

SAFE GROUND

Annual Review
2019/20



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Introduction

12 months go very quickly when it is full of new work, exciting challenges and opportunities. For people in prison, 12 months is probably a much longer time. For the children, partners and family of people in prison, 12 months can seem like a lifetime.

It is important for us to keep in mind the people we work with and to regularly remind ourselves of the realities of prison and the wider criminal justice system. While we often work with and support people in and on release from prison, we also often spend time bound periods in prison, leaving when our work is over.

We work in community settings as well as in prisons and we know how important the consistent, reliable, recognisable presence of trusted people is in that context too.

We are very aware that wherever we work, it is our reliability, consistency, honesty and willingness to engage with people even during moments of extreme crisis, that matters.

Making a difference in people's lives

We work with people who are used to being lied to, let down, excluded from decision making about their own lives and often patronised and denied any agency.

We see our work as creative and artistic not only because we use drama, improvisation and other art forms throughout it; but because we understand our function to be finding ways to respond to the unknown, contain the unexpected and 'hold' the often unbearable.

We perform a creative role with, for and in support of those who work with us and we work with others to enhance their own performance.

It is this creative endeavour that continues to lead us to new areas of work. Our women's programme is growing and beginning to demonstrate impact ([see pg 11](#)).

Our revisions to FM and FI are demonstrating clear improvements in what was already excellent and high impact programmes ([see pg 14](#)).

Impact and policy change- making a difference to the system

Our schedule of events has engaged an increasingly wide community of practitioners, artists, family members, academics and members of the public, housed in The Roundhouse ([see pg 8](#)).

We know that Black people are massively overrepresented in UK prisons; that although children in prison is a decreasing population, Black children are a growing group. We know that our colleagues at the Zahid Mubarek Trust continue to seek to establish clear and transparent scrutiny around inequality and racism and that our colleagues at Inquest continue to need to support families seeking information about their loved ones' deaths.

We know that families of people in prison is a hugely growing research area; and yet, phone calls continue to be more expensive than usual domestic lines, that sentences are increasing and that the age of people in prison is getting older.

It is a pleasure and a privilege to work at Safe Ground and the small staff team regularly get to reflect upon our own performance, needs and development. We practice what we 'preach' at Safe Ground and that means we are constantly questioning our impact, our purpose and our value. While we can never be content to work in prisons (as prisons themselves need questioning); we can be certain that the work we do with people and families affected by the criminal justice system, is necessary and valuable. We look forward to not having to do it anymore.

Charlie Weinberg



Chair's Report

Small charities are accustomed to change, spinning round, adapting and moving forward with limited finances. 2019 has certainly tested resilience and flexibility, by exposing us to all of these things. We at Safe Ground owe our continued existence to a resourceful, committed and hard working team, thoughtful input from the varied experiences of our Board members and the invaluable support of our funders. All parts of the team are pulling together to maintain a future for Safe Ground and ensure we are there to help others with their vision and hopes of a better future.

A year of change:

The Criminal Justice system and its approach to rehabilitation, has squeezed resources even further. Our funding alongside other charities has become more dependent on philanthropic sources, who themselves are subject to the unprecedented challenges and pressures of the global market. We need more than ever, to demonstrate the value of our work in assisting those who need it the most.

Delivery mechanisms of our much-needed interventions, into the various institutions, have also been subject to restructure and is not without its difficulties. New approaches have and continue to be researched, evaluated and commissioned where feasible. Collaborating with a range of partner institutions to plan and draw up a new road map for the future, is a key plank of our strategy. We have continued to build on our work in the community, which includes 'outside the gate' with families.

Our Board said goodbye to great team members Adam Stebbings and Gary Monaghan, both of whom are greatly respected for their invaluable contribution at a strategic and when needed, operational level. They continue to give us their support in various ways from the sidelines, which we really appreciate.

We welcomed former alumni Richard Lambe, Jason Smith, John Rehouse and Jess Bailey to the Board. We have gained from their experiences first-hand and celebrate in their continued success. Each one has within a very short time, contributed greatly with their thoughts and insights of the criminal justice system, its recipients, families and their communities.

University volunteer placements have really enriched our operation and added a vibrant dynamic. We have gained much from their overall enthusiasm, fresh ideas and excellent work on the website, data resources, social media, graphics and of course events, take a look at the website to see for yourselves.

An annual facilitated away day always shakes off the cobwebs, helps us to review progress and draw up the plans for the coming year. We also held a series of well attended and thought-provoking events, which stimulated great debate and opened up discussion on various aspects of the criminal justice system. We look forward to picking up on those threads in the near future.

Safe Ground is known for its resilience and we hope you will join us in celebrating our previous achievements and maintain your support, to ensure we have a future. Our aim as always to meet the objective of being able to provide assistance to those who need it most, both now and going forward, as a result of your generous interventions.

All of us at Safe Ground say a big thank you for your support and input over the last year. Come and join in our activities when they take place, bring forward any thoughts and ideas which you may have. Perhaps volunteer your skills and enthusiasm to help us meet the challenges of the year ahead, as we try to iron out some of those inequalities in society.

I look forward to our meeting again in 2020.

Diane Lennan

Events



The Price of Punishment

On 8th October 2019 we hosted 'The Price of Punishment' at The Roundhouse. It was an evening full of immersive performances and thought-provoking discussion about how we interpret punishment.

The purpose of this event was to explore what punishment means to us in society and what the physical, emotional and psychological effect of this can be. We brought together a group of emerging artists who had never met one another before but had applied for a position at Safe Ground. Looking at their diverse skillset and talents, we wanted to engage with them and combine their artistic abilities to produce a rewarding performance to be at the core of our next event. The artists met for the first time at our office back in August, and for the second time on the night of the event. The Safe Ground team very much took a backseat in this process, wanting the final project to be driven by the artists themselves.

The evening began with independent performances of dance, poetry, spoken word, and music scattered around the bar area, allowing guests to walk in between numerous artistic expressions to the proverb The Price of Punishment.

This moved on to the group performance which highlighted some key issues such as mass media; the contrasting voices of the press, society, and the individual facing punishment.

Safe Ground then took the lead and opened the group discussion by talking about how the idea of this event came together. The discussion then transformed into the audience sharing their interpretations of the performance. Next, we spoke about how prison is differently understood by those who have immediate interactions with the environment, to those who have had no personal experience of it before. This arose by some individuals, both performers and in the wider audience, expressing how this was the first time they were educating themselves on the criminal justice system (CJS), further to media headlines. This was a rare opportunity for people with lifelong experience working or being involved in the CJS to engage with people who were taking an interest in the system for the first time.

Feedback detailed that the majority of the audience were new to Safe Ground, and the audience admired the variety of performances and the use of arts to evoke emotive responses to the title. Comments also highlighted the enjoyment of the discussion; the collaboration of individuals from different backgrounds sharing and broadening each other's understanding of the CJS.

The F* Word (*feelings)

For one week, we were joined by Leighann, an officer working in the segregation unit at a category A prison. Leighann had participated in our Officers' Mess programme over six months previously at her prison and as a result, she wanted to learn more about Safe Ground. We used the opportunity to share her perspective of looking after people in prison.

We brought together Leighann with Richard, an artist, businessman and long term alumni member. Richard had experience of the segregation unit and we wanted the audience to think about what goes on for the person behind the door and the person locking the door.

The afternoon began with the audience participating in some programme tasters, introducing the audience to the methodology that we use. We then dove into a Q&A with Leighann and Richard, the questions were nuanced and complex, ranging from personal experience to mental health.

The feedback showed the audience had never been to an event like it and enjoyed being engaged and challenged to think differently, they felt that both participants were open and honest and thanked them.

SAFE GROUND

Safe Ground is an award-winning charity delivering therapeutic group work in UK prisons since 2003.

The F* Word

Wednesday 29th May 2019 - 1pm - 5pm

The Roundhouse, NW1

Safe Ground discusses 'The F* Word' and the danger it poses when in a segregation unit in a Category A prison. An ex-prisoner and a current officer will be sharing their experience of the unwanted place that the F* word holds in secure settings.

***Feelings**

Info and Tickets (ES) at www.safeground.org.uk



Our Own Stories

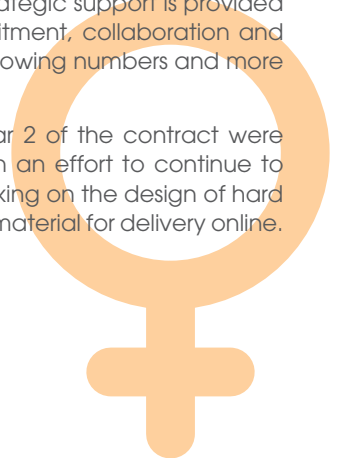
Our Own Stories invites women as creative, valuable group members, to work together in a process of personal development; designed according to our proven methodology. We use drama and the creative arts to stimulate performance and discussion that challenges, stimulates and encourages participants to experience new perspectives, rehearse alternative approaches and practice new relationships in a safe, secure and consistent space.

The programme was commissioned in 2018 as part of a three-year Wraparound service for women accessing Minerva services in West and North East London. As well as five group work programmes in 2019/20, Safe Ground also delivered two facilitator training days for eight Minerva key workers and five group work practitioners. Although the programme was developed in consultation with partners in both secure and community settings, this would be the first time it would be delivered to women as part of a community initiative.

While all Safe Ground programmes are thoughtfully designed to accommodate and include the most vulnerable people and are renowned for attracting and engaging participants for whom lifelong exclusion, experiences of trauma and adverse childhood experiences score highly, programme delivery in the community presents its own unique challenges. We became acutely aware of the range of barriers to participation among the women accessing the service and we were tested by low numbers and sporadic attendance.

In response, Safe Ground adapted the material and developed a range of engagement tools to support referral and recruitment strategies. We continue to work closely and creatively with our colleagues at Advance Minerva to ensure that Our Own Stories is accessible to all those who could potentially benefit and work hard to make sure the necessary logistical and strategic support is provided to women accessing the Wraparound Service. Commitment, collaboration and adaptability were key, and we are pleased to report growing numbers and more sustained engagement for Year 2.

In March, the last two programmes scheduled for Year 2 of the contract were postponed due to the emerging public health crisis. In an effort to continue to support Minerva service users, Safe Ground started working on the design of hard copy resources and the adaptation of the programme material for delivery online.



Self-care day for key workers at Advance

In April, Safe Ground was asked to design and deliver a day for key workers responsible for the unique Minerva Wrap Around project.

Advance's Minerva Service helps women involved in the Criminal Justice System to move on with their lives. Safe Ground is a partner in the service, delivering our arts based Our Own Stories programme to groups as part of the wider, rolling offer.

Alongside our direct work with women, we were delighted to provide this carefully planned day for staff. Safe Ground believes it is imperative that people who work with vulnerable people are given regular, high quality supervision and support and that all practitioners are immersed in reflective groups and processes. It is only through these experiences that we continue to learn and develop and sustain the important quality standards of our delivery.

With this in mind, Safe Ground prepared and delivered a day full of personal, individual and collective reflection. We incorporated dance, poetry, music, mediation, craft and banner making, inviting the team of 15 women to participate in activities and group work.



You will face many defeats in life,
but never let yourself be defeated.

Maya Angelou





H

J

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F

G



YOU ARE



Revisions



‘Parenting education’ does not accurately define Fathers Inside. I learned so much more about myself and being a parent.



Participant

The revisions of Safe Ground’s flagship programmes, Family Man and Fathers Inside, began in 2017. Throughout the design and piloting process, the team has worked hard to ensure that both programmes retain the methodological rigour, key elements and relevance to participants that have helped establish them as a cornerstone of family interventions strategies over the last 15 years. Our pilot sites for the recent revisions were HMPs Stocken, Buckley Hall, Parc and Berwyn.

Our approach to this process has been meticulous. Both programmes have been shortened and are now delivered full time over 4 weeks instead of the previous 5 and 8 weeks. We have worked hard to identify and incorporate both theory and practical techniques which interest, challenge, and stimulate cognitive, affective and intellectual growth for participants in new ways. We have built on what we learnt people found the most vital elements of the programmes while adding new material to enhance participants’ parenting and partner roles. We have trialled and validated the work with men across the pilot sites and seen the efficacy and impact of the new material in practice throughout the pilot phase.

Our external academic evaluations team led by Dr Nicholas Blagden at Nottingham Trent University has designed extensive quantitative psychometric evaluation processes for data collection at our pilot sites. The preliminary report for Fathers Inside has demonstrated promising results as a programme that assists with adjustment to prison, maintaining the parent-child relationship, increasing liberal parent attitudes and **reducing parental stress**. It has been found that parental stress is related to poorer mental and general well-being, increased risk of breaking prison rules and regulations and those who experience parental stress find it more difficult to adjust to prison. **Its measurement here in the context of family interventions is the first of its kind in this country.** The research also found that the revised programme was also helping men reconstrue their fathering role and

engage in ways of doing active fathering. Needless to say, we are encouraged by these initial findings and will continue to work closely with our colleagues at Nottingham Trent to measure the impact of the revised programmes as they are implemented across our wider network.

We would like to thank all participants, facilitators, alumni, education staff, commissioners and partners whose feedback, insight and input have been invaluable throughout the process.

“ I enjoyed being able to discuss many different topics and express myself in an intelligent way. Challenging views and opinions of others and my own! ”

Participant



Alumni Network

This year we were joined by placement student Niki, who has helped develop our Alumni network and engagement.



How does it work?

Participants can sign up to join our mailing list and attend/contribute to events. They can even write in with blogs or artwork for the newsletter.



How has it changed?

Niki wanted to engage alumni from the get-go so she created a welcome pack including a personalised letter, a welcome message from the Chair, the latest version of the newsletter, annual report and a piece of creative work from an existing alumni member. The purpose behind this is to engage the new alumnus whilst the programme is still fresh in their mind and the excitement after presentation day remains.



What do we hope will change?

We hope that this provides us with more alumni involvement as the more active members we have, the more our work can be guided by those who are most impacted. The people who have participated in our programmes have unique insights, experiences and skills which are crucial to informing our work, about wider conversations around criminal justice and in turn, better influence policymakers.



Secure centres

Mic Drop- children and young people influence policy and make structural change and policy influence

This year we were invited by the strategic advisor for the West Midlands PCC to undertake a short piece of research that would feed into the planning of new secure provision for children in the region.

The research we wanted to do was to ask children and young people directly for their thoughts and ideas about the use of secure or custodial settings for children with no criminal justice involvement. Often, children are accommodated in custodial settings in lieu of adequate or appropriate community based, or open settings. Our first experience of this situation was when we delivered Man Up in a secure children's home and came to understand that some of the children at the site were there on 'welfare' as opposed to 'justice' grounds.

This appeared to present a set of complex thinking we wanted to engage with further. Safe Ground was already involved in thinking about the purpose of prison at all. We were thinking about the use of prisons for children, particularly in the light of our delivery of Man Up in a children's prison during the year.

It was the idea of children against whom criminal charges had never been brought, being housed in secure and custodial settings that really triggered us to want to engage those children themselves in a conversation.

We were very pleased when the National Lottery Community Fund agreed to support our research and, with the support of the PCC office, we travelled to meet with children and staff at **Kibble** in Paisley and **Barton Moss** in Manchester.

Children's voices

There were mixed views from children and young people about the use of secure children's homes.

We worked with two groups of residents all under 18:

- Group 1 – 4 boys
- Group 2 – 4 boys

We were allocated 50 mins per group, the usual length of any lesson.

Format: SG introduced the idea that West Midlands are in the design phase of a possible building programme for a new secure unit for children. The groups were invited to think about:

- Considerations around imprisoning children
- Differences between 'welfare' and sentenced children in secure settings
- Appropriate and essential components of secure settings for any child.

The sessions used a creative format that asked children to tell the story of two children; one of whom was in secure care through the court, the other for his own protection.

Safe Ground compiled a brief report detailing the children's voices and staff analysis after visits to the two sites (only being allowed to work with children in one site, ethics procedures prohibiting direct access in the other).

As a result of this report and the children's voices, the idea of a new secure unit in the West Midlands has been changed: Tom McNeil Strategic Adviser to the West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner, and responsible for the PCC's policy design around the future of children's secure estate in the West Midlands, said of the research

*"learning that children and young people in one of the country's most respected secure children's centres, still predominantly see youth offending as '**deserving punishment**' or as simply a matter of 'bad choices' broke my heart. The evidence around why young people commit crime is there for all to see, and it nearly always involves **deep vulnerability and hardship**. These insights **from young people themselves** have **made me question** whether we should be **designing new secure facilities at all**.*

Instead I am now thinking we should be looking for far more radical alternatives outside of secure settings. Given what we know about young people's mental health and challenging home circumstances, there is good reason to believe alternatives are more likely to prevent crime and keep communities safe, while giving young people hope and a promising future. This is to replace a system that results in children and young people believing they should be blamed for their upbringing".

Safe Ground is extremely proud of the children with whom we worked having made such an enormous impact on such a challenging and vital area of children's wellbeing. This is a massive achievement and we owe a sense of great respect to the children that were kind enough to give their time and thought to this project, the staff that facilitated our access and to the policymaker who was brave enough to believe us when we told him the children themselves would be the best arbiters of any such decision.

Thank you all.

Key Events

April

Our Own Stories runs in the Advance women's centres in West and North East London, bringing the first year of SG's participation in the London-wide wraparound service to a close

2 day Rights in Focus conference at Autograph exploring rights-focused approaches to arts participation

Safe Ground facilitates a group 'self care' session with keyworkers at Advance

Fathers Inside presentation at HMP Parc

Officer's Mess day 7

2019

April

May

June

May

CW invited to speak at launch of book of poetry for children: "Seen & Heard"

The F* Word event takes place at The Roundhouse in Camden

Leighann (an officer at HMP Woodhill) spends the week at the SG offices

Awarded funding from Elizabeth Jack. Awarded Lottery funding for research project

June

CW attends Roundtable re probation Reform with CJA/Lord Ramsbotham and Richard Burgon

CW attends Families and Imprisonment conference at Cambridge University

Callie joins the team as SG Programmes Coordinator

Man Up presentation at HMYOI Wetherby

Family Man starts at HMP Berwyn

HMP (Parc, Berwyn) (FI, MU) presentation



July

Creative lab begins

Man Up at Oakhill STC

Man Up runs at HMP
Parc

Placement student
Abby joins Safe
Ground

CW key note speaker
Art & Activism at
Autograph, Rights in
Focus Network

August

Creative lab

PLA steering
committee

Minerva activities
workshop

July

August

September

Autograph

The Political and the Personal - Working in Criminal Justice Settings and Ethics.

In July, our Director, Charlie was invited to be a keynote speaker at a public event in Autograph London. Charlie spoke to an audience of around 25 practitioners, artists, criminal justice and museum professionals, about the work of Safe Ground and some of the structural and more personally challenging issues involved in the work. Charlie's presentation involved opening up a conversation about structural racism; attitudes to men who commit sexualised offences and the difficult reality of imprisoning children. Charlie was due to speak again at Autograph, however the event was cancelled because of COVID-19.

September

Placement student Niki
joins Safe Ground

FI presentation
HMP Berwyn

Autograph event



Key Events

October

The Price of Punishment event takes place at The Roundhouse in Camden

SG becomes a member of the Standing Committee for Youth Justice

November

HMP (Parc, Berwyn) (FI, MU) presentation

FMFI training for freelance facilitators and Novus staff

CW & LM facilitate first week of revised Fathers Inside

FM HMP Berwyn

December

SG meets with Gary Mansfield and records a podcast – Mizog arts

HMP (Parc, Berwyn) (FI, MU) presentation

2019

October

November

December

Podcast

Safe Ground joined Gary Mansfield on his podcast, Ministry of Arts, to discuss the importance of relationships, art and connections in prison. The discussion started with our work and how we view the state of the prison system, the history that moulds it and the future of the penal system.



[Click here to listen](#)





2020

January

January

Our Own Stories training

Volunteer Sarah starts

OOS Finsbury park

February

February

OOS Hammersmith x2

HMP (Parc, Berwyn) (FI, MU) presentation

Berwyn running FI

OOS and FI HMP Parc postponed due to COVID

March

March

OOS x 2 - CANCELLED

FI part parc-POSTPONED

OOS and FI HMP Parc postponed due to COVID

Acknowledgements

This report and all the work Safe Ground has managed to complete over the last year would not have been possible were it not for the considerable and ongoing contributions of all our multiple partners, allies, supporters, participants and funders.

This year was made possible by the generous support of:

Elizabeth Jack Foundation
Emmanuel Kaye Foundation
John Armitage Charitable Trust
The Dulverton Trust
The Goldsmiths' Company Charity

Our Board and Patrons, especially :

Baroness Helena Kennedy	Lord Ramsbotham
Joelle Taylor	Melly Still
Lord Lucas	Professor Renos Papadopoulos

Our freelancers, the team members that have joined and moved on and our partners and allies enable us to deliver the quality services we are known for. Thank you to:

Abby Kramer	Lindsay Murphy
Callie Davidson	Niki Pavitt
Keisha Bhamra	Sarah Limb

Our Board members keep us questioning and rigorously scrutinise our direction, outcomes and impact. Thank you to:

Adam Stebbings	Jason Smith
Deanna Rodger	Jess Bailey
Diane Lennan	Jon Rebouse
Gary Monaghan	Laura Lines
Grace Wylid	Richard Lambe

**Also our colleagues across the sector, many of whom have moved on.
Thank you to:**

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HMPPS
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Jonathan Perugia
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Kate Bulman
Kim Chambers
Lord Farmer
Mark Blake

Milton Keynes College
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National Prison Radio
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Novus
NPC
Oonagh Rider
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Shannon Trust
Spurgeons
The Centre for Crime and
Justice Studies
The Forward Trust
The Howard League
The Longford Trust
The Open University
The Prisoner Learning Alliance
The Prison Reform Trust
The Roundhouse
The team at Advance
University of Essex
University of Warwick
User Voice
Will Styles

Financial Review & Summary of Accounts

	2020			2019
	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM				
Donations and legacies	190,004	28,135	218,139	233,226
Other trading activities	710	-	710	978
Investment income	248	-	248	209
Total	190,962	28,135	219,097	234,413
EXPENDITURE ON				
Charitable activities	208,334	44,061	252,395	270,153
NET INCOME /(EXPENDITURE)	(17,372)	(15,926)	(33,298)	(35,740)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS				
Total funds brought forward	116,698	17,081	133,779	169,519
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	99,326	1,155	100,481	133,779

Safe Ground, Year ended 31 March 2020

The charity has no recognised gains or losses other than the results for the year as set out above. All of the activities of the charity are classed as continuing. The statement of financial activities complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 1985.

The summarised accounts above may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of the charity. For further information, the accountant's report on these accounts should be consulted. Copies of these can be obtained from Safe Ground, 2 Langley Lane, London SW8 1GB.

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