Welcome to ‘Look Beyond the Label’

Welcome to our 1st edition of ‘Look beyond the Label’, the information bulletin of Achieve North West Connect. We have many informative articles from around the North West describing our work delivering CFO3. Many readers will be aware of the work of Achieve in the past and our track record of securing employment and a range of other opportunities to ex-offenders. In our first year of delivery of NOMS CFO3 we have continued with that goal, working with our partners, the prison service, CRCs and NPS to develop an even more exiting programme of interventions and support for those facing barriers through their prior convictions.

This bulletin is designed to give you a flavour of the work we have undertaken in the last few months and I am certain you will read of many more innovative and successful services in future editions. We welcome any feedback on our information bulletins and also any items for future bulletins.

Our team and Career Connect, of which ANWC is a wholly owned subsidiary would like to thank all our partners in delivery and those in the criminal justice system for their support and goodwill in helping our project become the leading CFO3 provider in the country.

Chris Bennett, ANWC Managing Director
Dave Christian, ANWC Business Director

Prison Focus
A look at the work Salford Foundation are doing in HMP Styal, HMP Risley, HMP Hindley and HMP Manchester

Work Taster feature: FareShare
Kerry Hartin, ANWC Case Manager in Lancashire gives us an insight to the work of FareShare and how they will be working with ANWC.

St. Joe’s Bikery & Achieve More
A couple of articles outlining two new exciting projects that address CFO3 Sub Group Delivery.

Look Beyond the Label
This will be a regular feature of the Newsletter, a chance to tell some good news stories and showcase the great work the programme is carrying out.

Womens Feature
Jeannette Taylor Manager, Merseyside, tells us about ANWCs exciting work which is taking place at Tomorrows Women Wirral.

Meet the wider team
A warm welcome to the wider team and partners.

Also...
Employer engagement, the DAF, Fundraising and much, much, more.
Piecing together the Partnership
Phil Crabtree, ANWC, Finance Coordinator

ANWC would just like to welcome all our Partners to CFO3. We have been working on the contractual agreements for the use of your provision and expertise over the last 6 months and now all the contracts are in place.

Most of you attended the 1st Provider Forum in February so had a chance to meet one another and at future forums we will hopefully have the opportunity to find out more about the work you do for CFO3 as well as other projects and programmes you are running. Welcome to the team.
Discretionary Action Fund (DAF)
Phil Crabtree, ANWC Finance Coordinator

The aim of the DAF is “to improve the employability of offenders through the spot purchasing of courses, equipment and accreditations that may not be otherwise available” and is available to the ANWC Case Managers. In CFO3 we want to ensure that we use our DAF allocation to the full, to ensure that participants are given the tools and the opportunity to complete their journey.

So far we have had DAFs through for Training, ID cards, Birth Certificates, CSCS Cards, Hairdressing equipment, tools, non-returnable housing bonds, travel and sound equipment.

Case Managers are aware that it is important that we use the DAF and that we process all DAF expenditure on CATS+ so that we can claim the money through NOMS CFO. I have already and will continue to send out the ANWC Staff DAF Briefings to give you the latest updates on the processes and the issues we are encountering.

So have a think and come up with some innovative ideas of how we can spend the money and help the Participants along their journey.

Look Beyond the Label - CFO3 Good News Story
Helen Wood, ANWC Case Manager, Merseyside

_Helen highlights the excellent results of her effective working with ANWC Case Manager Andy Johnson, HMP Styal. This shows the benefits CFO3 can have in working with participants within custody and continuing the participant journey through the gate._

Sarah was convicted and sent to HMP Styal and whilst inside signed up with ANWC. A huge amount of motivational and confidence building work was completed with her by Andy whilst she was in prison. Andy spotted that Sarah was full of potential to achieve great things and supported her with her desire to do a Radio Production course in HMP Styal. Sarah completed this and thoroughly enjoyed the course. She had discovered a new found interest in pursuing work within the radio industry. Myself and Andy therefore worked together to arrange a place on a conference in London run by ‘Prison Radio’ on her imminent release. Upon release, I met up with Sarah to work with her in the community. We arranged for her tag to be amended in order to attend the conference in London. I began working with Sarah on employability exercises and we produced a CV for her. We spent time discussing disclosure of her conviction and did preparatory work for networking whilst at the conference. Sarah attended the conference and not only that, but made some excellent links in the industry which she then followed up. As a result she was offered a job working for prison radio on a project called ‘past, present, future’ and had to interview 25 influential people (across the country) including authors, poets and MPs! She is now keen to get in to public speaking about her experience of prison and moving forward positively and will therefore be working with ‘Tomorrows Women Wirral’ charity in the future (currently in the process of working towards this goal). Alongside this she volunteers in the Roy Castle Charity shop.
Sidonie Hale, ANWC Case Manager, Lancashire

Sidonie highlights the excellent work completed with Alex, a CFO3 participant and the benefits of tackling social exclusion as part of the participant journey into employment.

I began working with Alex back in December 2015. At our initial meeting it became apparent that he was ‘sofa surfing’, currently sanctioned from his benefits and was very de-motivated. I explained about CFO3 and the help and support that I could offer and Alex agreed that it was exactly what he needed to gain a more positive future.

Once he was signed up to CFO3 and we had devised a plan of action, we started to work on his motivation. He admitted that he was using cannabis on a daily basis which he felt was effecting his motivation. We therefore did some work around the use of drugs and the impact they have on daily life and then worked on his levels of motivation. We highlighted the importance of self-motivation and how this would have an impact on the work we would be doing and it wasn’t long before Alex was attending appointments on a weekly basis, on time and was no longer using cannabis on a daily basis.

We started to look at his benefit claim and made calls to the job Centre about his sanction. With another 4 weeks before the sanction was lifted, we turned the focus on his housing. Alex had been ‘sofa surfing’ for almost 12 weeks at this point and was living between family houses. A specialist referral was made to a local housing support project and we held a 3 way meeting and discussed how support from both agencies would help Alex to reach his goals of securing housing and gaining employment in the future. Within 2 weeks, a property was found for Alex! We then reported back to the Job Centre when his benefits were re-activated and he could begin his housing benefit claim. Alex reported to the office with a confident smile and was pleased to have the keys to his new flat!

The supporting agency helped him to move in and provided some essentials such as bedding, kitchen utensils and some food. Alex was delighted with the help and support that he had received. We are now continuing to work with Alex ensuring that his motivation is maintained and our next steps are to look into a mechanics course or apprenticeship as he is passionate about cars and would like to gain a career in this.

The Beneficiary Fund has been set up by the Career Connect Staff Fundraising Group to address the financial and practical barriers of the people we work with. The aim of the group is to raise ring-fenced funds for our beneficiaries for Clothing, equipment, travel, courses and rewards and incentives. Keep an eye out for the following events and thanks.
Look Beyond the Label - CFO3 Good News Story

Dennis Mahar, ANWC Case Manager, Cheshire & Greater Manchester

Dennis provides us with an insight into his work with a participant in the Cheshire area. He takes us through his step by step development and how through our work with him, he has changed his attitude towards achieving his future goals and avoiding re-offending.

Sean and I started working together back in October 2015. Up to this point, Sean had never worked and was a Prolific and Priority Offender (PPO) with a long history of offending, these latest offences included Burglary and Conspiracy to Commit Burglary. I felt that Sean had low self-esteem and lacked confidence and felt he wanted to change but did not know how to go about it.

We started looking at his motivation for wanting to change and setting some goals for where he wanted to go in the future. Sean identified that he would like to get a Job in construction so that he could build things and have a future with good prospects. He also wanted to set a better example to his daughter and be a proper father.

We worked on Construction Skills Certificate scheme training (Health and Safety) on the computer and sent off for a Citizen Card (ID) so he would be ready for a test. Along the way Sean agreed to complete voluntary work at the Hospice of the Good Shepherd. This was a real eye opener for Sean and I am pleased to say that he has continued to attend the hospice, voluntarily, 4 days a week.

We located a course for the CSCS card where Sean can get extra training and he is looking forward to this.

In Sean’s words, last year he nicked all the presents he gave away and then paid the price. In contrast, this year he had the best Christmas in years and he is looking forward to 2016 with no fear of re-offending.

Sean was reflecting on the difference between his situation and outlook from Christmas 2014 and this Christmas, 2015.

Prison Focus: Salford Foundation

Julia Pennington, Salford Foundation Operations Manager / Tracey Hill, ANWC Manager, Cheshire and Greater Manchester Prisons.

Salford Foundation has been working as a sub-contractor to ANWC since October 2015 in HMP Styal, HMP Risley, HMP Hindley and HMP Manchester. The contract focuses upon delivering an intensive mentoring programme to ANWC participants.

In the build up to CFO3, ANWC and Salford Foundation worked closely together to develop a support programme for participants. A number of focus groups were held with men and women recently released from custody, who generally felt that the main gap in custodial services was someone to support them with their thoughts, feelings, anxiety and apprehension regarding release. Engaging with ex-prisoners in this design stage has meant that the interventions are really relevant and engaging and this has helped to make this programme a huge success in the prisons. ANWC Case Managers complete initial work with participants to motivate and focus them. They then refer suitable participants to Salford Foundation who continue this work through progressing through the mentoring programme with them. The programme consists of 7 sessions and is proving successful in challenging thoughts and helping participants come to terms with their past whilst building aspirations for the future.

Staff delivering the service are extremely skilled and experienced in terms of changing the mind-sets of others, using their backgrounds in counselling, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Neuro Linguistic Programming. These skills, coupled with a structured model of intervention with participants, means that those referred for the service are really being forced to look at the underlying reasons for their offending as the first step on their journey of change with ANWC. A number of participants have commented on the impact of the intervention - One participant stated “this has really changed my value system, I didn’t realise that my negative thoughts were driving my behaviours”.

We hope to continue to work in this innovative way with participants to ensure their eventual employment is sustainable and they leave custody with an enhanced ability to emotionally function and manage themselves appropriately. As a result of this successful work, ANWC have commissioned these services to support ANWC participants in Lancashire, in HMP Kirkham and HMP Wymott.
Work Taster Feature: FareShare

Kerry Hartin, ANWC Case Manager, Lancashire

Kerry turns the spotlight to Fareshare, an inspiring charity who ANWC have partnered in order to broker work taster opportunities for our participants. Read on to find out more!

FareShare are donated short dated food from local supermarkets which was previously destined for waste. FareShare re-distribute this food to charities and community groups who transform it into nutritious meals for vulnerable people. The food they re-distribute is fresh, of good quality and in date.

Last year, Fareshare redistributed enough food for 17.7 million meals, spared 8,500 tons of food from being wasted and supported 2290 charities and community groups with food. But this is about more than meals. The organisations they supply food to – from breakfast clubs for disadvantaged children, to homeless hostels, community cafes and domestic violence refuges – are places that provide life changing support, as well as lunch and dinner. By making sure good food is not wasted, they turn an environmental problem into a social solution.

As a member of both the European Federation of Food Banks and The Global Food Banking Network, they are part of a global movement working to alleviate hunger by capturing surplus food and delivering it to the people who need it.

Having worked with another of ANWC’s close partners, Recycling Lives in the past, we were keen to learn about FareShare’s involvement in setting up the new branch of FareShare Lancashire & Cumbria (based in Preston) and any opportunities that might be available there to support our CFO3 participants. We discovered that Fareshare Lancashire & Cumbria work hard to prevent food from going to waste and instead, get it to those who need it most across the two counties. The FareShare center also plays a part supporting vulnerable people by providing training and work experience. For those keen and regular volunteers, they provide NVQ qualifications to go alongside the work experience they are gaining which will hopefully help them into paid employment in the future. The FareShare centre provides some of the most marginalised and vulnerable people with healthy meals, as well as tackling the widespread problem of food waste.

The potential for some worthwhile partnership work with ANWC became apparent and we decided to approach FareShare to see whether they would be interested in offering opportunities to CFO3 participants for work tasters. We quickly built a relationship with Claire the Centre Manager and arranged an initial visit with a small group of our participants. We found that this was a great way to engage the clients in the world of work and build more of a rapport with them, as well as being able to help them identify how the volunteering could help them progress. We are still working with FareShare and have so far had close to a dozen participants complete Voluntary work taster days with them, some of which have carried on working as Volunteers because they have gained so much satisfaction from doing so. We plan on approaching more local charities and businesses like these to see what benefit we can bring by offering some motivated participants to them for work taster days. The benefits for the companies are clear in terms of recruiting reliable volunteers and the participants are able to build self-esteem, confidence and valuable work experience.

ANWC Employer Forum Re-launch

Heather McCrorie, ANWC Business Unit Manager

March has seen the re-launch of ANWC’s Employer Engagement forum. Meeting bi-monthly, representative Case Managers from across the North West region get together to discuss the great work we are doing as a project overall in expanding on our developing network of employer partners.

When the group meets again in May, we will be joined by Alasdair Jackson, Operations Director of ANWC sub-contractor and employer ‘Recycling Lives’. Alasdair will provide us with an insight into Corporate Social Responsibility and the positive impact it can have for businesses. This input from a ‘real life’ employer will support us with understanding why Corporate Social Responsibility is something which should be taken seriously by businesses and how we can use this knowledge to our advantage when approaching new employers. Through the work of this group, we have developed some exciting partnerships within the Round 2 contract, resulting in jobs and work placements for many of our participants. This continued work will be integral to us achieving our employment targets and plans to support approximately 867 offenders into employment over the lifetime of the project.
CFO3 Sub-Group Delivery Feature

ANWC are required to deliver 5 sub-projects across the North West in the lifetime of CFO3. This provision will be delivered to a small number of participants who are deemed to be amongst some of the very hardest to reach individuals within the offender population. These are; Men and Women with mental health needs, Youths (16-18 yrs olds), Men and Women with significant drug and alcohol misuse issues, older offenders and vulnerable Women. The aim is to work with select numbers of these participants per year in order to ensure very specialist support is offered to them to improve their chances of gaining employment and reducing social exclusion.

Here we have featured 2 of these exciting projects below. Watch this space for details of the other projects as they get under way.

“St. Joe’s Bikery”

Cilla Roberts, ANWC Manager, Cheshire & Greater Manchester Community

ANWC are pleased to announce our plans to deliver a bike project to support disadvantaged offenders with significant mental health needs.

We will work with The Margaret Carey Foundation (MCF) which is a charity which recycles and repairs bicycles and wheelchairs in prison and community settings. In their work with us, MCF’s Bike Mechanic will deliver a service to our participants who are resident at St Joseph’s Approved Premises (an Approved Premises for residents with significant mental health needs). MCF services will include: tuition on how to repair and recycle broken and dis-repaired bicycles; training to become a bike mechanic. If the residents “do up” one bike, it will be given to a more disadvantaged child in Africa or Europe. If they repair a second bike, they get to keep it.

We all know the links between physical and emotional well-being and so to improve this, MCF will also arrange bicycle groups to support the participants to cycle safely on busy road routes and on Manchester’s canal and cycle paths. As well as physical and mental health, the purpose of the cycle tours is to empower our participants to cycle safely and confidently on roads and cycle paths instead of using public transport.

“Achieve More”

Lynda Booth, ANWC Manager, Lancashire

ANWC in Lancashire are pleased to have been asked to deliver a specialist project which hopes to support a small number of men with a disability, serving long prison sentences, being released to a North West address.

Whilst ANWC are experienced in working generally with older offenders, we felt it was important we were able to deliver a meaningful programme specifically for this group, providing them with beneficial skills for their release. We met with Roy Skeates who had been delivering a ‘Choices’ course for groups within HMP Wymott. He had a wealth of knowledge and experience and was able to design a course specifically suited to our sub group, which he called ‘Achieve More’.

‘Achieve More’ is designed to be a challenging, thoughtful and memorable message for the participants and provides them with an opportunity to think about the challenges they face currently; in resettling and how best to shape their future.

The first ‘Achieve More’ course was delivered in February 2016. The course was delivered over 6 two and a half hour sessions, which included interactive discussions, quizzes, DVD clips and a basic personality test. The tutor and an ANWC Case Manager were present throughout and each session was structured and meaningful for the participants.

On completion each participant received a certificate and provided us with valuable feedback regarding all aspects of the course. The feedback was extremely positive and this has encouraged others to attend future courses.
Tomorrow’s Women Wirral

Jeannette Taylor, ANWC Manager, Merseyside

Tomorrow’s Women Wirral (TWW) is a charity based in central Birkenhead. It is designed to benefit all women in the community and has a commitment to reduce female imprisonment, prevent re-offending and provide support and assistance to those women in recovery. TWW provides a women-only environment and a one-stop shop approach.

At the request of TWW and Achieve North West Connect, a range of organisations attend the centre to offer support for women with issues including domestic violence, mental health, abuse, substance misuse, finance, accommodation, education/training and employment. ANWC Case Manager, Helen Wood, is based at TWW for 2 days per week, working with women referred by their Offender Managers. Initial work involves Helen working with women to identify their needs and to agree an Action Plan on how to address these needs. She works with women to improve in areas such as Goal Setting and Self-esteem / Confidence. By completing the GOALS motivational programme with Helen, women have more confidence and motivation to engage, so referrals to specialist organisations can then be made to ensure women receive the support they need to move forward. Helen provides support and encouragement to women to attend appointments with these organisations and also focuses on the employability needs of the women. She delivers qualifications accredited by Open Awards in areas including Independent Living and Pre-Tenancy. Support with creating CVs, Disclosure of Convictions Statements, career coaching, accessing education/training opportunities, interview skills and accessing employment opportunities are all provided by Helen. As important is the support that Helen provides in taking women to appointments when they are feeling anxious, or working alongside the women to complete courses and work experience.

Feedback from one of the women that Helen is currently working with:

“Since my release my feet haven't touched the ground. The support from Achieve North West Connect has given me the confidence to go forwards and try new things. They have been there, cheered me on and provided me with the means to succeed.”

Look Beyond the Label - CFO3 Good News Story - ‘Through the Gate’

Tim Moore, ANWC Case Manager, HMP Styal and South Manchester

I first met Anna in HMP Styal in mid-January this year. She was very keen to do some sort of social work related course but she was afraid she’d be excluded because of her offence. I reassured her that this was not necessarily the case and we discussed a referral to the ‘Back on Track’ education and training centre on her release from custody. I then completed a CV with her and we looked at what she had gained by offending and what she had lost. Anna said after writing down her gains and losses it was very obvious to her that she had lost far more than she had gained by being an offender.

Following her release from Styal, Anna attended Back on Track and was assigned a mentor to help her to set achievable goals in education and helping out with youth work. This was completed successfully and Anna is now about to commence a Health and Social policy course. She is also applying to go to college in September, to go a higher course in Social Care, something which she thought would have been impossible when she was in prison.
Look Beyond the Label - CFO3 Good News Story

Stuart Raine, ANWC Case Manager in Rochdale, Greater Manchester

From day 1 on our project John demonstrated a high level of commitment & enthusiasm. He wanted to make positive changes regarding improving his overall quality of life with a view to gradually working towards securing full time employment and living a healthier lifestyle. I wanted to help him to achieve these goals.

As an ANWC Case Manager I offered ongoing support, advice and guidance giving praise and reassurance throughout which assisted with building up John’s confidence and self-esteem. We then commenced one-to-one work and we completed a telephone mock interview. I made this as real as possible for example, he prepared by researching the company he wanted to apply to, so he then had some knowledge of what they do, buzz words, job training, rate of pay, holidays, bonuses & pension fund percentage contributions.

John and I then worked together on good communication skills which are relevant in the work place; looking at interpersonal skills and values, good people skills, having a polite & friendly telephone manner - such as speaking clearly and concisely not using any slang words, being assertive & understanding of the views of others.

Once we had completed a job search, the mock interview and the support in communication skills for the work place, John’s confidence & self-esteem were high. Then we were ready to do some serious job searching. At this point John was confident enough himself to contact a job agency and due in part to how he came across in his telephone manner he was given a telephone interview straight away. Since John was very well prepared in advance the interview went well I am really pleased to say that John was successful and offered a real job position as a Customer Service operative working on the Personal Protection Insurance. This is the first of many job achievements to come for ANWC participants on CFO3.

*All names have been anonymised to protect the identity of the CFO3 participants

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