuse. The agenda was tailored to the needs of the participants, and the interactive exercises and pair working were particularly appreciated. Some of the participants reported profound learning and insights over the course of the weekend. One participant commented on the advantage of attending a women-only workshop, as she felt that women were more open, and shared more of their personal experiences.

Participants' feedback included:

'I was expecting something different, and I got something better.'

'I was so scared, but I'm happy that I'm here.'

'I'm excited. I'm learning so much.'

'I can't wait to go and practise this.'

'I've realised that I've got a very aggressive style of communication, and I'm going to work on it.'

South Wales: Fast Track Training for Trainers

In South Wales, 7 participants enrolled on a 'fast-track' training programme, developed under a National Lottery Awards for All Wales grant. Its aim was to 'recruit, train and support volunteer workshop facilitators from a range of marginalised communities.' 5 participants completed their training in January 2019 and an awards ceremony was held in a Cardiff Community Centre on 9th February.

All participants had undergone a Level 1, level 2 and T4F workshop prior to signing up to the Fast-track programme.

The aim of this initiative was to provide a more accessible training and mentoring for newly qualified facilitators, so that they had experience of thinking through, preparing for and delivering exercises over a period of 6 months. A tailored series of workshops was developed, to take participants through facilitating the essential areas of an AVP workshop, finishing with a full day of role play training.

Positive elements of this model of training were that it provided support for participants over a longer period of time. It was a flexible 'mix and match' approach, so that apprentices had opportunities to facilitate with experienced facilitators during the programme. A facilitators log was developed so that participants could track their progress and reflections. The group who took part in the sessions over 6 months developed a real team ethos and very deep connections, which helped them to stay on board. There is now a more diverse facilitator team in South Wales, including women from ethnic minorities.

Feedbacks from the participants included:

"Accessible and flexible to my needs"

"I have enjoyed the experience of AVP as a whole – the people, the sessions, the facilitators, the facilitation."

"I found AVP massively helpful. I have a greater understanding of myself and others and also understand how situations can arise and how I can handle myself in certain situations. I would like to thank the facilitators for helping and sharing about subjects which concerned me and which gave me so much understanding of how others and myself cope. Thank you. "

Manchester Jan 2019

North Wales: HMP Berwyn Wrexham

Close working relationships with the psychology and chaplaincy departments have been essential to get AVP established within the prison. Six workshops have been completed to date with a further two planned in the Autumn 2019.

The psychology department:

- Ensure the courses are advertised in various ways throughout the prison
- Identify participants and keep a waiting list
- Are planning to evaluate the impact on participants to enable the prison to decide whether to continue to commission AVP
- Meet with AVP quarterly to plan a way forward
- Enter information on to the electronic NOMIS system to ensure details about the course attended are available for all to see

The Chaplaincy:

- Promoted the value of AVP to the prison initially
- Host the course within their department

The workshops, initially available to one wing of the prison only, are now open to the whole prison. Holding one course with prison mentors was a great success – the mentors continuing to promote the course by word of mouth. There are now an increasing number of prisoners saying that they wish to engage on AVP workshops.

A taster session is always run in the prison the week before the workshop, to ensure the participants have an understanding about what they are agreeing to do. At the request of participants, as well as the certificate of completion a general testimonial is also provided. This is entered on the electronic system, and is provided as a paper copy also.

AVP North Wales expressed the following concern, “We are aware that our relationship with the prison, which is very positive, is reliant upon two members of staff only – one very enthusiastic psychologist and the chaplaincy manager. This leaves us somewhat exposed if either of them leave the prison.”

National Gathering:

AVP Britain’s National Gathering is an important opportunity for volunteers from across the country to come together, to network and to share information and skills. A successful Gathering was held in Wrexham, North Wales in November 2018. The feedback from participants was positive. Attendance could have been higher, and there may be a need to consider how we best provide ongoing learning and training experiences for the AVP community moving forward.

Trustees' Report 2018- 19:

April 2018 – March 2019 has not been without its challenges for AVP Britain. Bearing in mind the need to get AVP Britain to a more sustainable place in terms of structures, funding and personnel, Trustees have concentrated on governance, fundraising and communications. We have however found the current fundraising climate increasingly challenging and as of March 2019 none of the larger fundraising bids had been successful. Trustees are grateful to the Wales Region for enabling 6 months of a Lloyds Bank Foundation grant to be transferred to AVP Britain. This has provided us with enough financial capacity to engage another Development Officer and to access free support from professional business consultants. As the new Development Officer didn't take up post until 1st May 2019, work undertaken by her does not fall within the timescales of this report.

With the help of our Development Officer funded by the Tudor Trust we were able to update all our policies (essential for funding bids), improve internal communications systems, and review the structure of the log-in section of our website. We are also implementing new evaluation systems to consistently collect and analyse service delivery data. This is providing vital information to shape future delivery and to describe the impact of our services.

An article in 'The Friend' (The national magazine for Quakers in Britain) celebrating our 21st anniversary in Britain provided some welcome external publicity and brought in additional donations. A new fundraising leaflet was also drafted for external use. We were able to ratify two new Trustees during the year and co-opt one other.

Whilst progress has been made, significant challenges remain. There is a need for central staffing and Trustees are stretched. We are aware that there has been an overall reduction in the number of workshops delivered in this reporting period and that some Regions are challenged. At the same time there are encouraging signs of growth and creativity in some regions, and this is reflected in the Regional Reports (pages 4 - 7)

Highlights of our work in 2018 – 19:

- Our internal contacts database was updated in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Our internal newsletter has been revived, thanks to volunteers
- Our evaluation system has been revised, improved and a system set up to ensure that evaluation is analysed in a consistent way across delivery strands

- An article was published in 'The Friend' in October 2018 at the time of our 21st anniversary, raising our public profile
- A fundraising leaflet was produced
- Thanks to the Wales Region we accessed a 6 month grant of £7,400 from Lloyds Bank Foundation. This enabled us to recruit additional staff and gain free support and advice from business consultants

Challenges:

The main challenge, as highlighted above, has been the failure to attract significant funding, despite considerable effort.

Moving forward there is a need to ensure the sustainability of AVP Britain and share a clear vision and strategy for the charity. Trustees are currently working on this. In order to generate increased ownership of the organisation this work will involve all volunteers, facilitators, Regional Coordinators – Trustees, staff and other external stakeholders.

During 2018 – 19 **the Trustees** were:

- Jane Harries, Chair
- Anne Martin, Vice-chair
- Marie Walsh, Treasurer
- Joan Neary
- Colin Mallinson
- Matthew Knight
- Alexandra Dzhuras-Dotta (co-opted in February 2019)

AVP Britain's Structure

Alternatives to Violence Project, Britain is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales, no. 4127409 (registered office The Grayston Centre, 28 Charles Square, London N1 6HT); and registered by the Charity Commission, no. 1085709 and registered in Scotland as charity no. SC039287.

The Governing Documents of AVP Britain are Articles and a Memorandum of Association. Company Members meet in an Annual General Meeting and appoint the Trustees/Directors. The latter appoint the officers: Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer.

The Operations Committee, responsible for some operational issues, was laid down at our AGM in November 2018. Trustees have established a number of working groups to take specific work streams forward. At the time of writing we have five active Regional Management Committees, made up of mostly

volunteers, which organise the work of AVP locally. There is a part-time FUTC (Facing up to Conflict) Administrator based in London who works with volunteer assessors, fundraises for and manages the FUTC online course for prison inmates. All committees and staff report to Trustees. Currently the Board of Trustees are involved in much day to day management of AVP Britain but it is hoped that, with further funding, staff can be recruited so that they can focus on the overall vision of AVP and overseeing activities.

How AVP Britain is managed

The Board of Trustees provide the strategy for how AVP Britain will achieve the vision of a non-violent society. Each region has a Regional Coordinator that works with the local facilitators and other volunteers in the region to:

- Publicise and promote workshops through social media and by building partnerships with relevant voluntary and statutory organisations including prisons
- Register potential workshop participants and provide support when required
- Provide the administrative and practical logistics necessary to ensure the smooth running of the workshops
- Support and ensure the professional development of the facilitators
- Carry out fundraising and other activities to ensure that the aims of AVP Britain are carried out at the local level

The company's annual income exceeds £100,000 and therefore an independent examination of accounts is required.

Health and safety report

No incidents have been reported.

Thank you

We thank all our volunteers for their extraordinary dedication in managing the organisation and maintaining a high standard of practice.

Given the challenging economic climate for fundraising we are grateful to all those who have standing orders with us and who have donated privately in any way. We also thank our funders who have trusted us to use their resources well.

*Jane Harries
(Chair of Trustees)*

Financial Report:

Over the year our overall income was up by 17% compared to 2017-2018. The grant funding we secured centrally was up compared to last year and significantly more grant funding was also obtained in the regions. Approximately 60% of our income came from grants, just over 11% from donations and roughly a quarter from workshop receipts. We are extremely grateful to all those who fundraised for AVP during the year and to all those individuals and organisations who have funded our work. Our particular thanks this year go to the Flapjack Trust, the Lloyds Foundation and the Hilden Trust for their support, as well as the numerous smaller trusts, who made such valuable contributions to our work in the regions and to our distance learning programme, 'Facing Up to Conflict'.

Our overall expenditure, at £113,381, was slightly less than last year and once again, charitable expenditure accounted for 95% of total expenditure. We ran somewhat fewer community workshops than last year but reached an equal number of participants, so costs per participant were lower. We showed an overall surplus for the year of approximately £9,600 and crucially we also achieved a surplus in our central unrestricted funds, which are needed to run the national framework of AVPB. However, we only achieved this on the basis of some very welcome 'donations' from the regions and we recognise that a more long-term approach is needed. Trustees will be looking this year at whether we need a central office and if so, how it can be funded more sustainably.

Finally, AVPB trustees recognise that there is also another challenge to meet; how to expand our capacity to match the growing need for conflict skills in an increasingly divided society. During 2018-2019 we achieved a significant increase in the numbers completing 'Facing Up to Conflict', our distance learning programme, with a corresponding increase in both income and expenditure in this area. We have not been able to match this growth in the numbers of people benefiting from prison workshops and community workshops. To move closer to our vision of a non-violent society we need to throw our net wider and find better ways to reach out to more workshop participants and volunteers. The trustees believe that the way forward lies in first obtaining the resources needed to create an up-to-date impact report that can demonstrate the true value of our work, then going on to forge new partnerships at both national and regional levels with organisations that already engage with the people we want to reach.

We believe that achieving funding for and recruiting a national co-ordinator will be critical to the success of this approach.

Marie Walsh
Trustee Treasurer

ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROJECT, BRITAIN						
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES						
For the period 1/4/2018 to 31/3/2019						
	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds		
		£	£	2019	2018	
		£	£	£	£	
Incoming Resources						
Grants		14,450	61,323	75,773	55,594	
Donations		13,613	1,000	14,613	19,569	
Workshop/Event Receipts		32,908	0	32,908	32,725	
Other Income		4,177	0	4,177	876	
Total Incoming Resources		65,148	62,323	127,471	108,764	
Resources Expended						
Direct Charitable Expenditure	2	62,898	45,242	108,140	111,018	
Fundraising & Publicity	3	1,426	0	1,426	871	
Governance	4	3,815	0	3,815	4,509	
Total Resources Expended		68,139	45,242	113,381	116,398	
Net Resources						
before Fund Transfers		-2,991	17,081	14,090	-7,634	
Transfers between Regions		3,000	-7,485	-4,485	0	
Net Movement in Funds		9	9,596	9,605	-7,634	
Balances brought forward at 1 April 2018		58,388	27,987	86,375	94,407	
Balances carried forward at 31 March 2019		58,397	37,583	95,980	86,375	

"I have learnt to listen and to be cooperative with others, and to put myself in other peoples' shoes is important too."

Sept 2018 London





"It was good to be reminded about how I can see things differently and see what I can do to change more"

Sept 2018 London

"I really enjoyed the course and gained so much knowledge from it. Hopefully it will help me a lot."

Feb 2019 Manchester

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