

## Site

HMP/YOI New Hall

## Name of project / initiative

Cooking Sessions

## Overview

The Rivendell Unit is a 32 bed facility, about half of the residents on which are on the Personality Disorder (PD) Pathway, and a two year PD programme run on the unit. Following a request from a member of staff, volunteers from the local Mothers Union visit the unit once a month, spending the day with residents helping them to prepare a dish which the women get to eat afterwards. The Mothers Union volunteers supply the recipe and all the ingredients, and while they supervise the process, they focus on encouraging the women to do the actual cooking. The recipes are put together by the volunteers, with a focus on healthy but affordable eating, and ease of preparation, so that they are the sort of dishes that the women could potentially cook for themselves on release.

## Longevity

The scheme has been running for over five years.

## Benefits

Take up is high from the women on the unit. They enjoy the sessions and look forward to them beforehand – and the sessions build their confidence and knowledge in being able to cater for themselves well on release. Staff have also seen significant changes in the behaviour of many of the women when they are with Mothers Union volunteers, who present a positive and approachable role model to them. The volunteers themselves also find the sessions rewarding, feeling (rightly) that they are doing something positive for the women.

## Uniqueness

We don't believe that this initiative is currently happening in any other establishments – particularly on the regular basis it is happening here.

## Applicability

We feel that this is an idea which could be rolled out more widely, across the female estate, but also more widely.

## Requirements

It does require a relationship with a local Mothers Union or similar, but has negligible cost or staffing implications.

## For more information:

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## Submitted by:

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