

DIRECTION FOR BEDFORDSHIRE

DECEMBER 2019



Direction
for Bedfordshire

'SQUARE ONE' HMP BEDFORD DEPARTURE LOUNGE

HMP Bedford launched their 'Square One' Departure Lounge this month to make release days a more effective and supportive transition from prison back into the community. This space has been equipped with toiletry packs, phone charging facilities and rucksacks, so that the residents are no longer being sent out into the public with their belongings in plastic bin bags. All these little elements hope to humanise and ease reintegration back into society.

Like with any new venture, there have been some teething problems but this is an evolving project with lessons to be learnt from every release. We have been attending Square One when Bedfordshire based residents are being released, so that they are aware of our service and how we can help in the community. On a few occasions this has also been a beneficial place for families to wait for their loved ones to be released. This gives partners an opportunity to explain how they can also help the surrounding support networks of the residents as well.

One resident waited for his family members to meet him in Square One and we had the opportunity to share with him and his family more about *Direction* and how we could help the family as a whole. We could remind them that this was an opportunity for a fresh start and share some types of support that is available to them. The family and resident were very grateful that there was someone they could contact should they need help in the future.

Square One also provided a warm, dry place for a partner of a resident to wait while he was released. As the prison can only advise that releases are from 8:00am onwards, she arrived at 7:45 and was waiting in the cold. When I arrived at 8:45 I was able to bring her inside and make her more comfortable during this anticipating time. While we waited, I was able to explain *Direction for Bedfordshire* and reassure her that there are services out in the community that can help her partner when he is ready to access them.

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 December 2019.

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

As we come to the end of 2019, we would like to once again thank all our partner agencies for the support they have given us. As a new service we have received a continuously good reception from all the professionals that we have met, and positive feedback from those who have worked with us. Let's see what 2020 has in store!

So, what have we been up to?

- Early this month we met with **The Prince's Trust** to discuss the training and skills they can provide to 16-30-year olds. Their 'Get Into' programmes provide young people with the opportunity to gain work experience and hopeful employment. They have strong links with London Luton Airport so there can be prospects of cabin crew and ground handling roles. They encourage enterprise amongst young people by offering alternative employment courses, including self-employment and even offer grants to successful candidates. They want young people to not face barriers when entering into employment, so their Development Awards can provide up to £500 of financial support to ensure that young people are able to study or work.
- We presented to the **Luton Adult Social Care** team to give more information on Direction for Bedfordshire and how we can support individuals under their care. As the month has progressed, we have received a handful of referrals from Adult Social Care and it has opened our eyes as to how different each individual's case and situation can be. We want to support vulnerable and marginalised people within Bedfordshire as much as we can, and therefore invite any referrals from professionals if they are struggling with accessing services that their client may need.
- We also spoke to **Beverley Auburn, Skills for Work & Life Manager at Bedfordshire Employment & Skills Service**. They provide 19+ provision for those who need qualifications below Level 2 and aim to help those facing work poverty. They work to recognise gaps in training and will create bespoke courses if there is the need for them. They can also teach interview techniques, CV writing, post interview feedback and budgeting skills.
- It was good to chat to **Nicola Venning** who is the Community and Wellbeing Champion for **Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity**. Her role as a social prescriber is trying increase the participation of socially isolated residents in local groups and activities to improve their mental health and well-being. We will definitely be able to complement each other's work and use each other's knowledge to help our service users.

CASE STUDY

We received a referral from Luton Adult Social Care in regard to an elderly ex-priest who was bed-ridden and needed support in being more connected to the Church. While this type query is not under our typical remit, we were happy to help this vulnerable individual. The gentleman's social worker explained that they had arranged a sitting service with a young person, but felt that this was not beneficial to him as they did not share his interests in the Church. He missed being involved in the Church community and singing hymns. We initially contacted Stopsley Baptist Church who were a real help to us, but as the gentleman is Church of England faith, a different Church would better serve his beliefs. We then contacted a number of CofE Churches across Luton and finally St. Thomas' in Stopsley responded that they could offer support options in the New Year. Not only has this referral enabled us to help an extremely vulnerable individual, it has also broadened our knowledge to other networks of support available in Bedfordshire. We received extremely positive feedback for keeping the social worker in the loop and reassuring them on the progress of the referral.

Luton

Do you need any student volunteers? Can you offer work experience to young people from Luton or Bedfordshire?

Att10tive 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 Att10tive@gmail.com

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- We had a great meeting with **Luton Town Football Club Community Trust** to hear about the work they do within the community through football, cricket and basketball to bring groups together around the town. Their Luton Street League particularly brings 16-25-year olds from across the town to improve community cohesion. Their 'My Choice' project is a mix of various interactive workshops delivered by professionals and partners to an audience as an early intervention awareness and education scheme. They have also designed and launched an interactive website which has been taken into primary schools. This aims to encourage self-empowerment on how and where to instigate support and recognise risk factors that have influences on life choices; this will be left in each of these schools as a tool for additional support and PHSE use.
- **The Annual PCC Partnership Event** provided us with another chance to learn more about what our fellow services are doing throughout the county. Events such as this emphasise the importance of collaborative working and meeting professionals outside your organisation or typical working remit. *Direction for Bedfordshire* in particular always benefits from every new service and professional we meet. Each meeting is another piece of knowledge that can help our service grow and work more effectively when we are faced with new or complicated referrals. We want to continue raising awareness of our service for those who have not yet worked with us, so please get in touch if there are any services you are working with who you think we should link up with!
- We were given the chance to have a meeting with and site tour of **Emmaus Village Carlton**. This gave us an amazing first hand insight into the community that has been built between staff, companions and volunteers. They can house people on site on an open-ended basis, and embrace them into their community as companions, in exchange for volunteering work in the various areas of the site. They can work in the warehouse, bistro, boutique etc. and can be given the opportunity to use their individual interests and skill sets.
- We have entered into a new partnership project this month with **Women's Aid in Luton** and will be working together on a new weekly drop-in session from 6th February 2020. This will be an information and guidance opportunity for any women that need help and don't know where to go. We are hoping to evolve the drop-in session so a number of different service providers attend. We want there to be a good presentation of what is available in the town for women in need. We want to get the message out to as many public spaces as possible so that women from all walks of life know that the support is there if they need it. Please spread the word and get in touch if you would like to get involved!
- Follow the link to find out more about **Youturn Futures' Sexual Trauma National Conference** in April 2020 - <https://youturnfutures.com/youturn-national-conference/>

"We can always use a hand, and your help is valuable to us and our service users." –
HARRP Luton

"I am very impressed with your proactive involvement in trying to support my client, and updating me with your actions." –
Luton Adult Social Care

