

DIRECTION FOR BEDFORDSHIRE

JUNE 2021



Direction
for Bedfordshire

DIGITAL NETWORKING FORUMS

Our Digital Networking Forums have been ongoing since April 2020 as a reactive resource to COVID-19 forcing professionals to be isolated and work remotely. Direction for Bedfordshire's vision is to enhance collaborative working and we have achieved this time and time again through the forums. We have received consistent positive feedback from new and returning forum attendees spanning a wide variety of sectors. This is an open space designed with our partners at the heart to ensure that everyone gets the most out of this platform.

The next forum dates are as follows:

North (covering Bedford and surrounding areas): **Tuesday 20th July 2021, 2-3:30pm via Zoom.**

South (covering Luton and surrounding areas): **Wednesday 28th July 2021, 2-3:30pm via Zoom.**

Please do share these dates within your team and get in touch if someone can represent your organisation. Also please share these details with other partner agencies that you feel would benefit from attending!

We have designed a **short feedback survey** to gather the thoughts and views of forum attendees, so please follow this [link](#) to share your opinions.

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 June 2021.

Direction for Bedfordshire Coordinators: Lauren Cox, Emma Freeman & Tommy McCollin

The original plans for 21st June onwards were once again delayed which will have had a knock-on effect for services and organisations across Bedfordshire in reinstating somewhat normal service delivery. The COVID-19 pandemic has showcased the adaptability of both professionals and services users to deliver and receive support and has also enhanced the collaborative working going on amongst professionals and the general public. *Direction for Bedfordshire* look forward to working with partners and service users to fit in with the new, dynamic ways of working that have emerged over the last year. We are keen to add extra value wherever we can to ensure that partners feel connected and informed of all the varied support services available in the county, and to empower service users to engage with services that understand their needs.

So, what have we been up to:

- **YouTurn Futures** have put together an **Impact Report** for 2020-21 to showcase the great work of each business area that makes up the charity as a whole. Please follow this [link](#) to the report, and please get in touch if YouTurn Futures can add extra value to your work or service.
- This month we have finally been able to revisit the **Approved Premises** in Bedford for female offenders, where we are able to support residents to positively move forward after release from prison. On this occasion we were able to help two women who were interested in engaging with some local courses.
- We have also been back to visit **EMMAUS Village Carlton** for the first time since pandemic began. This is a peaceful location north of Bedford where those experiencing homelessness are offered accommodation and wrap-around support in exchange for volunteer work which positively contributes to the community complex which has a second-hand shop, café, and bistro as well as a garden growing much of their fresh produce. They encourage visits from partner agencies to fully appreciate and understand how the community works.
- We met with **L Lynch Plant Hire** this month to learn more about their '**Careers in Plant**' training scheme for people who want to further their skills in the construction industry. They work to support those who cannot afford the high costs of construction training courses to advance in their career and diversify the job market. Following an interview and taster session to ensure that candidates know what they are signing up for, they offer successful candidates two weeks training which progresses to working on site at one of their projects across the UK. They have a strict eligibility criterion and are keen to work with punctual, reliable, and motivated individuals. Construction courses is something that *Direction for Bedfordshire* have frequently revisited for referrals to find a solution, so please get in touch for further information on this great opportunity.
- **Develop in Bedford** have reached out to us to promote their campaign to save their Centre located on Tavistock Street since 2012. They deliver bespoke education packages for all learners who have chosen an alternative learning route from the other local colleges or training providers. **Develop** notice a distinct growth in confidence when learners attend the Centre and fear that if the Centre were to close there would be a significant, devastating impact on learners and their families. They are looking for someone to provide financial backing to the Centre to continue **Develop** being able to invest in the young people of Bedford. Please follow the [link](#) to an information document that gives further detail on **Develop's** work, their campaign petition and contact details to get involved.

CASE STUDIES

All names have been changed to protect the service user's identity

We received a referral from the Crown Court asking for help to fund a **roadworks course** for Peter. After meeting with him and discussing his long-term plans post course, we highlighted the relevant **NRSWA course** which involved all aspects of highways maintenance and made the booking arrangements for him. We also helped him with the **purchase of PPE** for the course and his future career goals. Upon completion of the NRSWA course Peter has requested some help with searching for jobs and getting an up to date and professional CV written. He has been referred to **NOAH** for help with this. He is a level-headed guy who knows what he wanted to do but finances would not allow. He is over the moon that YouTurn Futures have helped him on the way to achieving his employment goals.

This month we have helped two people who have **convictions for sexual offences to complete self-disclosure statements** for future employers to inform them of unspent convictions. We have supported them with writing their statements and liaising with Probation to ensure they are satisfied with the amount of information they are disclosing. People with these types of convictions have a real challenge in being given a second chance but having stable employment is an important protective factor in reducing the likelihood that someone will reoffend and so we will do our best to support people as best as we can.

Noel contacted his previous probation officer to **seek advice about his housing situation**. Unfortunately, as he was no longer supervised by Probation, they were unable to support him with making referrals, but knew that *Direction* would be able to help him as an ex-offender. We contacted Noel and discovered that he had moved in temporarily with his brother and family after a relationship breakdown. With several children living at the address, it was unsuitable for him to stay, and he had been given a deadline to leave. Noel was unfamiliar with how to go about reporting to the Council as homeless and needed support in doing so. We completed a homelessness referral to the Local Authority who were grateful to us for highlighting the issue and have agreed to move Noel to temporary accommodation by his deadline. Noel was incredibly grateful for our support, **"You're an absolute star, thank you so much for helping me!"**

- **Clinks** delivered a national webinar to share information on the **RECONNECT: Care after Custody** project. This is an enhanced support service for disengaged prison leavers with low level needs to improve their health outcomes while living back in the community, with a particular high priority to support rough sleepers or those experiencing homelessness. The project is delivered in connection with the Liaison and Diversion service and the Revolving Doors Lived Experience Team who provide expertise and the voice of those with lived experience. The project provides 3–6-month support plans to help people transition to independence. The webinar featured a segment from a RECONNECT service user from Devon who spoke highly of the project and how it has kept him motivated and engaged with services and has given him a clear path. This has not yet been rolled out in Bedfordshire, but we look forward to this needed support being implemented for our local prison leavers in due course.
- We attended an **Adult Safeguarding Training** through Safeguarding Bedfordshire this month to keep our knowledge up to date. When working with vulnerable adults we must work in a personal and person-centred way in the knowledge that all adults have a choice and will make their own decisions if they have capacity. If adults reject support, then we must continue to bring up positive ideas and remind them that support is always there when they want it.
- **The Luton Homeless Partnership Meeting** gave updates that the **Citizen's Advice Bureau** are now getting volunteers and staff back into the office and they are offering digital face to face appointments. The **Homeless Health Peer Advocacy** project are now ready to start offering support to those experiencing or at risk of homelessness, or those experiencing adverse health effects. The support is provided by volunteers with lived experience and is intended to continue initiate and sustain positive engagement with services to improve health outcomes amongst this highly vulnerable demographic.
- **St Martin's in the Fields Frontline Network** delivered a conference made up of different webinars for frontline workers, and we attended sessions around Complex Needs and Universal Credit, and Crisis Management. These information sessions gave an insight into the DWP's discretionary offer for customers with complex needs and how to diffuse and resolve a crisis situation when working with service users.
- **Homeless Link** delivered a **Bedfordshire Community of Practice** session on **No Recourse to Public Funds**. The **King's Arms Project** delivered a presentation about the resources and support available for these clients across Bedfordshire. This is an ongoing issue for community services and there was a clear message that we need to be highlighting these issues to decision makers within our organisations. There is a helpline available for both service users and professionals to get advice on immigration, asylum etc.

"You have been very helpful".

National Probation Service

"Thank you for everything".
Service User

"I like this [forum], this is one of my favourite meetings".

Bedfordshire and Luton Recovery College

"I've gone from nothing to having all this information to work through, it's really brilliant!"

Luton Adult Social Care

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Service Shout Out!



PROJECT NOVA

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
WALKING WITH THE WOUNDED RFEA

Project Nova is a **veterans' organisation** funded by the NHS that helps guide and mentor veterans' who are involved in the Criminal Justice System. They deliver a wide range of support to help **prevent reoffending** and link in with all the service charities. There are several new projects that their **Bedfordshire co-ordinator, John Phillips** is involved with: **The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) Past and Present Project** connects veterans with a new programme that helps record and maintain the graves of veterans buried in local cemeteries. They work in conjunction with the CWGC to clean and maintain the graves as part of a wider partnership project with the National Probation Service as part of the community service programme. There are also **emerging projects underway with the Prison Service** to establish Veterans in Custody groups within local prisons working alongside the RBLI and SSAFA to ensure seamless transition from prison to life outside prison, following release. Once again, this is to help guide the veteran away from reoffending by ensuring that there are recovery pathways and opportunities for housing and employment in place on or before the release date. Project Nova **work with all UK Armed Forces veterans** including the Merchant Navy and Reserve Forces personnel. Here is a [link](#) to their webpage for more details.



**Bedfordshire
Police & Crime
Commissioner**

YouTurn
Restore, Reform & Reintegrate