



United Together Pre-release Programme evaluation report

July 2020



















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About us









Active Lancashire is the strategic lead for Sport and Physical Activity in Lancashire. Sport and physical activity have the power to influence behaviours and develop skills which can have a broader, positive impact on people's lives. Our work in leading and facilitating effective partnerships across the county from key influential decision makers, through to community grass roots organisations aims to encourage Lancashire residents to engage in sport and physical activity and lead a happy, more prosperous life.

bespoke behaviour change programme. It is an innovative peer led project using physical activity to deliver better outcomes for adults in recovery from substance misuse. It now engages wider groups of people including those with mental health issues, ex-offenders, the homeless and people with other addictions such as gambling. It is an ambitious partnership project which aims to encourage more active and healthier lifestyles. Free sessions are delivered across Lancashire by peer support workers who began as participants on the project themselves.















Project summary

The United Together Pre-release programme is a new initiative to provide an essential link to the wider United Together programme in the community. The aim is to provide a joined-up approach which engages those near to release whilst still in prison and then supports them immediately from release to help them overcome key barriers they face and to reduce the likelihood of them re-offending. On release participants are met by our Challenge Through Sport Initiative (CSI) Support Workers with lived experience, who develop personal action plans with each individual and then link them into support from a whole range of support in the community including our Football Trusts.

The pre-release programme has been developed to provide that initial contact with those in prison and to offer them the opportunity to undertake accredited training and personal development which will build confidence and trust with agencies who are then able to support them following release. The offer also includes training for the workforce within our Football Community Trusts who will deliver some sessions in the pre-release programme and offer support in the community. Many of these staff have not worked with similar cohorts of participants previously. Finally, the training offer is also planned for prison staff to upskill and increasing their knowledge of how to provide a more varied sport and physical activity offer.

The development of this programme took much longer than we originally anticipated and there were many challenges to overcome. However, a key driver for the successful delivery to-date was the consultation which our CSI team undertook with prisoners and with the staff. This provided a much clearer picture of how those in prison felt and what they ideally would like to see on release from prison.









Outcomes

During the first year of the project we have:

- Upskilled 26 Football Club Trust staff who found the training really useful and felt more confident in how to engage and support those in prison
- Delivered 1 week-long training block to prisoners, leading to the personal and emotional development of 12 prisoners
- Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the prison staff training had to be postponed for a later date; however, the prison staff that attended the first round of training for prisoners expressed an increased interest to support the programme and get more involved with delivery

Challenges

From the beginning of the project we had to overcome a number of challenges, from getting the Governor and the prison staff on board to overcoming some negative experiences that prisoners already had from external agencies. As this was the first time that we were setting up a project within a prison, it meant that we were not aware of the processes and procedures and we were learning as we were going along. Broken communication between the partners, not suitable rooms, outdated or missing equipment and limited offers for ex-offenders from some of the Football Community Trusts were also some of the challenges the delivery team faced and managed to overcome successfully.









Key Achievements

- Developed a successful partnership for delivering the programme in prison and worked alongside with the Twinning prison programme
- Set up a Steering group consisting of Active Lancashire, the Cumbria & Lancashire Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC), the National Probation Service (NPS), The Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), Great Places Housing Association, and Burnley Football Community Trust.
- · Physical activity sessions helped prisoners stay engaged with the project and form a great friendship
- · The delivery team gained the prisoners' trust by being understanding and adopting a strong but not dictate delivery
- The prison staff expressed an increased interest to support the programme and get more involved with delivery
- The CSI Team have been invited to talk on the NW Prison Radio Show and promote the project
- Interest from other prisons to deliver the project. DWP has expressed an interest in expanding the United Together project to young offenders 16-24
- Started a partnership with the Violence Reduction Unit (Police) as a result from this work
- Great Places Housing association decided to expand their involvement with the project and provide holding accommodation for offenders upon their release
- Despite the initial resistance, we have a meeting with the Governor of Preston prison to discuss the project further
- All partners and specifically NPS are more aware of the workforce development issues that need to be addressed









Lessons Learned

- 1. Setting an in-prison programme is not straightforward but a lengthy and time-consuming process
- 2. Key stakeholders need to be on board from the beginning of the project and can play a vital role in facilitating or impeding the development of the project
- 3. Creating a strong partnership can provide a better support to those coming through probation.
- 4. Upskilling the Football Community Club Trusts and prison staff is a crucial part of the project as it helps them increased their understanding of how to keep ex-offenders engaged
- 5. Sport and physical activity have the power to keep people engage and break down barriers. By upskilling and empowering the prisoners, it can change their mind-set of how they stay on track upon release
- 6. Prisoners have negative experiences of external agencies, thus it is important to have a delivery team that can offer empathy and share their lived experience with them
- 7. A lot more questions need to be asked before a person is released. People's concerns need to be listened to before they come out of prison or once they are working with probation
- 8. Mental health and substance misuse assessments would be useful to be done before the person leaves prison
- 9. Support that starts in prison and continues upon release is important especially for people with complex needs and can help break the cycle of re-offending.
- 10. Contact with probation services officers in the community would be useful especially regarding accommodation and specific patterns of behaviour
- 11. Contact with the person's family or friends who support them need to be made prior to their release
- 12. Support should be easily available not only to the ones leaving prison but to their families or support networks. This will give them the tools to understand some of the person's behaviours.

The national and local Active Lancashire CSI picture

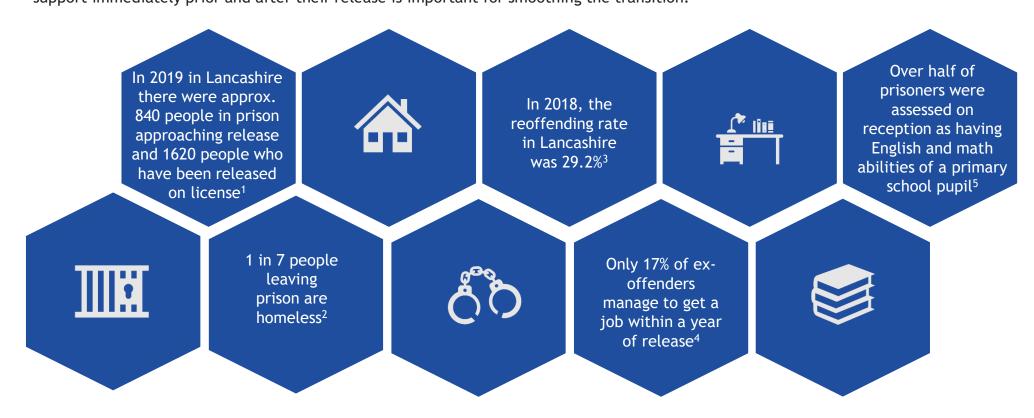








There is no doubt that people who are about to be released from custody face multiple challenges and barriers as they re-enter society. Many of them are struggling to reintegrate back into the local community increasing the risk of reoffending. Increased support immediately prior and after their release is important for smoothing the transition.



About the project









The United Together Pre-release programme is a new initiative to provide an essential link to the wider United Together programme in the community. The aim is to provide a joined-up approach which engages those near to release whilst still in prison and then supports them immediately from release to help them overcome key barriers they face and to reduce the likelihood of them reoffending. On release participants are met by our Challenge Through Sport Initiative (CSI) Support Workers with lived experience, who develop personal action plans with each individual and then link them into support from a whole range of support in the community including our Football Trusts.

The pre-release programme has been developed to provide that initial contact with those in prison and to offer them the opportunity to undertake accredited training and personal development which will build confidence and trust with agencies who are then able to support them following release.



A timeline of the project development

2018

Oct

2018

Meeting with the Governor of HMP Preston informing him of the project. The manager of the Re-offending Unit (ROU) contacts Active Lancashire (AL) to discuss the offer and meets with Twinning Project and the Minister of Justice (MOJ).

AL holds a meeting with Spectrum at HMP Prison on the G Wing (Substance Misuse Wing of the prison) to discuss the UT Project and they are very keen to be part of it.

HMP Preston's family liaison officer attends CSI team meeting, delivers Hidden Harm workshop and invites UT to be part of the family days they run.

CSI manager is cleared on vetting and can now visit the prison any number of times.

AL meet with UT football mentors who are all keen to work in the prison and their details are sent through for vetting, but struggling to set up a meeting with the Prisons gym instructors.

CSI make contact and meet other agencies working in the prison such as Shelter, DWP, Probation to bring them up to speed with the UT Project.

Preston North End (PNE) Community Football Trust arranged a joint meeting offering some prison officers a tour. The meeting is very PNE focused and there is a lack of understanding about the UT project

Meeting with the ROU Manager who is very positive about the project. Discussion focused on arranging meetings with prisoners, their families, prison gym instructors and internal partners so all of them could contribute to the development of the project. Vetting procedures for the delivery team and reviewing the facilities that would be needed for the delivery of the project such as one Sports hall (a bit bigger than a badminton court), 2 x gymnasiums with all 3 of them having class rooms attached are also discussed.

A meeting is arranged with PNE and CSI and PNE agree to work together to go into the prison and to deliver activities.

UT meeting arranged at Burnley Football Club with the mentors, the ROU, Probation, AL and CSI. The Learning Skills and Employment Manager (LS&EM) attends instead of the ROU. The meeting is not very positive as the LS&EM manager is a realistic thinker and not a risk taker as the other manager was and everyone leaves the meeting deflated.

CSI Manager on continual chase up of ROU for meeting dates, clearance of mentors, arrangement of gym instructors meeting

Nov 2018

A timeline of the project development (cont.)

Names sent through to HMP Preston again for vetting clearance.

CSI and PNE meets with the ROU manager to arrange a focus group with prisoners. CSI also meets the minister at the Landmark Church

Focus group held at HMP Preston with 24 prisoners. CSI, Football trust mentors, DWP and Active Lancashire attend.

Still unable to arrange a meeting with the gym instructors.

Email communication between the Rehabilitation Officer, PNE and the new ROU manager as AL and PNE try to establish a new relationship.

HMP are starting to direct their conversations towards PNE and do not understand that AL is leading the project and is the funding holder.

A member of the delivery team has his vetting clearance knocked back due to his past lived experience. HMP Preston's Governor will not make any allowances. This also meant that DB could not have a gate pass to visit the prison.

Trying to arrange meetings with HMP Preston is proving very difficult. Still unable to hold a meeting with the gym instructors.

Dec 2018

Jan 2019

019

Feb

Mar 2019

Apr 2019

May (2019 PNE attend the family day with the HMP Preston visitors and the day is characterised as a success.

CSI shares an email with all the agencies in the prison reassuring them that the UT project aim is to support them and not to replace them. UT is an additional offer being given to them and an overview is finally shared.

A meeting with other agencies within the prison is held to finalise parts of the training.

ROU manager leaving and the invitation for AL to attend the Offender Mental Health Pathway is cancelled due to his departure.

Still find it hard to engage with the ROU and the LS&EM managers

Meeting at HMP Preston with PNE, The ROU manager and LS&EM.

Invitation to AL to attend the Offender Mental Health Pathway

Still struggling with HMP Preston staff wanting to work direct with PNE on the UT project and not understanding AL is leading on it. The Twinning Project (TTP) now becoming a barrier and HMP Preston stated all activity had to go through PNE for TTP. PNE are very mindful of the partnership and worked hard to convince them otherwise.

CSI and PNE work on the programme to be delivered in HMP Preston. Great Places and AL Workforce manager brought in on the meetings.

A timeline of the project development (cont.)

Jun

2019

2019

The Twinning Project remains a barrier and continually referred to. No teams in Lancashire at this time are signed up to it.

Meeting with PNE and HMP Preston; however, very much focused on PNE and TTP.

AL attend the Offender Mental Health Pathway workshop.

CSI manager contacts TTP to discuss the programme and the barriers it is causing. TTP suggests that we should work together.

CSI arranges for TTP to attend a meeting at PNE with CSI, PNE and the HMP Prison to discuss the barriers.

HMP Preston still not convinced so CSI manager invites the MOJ to the meeting with TTP and partners.

CSI Manager emails the HMP Preston Governor with concerns over the direction of the conversations and the lack of understanding of AL leading on the programme.

CSI manager arranges a meeting with the LS&LEM & ROU Manager to clear issues that have been building up re communication. CSI manager meets HMP Preston staff and has a positive conversation.

Clearance emails now being sent for other staff.

PNE meeting with TTP. TTP requests a Service Level Agreement (SLA) doing between Preston Prison and them. Preston Prison do not understand TTP and are convinced they have to go through PNE.

Contact with the HMP Veterans in Custody Officer to work with him on the project.

Preston Prison still not understanding the partnership and still directing towards PNE.

CSI manager contacts MOJ to discuss the barriers TTP is causing and they inform us that there should be no issues and UT can work with TTP or alongside it.

AL feeding back to Sport England (SE) re the prison project.

2nd workshop for Offender Mental Health Pathway takes place and AL attends. New partners met.

All partners meet with TTP. The meeting is eventful but not productive and TTP did not gain any friends. The meeting created a bond between CSI, HMP Preston and PNE. From this day the partnership changed and PNE and CSI were able to work together with Preston Prison who also realised TTP was not who we all had to go through.

Aug 2019

Sept 2019

A timeline of the project development (cont.)

Oct

2019

Nov

2019

Staff who are cleared need to attend an Induction at HMP Preston which is 5 days. Limited dates but the communication is still proving very difficult with Prison officers. No response re booking on the induction or the clearance of other staff.

Still not able to meet with the gym staff to discuss what we can do in the gym.

PNE, CSI and AL complete their induction.

Discussions now taking place re equipment and the passing of security, training rooms etc.

Meetings and emails finalising the programme, gaining clearance for Great Places (GP) staff.

Prison Programme finally agreed and shared. Referral forms, feedback forms, consent forms all created for the programme.

Attend the prison on the 31/1 before the programme starts to meet the 12 and do an introduction to the team. Able to also meet with the gym instructors who we have still not been able to meet with.

CSI meet with LS&LEM to discuss the programme and plan for the next one. Informed a great success and HMP Preston staff thought it was good too. PNE lead promoted so another staff member takes over.

CSI manager completes induction and CSI staff attend Managing Personality Disorder training through NPS at Wymott Prison

Steering group created and meeting arranged between Active Lancashire, the Cumbria & Lancashire Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC), the National Probation Service (NPS), The Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), Great Places Housing Association, and Burnley Football Community Trust.

Meeting with HMP Preston, PNE & CSI at PNE re setting a date for the programme. Agreed the programme would run over 5 days to 12 prisoners who were all due out within 12 weeks.

CSI, PNE & AL attend HMP Preston to speak with ROU staff to select prisoners suitable for the programme. Staff extremely helpful. 4 of UT team visit prisoners and discuss the project, checks then done on NOMIS to check their history, their needs and if they are able to attend the programme.

PNE, GP, CSI all agree to provide a reward for the prisoners completing the programme. GP provides a goodie bag with a £25 love to shop voucher in. CSI provides time credit vouchers.

Programme runs with lots of learning. GP attends the prison and brings in a mobile phone which is a prohibited item and has to have it taken away in a sealed plastic bag. On collection the staff member is interviewed re the reason it was brought in.

Jan[•] 2020

Feb 2020

Aims



Support prisoners reach their full potential by providing a pathway of personal & professional development

Develop a workforce who can use a tailored sports offer to engage, motivate and inspire individuals during their transition from custody to community



Methodology









For the development of the project

Forming a partnership with PNE and Great Places and start working together as a team on developing the project

2 focus groups were organised with key stakeholders including prison staff and prisoners

For the evaluation of the project

We utilised a mix approach to measure the impact and engagement with the project, consisting of:

- gathering feedback from prisoners throughout the week
- session attendance logs
- 2 case studies to showcase the impact the project had on participants and
- 1-2-1 interviews with members of the delivery team

Training development Active Lancashire









To shape the programme, an initial consultation was carried out with prisoners, prison guards and all the partners in the Re-Offending Unit. In the 2 focus groups, participants were asked about what type of support they would like during their first two weeks of being released, what training opportunities they would like to attend and what activities would be of interest to them. The findings of the focus group have provided valuable insight regarding the kind of package of support that needed to be developed. Specifically, stakeholders identified the following 8 areas:

Ongoing peer support Financial Support and Form completing Universal Credit support Realistic goals and target setting Volunteer opportunities and feeling part of a community Housing Needs addressed early Gym and fitness opportunities Awareness of criminal convictions support

The pre-release training offer provides high quality engagement and training whilst in prison, informs prisoners of the offer once out and engages people in activities and learning. The 5day programme was developed in collaboration with Active Lancashire, CSI, Great Places and the Football Community Trusts and was approved by the Re-offending Unit.

Pre-release offer



Goal setting session



4 Accredited workshops (Mental Health Awareness, Safeguarding Adults in Sport and Physical Activity, First Steps into Coaching and Multi Skills Activator)



Train like a Pro module, the module covered counts towards a qualification if anyone continues the course after released



Pre-employability and training support



Wellbeing and stress management



Multi-skills tournament

Project targets

(4 in Year 1 and 6 in Year 2), leading to the personal and emotional development of **25** prisoners in total. However, it was highlighted by the prison staff that the spreading out of the sessions across several weeks would have a negative impact on engagement. Thus, we decided to deliver the training sessions within a week.

The initial proposal was to deliver 12-week sessions in prison

2 week-long training blocks delivered in prison

2 training sessions upskilling Football Trust and prison staff

100 individuals engaging with the United Together project and benefiting from individual or group mentoring sessions

70 individuals linked with Football Trusts

45 individuals progressing on to training, apprenticeships, or employment

Due to Covid-19 pandemic the delivery of the second training course and the training session for the prison staff had to be postponed.



Football Community Trusts staff training









26 staff from Football Community Trusts participated in Level 2 Multi-skills development in sport qualification and Mental Health Awareness course.

Many of these staff have not worked with similar cohorts of participants previously and the training helped them gain a better understanding of the complex barriers prisoners face and how best to engage them in taking part in sport activities. This training has also taught the staff the importance of coaching the person in front of them in a non-judgemental way, rather than taking into account any past experiences the prisoners have been involved in.

The Level 2 Multi-skills Development in sport qualification, enabled staff to understand how to develop balance, agility and co-ordination through the delivery of activity and games to adults who had limited sport or physical activity skills.

Participants said that the training made them aware that they should not take for granted that all participants have good balance, agility and co-ordination. The training also increased their understanding of how to break things down to simple activities, to develop these fundamentals movements through games and activities.

Staff from Preston North End Community Football Trust, a key delivery partner for this work, took part in the Mental Health First Aid awareness course. Participants said that they had little awareness of the physical impact that people with mental health issues experience and the benefits which physical activity can provide. Coaches felt more comfortable that they could adapt their sessions to provide more of a focus on supporting mental wellbeing.









In prison training

The first training block took place in February and lasted a full week with both morning and afternoon sessions.

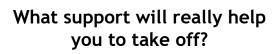
In total 12 prisoners participated in the first round of the project.

Prisoners attended all the sessions and stayed engaged thoughout the week.

The prison staff stated that this has never happened before and it was very common for prisoners to disengage after a couple of sessions.

Upon their release, all 12 of them engaged with the United Together project and continued receiving individual support based on their needs.

A detailed description of the training sessions and feedback from the prisoners follows.





Goal setting session

What might blow the balloon off course?

<u>ئ</u>

What or who will hold you back?

Who needs to be on board?

What do you need to do to develop to help you to take off?

The week started with a goal setting session to give participants something to work towards to. For the goal setting session we used the balloon goal setting tool where participants are asked to reflect on the areas of their lives that need to develop as well as the people that can support them or hold them back.

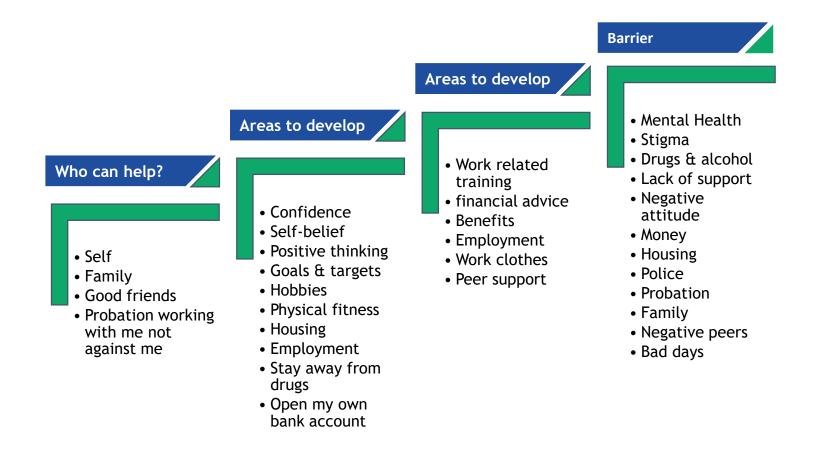








During the goal setting session, participants identified facilitators that could reduce their risk of reoffending make their reintegration easier as well as the factors or people that could hinder their attempt to re-enter society after their conviction. The session revealed that prisoners experience complex issues that require the involvement and collaboration of different agencies to address pressing issues such as housing, substance misuse, and financial support.



9 out of 12 said that they would like help finding a job or gain some employability skill certification such as CSCS card



Employment support

Most of the participants expressed an increased interest in gaining employment after their release; however, they acknowledged that they need to work on some areas and put their lives in order before gaining employment. Participants identified the following barriers:

- Discrimination due to their criminal record
- Low self-esteem
- Substance misuse issues
- Learning difficulties
- Social isolation
- Mental health conditions
- Lack of experience
- Lack of family support

2 participants
expressed an express in coaching after the training



The session was positively received by the group. Participants learned about the benefits of wellbeing and had the opportunity to practice some mindfulness exercises. The session also gave them the opportunity to explore how they come across to other people.

"I feel so positive and more stronger to change my life and make a difference to others and the world"

"I've enjoyed today and learned a lot about my wellbeing and mindfulness. It's made me think a lot about how I come across and how I am going to listen more"







Physical Activity

The inclusion of physical activity in the training programme capture the interest of the prisoners and spending time in the gym kept them engaged throughout the week.

All prisoners, no matter their capability, engaged with the activities the delivery team had organised for them and some expressed an interest in gaining direct experience of leading sport and physical activity sessions after their release.

Without a doubt, the sport and physical activity sections of the programme served as a 'hook' for engaging prisoners and making them aware of the United Together offer and the support that is available for them.

"Good session learnt you can do practical with little equipment very enjoyable"



"Today been very good for me! I haven't been Active for 3 years until today and it has most definitely been a very healthy and fun day...Thank you!" "It's been a good course and it's nice to know there are other services out there on offer. I will be using them as much as I can on release and grasping what's on offer"

"YES I do trust each and everyone of you now, thank you all for your support and help"

Feedback

Feedback from the participants was positive throughout the week. One of the main factors that contributed to the success of the course is the trusting relationship the delivery team managed to establish with the group.

On the first day the delivery team consisting of Active Lancashire, CSI, Great Places and Football Community Trusts team shared their own and other team member's history and how they had lived experience. This immediately broke down some barriers and the feeling of understanding soon became apparent as a few of the team are exoffenders, in recovery from substance misuse or experience mental health issues.

As the week progressed every one of them stated they believed the delivery team genuinely wanted to make a difference to their lives and that they were 'not just a tick box'. Participants felt assured in opening-up and sharing with the delivery team their concerns and hopes.

End of the week feedback



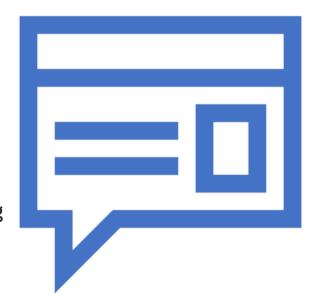






'Really brought the team together'

'I've been sleeping and eating better, more calm, met new friends and peers'



'It's the best thing I have been on in Prison'

'Good course and you can tell the trainers care about what we are going to do on release'

'It has really made me think different about getting out in the real world and having people there to help when released'









Other outcomes

77 ex-offenders received individual or group mentoring support



31 ex-offenders progressing in employment or training

13 ex-offenders linked with Football Trusts

Case study 1- Kieran









Kieran is now 27 years of age and has been taking drugs since he was around 14.

As a child he spent many days and years in and out of hospital due to health issues. This had a knock on effect with his education and friendships as he was not able to attend primary school when he had his operations. His High School days were very troubled and his behaviour also deteriorated at school. He was later diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD).

At the age of 14 Kieran became involved in a relationship with an older girl and at the age of 15 he became a father to his first child. By the time he was 19, he was the father of 3 young children. The relationship was volatile and Kieran found it very difficult to cope with and easily became frustrated. As Kieran's mental health and substance misuse increased the relationship went downhill leading to Kieran being sectioned on more than one occasion. He spent time in and out of prison and unfortunately on one of his visits inside he started using Spice and became addicted.

Since 2017 he has lived in a flat in a 'not so nice' area surrounded by other people in addiction. On his release he usually managed a few weeks clean before lapsing back into his old behaviours and smoking Spice again. He would

become mentally unstable, seek attention by calling the Police or the Crisis team and then eventually find himself locked up again. This has been an ongoing cycle for Kieran.

The last time he was in Preston Prison, Kieran agreed to attend a 5-day course on the United Together Project. Kieran thoroughly enjoyed the week and interacted well with the rest of those on the course and with the delivery team. He agreed to continue to engage with United Together on his release. Little did he know that this was going to be a turning point in his life and one big roller coaster that was going to help to break the cycle of his behaviour patterns of his previous releases.

When Kieran was released he met up with some of the CSI team and his probation officer. The team also spoke with his Mum, giving her the support she had not had before and it gave her confidence to deal with her son and understand what was happening to him.

It was a rocky road to start with and Kieran started to return to his old behaviours and picked up Spice again. Being in the same environment with nothing different in place he was quickly becoming frustrated and fed up. Another issue was Kieran being released back to the same flat in the same town.









He has had numerous phones taken from him, he has had people enter his house and take his property, he has been used as a punch bag when people were in the wrong mood, he has had people calling at all hours at his door etc. He started to become very agitated and was feeling angry, fed up and wanted to give up.

After seeking advice, the Crisis team were contacted. However, Kieran did not have a mental health assessment prior to his release or one set up once out. When he was first released neither his GP nor the Crisis team would take any ownership for him and he was passed from pillar to post. The GP would not look at his medication and he was actually released from Prison without any medication.

After a long wait he has been assessed by the Mental Health team and he is now under the CMHT. CGL - Inspire was also contacted so that he could be treated for his drug addiction. Inspire became another fabulous solid support and by working together Kieran was eventually recognised that he should be treated for dual diagnosis - substance misuse and mental health issues. During this whole time, the CSI team continued to support him and they have been out to visit Kieran and his Mum at all different times of the day and sometimes 4 or 5 times a week.

After a long hard battle Kieran is now for the first time ever going to go into rehab and he will receive intense counselling too which he has not had before.

There is still a long way to go and a lot of personal issues

to be resolved but by partners working together we have shown what can be achieved. The sharing of knowledge has been key in the case of Kieran. Plus, working with Kieran's mum, she was able to get the support she had never had before and it enabled her to ask questions and learn about her son's addictions and behaviours. It gave her confidence to continue to put up with his moods, frustrations and mental health issues that were getting worse every day.



Case study 2 - David Active Lancashire









This case was a result of the good relationship that we have built with the prison staff. David was referred to the United Together Project earlier this year from Lancaster CRC. He has been out of prison 11 weeks now and his first contact was via the phone to one of the mentors due to the lockdown. He was living with his Mum and brother. He was difficult to engage with at first but, after a few phone calls he disclosed that he may have had a drug problem in prison and really didn't want to go back down that road.

It was suggested that he tried supported accommodation, to help maintain his drug free lifestyle. The Supported Housing suggested is an abstinent place where residents are tested for substance misuse weekly. He said he would think about it.

During one of the weekly phone calls the mentor became concerned that David wasn't making much progress in any area of his life. They felt the environment he was living in wasn't the best to change his behaviour as he was not getting the support or encouragement he needed at home.

Eventually David agreed to go into Supported Housing. He was really fearful and it took many phone calls from the mentor and their peer mentor to encourage him to put his mind at rest.

On moving in day the mentor spoke to David in the morning and talked through how he was feeling. He was extremely nervous but he was reassured and the mentor met him there. One of the peer mentors was already there awaiting his arrival. This put his mind at ease.

David has been living in Walter Lyon House for a few months now and has settled in extremely well. His mentor is in regular contact with him and he has taken every opportunity to get in involved with all activities in the house.

He has set himself his own goals and has started Couch to 5k, cooking lessons and Yoga. He now sees a brighter future for himself and his mentor is looking forward to seeing how he flourishes along his new chosen pathway.













Setting-up the project

The process of setting the process-up was slow and challenging.

- Firstly, the prison staff changed since we wrote the project proposal and we had to re-engage with the new ones and bring them on board. We also experienced resistance from the prison governor who was less open to new ideas and this slowed things down.
- There was resistance from the prison gym instructors and the Twinning programme was an unexpected barrier
- Getting access to the prison has also delayed the start of the project. For example, access by one of our Support Worker who has lived experience (and a criminal record) has been a stumbling block
- Overcoming negative experiences that some prisoners had of external agencies

The prison processes and procedures

- Not fully understanding the release procedures such as what happens when they are released, who is involved, what are their license conditions, where they are allowed to live, or the fact they have to get permission from their probation worker to get a job. In hindsight all this information would have been helpful to have before their release and family/partners spoken too as well to find out what support is in place. The lack of information upfront, increased the workload as we were learning as we went along.
- The delivery team was not aware of break times and how they worked which had an impact on the delivery of the workshops; however, the team was able to re-adjust their breaks to align them with the prison ones.











The physical environment

- The delivery team was not familiar with the prison setting and it was difficult for them during the first days to find their way around prison.
- The classroom in the library, where the sessions took place, was very small to accommodate all the participants and the delivery team.
- Missing or outdated equipment resulted in a couple of short clips not being shown; however, the impact on the delivery was not significant. After a discussion with the prison staff, it was agreed that the next workshop would take place in a different more suitable room and all equipment would be checked in advance.

Broken communication

- The delivery team did not have the risk assessments for the library and the sports hall from the prison which made them feel a little bit nervous.
- There was also a break down in communication between all partners regarding the completion of the medical forms for taking part in the activities; however, that was swiftly rectified without having any impact on the participants' activities. It was agreed that the prison risks assessments for the delivery room and the sports hall to be shared with all the partners involved. A clear procedure of who needs to complete what forms and a list of partners that need to be shared with was created.

Lack of programmes in the community

• Some Football Club Trusts had a limited offer for ex-offenders.

Achievements











The project has created a butterfly effect from the energy of the delivery team to the participants and the prison staff

- Developed a successful partnership for delivering the programme in prison and worked alongside with the Twinning prison programme
- Set up a Steering group consisting of Active Lancashire, the Cumbria & Lancashire Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC), the National Probation Service (NPS), The Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), Great Places Housing Association, and Burnley Football Community Trust.
- Physical activity sessions helped prisoners stay engaged with the project and form a great friendship
- The delivery team gained the prisoners' trust by being understanding and adopting a strong but not dictate delivery
- The prison staff expressed an increased interest to support the programme and get more involved with delivery
- The CSI Team have been invited to talk on the NW Prison Radio Show and promote the project
- Interest from other prisons to deliver the project. DWP has expressed an interest in expanding the United Together project to young offenders 16-24
- Started a partnership with the Violence Reduction Unit (Police) as a result from this work
- Great Places Housing association decided to expand their involvement with the project and provide holding accommodation for offenders upon their release
- Despite the initial resistance, we have a meeting with the Governor of Preston prison to discuss the project further
- All partners and specifically NPS are more aware of the workforce development issues that need to be addressed

Lessons Learned









- 1. Setting an in-prison programme is not straightforward but a lengthy and time-consuming process
- 2. Key stakeholders need to be on board from the beginning of the project and can play a vital role in facilitating or impeding the development of the project
- 3. Creating a strong partnership can provide a better support to those coming through probation.
- 4. Upskilling the Football Community Club Trusts and prison staff is a crucial part of the project as it helps them increased their understanding of how to keep ex-offenders engaged
- 5. Sport and physical activity have the power to keep people engage and break down barriers. By upskilling and empowering the prisoners, it can change their mind-set of how they stay on track upon release
- 6. Prisoners have negative experiences of external agencies, thus it is important to have a delivery team that can offer empathy and share their lived experience with them
- 7. A lot more questions need to be asked before a person is released. People's concerns need to be listened to before they come out of prison or once they are working with probation
- 8. Mental health and substance misuse assessments would be useful to be done before the person leaves prison
- 9. Support that starts in prison and continues upon release is important especially for people with complex needs and can help break the cycle of re-offending.
- 10. Contact with probation services officers in the community would be useful especially regarding accommodation and specific patterns of behaviour
- 11. Contact with the person's family or friends who support them need to be made prior to their release
- 12. Support should be easily available not only to the ones leaving prison but to their families or support networks. This will give them the tools to understand some of the person's behaviours.









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