

DIRECTION FOR BEDFORDSHIRE

OCTOBER 2019



Direction
for Bedfordshire

SUCCESS STORY

We have been working closely with **Jobskilla** and promoting their valuable courses that are running in Bedfordshire. We circulate these courses to all our partners to generate interest and to upskill service users. Jobskilla have recently finished a **Forklift Training Course** which consisted of 2 weeks of classroom-based theory/activity and 3 days training at a warehouse in Sundon Park, Luton. We have received great feedback on this course from two Luton BeNCH CRC service users.

“Mr. JP reported that the theory side was a tad tedious however he understood that it was needed, and on the whole found the course very beneficial and could have possibly saved him approximately £800 in the process.” Mandy, Probation Service Officer

“My service user attended the Jobskilla course, of which 21 started and 12 finished. On the last day of the course a family business company who recycle metal presented to the group about a vacancy for a night shift role. He was interested and went for an interview a few days later. He has now completed a weeks training and is now waiting for a start date. This opportunity is really good for him as he has not worked for a while and he needs something to fit in with childcare. He thanked me for putting him forward.” Probation Service Officer

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 October 2019.

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We have survived and thrived through 7 months of service and we are continuously making efforts to reach those who need us most, and promote our work throughout Bedfordshire. We are continually grateful to all our partners who have supported us throughout this process, and for welcoming us into your organisations to deliver direct support to your service users.

So, what have we been up to?

- We were invited this month to present to **CBC Employment Skills and Training** networking group. This was an excellent platform to spread the word about *Direction for Bedfordshire* and to hear about the work going on to help people secure and sustain employment in Central Bedfordshire.
- I attended **Azalea's Luton Against Sexual Exploitation** group which has been designed to give the community a voice for their intolerance of sexual exploitation (SE). Azalea are working on addressing the demand of SE with their 'Flint' project and continue to support the victims of SE. They encourage members of the community to attend the LASE meetings as it is vital that the public and professionals work on this issue together.
- We attended our first **VARAC** this month which allows Direction for Bedfordshire to lend a further hand in helping particularly vulnerable people gain access to the services that they need. We can be a supportive tool for this forum for individuals who do not quite make their threshold.
- We presented to **The Women's Resettlement Forum** which is a new monthly meeting that takes place in Luton and it is all about exploring opportunities for women as part of a resettlement pathway. The aim is to increase partnership and working together in order to enhance the experience of women who access their services. Local services include **Keystage Housing, YCMA, Women's Aid, LCH Pathways, Squared & Stepping Stones**.
- We welcome any training opportunities that can help us in our roles, and so this month we attended the **SafeTALK Suicide Alertness** training. This aims to normalise discussions of suicide and to raise awareness of the signals that someone might be feeling this way. The **PREVENT** team also organised a training to explain their actions in safeguarding those who are being groomed for radicalisation, and how to recognise this.
- **Luton's Citizens Advice Bureau: Help Through Crisis Team** hosted a networking event this month which was a great opportunity to hear about their current work and to share around the table of what else is going on in the area. Networking events are essential for widening our professional knowledge and contacts so that we can signpost our service users effectively and efficiently.

YouTurn

Restore, Reform & Reintegrate



Bedfordshire
Police & Crime
Commissioner

CASE STUDY

Sasha met 'Martin' at the new **Kingsbrook and Caudwell Community Drop-in**. This drop in has been set up by the Community Wellbeing Champion for Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity. It takes place once a month and has a number of different organisations based in Christ the King Church Hall and is open to all. 'Martin' shared the struggles and frustrations he had been facing when trying to access services. He wanted help with his benefits and queried whether he was receiving the correct financial support. He felt that services that he had engaged with hadn't helped or listened to him. Sasha was able to put him in touch with a dedicated staff member at **Advice Central** who spoke to 'Martin' about his situation. This staff member had previously worked for the DWP so was very knowledgeable about benefits. She looked into his case and even went to the lengths of confirming with an old colleague, which confirmed 'Martin' is receiving the correct support given the changes with the benefits system. Whilst this was not the result that he was hoping for, 'Martin' was very appreciative of the work both **Direction for Bedfordshire** and **Advice Central** had done for him. He recognised that time had been taken to listen to his concerns and that he was constantly kept updated throughout the process.



Do you need any student volunteers? Can you offer work experience to young people from Luton or Bedfordshire? Att1otive works with schools and colleges to enhance the learning experience for young people. We are looking for a range of opportunities which could be a varied number of hours for students. For an initial conversation please contact Montell Neufville at Att1otive@gmail.com



- We had a great reception from the **Luton YOS Service Meeting** with their entire team. In explaining more about *Direction for Bedfordshire* and what our service is all about, it was recognized that we can play an essential part in bridging the gap for individuals who may be coming to the end of their time with the YOS but still need support. We can also be an extra resource to those who transition from the YOS to probation, as there is a significant change in statutory engagement between these two services.
- We recognise that there is limited support for the loved ones of people involved in criminal activity or in custody. Therefore, we have started to base ourselves once a week in the **Visitor's Centre at HMP Bedford** to promote *Direction for Bedfordshire* to this audience. While we recognise that the time in the Visitors Centre is all preparation for seeing their loved one, we just want to become a familiar face and name so that people feel comfortable approaching us with any issues or queries they may be facing.
- We have received great support and enthusiasm from the **Job Centre Plus** in Bedford when presenting to their staff. They are keen for us to have a drop-in session within their organisation to benefit both their clients and staff. We want to strengthen both of our services by sharing information about the important services that are working to support the residents of Bedford Borough. They have also kindly offered to support our upskilling by training us on Universal Credit and general benefits information.
- **Youturn Futures** and **Keystage Housing** are working together to support probation nominals engaged in Integrated Offender Management (IOM), by having a designated property to house 6 nominals. We have engaged with the residents there to find out what extra support they need and to signpost them to services that can help.
- This month we met with Richard Carrington from **CBC Housing Services**. Richard and his team work with Central Beds. Council tenants to improve their skills and get into work. They promote and support tenancy sustainment by empowering individuals to advance in their personal and professional development. They provide group courses and one to one sessions, and organise a number of Job Fairs throughout the year across the local authority.
- The **Greenlight Community Food Workshops CIC** is all about cooking nutritional meals on a budget. They teach participants about eating a healthy balanced diet as part of maintaining good health and helping you feel your best. At the end of the course participants are given a free recipe book and are part of a new social network and friendship group.

"You are so persistent. I would've just given up by now"
Zoe, Service User

"There is invaluable information on there which I believe many professionals will find useful."
Richard, Central Beds, Council

"Thanks for listening"
Stefan, Service User

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

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