

DIRECTION FOR BEDFORDSHIRE

JULY 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.

Due to the summer holidays, we have decided to take a longer break between the forums and they will return in September 2021.

Please promote the forums amongst your team, wider network, and anyone 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 July 2021.

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

July 2021 marked 'Freedom Day' from COVID-19 restrictions across the UK. While this may have been a well anticipated and celebrated day for some, we know that for many of the most vulnerable in our communities that this may be met with feelings of worry and fear. Through our Digital Networking Forums, we have recognised that many of the partner organisations approached this day with caution and will be gradually reintroducing face to face service delivery from this point on. The blended approach to service delivery of both remote and direct resources will hopefully cater to the wide-ranging needs of client groups and can provide a bespoke service for each individual. As always, *Direction for Bedfordshire* are keen to support these plans and enhance them in any way that we can.

So, what have we been up to:

- We met with **Mary Seacole** this month to find out about their **Barbering Project for 16–25-year-olds**. This is an 8-week programme covering elements of infection control, health and safety, business training, and at the end of the course an external accreditor attends for a day of training to receive an ABT qualification which allows someone to get insurance for practicing barbering. They also intertwine crime reduction and exploitation training within this programme. This is open to any young person across Bedfordshire who is vulnerable or at risk of exploitation. They are able to take on people over 25 but the majority of the 6-person cohort does need to fit into those age ranges. Please get in touch if you are working with any young people who would like to take advantage of this great opportunity.
- Following the success of the Safer Streets work in Bedford, Central Bedfordshire Council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner are delivering the **Safer Streets** project to target the Downside area of Dunstable. The project aims to improve the area for residents in terms of reducing crime and helping residents to feel safe. We joined the Council, Police, and other partner agencies in visiting residents to canvass their opinions about how they felt about their area and to offer them support with different ideas to improve the security of their properties. *Direction for Bedfordshire* will continue to support the events connected to this project so we can highlight our services to local residents who may benefit from our support and knowledge.
- Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a hugely increased workload for the **Jobcentre Plus**, and a pause on sanctions for anyone who is claiming job seeker benefits in a bid to support those affected by the pandemic, we have recently had an update that there will be a **phased and supportive return to enforcement of the rules from DWP**. Anyone supporting people who are claiming Universal Credit and those looking for work is advised to ensure that contact details are up to date on their online journal, and appointments are attended when invited in to see a Work Coach. The good news is that there are many jobs available across various sectors in Bedfordshire and there is a huge amount of support for young people especially. We are able to signpost to a host of local partners who can support unemployed people back into work through job searching, CV writing, interview skills and many more.

YouTurn
Restore, Reform & Reintegrate



"Thanks for what you and Emma did during the pandemic to keep Direction going, and indeed heighten its presence during this tricky period"

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

"Thank you very much for the information you send. I pass that on to my colleagues and they've found it extremely beneficial as well, so it's a good two-way partnership!"

Royal British Legion

Thank you, I have appreciated your involvement and guidance throughout – you've been a great help. "

CGL

"Thanks for all you do"
The Probation Service

"This is fantastic as has been a source of frustration and significant barrier for years."

The Probation Service

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- The **Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner** are offering a **fully funded programme for young people across Bedfordshire this summer**. They are working with Boxing Saves Lives and other local businesses to offer community-based **Boxing and Martial Arts classes for 11-16-year-olds**. These sessions will be an opportunity to learn skills in focus, confidence, and health, and provides a positive outlet to spend the school holidays. They are being held all over the county in community centres and parks. Please follow this [link](#) to see the class timetable and how to sign up.
- **Terrence Higgins Trust** deliver HIV support services and iCASH Sexual Health Support for 13–25-year-olds. They offer a safe space for young people to approach a confidential professional who will not judge and are there to help. They are currently trying to promote STI testing among young people coming out of lockdown, and to support this they are offering a [training session](#) about how professionals can approach this subject with young people
- We attended **Risk Assessment Training** to update our skills and to remind ourselves how to best balance prevention and protection. This training highlighted how we need to skills, knowledge, and evidence to highlight risks to those that don't want to acknowledge them, and we need to communicate these in a suitable way to help with understanding. We must offer personalised risk assessments with the aim to protect the individual and educate the needs of clients to all that are involved with that individual.

CASE STUDIES

All names have been changed for confidentiality

We were contacted by a vulnerable young mother who had been placed into temporary accommodation. The property only came with a fridge, cooker, and beds so she was asking for help to source essential items, especially for having a young baby, such as crockery, cutlery, and a microwave. We received a great response from our post on **Next Door** and were able to get these to her within two days. As this is her first tenancy, we also connected her with **Penrose** for floating support to understand and sustain her tenancy. She is eligible for grants from **Buttle UK**, and the **BBC Child in Need Emergency Essentials** grant which Penrose will help her to apply for.

Luton Adult Social Care contacted us following a one-off violent domestic incident to source some support for the perpetrator. When discussing this case with partners from domestic abuse services, such as **Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership** and **MK Act**, they were able to highlight that as this was an isolated incident fuelled by alcohol, they suggested that a domestic abuse perpetrator programme would not be suitable for him and rather support from substance misuse services would be more appropriate. **Mindfulness Support Service** also passed on information for their short perpetrators course.

Service Shout Out!



Penrose Roots

Penrose Roots to Recovery offer **community-based recovery services**, mainly in Luton but now they have a new project offer for a community garden in Bedford. The Bedford project is working in collaboration with The Bedfordshire and Luton Recovery College and they welcome club members to come down to 2 Woburn Road, Bedford on Wednesdays 10am-2pm. Referrals to become a club member for this group should go through the Recovery College - elft.recoverycollege@nhs.net. They have a new Community Garden Project at Strathmore Avenue, Luton which also doubles as a social group where people can get involved in the horticulture activities, or they can attend the various social activities. This is called the Connects Group and runs Fridays 11am - 2pm. They are looking also for potential new volunteers. They are always keen to bring on new people with new ideas to make the most out of the projects and to effectively cater for people's needs. All groups are open to anyone across Bedfordshire. They appreciate that travel can be difficult, but people are welcome to attend whatever group they're interested in, or the one that is most convenient. If you would like to organise a visit down to the gardens for you, your team, or your client, or make a referral then please contact Liz Aldous: elizabeth.aldous@penrose.org.uk

