

# BEATING TIME



**“Turning fledgling  
ideas into business  
plans and re-shaping  
futures”**

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*“Best thing I have ever seen in a prison”*

*Erwin James – Editor of Inside Time/ Writer/ Former Life Sentenced Prisoner*

**“Restart opens doors, gives hope and direction, creates confidence and the space to develop your ideas”<sup>1</sup>**

**1. Introduction**

Beating Time is pleased to report the key findings of two, 15-week Restart pilots – one run in HMP Featherstone and the other at HMP Birmingham. To date the pilots have resulted in **7** business plans, **2** businesses in development, **2** start-up grant awards, **12** interviews, **6** job offers and **16** new employers introduced to our work.

This report includes: key findings from the feedback and evaluation process; participant roundtable; a post-pilot update; and sample case studies.

Restart is a unique response to the lack of entrepreneurship opportunity in UK prisons: 50% of people serving sentences aspire to be self-employed<sup>2</sup> but the opportunities to harness that drive are scarce. Restart is the culmination of more than 2 years of research and development and is built on the findings of established programmes outside the UK, in particular the Texas Prison Entrepreneurship Program<sup>3</sup> which combines personal development, business planning and intensive mentoring support to maximise success in starting a business on release.

Restart is led and co-ordinated by the charity, Beating Time. The two pilots were run in collaboration with Enterprise Exchange, Enterprise Inspiration, KPMG and Rubery Owen.

**2. Main Outputs**

<b>Programmes<sup>4</sup>:</b>	<b>2</b> 15-week pilots completed – <i>in Birmingham, against a background of turmoil with emergency handover from G4S to State Sector, associated shut downs and participant transfers.</i>
<b>Concerts:</b>	<b>2</b> performance and business pitching events organised by the participants to a combined audience of <b>&gt;150</b> family members, employers, mentors, staff and community representatives.
<b>Business Plans:</b>	<b>100%</b> of the Restarters completing the programme made business plans.
<b>Start-up Businesses:</b>	<b>1</b> business in development; <b>1</b> business launched
<b>Grants Awards:</b>	<b>2</b> (100% of the businesses requiring funding this year).
<b>Volunteers:</b>	<b>20</b> - KPMG gave <b>&gt;250</b> volunteer hours to the programme (c£60K worth of time) and continue to support the business ventures.
<b>Jobs</b>	<b>1</b> employment fair: <b>41</b> men attended; <b>15</b> employers <sup>5</sup> ; <b>12</b> second interviews; <b>6</b> job offers (so far, work continues)
<b>Future programmes:</b>	<b>6</b> prisons wanting the programme.

**3. Main Outcomes**

**Need:** established (both prisons and those serving sentences had a strong appetite for the programme).

**Creative programme:** worked to develop and test the self-confidence and abilities of the participants from the beginning to the end.

<sup>1</sup> JF, Restart Participant, HMP Birmingham

<sup>2</sup> <https://centreforentrepreneurs.org/cfe-research/from-inmates-to-entrepreneurs>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.pep.org/>

<sup>4</sup> Programme details set out in Appendix C

<sup>5</sup> Our employer contact list set out in Appendix B

**Learning and Skills:** 100% completing the programme said they learned new valuable skills.  
**Personal Development:** 100% completing Restart reported renewed sense of purpose and direction, improved sense of well-being, reduced stress and anxiety.  
**Mentors:** 100% of the 20 KPMG Mentors have volunteered to Mentor more Restart Programmes.

#### 4. Pilot Context – Where, When and Who?

Beating Time already runs choirs in both HMP Featherstone and HMP Birmingham. They are however, very different prisons.

**HMP Featherstone (09.01.2019-10.04.2019):** Category C Training & Resettlement Prisons with a large but stable population and leadership. Inmates: 700

**HMP Birmingham (22.01.2019-30.04.2019):** Local Prison with a high churn of people coming through its gates. In the run up to starting the Restart pilot, the prison received a damning inspection report culminating in transfer from G4S to State Sector Control: over 500 individuals were sent to other prisons. We are grateful that the participants, staff and Governor team supported piloting Restart during this time. Inmates: 1030

Participants were recruited via an internal advertising campaign and selected with reference to release dates, interview and prison security/safety requirements.

#### 5. Key Data Findings

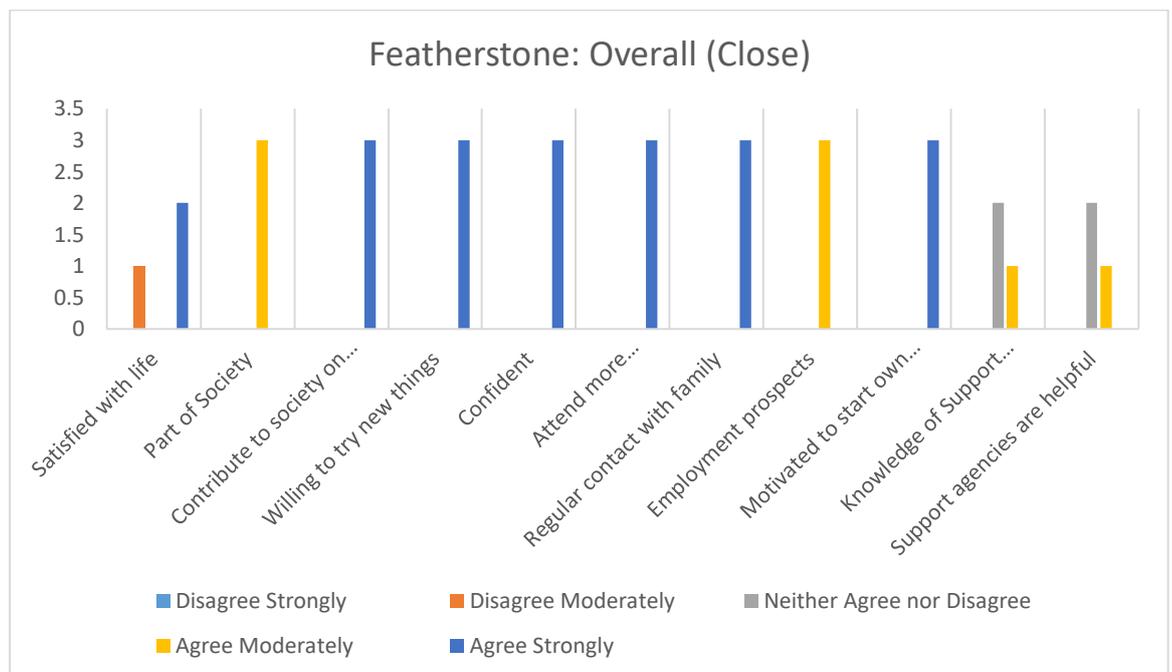
##### i) Participant Profile

- **Number:** 25 enrolled (11 at Featherstone; 14 at Birmingham); 11 completed (6 at Featherstone; 5 at Birmingham). Reasons for not completing: 6 transfers to other prisons; 5 withdrawn by prison (loss of privileges); 3 voluntary withdrawals (1 on religious grounds, 1 in week one)
- **Age profile:** reflected the age profile of the two establishments  
HMP Featherstone: Age Range – 30-53 Mean Age – 40  
HMP Birmingham: Age Range – 24-50 Mean Age – 37
- **Gender profile:** all reported as male
- **Ethnic profile:** Both prisons have a wide range of ethnic backgrounds<sup>6</sup> but in both over 50% of the population is White British. This was reflected in the Birmingham Restart cohort. The Featherstone cohort make up however was 50%+ Black Caribbean and Black African and 29% White British/White Other.
- **Average Attendance Levels:** of the cohort available to attend in any week: Featherstone: 91%. Birmingham: 84% (of which 7 sessions were either 100% or had only 1 absent)

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<sup>6</sup> Prison population information: Report on the announced inspection of HMP Featherstone by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 1-5 October 2018, HM Inspectorate of Prisons, Nov 2018 (p.70, Section 6, Appendix III). Report on the unannounced inspection of HMP Birmingham, 30 July-9 August 2018, HM Inspectorate of Prisons, September 2018 (p.110 Section 6, Appendix IV)

- ii) **Mental Health Snapshot:** (start and finish: scaled response 1 (poor) – 5 (excellent))  
 At close: **80%** - reporting fair or above levels of mental health at close.  
**Increase 10%-30%** - reporting excellent health.  
**0%** - reporting poor mental health.
  
- iii) **Personal Well-being:** (start and finish: ONS4 scaled response 0-10)  
 Start: **50%** - low sense life was worthwhile:  
 Finish: **100%** - high/very high life was worthwhile.
  
- iv) **Activities and Agencies:** (start and finish: participants were asked about in-prison activities/willingness to work with agencies on plans towards release)  
**100%** - working with or willing to work with agencies towards plans on release.
  
- v) **Business start-up knowledge:** (start and finish: scaled questions on business start-up knowledge)  
**100%** - reported increase in knowledge on all areas covered by the business start-up course  
**100%** - reported more confident about starting a business
  
- vi) **Overview:** (start and finish: likert-5 scaled responses on programme impact on feelings about self/confidence/relationships/release prospects)  
*Featherstone highlights:* **100%** strong agreement can contribute to society; **100%** agreement had employment prospects on release  
*Birmingham highlights:* **100%** agreement satisfied with life; **100%** strong agreement Restart has increased confidence and willingness to attend more activities.



## 6. Main Learning

Learning has been a joint process with the participants whose input has been sought throughout to ensure that the programme meets real needs, e.g.,

How Could Such a Great Course get Better?

— Possibly factor in a contingency day so that unforeseen events such as a "lockdown" does not put time pressure on the course, fixing the schedule to jump ahead instead of following a natural order and consolidating.

— If the students were to form a study group that met in between each meeting, then they may be able to prepare more, utilise the books, and the mentors could play a part.

— The KPMG mentors were amazing and I doubt this area could be possibly improved. Once was brilliant, twice was even more rewarding, and so I guess I would say that the two meeting format should be repeated if possible.

— Personal coaching was good and could be even better with a brief follow up meeting whereby ~~the~~ <sup>you</sup> could add detail to your written summary.

Extract from feedback given by a Restart Participant in HMP Birmingham

- **Combining creative and entrepreneurship programmes** – exceeded expectations: rapid creation of positive bonds between group members was observed in both pilots and self-reported by participants – even the most reluctant singers:

And even though I would recommend Restart as a personal development programme, it was definitely an exercise in building a sense of team spirit. When rising to the challenge of combatting personal stage-fright, we all agreed as a team, that it would be easier for us as individuals if we made a pact that none of us would back out. The task of project managing our own end of course concert also inspired a situation whereby we nurtured a responsibility to not let down others, who were no longer present, but who had invested a lot of time in us. The whole experience fostered a sense of duty, to ourselves and others, by surmounting a personal urge to take the easy route and swerve the challenge.

Extract from Feedback given by Restart Participant in HMP Birmingham

- **Level of engagement and outputs** – exceeded expectations (particularly in the challenging circumstances in HMP Birmingham). All completing participants developed business ideas and showed increased motivation.

- **Mentors** – vital to success: 100% of mentors and participants valued this interaction. Although not asked to do so, mentors have continued to work with those participants launching businesses and KPMG has offered support for future programmes.
- **Support Worker** – key to success post-programme, providing a point of contact and support in the run up to and on release. Contact is also facilitated through weekly choir which continues in both prisons.
- **Programme Director** – pilots highlighted the need for a lead individual with project oversight ensuring tight co-ordination and follow-up between and with course deliverers, prison and participants. Increased involvement to be costed into future programme budgets.
- **Candidate Selection** – to be improved with more focus on release dates, motivation and behaviour and balanced with the need to seed the group with stable (choir) members for continuity.
- **Conduct** – to introduce a commitment/behaviour “contract”. Relatively high withdrawal rates for behaviour and other reasons are expected reflecting the challenging environment and lives participants face. A physical contract provides a touchstone evidencing commitment on both sides
- **Case Study/Single business plan** – The Featherstone pilot was built around a single real business case provided by Rubery Owen. This had learning benefits but we feel that helping participants develop their own plans encourages better commitment and ownership of the ideas and so increased chance of success.
- **Course length** – increased number of sessions but held over a shorter period (subject to prison regime constraints) - gives participants chance to work at greater depth and more time to work-up a detailed plan
- **Study time/writing materials** – participants would value dedicated study/development time and writing materials (over computer access).

## 7. Opportunities Created

The pilots have also opened up more opportunities for the participants, the prisons and us:

- **Gazebo Jerk Hut** (a Restart Business) – has 4 “bookings” as a result of the Final Concert: The High Sheriff of Birmingham; KPMG; HMP Oakhill and one of the funders;
- **Inside Job** (a Restart Business) - held a recruitment drive at HMP Birmingham on 17 September with 41 men and 15 employers. A round of second interviews with equipment hire company, HSS for 11 men was held on 8 October. HSS have made 5 offers. Another employer, Carmichael has made one. Work continues and the final result is expected to be higher;
- **KPMG** - have offered an internship to a young man who has served a sentence;
- **Demand for Restart** - HMPs Stafford, Sudbury, Belmarsh, East Sutton Park and Brinsford have asked for Restart;
- **The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra** (concert guest)- want to collaborate with us, getting their musicians to come into prison to perform with our choirs;
- **The Princes Trust** (concert guest) - is looking to do a project in HMP Birmingham;
- **Inside Time** (editor Erwin James attended the concert) published an article about Restart and The Guardian is doing a piece.

**Final Word – Jonathan, Restart Participant and Inside Job Business Creator (5 months after finish of 15-week Restart Programme):**

cementing my philosophy on it all. When your Restart course made me think, I concluded the most important thing an ex-offender could have was employment so that they could provide for themselves and their families, and regain their self-worth. But as the months pass I've realised that paying the bills alone won't satisfy the human spirit. People won't be ~~happy~~<sup>content</sup> until their work makes them happy, I thought. But I've gone further and a little deeper now. ....

..... The only way the lads are gonna stop coming back is if they feel part of the society they rejoin. Not just a sense of purpose for themselves but a sense of importance to the community. A newfound feeling of attachment and acknowledgement they belong.

**BEATING TIME, October 2019**

## Testimonials

### Participants – on Restart:

*“I’m more capable than I gave myself credit for” (JD, HMP Featherstone)*

*“I no longer face a barrier of self-doubt, and instead have been inspired to take control of my own progression (JF, Participant, HMP Birmingham)*

### Participants – on singing:

*“At first I couldn’t work out why but by the end you realise why. We did things as a group because of choir. We achieved great things together.” (Participant, HMP Birmingham)*

*“I pushed myself to do things because I didn’t want to let the other lads down. I wouldn’t have done it if it wasn’t for them.” (Participant, HMP Birmingham)*

### Participants - on course deliverers:

*“Every prison needs the passion and focus of individuals such as Phil, Heather and all those involved. It is the key to rehabilitation” (T, participant, HMP Birmingham)*

*“he motivated us to improve constantly [...] he encouraged those who struggled & found it difficult singing in a group [...] he never gave up on us” (Round Table Session, HMP Birmingham)*

### Participants - on the mentors:

*“The team from KPMG are exactly what I need, made me feel comfortable & showed me I knew more than I thought” (J, participant, HMP Birmingham)*

*“The mentors show us that some employers are still willing to employ us” (J, participant, HMP Featherstone)*

### Family members:

*“Proud to hear my brother open up with his singing ability.” (Family member, HMP Featherstone Programme)*

*“The James you are returning to us, is a James we’ve not seen for a very long time, thank you.” (Nicole, wife of James, the developer of Gazebo Jerk Hut)*

### Concert Audience:

*“Seeing those men seizing the opportunity of a second chance, overcoming limitations and stepping up into a dream for a better future was priceless to witness.” (KPMG Mentor)*

*“Wow! What a great performance all. It has been lovely to sit back and watch you all. This is a first for me and I can truly say your journey was heart-warming. To listen to you overcoming your fear and stepping outside your comfort zones is a great achievement and a real step in the right direction. Well done to all the staff and managers involved creating opportunities to help reduce reoffending #Featherstonesgottalent.” (V Millward, Learning & Skills HMP Stafford)*

**Prison Staff (key workers/wing officers):**

*“More focused on achieving his CAT D and... achieving a good outcome in his parole hearing. He is also excited for his release as he has been offered a two-week trial through KPMG and Rozone... this is really helping focus on some stability in his life upon release.”*

*“M is very focused on his future [... and] is motivated to ensure he is full time employed when released.”*

**KPMG Mentors:**

*“I feel like the myth/conception that prisoners are “bad people” with no hope/prospects was broken down and I came away feeling that, generally, the people involved with the Restart programme are those that have made bad choices but are bright, ambitious and capable of “going straight” if they are given the right opportunities and support.” (Nikki Davies, KPMG Mentor)*

*“I feel a sense of pride in being able to be outside of my comfort zone and help to make a difference [...] my view of prisoners and prison life has really changed.” (Tom Whybrow, KPMG Mentor – Tom has continued to work with his mentee on the Gazebo Jerk Chicken project)*

*“it makes me feel good to (metaphorically!) put my arm around someone who has made mistakes or who maybe hasn’t seen the best of what humanity has to offer and to use my skills to try and help them, show them that not everyone in the world is like that” (Paul Jackson, KPMG Mentor)*

## Appendix A – Participant Updates and Case studies

### Restart Graduate, post-release - setting up own business

**James:** is in his 30s. He is an experienced chef. His first job was for Raymond Blanc. He has a supportive partner and a large family. He is also a heroin addict and has served several prison sentences. He was released in September 2019.

He participated in the HMP Birmingham Restart pilot. Initially shy in Choir he became an enthusiastic and confident performer. He developed a Caribbean Street Food business called “Gazebo Jerk Hut”. His KPMG Mentor, Tom Whybrow, was hugely impressed by him and put in a lot of time doing research. The Prison Governor gave James permission to showcase his food at the final Concert – he cooked 3 mains and sides for 100 people (as well as rehearsing, taking a solo and pitching his business). He was awarded a Restart Grant (of £5000) to set up Gazebo Jerk Hut on release.

James is currently working with, Tom (his KPMG Mentor, now friend) and Rob Taylor (a local business man who has set up 10 businesses) on the launch of Gazebo Jerk Hut. Following the pilot and before his release he studied for and gained a Distinction in his Level 3 Hygiene Certificate (key for his business) and revised for his driving theory test. On his release the Prison Governor, Paul Newton, sought him out to congratulate James on how he has used his sentence and the opportunities he has had in prison to transform his life. (HMP Birmingham sees around 500 men go through its gate every month, it is rare for a Governor to speak to any of them personally on release.)



James used his sentence to get clean. He put himself through “cold turkey” rather than take a heroin substitute and is doing a 12-step programme (NA). He has volunteered for a restorative justice programme and to meet his victim, whose statement in court motivated him to use this sentence to turn his life around.

**Left: James pitching Gazebo Jerk Hut in HMP Birmingham**

### Restart Graduate, pre-release - business launched

**Jonathan** is in his 40s. He ran his own Estate Agency before going to prison. He was also involved in drug importation and is serving a 15-year sentence. Jonathan is on the prison council, runs the gym and is well liked and respected. The prison officers struggled to recruit people for Restart (scared by the performance element). Jonathan recruited 11 strong candidates in one afternoon. Singing does not come easily to Jonathan but he played a full part in rehearsals and the concert putting in maximum effort and supporting everyone else.

His business is called “Inside Job”. It is an in-prison recruitment consultancy. With deep inside knowledge he identifies strong, work-ready candidates within the prison who are coming up for release and matches them to job opportunities for outside agencies/employers. We secured an opportunity for him to launch Inside Job in HMP Birmingham on 17 September 2019. He identified over 40 candidates, helped them prepare CVs and disclosure letters and undertook interview coaching. He has been awarded a Restart Grant (administered by us) which has funded business

cards, flyers, “pop-ups” for his stall at events and refreshments for the event itself (the prison had no budget). Working with us and specialist recruitment consultancy, A Fairer Chance, the men met 15 employers including HSS, Rentokil and Lendlease at the event. 6 job offers have been made and 12 men have had second interviews (one turned down an opportunity to be released on tag to attend the interview).

The Prison Governor has met with Jonathan and our Support Worker to discuss holding the event quarterly (we do not, currently, have the budget), Jonathan has been given his own office space in the prison to run Inside Job, is liaising with the Resettlement Team and he has asked to run clinics every three weeks to identify candidates, help with CVs, etc. and through our employer links, job-match.

Jonathan and a colleague led the Restart participants’ organisation of the final challenge of Restart – a concert for 100+ guests.

The KPMG Mentors are in the front row supporting their mentees.

Members of the men’s families are in the audience.



## Restart Graduate, post release - reintegration into community

**Lee\*:** attend the HMP Featherstone pilot. He was released in July 2019 and has remained in close contact with our West Midlands Support Worker. He is facing challenging circumstances as the breakdown of family relationships whilst in prison meant he has been housed temporarily in a hostel. He is a superb singer. Our Support Worker visited him in the hostel in the first few days and helped him sort things out with the staff, who he had been reluctant to approach. She invited him to The Choir With No Name, an award winning Birmingham Choir for people on the margins, run by our Music Director Pete Churchill. We bought him a bus pass. He has started attending and stays for the meals the choir share afterwards. He has made great progress over the last month and is working to rebuild relationships with his family. We are confident he will be able to pursue employment opportunities soon.

## Restart Graduate, pre-release – post-course support

**Fred\*:** attended the HMP Featherstone pilot. He remains a core choir member and is coming up for transfer to a Category D (open) prison in December 2019. We hope to be able to work with him on employment opportunities through the Release on Temporary Licence scheme once there. He has been awarded a commendation for his original song composition in this year’s Koestler Awards (the choir itself won a Gold Award).

[\*Names changed]

## Appendix B – Employer Contacts List

Be On Site  
LendLease  
Rubery Owen/Rozone  
KPMG, Birmingham  
HSS Hire Services Group PLC  
VGC Group Ltd  
McGinley Support Services  
Hercules Site Services Ltd  
Rentokil Initial plc  
WAMITAB  
Costain Group PLC  
Fusion JV (HS2 joint venture group)  
RSS Infrastructure Ltd  
Snappy Snaps (Timpson Group)  
University of Wolverhampton  
Carmichael

## Appendix C

### THE PROGRAMME

Period (15 weeks)	Activity
Weeks 1-5	2 hour session: Choir only – team building, confidence and new skills
Week 6	Choir + Start-up 1: pros/cons of self-employment
Week 7	Choir + Start-up 2: contents of a business plan
Week 8	Choir + Start-up 3: business planning with Mentors
Week 9	Choir + Start-up 4: marketing and sales
Week 10	Choir + Start-up 5: accounts and tax
Week 11	Choir + 1-2-1 Coaching
Week 12	Choir (+ performance planning)
Week 13	Choir (+ performance planning)
Week 14	Choir (+ performance planning)
Week 15	Performance: concert and business pitching

In practice, the pilot programmes were adapted as follows:

**HMP Featherstone:** the start-up course was adapted in collaboration with local engineering business, Rubery Owen to focus on the production of a single business plan for its “Smartwasher” product<sup>7</sup>. Support included the installation of a Smartwasher in Featherstone’s workshops and the possibility of training and employment options and progressing the business plan with Rubery Owen on release. 1-2-1 coaching was not included in this pilot.

**HMP Birmingham:** was forcibly varied due to 2 lock-downs at the establishment. This reduced the planned start-up course sessions - we combined weeks 7 and 8 (contents of a business plan/mentors) and in planned week 11, combined business plan writing and 1-2-1 coaching (using two coaches).

Future programmes will be longer 6-8 days

They will include an extra day on:

1. Purpose, Strengths, Strategy and Goals;
2. A day to pull everything together and finish any outstanding items.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.rozone.co.uk/products/partwashers/smartwasher.html>

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The University of Wolverhampton

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