

# **London Hearing Voices Project: Prisons & Secure Units**

Rachel Waddingham  
Project Manager, Mind in Camden

# + Mind in Camden's London Hearing Voices Project

2005 – 2009: London Hearing Voices Groups Project

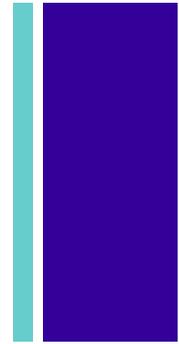
2009 + Voice Collective

2010 + Prisons Project

2012 + Paranoia Groups

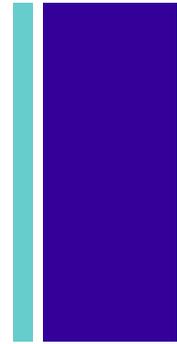
# + The Prison Project: Overview

- 3 years funding
- Establish a trained, supported & sustainable network of Hearing Voices Groups in London's Prisons & Secure Units
- Limited staff time (4 days development worker, 2 days manager)



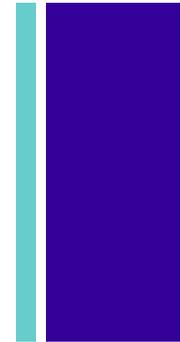
## + London Prisons – some context

- 8 prisons in London
  - 1 women's prison
  - 1 young offenders institution
  - 6 male prisons
- Over 7,500 people in prison (90,000 + in UK)
- Many many more in secure forensic units
  - NHS & Independent



## + A bit about the people in prison

- Average age: 27
- 70% diagnosed with 2 or more mental health problems
- 'Psychosis': 7% male, 14% female
  - 26% of these spend 23hrs+ in cell
- High suicide rate (x 15)
  - 'Hearing Voices' involved in 20%
- High levels of trauma -> Hearing voices a common experience



# + Support for people in prison who hear voices

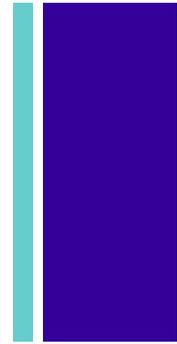
## ■ Mental health inreach teams

- NHS run
- Provision varies, but ALL overstretched
- Don't always feel able to help voice-hearers

## ■ Charities

- Samaritans, St Mungos, WISH, Women In Prison, Southside
- Overstretched and underfunded

## ■ GAPS ... GAPS ... GAPS

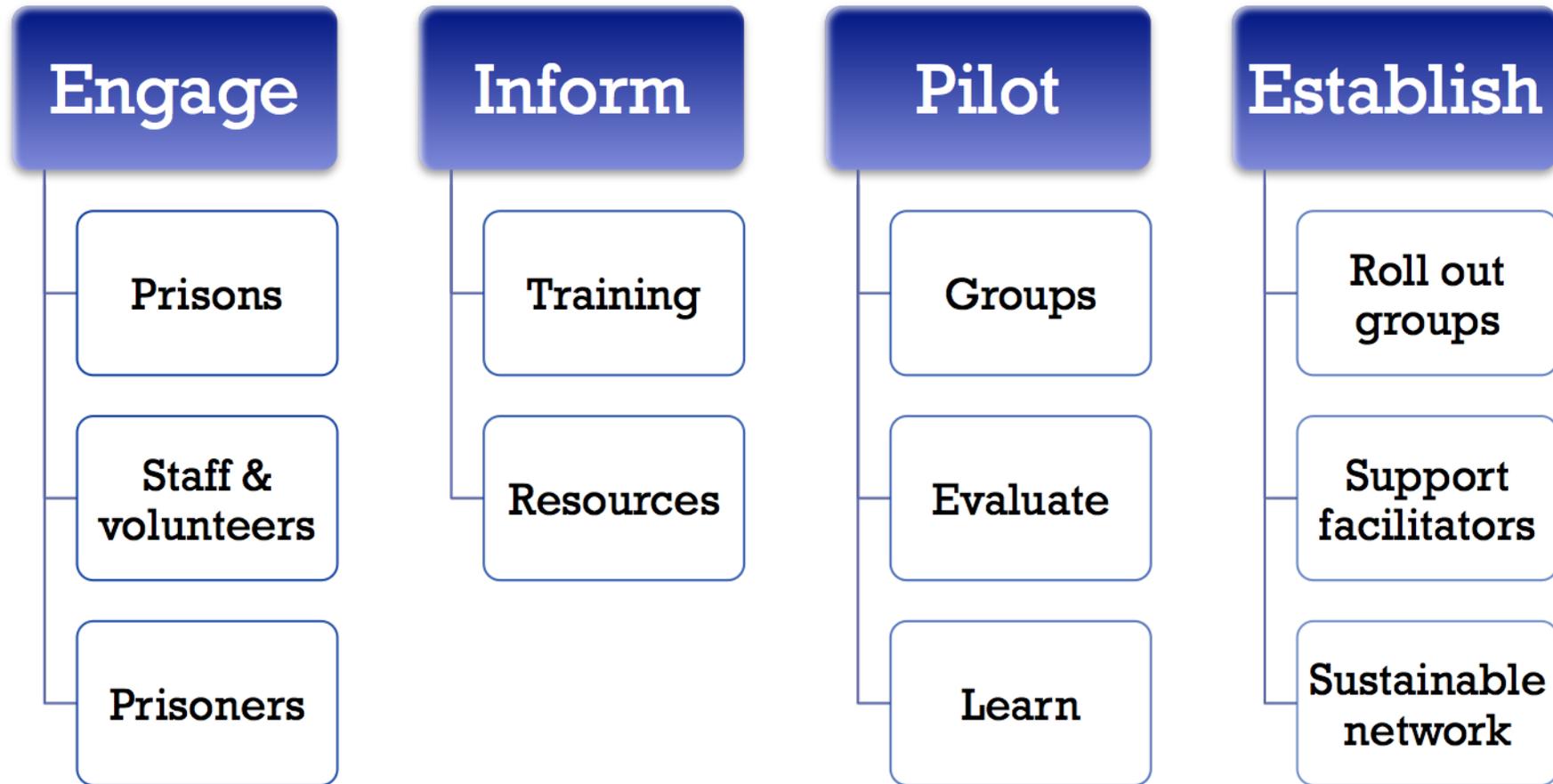
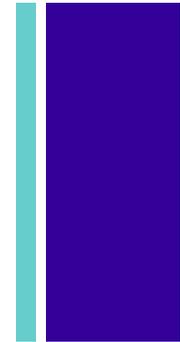


# + Bored of statistics?



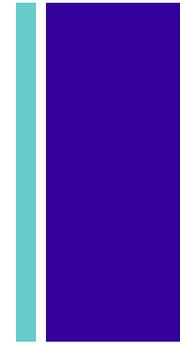
It's about people, not numbers

# + The Plan:



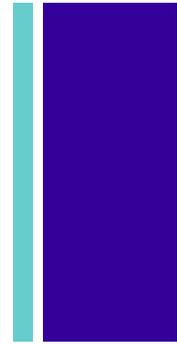
# + The Reality #1:

- A slow start
  - Prisons interested, but overstretched
  - Jumping through hoops
  - Lots of training and development work
  - Learning how to influence from a distance
- Turning points
  - Getting clearance!
  - Launching first group (HMP Holloway)
  - The group WORKS!!
  - One day conference (28 June)



## + The Reality #2:

- Gathering momentum - Increased engagement & enthusiasm
  - Prison officers
  - Healthcare
  - Voluntary agencies
  - Prisoners
- Change the model – develop what we can, where we can
- Plans with HMP Pentonville, HMP Wandsworth, HMP Belmarsh, YOI ISIS, HMP Bronzefield



# + The Group: HMP Holloway

## HEARING VOICES GROUP

A peer support group for women who hear voices or see visions

"I always felt that the voices were stronger than me. They ran my life. The group has given me the strength I need to stand up to them"

**FRIDAYS, 10 - 11.30AM**

Facilitators: Beth (Day Centre), Julie (CMHT)  
& Rachel (Mind in Camden)

Launch Event\*: 13th May  
First Group: 20th May

\*The launch event is open to all. Come along and find out about voices & visions, hear Rachel's recovery journey (she hears voices too) and find out about the group.

### WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

Speak to: Beth (Day Centre), Julie (CMHT) or Chrissy (C1)

Central and North West London   
NHS Foundation Trust

  
Mind  
MIND IN CAMDEN

  
LOTTERY FUNDED

- Launched 20<sup>th</sup> May
- Drop in (Day Centre clients)
- Optional
- 13 women so far (2-6 per group)
- Partnership between MiC & prison

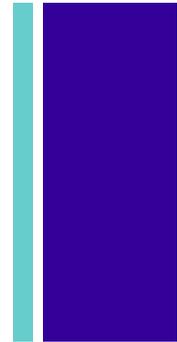
# + The Group: What we've learnt

## ■ Don't Panic!!!

- Lots of initial anxiety from staff
- Included belief that unstructured groups won't work
- In truth: IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE, IT'S A GROUP

## ■ Hold On To Your Hat

- Fast paced – so much for women to share
  - Voices, visions, trauma, diagnosis, spirituality, families, self harm, bullying, sentencing, prison life, guilt, loneliness, motherhood
- Dealing with our own frustration & powerlessness



# + The Group: What members tell us they like about it

■ Acceptance

■ Trust

■ Space

■ Respect

■ Mutual Support

■ Friendship

■ Hope

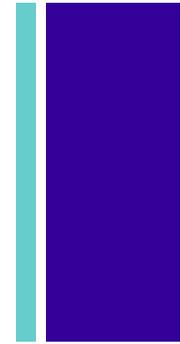
■ Inspiration

■ Tears

■ Survival

■ Laughter

■ Connection



# + Want to find out more?

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With thanks and appreciation to our funders:

Henry Smiths Charity, National Lottery through Big Lottery  
Fund, Rayne Foundation

