

DIRECTION FOR BEDFORDSHIRE

AUGUST 2019



Direction
for Bedfordshire

MOVING FORWARD

Whilst developing our service we have met with and learnt about a vast number of providers who are trying to upskill individuals and prepare them for employment. *The Tess Group* and *Jobskilla* have been delivering courses within Bedfordshire for Customer Services, Sales, Spectator Safety and I.T. Skills. These vocational courses are perfect for focusing an individual's job search and increasing their confidence in entering the modern workplace. We have noticed that training opportunities are evidently available for (ex)offenders and those around them, but what we now want to focus on identifying is services that can turn this training into sustainable employment. We want individuals to be empowered that committing to training and bettering themselves will lead to a stable means to rebuild their lives. We understand that gaining employment is generally challenging; therefore, we want to ensure that we are working in partnership with services that can ease this daunting process and produce productive outcomes.

This newsletter is an overview and update for partners of all that has been going on with regards to the Direction for Bedfordshire Offender Hub in August 2019.

Written and Edited by: Lauren Cox (Offender Hub Coordinator, YouTurn Futures)

This month we have really put our all into continuing to meet with our partner agencies and services. This has a two-sided objective as not only are we taking this opportunity to promote our own service, but also to widen our knowledge of the ongoing work across Bedfordshire. We want to be confident in our abilities to signpost and advise our service users; as in reaching out to us means that they are at their most vulnerable. These meetings have both broadened our expertise and been rewarded with positive feedback on Direction for Bedfordshire from fellow professionals.

So, what have we been up to?

- We met with Sue and Nigel from **Companions Real Bread CIC** who offer a fantastic work experience opportunity for individuals with fire in their bellies to turn their lives around. They currently have 8 volunteers and two employed staff members taking advantage of the skills the bakery has to offer. Not only do they provide a practical service in upskilling for employment, Companions Real Bread CIC also act as an emotional support for their service users. They encourage their service users to follow their passion and to move on from their 6-month placement into secured employment.
- **Ormiston Families** interact with families faced with incarceration by running the Visitor's Centre in a number of local prisons that support Bedfordshire residents, and through their Breaking Barriers Programme for children who are affected by a loved one being in custody. When meeting with them we discussed how we could also support families through this tough time by basing ourselves within the Visitors Centre of HMP Bedford. This would give us an opportunity to raise awareness of our service and to reassure families that we are equally here to support them through their experience of prison and the Criminal Justice System.
- We have created a link this month with **Only A Pavement Away** – a service acting as a conduit between ex-offenders & vulnerable people, and employers in the hospitality industry. They work with employers who do not discriminate against past convictions and who will give people a chance to get their lives back on track. This is a beneficial partnership to have made and we hope to regularly signpost our service users in need of sustainable employment to this charity.

YouTurn
Restore, Reform & Reintegrate



CASE STUDY

We received a referral in May 2019 from the Approved Premises in Bedford in regard to their resident "Julie". "Julie" was placed in the Approved Premises while she was awaiting her immigration case with no recourse to public funds, which meant that she was very limited in how she could spend her time there constructively. She was becoming progressively bored and disengaged which had adverse effects on her mental health. Direction for Bedfordshire were able to signpost "Julie" to the **Bedford Women's Centre** where she attended weekly and engaged in activities before moving on from the Approved Premises. When following up this referral with the staff they noted that there had been an evident positive change in "Julie". Also, at this time Direction was able to link the Approved Premises with **Reactiv8** to increase their other resident's engagement. As a result, 8 residents attended the 2-day Mindset Workshop. They will also be attending the Reactiv8 longer programme in September, with some of the residents even interested in volunteering to stay engaged with the service.

- We were invited to the **Luton Directory Live Event** which was an excellent opportunity to meet both other professionals working in Luton and the public. Direction for Bedfordshire received a wealth of positive feedback and we were able to open up discussions with agencies such as Active Luton, Vauxhall, The Recovery College and Citizens Advice Bureau. We were even surprised to make links with services such as Cat Protection who whilst their main objective is to support vulnerable animals, also come into contact with vulnerable adults. They greatly appreciated being made aware of Direction for Bedfordshire as they now could signpost these individuals to our service to access the support they need.
- As our service has evolved, we have decided to host some drop-in sessions in public places and partner agencies across the county so we can further promote our service and to be more accessible for our service users. We have already secured sessions within the Approved Premises in Bedford and the HARRP in Luton. Please get in touch if you feel like your agency would be a good base for us.

We have also had the opportunity to meet with and learn about a number of our other partner agencies:

NHS Social Prescribing	Jobskilla	POhWER
The Tess Group	Link to Change	FACES
The Change Project	P2R Bedford	Flying Start
YMCA Domestic Abuse Outreach Project	Central Beds. Employability and Skills	Women's Intuitive Programme
Training 4 U Services	Bedford Credit Union	LBC Early Help

"It was lovely to meet the 'Direction' team and hear about this fantastic new service. We think this service will be of great value to ex-offenders and their families as finding the right service can be a mine field to navigate, **FACES** are pleased to be partners in this new venture"

Wendie, FACES

"Direction for Bedfordshire Offender Hub fills a vital information gap for offenders and their families, at a time of transition."

Noelette, Luton Irish Forum

"Thank you for coming to talk about the service you offer to Offenders and families. There is very little support available for families and we will publicise what you do at the Visitors Centre at HMP Bedford and we look forward to you providing a surgery on a trial basis".

Wendy, Ormiston Families

Here's some of the valuable services we've added to our website this month:

Keystage Housing

Chums

The Change Project

Only A Pavement Away

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, WANT US TO COME AND SPEAK AT YOUR TEAM MEETING, OR WANT TO MAKE A REFERRAL CONCERNING AN INDIVIDUAL PLEASE GET IN TOUCH THROUGH ONE OF OUR PLATFORMS:

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