

St Giles Trust's Choices Project

Executive summary

***"Essentially, we do
what we say on the tin.
We give them choices."***

Choices Team Leader, St Giles Trust

About Choices

St Giles Trust's Choices Project helps some of the most disadvantaged young people (16-24) who are not in employment, education or vocational training to move their lives forward. It offers targeted support aimed at helping young people overcome their individual barriers.

Pro Bono Economics (PBE), the charity that helps other charities and social enterprises understand the impact and value of their work, undertook an evaluation of the Choices Project during 2014 - its first full year of operation.

Support from HSBC under its Opportunity Partnership, a three-year programme launched in 2013 that brought together four charities to tackle youth unemployment (St Giles Trust, The Prince's Trust, Tomorrow's People and Catch 22), has enabled St Giles Trust to expand Choices from a small south London pilot to cover London, Cardiff and Leeds in 2014 and beyond.

"The PBE evaluation resulted in a headline cost/benefit ratio of between £3.50 and £4.00 for every £1 spent on Choices.¹ This finding shows that the wider impact of Choices extends well beyond the disadvantaged young person being supported.

The aim of this report is to enable service commissioners to pay more attention to services which add value as opposed to those which are just cheap to purchase."

Rob Owen OBE, Chief Executive, St Giles Trust

"It comes as no surprise that St Giles Trust's Choices Project delivers excellent benefits to clients and wider society. Since PBE's first project with the charity in 2011, St Giles has made the impact and value of its work a high priority in programme design. By focusing on what works, the charity continues to deliver excellent and high quality services to young people."

Julia Grant, Chief Executive, Pro Bono Economics

1: Figures rounded down from £3.51 and £4.01



Key findings

During 2014:

- Choices supported 1,132 clients
- 543 of these achieved at least one successful outcome in employment, education or vocational training
- 907 successful outcomes in employment, education or vocational training were achieved in total.

PBE found that Choices clients were harder to reach than most young people and faced multiple barriers to successful participation in society and the workplace.

In addition to support on employment, education or vocational training, Choices clients were helped to tackle more complex issues which other employment schemes don't always recognise or address.

Unlike many statutory services, Choices caseworkers are able to work flexibly with young people, providing tailored support and giving them better opportunities to engage with young people and win their confidence.

"I'm now better at doing job searches and writing CVs and know how to dress and speak at interviews."

Choices client



PBE approach

PBE volunteers set out to quantify the benefits of Choices, in terms of savings to the public purse resulting from successful outcomes in employment and associated benefits from reduced re-offending. The study also captured the impact of vocational training, education and volunteering on re-offending rates and their likely impact long-term.

If all these potential benefits of Choices are considered and valued (for example increased confidence and self-esteem of participants), then Choices may well have an even greater influence on re-offending.

"Taking part in activities has helped me learn how to approach people and talk to them."

Choices client

PBE findings

Impact of Choices on employment

PBE estimated the value of benefits of Choices on employment and related reductions in re-offending to be around £851,000 in the first year (2014).

The resulting overall benefit of Choices is estimated at £1.58m using the Treasury's social discount rate of future benefits (at 3.5%).¹

The total cost of Choices in 2014 was £998,000. This figure includes costs related to training and education, which have largely contributed to Choices' impact on employment. The estimated costs attributable to Choices' work in employment (39%-45% of all successful outcomes) amounted to between £394,000 and £499,000.

These figures result in a cost-benefit ratio of between £3.50 and £4.00 for every £1 spent on Choices employment initiatives.

1: This assumption factors in a possible 50% reduction in benefits in each subsequent financial year, assuming that clients may have breaks in employment and that benefits will only last five years.

Wider Impact of Choices on education, vocational training and volunteering

Choices also supports young people to take up opportunities in education, vocational training and volunteering, producing a longer-term impact on life-time earnings and productivity.

In 2014:

- Choices steered 495 young people towards training in practical skills such as plumbing, construction, beauty, sports, health and social care
- As a result of these qualifications, wages are estimated to increase by between 1% and 16%
- PBE examined 45 volunteering outcomes providing pathways to employment. US research has found that volunteering increases the likelihood of finding a job by 27%. (Source: Corporation for National Community Service 2013)
- Choices resulted in 33 successful outcomes in education, which may result in increased future wage and employment returns over an individual's lifetime, ranging from £110,395 (women) and £170,984 (men). (Source: Department for Education 2014)

“They will do anything to help and if they are not able they will find someone who will.”

Choices client

Feedback from Choices staff and clients¹

The study also obtained feedback from clients and staff at Choices to find out their views on the strengths and benefits of the programme.

Caseworkers emphasised that the flexibility to tailor the programme to the needs of each individual was key to success. This enabled each young person to build soft skills such as motivation, confidence and self-esteem alongside practical advice on employment and education.

Clients valued the approachability of Choices caseworkers and the one-to-one support of the programme. Caseworkers also continue to support their clients after they have gained employment.



¹: PBE surveyed four Choices Team Leaders, six Choices caseworkers and eighteen clients to gain insight into the impact of the programme on individuals.

Many Choices clients had overcome multiple barriers including homelessness, domestic violence, substance misuse problems, mental health issues or being single parents. On top of support and advice on employment, education and vocational training, clients reported that they also received support on motivation, goal setting, confidence and self-esteem.

Choices offers flexible support which can range from simple and effective interventions, for example helping a young person prepare for an interview, to longer term support such as building the necessary skills and confidence to get someone work ready.

Contact us

For further information about this summary or advice on how to access support please contact a member of our team at:

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*"I didn't think I had the
ability to do anything.
But now I consider I can."*

Choices client

St Giles Trust

St Giles Trust works with offenders and disadvantaged people to help them rebuild their lives. It works in prisons and in the community reaching around 15,000 people each year.

Its services offer practical and emotional support through a peer-led approach of using people who have lived experience of the issues facing their clients. It provides a range of services across the UK. This includes specialist services for young people, vulnerable women and disadvantaged families in the criminal justice system.

Find out more at www.stgilestrust.org.uk

Pro Bono Economics

Pro Bono Economics helps charities and social enterprises understand the impact and value of their work. We match highly skilled professional volunteers with charities that need their expertise. Set up in 2009 by Martin Brookes (Tomorrow's People) and Andy Haldane (Bank of England), PBE has engaged with almost 300 charities and given over 300 economists volunteering opportunities.

Find out more at www.probonoeconomics.com

