



forward

# IMPACT REPORT

November 2024



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# INTRODUCTION

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Welcome to Forward's Impact report for 2023/24, a year when we supported over 28,000 people, 6,000 more than the previous year and our highest reach ever.

In Part 1 of this year's report, we present an overview of our service delivery across addiction, mental health, substance misuse, offender rehabilitation, employment and accommodation. We also present our geographical reach across England and Wales, and provide a breakdown of our client groups, highlighting in particular the extent of our work with people in prison and on probation. This is followed by a summary of the progress made by clients across our 'stages of change', with client activities categorised as 'pause', 'engage', 'develop' and 'prosper', designed to provide a structure that supports people towards recovery and rehabilitation. Finally, we introduce in this section our new data framework that provides a consistent way for us to report on the reach and efficacy of all our services.

In Part 2 we dive deeper into each of our service areas, presenting headline data on the numbers of clients reached, and the levels of activity engaged in, while highlighting impact based on our research and evaluation activity. Each service area also contains a section on innovation and new developments, as well as some significant achievements (e.g. our Employment Service being rated 'Good' in its very first Ofsted inspection).

In Part 3 we spotlight some other special initiatives and the impact they've achieved, including: Forward Connect (our recovery community), Reach Out online chat service, our Lived Experience Employment Pathway, and M-PACT (whole family support) before closing on a summary of our Social Value.

Finally, we acknowledge all our service delivery partners, without whose expertise and knowledge we wouldn't be able to achieve our reach and impact.

We hope you enjoy this year's report, which should be read in parallel with our annual report, which presents a broader picture of organisation-wide performance and key achievements.



**Mike Trace**  
CEO

# Part 1: Services Overview

## SERVICE RANGE IN SUMMARY

In 2023/24, Forward delivered **75** contracted services in addition to a range of charitably-funded projects and support:

### Substance misuse, addiction & mental health



#### Prison

- ▶ Substance misuse services in **16** prisons and **1** Immigration Removal Centre
- ▶ Intensive recovery programmes in **10** prisons
- ▶ Mental Health 'Talking Therapies' in **5** prisons
- ▶ Reconnect (linking vulnerable prison leavers with healthcare) services in **5** prisons across **3** counties (Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex)

#### Community

- ▶ **3** 'whole system' substance misuse services in East Kent, Southend-on-Sea and Medway
- ▶ Structured recovery programmes and groups in **5** areas (Dover, Medway, Hull, Essex and Liverpool)
- ▶ Residential rehabilitation in **2** centres - in Hull (The Bridges) and Wiltshire (Clouds House)
- ▶ **3** Recovery Houses in Hull and East Kent
- ▶ Licenced delivery of M-PACT (Moving Parents and Children Together, whole-family support to address addiction) in **34** local authority areas



# Rehabilitation of offenders

## Commissioned Rehabilitation Services (for People on Probation):

- ▶ Personal Wellbeing services in **9** counties (Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Essex, Kent, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Sussex, Surrey);
- ▶ Accommodation support in **3** Welsh regions (Dyfed-Powys, South Wales and Gwent Powys)
- ▶ Dependency & Recovery services (connecting people with community treatment) in **7** areas across London and Humberside

## Employment & Accommodation support

- ▶ Information, Advice and Guidance services in **16** prisons
- ▶ Employment Support in **5** community areas
- ▶ Enterprise support through our entrepreneur support scheme, and direct employment opportunities through our social businesses - Blue Sky Services (grounds maintenance) and Amenity Landscaping (garden maintenance), and The Brink café in Liverpool
- ▶ Access to private rented sector accommodation and mentoring support through 'Vision Housing' in **20** London Boroughs and **3** counties (Kent, Surrey and Sussex)



Through these services we reached **28,306** people in the year. These services spanned the breadth of England and Wales as set out in the map below, including delivery in 27 prisons.

**SERVICE KEY**

**Community services**

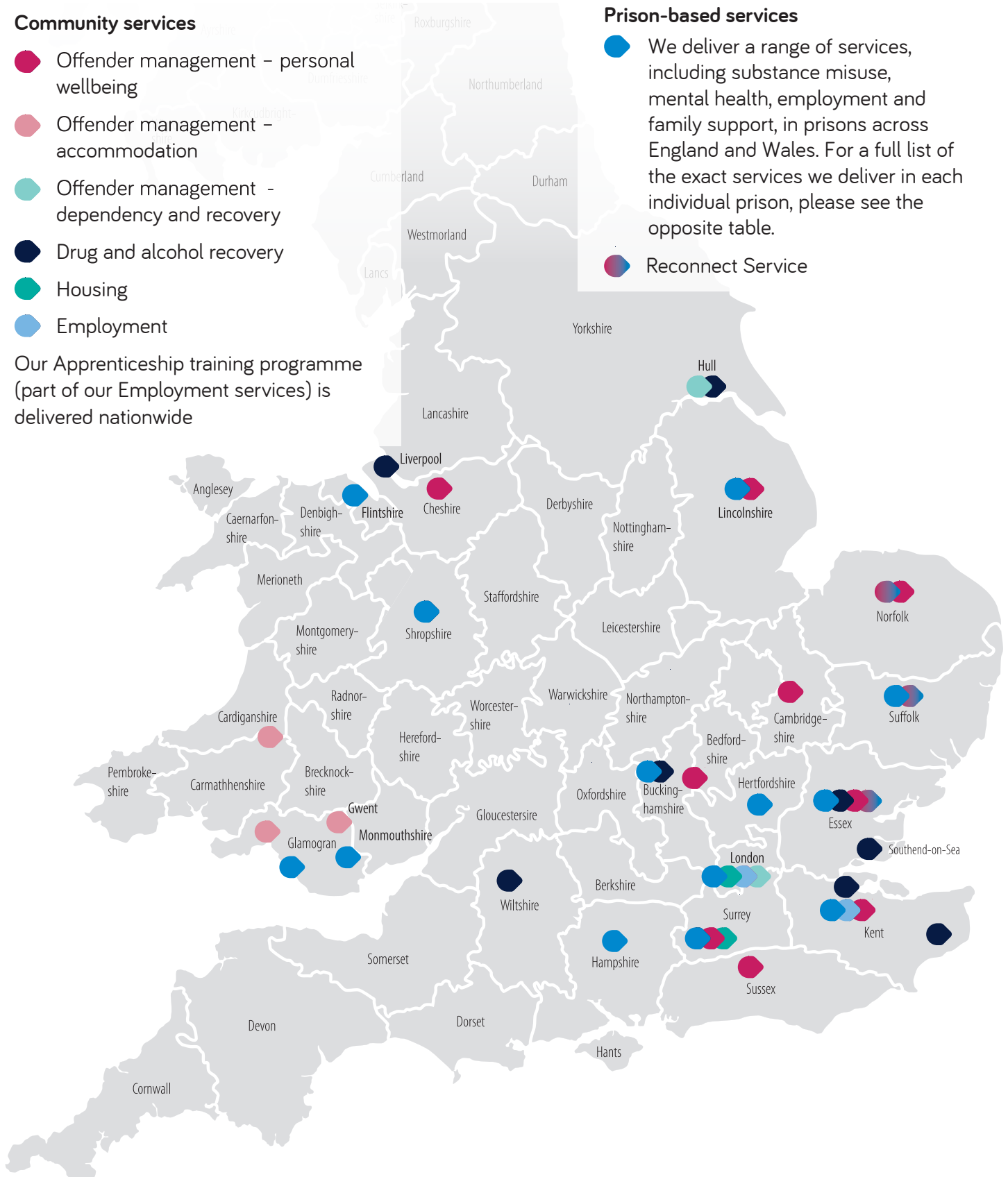
- Offender management – personal wellbeing
- Offender management – accommodation
- Offender management – dependency and recovery
- Drug and alcohol recovery
- Housing
- Employment

Our Apprenticeship training programme (part of our Employment services) is delivered nationwide

**SERVICE KEY**

**Prison-based services**

- We deliver a range of services, including substance misuse, mental health, employment and family support, in prisons across England and Wales. For a full list of the exact services we deliver in each individual prison, please see the opposite table.
- Reconnect Service



Area	Prison	Substance Misuse	Mental Health	Employment
London	HMP Brixton	✓		✓
	HMP/YOI Feltham			✓
	Heathrow Immigration Removal Centre	✓		
	HMP/YOI Isis			✓
	HMP Pentonville			✓
	HMP Thameside			✓
	HMP Wandsworth			✓
	HMP Wormwood Scrubs	✓		✓
Thames Valley	HMP/YOI Aylesbury	✓		✓
	HMP Bullingdon			✓
	HMP Winchester			✓
Surrey	HMP Bronzefield	✓		
	HMP Coldingley	✓		
	HMP Downview	✓		
	HMP High Down	✓		✓
	HMP Send	✓		
East of England	HMP Chelmsford	✓	✓	✓
	HMP Highpoint		✓	✓
	HMP Hollesley Bay		✓	✓
	HMP The Mount	✓	✓	✓
	HMP Warren Hill		✓	✓
Midlands	HMP Onley	✓		
	HMP Rye Hill	✓		
	HMP Stoke Heath	✓		✓
Wales	HMP Swansea	✓		
	HMP Cardiff	✓		
	HMP Berwyn	✓		

# CLIENT ACTIVITY & PROGRESS

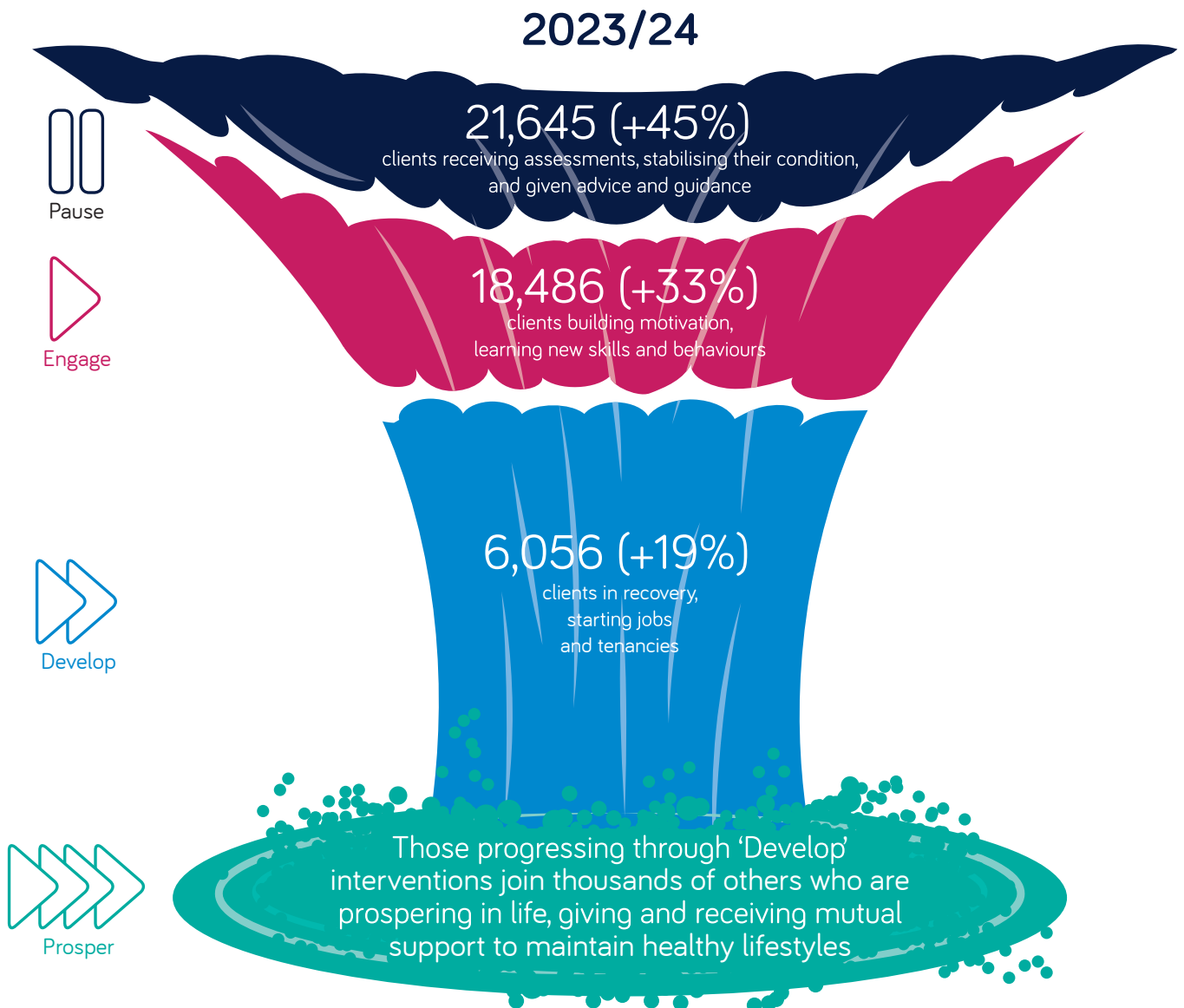
Across all our services, and for all our clients, we structure and categorise our support activities according to stages of change or progression, as summarised below:





For the last five years, we have collected data on the number of clients who were accessing support at different stages of change, from 'Pause' through 'Engage' to 'Develop', data that can be visualised as a 'funnel' that flows into our ever-growing reservoir of people who are 'Prospering' in life (becoming part of our 'Forward Connect' recovery community – see p24).

The diagram below presents this data for 2023/24 and compares it with the previous year, showing percentage increases at each of the stages of change. Particularly gratifying is the fact that while operating at greater scale than last year (reaching 27% more people), we maintain the intensity of our support, with nearly one in four of our clients continuing to access 'Develop' interventions and programmes that facilitate real change and personal development.





# DATA FRAMEWORK

Across all Forward services we have made a priority to collect consistent data sets to allow us to assess and compare the reach and efficacy of our different areas of work.

To help us achieve this, over the last 12 months we have developed and designed a ‘data framework’ with the following components:

<b>Client characteristics</b>	Routinely collected management information on demographics (age, gender, ethnicity, etc.) and clients’ histories and personal circumstances.
<b>Client activity</b>	Routinely collected management information on client access to interventions categorised by our stages of change (as described above).
<b>Progress Indicators</b>	Measures of personal development (behavioural or emotional change) or practical achievement (getting a job, or finding secure accommodation), while still in contact with our services.
<b>Outcomes</b>	The ‘end goals’ of any specific service, achieved while the client is still accessing the service.
<b>Impact</b>	The longer term effect of our services and programmes on people’s lives, and on communities and society.

With this conceptual foundation in place, including core data sets for client characteristics and client activity, over the next 12 months we will be embarking on a number of comparative studies.

For example, to measure the ‘intermediate progress’ made by clients while they are accessing our services, we will be using the Intermediate Outcome Measures Instrument (IOMI) in a selection of our probation, employment and substance misuse services. The tool will enable us to work with clients to assess the progress they are making in terms of resilience, wellbeing, agency / self-efficacy, impulsivity / problem-solving, motivation to change, hope, and interpersonal trust – measures which are widely regarded as cross-cutting indicators of progress across our service areas.

We have already trialled the tool in our probation personal wellbeing services, where pre- and post-measures of resilience showed improvement of 41.9% (see page 18 for details).

And in terms of longer term impact, we will add to our existing research library by undertaking a longer-term impact study of our ‘Develop’ community day programmes. This will be a follow up study with clients at 6- and 12-month intervals after they have completed the programmes, finding out about their personal status in terms of housing, employment, relationships, and abstinence while exploring in depth their experiences, moments of strength and challenge, what made a difference and why.

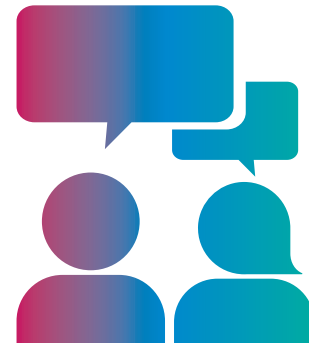


## Part 2: Service Profiles

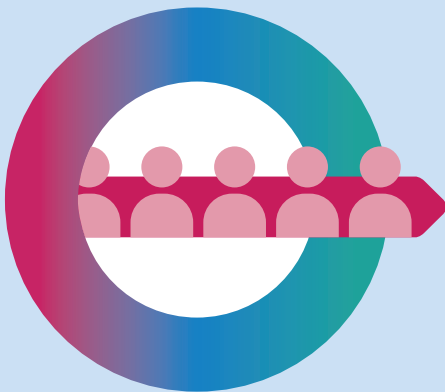
# SUBSTANCE MISUSE, ADDICTION & MENTAL HEALTH

## IN PRISON

During 2023/24 Forward provided services in 19 prisons and 1 Immigration Removal Centre, delivering psychosocial and clinical substance misuse support, Talking Therapies (mental health support formerly known as Improved Access to Psychological Therapy (IAPT)), structured recovery programmes, and Reconnect, linking prison leavers with healthcare services in the community.



## REACH AND ACTIVITY



### Substance Misuse

- ▶ **5,315** male clients
- ▶ **1,369** female clients
- ▶ **168** clients starting Stepping Stones (Engage)
- ▶ **138** clients starting structured abstinence-based group programmes (Develop) including Y Bont in 3 Welsh prisons

### Talking Therapies

- ▶ **1,207** clients
- ▶ **266** clients starting Step 2 Talking Therapies (Engage)
- ▶ **93** clients starting Step 3 Talking Therapies (Develop)



### Reconnect

- ▶ **218** clients supported

## Progress, outcomes & feedback

- ▶ **96%** of our prison clients had an excellent or good experience of our service

*“Forward has made me believe there is a better future for me...”*

- ▶ **1,357** clients completing treatment drug/alcohol free
- ▶ **72%** average completion rate across all Develop prison programmes
- ▶ **57%** of Talking Therapy clients moving into ‘reliable improvement’

*“Working with Forward has helped me to better understand my feelings and thoughts and also how to best deal with them...”*

*“Reconnect is banging... I would defo recommend it!”*

Reconnect client



## Innovation and New Developments

**Continuity of Care:** to improve the rate by which our substance misuse service users engage with community support upon release from prison, we have introduced a new best practice framework across our prison services. Implemented by service managers who share learning and experience through regular forums, the framework has improved continuity by an average of 18% nationwide.

**VR in prisons:** Building on our innovative use of in-cell videos to provide harm minimisation advice to prisoners, delivered by people with lived experience (as reported in last year’s report), we are piloting the use of VR to test the therapeutic benefits of immersive experience in natural environments.

**Gambling harm:** To address the prevalence of gambling harm experienced by our service users (according to our 2021 survey, 1 in 4 of our clients think they have a gambling problem), Forward Trust have trained peer mentors to support those experiencing gambling harm, and also deliver gambling and gaming workshops as part of its talking therapies service in Suffolk prisons.

**Women’s pathway:** During 2023/24 we delivered substance misuse support in 3 women’s prisons (Downview, Send and Bronzefield), representing 25% of the female estate. With this foundation, we will be developing a comprehensive recovery pathway for women in prison, reflecting the different prison types and sentence lengths, and focussing on the particular vulnerabilities and circumstances that women experience (e.g. we will develop targeted interventions for sex workers).

**Immigration Removal Centres (IRCs):** From summer 2024, we have been working with healthcare partner Dr PA to deliver substance misuse support at Campsfield House IRC in Oxfordshire. Building on our previous experience in Gatwick and Heathrow IRCs this makes us one of the leading providers of substance misuse support to people in IRCs living through the anxiety of possible deportation.

# IN THE COMMUNITY

During 2023/24, Forward delivered integrated substance misuse services in East Kent (6 sites in Ashford, Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone, Margate and Sittingbourne), Southend-on-Sea and Medway, alongside structured group 'day programmes' as part of wider treatment systems in Hull, Essex and Liverpool.



## REACH AND ACTIVITY

### Treatment

- ▶ **3,892** male clients and 1,792 female clients supported
- ▶ **2,290** clients starting Engage group programmes (e.g. alcohol detox groups)
- ▶ **217** clients completing clinical drug/alcohol detox
- ▶ **700** clients provided with life-saving Naloxone
- ▶ **238** clients starting structured day programmes ([Develop](#)) in East Kent, Hull, Essex & Liverpool
- ▶ **270** clients referred to residential rehabilitation across the country ([Develop](#))

### Residential Rehabilitation

- ▶ **193** new admissions to Forward's own structured residential programmes at Clouds House (Wiltshire) and The Bridges (Hull)

### Recovery Housing

- ▶ **3** recovery houses in Hull and Kent, supporting **13** men and women in total at any one time.

### Recovery Support

- ▶ **432** structured programme graduates accessing 1-2-1 support, meet and greet (for prison leavers), social skills, employability and wellbeing workshops



## Progress, outcomes & feedback

- ▶ **98%** of our clients had an excellent or good experience of our service.
- ▶ Client numbers & completion rates for our recovery pathways:
  - Alcohol: **1,215 (39.4% completing v 40% target)**
  - Opiate: **1,185 (8.4% v 8%)**
  - Non-Opiate: **388 (45.4% v 48%)**
  - Alcohol & Non-opiate: **390 (31.5% v 33%)**

*“Forward changed my life, if it wasn't for them I would be dead now. I have everything back that I lost and I am doing very well”*

- ▶ **64%** average completion rate across all structured day programmes
- ▶ Forward residential rehabilitation centres:
  - **60%** completion rate for The Bridges
  - **76%** completion rate for Clouds House



## Innovation and New Developments

**NEW service:** From April 2024, we have been delivering the integrated community substance misuse service for adults in Thurrock in partnership with Open Road, who deliver the children and young people's service. This further strengthens our presence in the East of England, where we also deliver substance misuse services in Essex and Southend-on-Sea.

**Lived Experience Recovery Organisation (LERO):** In Kent, we have been supporting people with lived experience to develop a county-wide independent peer-led organisation to deliver advocacy, research and recovery support. Supported in the initial stages by Forward Connect members (see page 24) the LERO now has its own name (Reach Out And Recover, ROAR) and leadership committee, which has organised a range of exciting initiatives – highlights include a Buddy Scheme (supporting people in hospital), Dry Miles Recovery (recovery-based events) and the 'ROAR-ing Chorus' recovery choir.

**Recovery Pathways:** During 2023/24, we have been refining the components of our three recovery pathways (alcohol, opiate, and non-opiate), defining and developing progressive packages of support at each of our stages of change, to motivate and support clients to make positive changes to their drug use, health, and relationships. This work has informed a new practitioner handbook for staff and promotional materials for service users and will also underpin a new approach to measuring the progress made and outcomes achieved by service users while in treatment.

**Recovery Online:** In Spring 2024, we launched our online structured day programme, Recovery Online, enabling people to access group-based therapy and tailored support from their own home, anywhere in the UK. Millions of people are currently unable to access residential rehabilitation or in person day programmes because of work, childcare commitments, disabilities or health problems – e.g. agoraphobia. Recovery Online provides a solution.

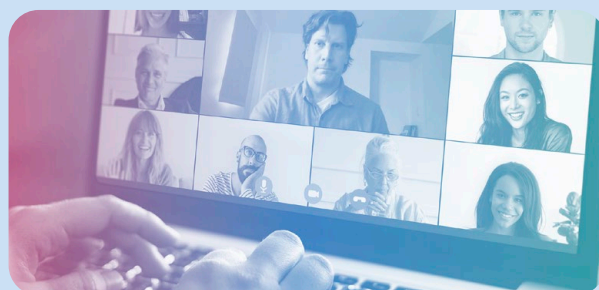
# Recovery Online – Overcoming Agoraphobia: **Katie's story**

- ▶ The NHS estimates that one person in every 100 in the UK suffer from agoraphobia – that's half a million people.
- ▶ Many people who have agoraphobia use drugs and alcohol to manage their anxiety – people like Katie...

Three years ago, as lockdown hit, Katie thought that everyone else had at last come round to her way of thinking, forced to stay at home. "Brilliant, I thought, now I can get everything delivered to me without leaving the house, even my vodka from the off-licence, and it'll be normal," she says, with self-deprecating irony. However, as Katie's anxiety worsened and her alcoholism deepened, she felt she'd hit rock bottom and needed help, yet didn't know where to turn to find it: "I felt so isolated and desperate that I would never get the treatment I needed..."

A resident of Faversham, Katie heard about Forward's drug and alcohol service in East Kent from her GP and called for help. At the time, as part of our adaptation to Covid, Forward had developed an online version of our well-established structured day programme, offering intensive, abstinence-based group therapy and support. Katie joined the programme and immediately felt at home. "It was a great experience, I could talk and open up with these faces on a screen. I really connected with them and the counsellor. Slowly, session by session, I began to understand the reasons for my anxiety and my use of alcohol, and to realise that recovery is possible." Katie completed the 12-week programme and graduated online in July 2021.

As lockdown restrictions were lifted and the world slowly returned to normal, Katie's recovery strengthened and her confidence grew. She decided to apply for a job at the restaurant across the road from where she lived, becoming a pot washer, and progressed to assistant chef. She then applied to become a volunteer for Forward, helping with our Reach Out online chat service and as a peer mentor for the online day programme. Fast forward to today and Katie works for us as a Volunteer Coordinator, giving back and supporting others with their recovery. Katie gained the OCN in Peer Mentoring and has completed the Award in Education and Training so she can teach others. To add, Katie has also completed a Level 2 in Counselling and has started on Level 3: "This is my new normal, as opposed to laying in bed drinking vodka".



As Forward's services also returned to normal, with the day programme back up and running at our hub, we realised not everyone could benefit from access to in-person support. Many people were still, in effect, experiencing their own private lockdown, unable to travel or to leave their homes – through conditions such as agoraphobia but also mobility problems or childcare commitments. Millions are missing out on drug and alcohol recovery. Which is why we decided to launch Recovery Online.



Building on our experience in East Kent, Recovery Online is a structured programme enabling people to access group-based therapy and tailored support from their own home, anywhere in the UK, offering all the therapeutic benefits of residential rehabilitation or in-person day programmes.

Through Recovery Online, we hope to reach many more people like Katie, connecting them to structured support and, crucially, to others on similar recovery pathways.



*“I felt so isolated and desperate that I would never get the treatment I needed. Forward offered me a place on the online programme and it literally saved my life!*

*It enabled me to reconnect with life and meet like-minded people. Now I am living in recovery. I have a job, I volunteer, I am studying and able to pass on my experience, strength and hope to those who need it.”*

- Katie Cole, former online programme participant from East Kent



# REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS

In 2023/24 Forward delivered a range of services to people on probation across England and Wales, including personal wellbeing (enabling good mental health and positive relationships), accommodation, and dependency and recovery (motivating change for people on probation with substance misuse needs and connecting them with treatment and support in the community).



## REACH

### Personal Wellbeing (PWB)

- ▶ **4,714** clients supported
- ▶ **1,143** clients achieving positive Develop outcomes ([Develop](#))

### Accommodation

- ▶ **2,673** clients supported
- ▶ **600** clients achieving positive Develop outcomes ([Develop](#))

### Dependency & Recovery

- ▶ **2,163** clients supported
- ▶ **512** clients achieving positive Develop outcomes ([Develop](#))

## Progress, outcomes & feedback

Analysis of pre- and post- self-reported scores for PWB (personal wellbeing) clients in 23/24 showed statistically significant improvements for Resilience, Wellbeing, Psychological Health & Quality of Life.

At the point of engagement, 595 clients were categorised as 'Low Resilience' compared to 345 post-engagement; a **41.9%** pre-post reduction.

The data showed a stepwise shift from low to average levels of wellbeing following engagement with PWB services in addition to a **189.7%** increase in levels of 'high wellbeing'.

Self-reported psychological health and quality of life average scores increased by **32.7%** and **29.3%** respectively after engagement with PWB.

# New Developments: HMP Millsike

In April 2024, in partnership with Mitie and People Plus, Forward were awarded a ten-year contract by HMPPS to operate and manage HMP Millsike, a new Category C Resettlement prison that will be operational in April 2025. Together, the partnership sees this contract as a ground-breaking opportunity to implement a new way of delivering a prison service that stretches current perceptions of what is possible.

**HMP Millsike** – situated on land opposite the existing HMP Full Sutton in Yorkshire – has been named after Millsike Beck, a local river adjacent to the new jail, firmly embedding the prison into its local community. The new prison has a number of exciting features:

- ▶ It will be the first jail in the UK to run solely on electricity, using solar panels and heat pump technology to consume a quarter of the energy used to heat existing Victorian-era prisons such as HMP Wormwood Scrubs.
- ▶ It is designed with education, training, and jobs for prisoners on release as its main purpose - intended to reduce crime and reoffending, its goal will be for prisoners to learn new skills and acquire training that will provide them with a viable opportunity to work in key industries when back in the community.
- ▶ Residents will comprise of those serving shorter sentences who arrive directly from a Reception Prison, and those serving longer sentences who have spent time in a Training Prison addressing their rehabilitative needs.

## Forward's role: Connections

Within the prison Forward will have responsibility for delivering 'Connections' services comprising of: Family and Relationships; Health & Wellbeing; and Desistance.

### Family and Relationship Services:

Forward will be responsible for:

- ▶ The whole family visit process, from the visitor's centre to the actual visit, including interventions such as family learning sessions.
- ▶ A range of family interventions and case management of prisoners involved in peer mentor support, schools, and family services liaison.

- ▶ Oversight of the Connections Family Unit, a discrete residential unit housing prisoners engaged in our family interventions.

**Health & Wellbeing:** Across the whole prison, specialist practitioners will undertake health and wellbeing assessments and case management, deliver evidence-based interventions (1:1 and groups), and facilitate onward referrals to supportive organisations and agencies.

They will also recruit and manage a team of peers (serving prisoners) called Health and Wellbeing Champions ('HAWCs') who deliver a range of interventions (e.g. blood pressure and weight checks), and share knowledge on nutrition to promote healthy living.

**Desistance:** Forward Trust will manage the 'Bridge Unit', a four storey Houseblock that will include our Incentivised Substance Free Living wing. Here, men will live as part of a supportive community, where residents, staff and other services will work together to enable them to holistically address factors related to their offending, prepare for life after prison and crime, and recover. Applying the concept of a 'village', we will bring together all the agencies (including health services, housing advice, employment support, and activity groups) needed to support rehabilitation, enabling close cooperation and joined-up person-centred care.

Within the Houseblock, Recovery Navigators will directly support prisoners to navigate their rehabilitation and recovery journey, building trust, and providing support, a community, continuity of contact, connecting and signposting, delivering structured 1-1, group work, and virtual sessions. Innovatively we will connect all our rehabilitative work with our family and relationship work, meaning interventions in HMP Millsike will be systemic as well as individual.

**Forward Connect:** All prisoners who participate in our Connections work will benefit from access to Forward Connect, Forward's added-value 'recovery community' of former clients (ex-offenders and those in recovery).

# EMPLOYMENT & ACCOMMODATION

## EMPLOYMENT

During 2023/24, Forward delivered Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) to clients in 16 prisons, and employment support and adult skills training for ex-offenders and other disadvantaged groups through five contracts in the community. We also provided enterprise and self-employment support and employment opportunities through Blue Sky Services and Amenity Landscaping. In 2023/24 we also expanded our Advisory Group which provides additional challenge, scrutiny and support to employability and adult skills work. The Group now includes a former Ofsted Inspector, a trustee and three employer partners.



### REACH

- ▶ **5,580** clients in prison receiving Careers Information Advice and Guidance
- ▶ **1,312** clients receiving community-based job support or vocational training (including the DWP Restart Scheme, Adult Skills and the Multiply numeracy programmes)
- ▶ **100** clients supported with their ideas for enterprise or self employment
- ▶ **20** staff employed through Blue Sky Services and Amenity Landscaping
- ▶ **498** clients in the community progressed into a job or apprenticeship

### Progress, outcomes & feedback

- ▶ **95%** of prisoners very satisfied or satisfied with our CIAG services
- ▶ **500** clients leaving prisons moving onto jobs, training, education or other community type provision
- ▶ **57%** of enterprise clients trading after 4 months
- ▶ **600** job outcomes for our DWP Restart Scheme (104% of target)
- ▶ **92%** completion rates for Adult Skills Programmes

# Innovation, Achievements and New Developments

**Ofsted:** In October 2023 an inspection provided a Good (Grade 2) judgement for Forward's Adult Skills and Apprenticeships provision.

**Employability Day 2023:** In July 2023 to celebrate Employability Day, the Directorate hosted an awards event with Elizabeth Taylor, Chief Executive of the Employment Related Services Association as the keynote speaker, which recognised the achievements of Restart participants and Adult Skills/Multiply Learners.

**ERSA Finalist 2023:** Kirsty Langley, our Restart Scheme Employment Advisor, was a finalist for Frontline Advisor of the Year award at the Employment Related Services Association (ERSA) Awards 2023. The category recognises staff and trainers who have shown

exceptional commitment to working with their caseload in terms of moving people into jobs with opportunities and career prospects and providing in-work support.

**Enterprise Work:** We celebrated Global Entrepreneurship Week (13-19th November 2023) by focusing on our growing work with Enterprise Mentors (volunteers) who have extensive entrepreneurial or lived experience to help clients.

**Green Sector:** As part of our Adult Skills programmes in London and East Kent, we have developed exciting partnerships with employers including Thames Water and The Felix Project to help learners access employability, work experience and jobs in the emerging green sector.

## 'Multiply' numeracy programme (East Kent)

In 2023 with support from Kent County Council and the Department for Education, we launched 'Multiply' in East Kent, an innovative programme designed to improve people's 'number confidence' and numeracy skills to help them succeed in all areas of life.

We all know that numbers play a crucial role in our daily lives, from learning and training to working and managing our finances. However, government data reveals that nearly 50% of working-age adults struggle with numeracy skills, which can hold them back in life. This is why our Multiply programme is so vital, providing a supportive environment for individuals to overcome their numeracy challenges and unlock their full potential.

By the end of March 2024, our programme had already supported 200 learners, with 90% struggling with poor numeracy skills and lacking confidence. Many of these individuals had negative experiences at school or college, while others were affected by the pandemic. Additionally, 55% of our learners had self-declared learning difficulties. Despite these challenges, our programme has helped learners to build their confidence and skills, with many reporting improved aspirations for their careers, salaries, and future job choices.

- ▶ 75% of learners improve their confidence on our one- and three-day courses
- ▶ Up to 60% improvement (based on a self-assessment test) in skills and knowledge on our one-day course
- ▶ Up to 72% improvement in skills and knowledge on our three-day course
- ▶ 50% progressing onto our Adult Skills programmes

One of our learners, Ellen, struggled with numeracy skills and lacked confidence. After completing our Multiply programme, she reported a significant improvement in her confidence and skills. Ellen is now pursuing a higher Functional Skills qualification in Maths and is excited to apply her new numeracy skills to her daily life.

"I really enjoyed the course, in the past I dreaded maths and it often stopped me for applying for better jobs, but the Forward Trust tutors made everything less daunting, I understand things better, learned how to do basic budgeting by myself and feel more confident to apply for jobs."

- Ellen, Multiply Programme Learner

# ACCOMMODATION

During 2023/24 we expanded our 'Vision Housing' service, where we provide access for people coming out of prison or in recovery from addiction or mental health problems to quality accommodation in the private rented sector (PRS), coupled with mentoring support from volunteers, offering practical and emotional support to help them sustain their tenancies. Tenants can also access our Forward Connect online support groups.

As part of our expansion, we are building a growing network of landlords who value the role they play in helping people to rebuild their lives while also benefiting from stable and reliable tenants. Working with local authorities and other charities as referral partners, we now work in 20 London boroughs and across Kent, Surrey and Sussex.



## REACH

- ▶ **370** referrals received
- ▶ **362** assessments completed
- ▶ **359** viewings arranged
- ▶ **116** new tenancies secured

## PROGRESS, OUTCOMES & FEEDBACK

- ▶ **88%** of tenancies have been sustained for over 6 months
- ▶ **66%** of tenancies sustained over 12 months



*“ We are delighted to work with Forward, as their care and dedication to their clients, never stops to amaze, making it a smooth and easy rental.”*

**Landlord**

*“ In my time I have noticed some positive changes and improvements with my mentees which has been lovely to see and feel like you are playing a part in this support.”*

**Mentor**

*“ I felt very supported by Forward from the offset, they communicated with me regularly and I had viewings to go to almost straight away...Within a short space of time I was moved into a property. Without Forward things would have been so much worse and I would have been homeless.”*

**Forward client / tenant**

*“ The area I moved to is close to family so that has really helped with that connection. I am happy and settled now in a new relationship and I have a stable roof over my head. I know that the guys at Forward are always at the end of the phone if I have anything I need to speak with them about and I am hugely grateful for all the help and support I have so far received.”*

**Forward client / tenant**



# Part 3: Other Initiatives & Impact

## FORWARD CONNECT

Forward Connect is our national network of peer-led communities for people who are making progress in their recovery and rehabilitation, and who want to meet and stay in touch with others for life-long mutual aid and ongoing support.

Forward Connect is a 'broad church', open to anyone regardless of the recovery pathway that they have chosen and also for people for whom addiction has not been a challenge but have made progress through other Forward service pathways, such as employment, probation or housing.

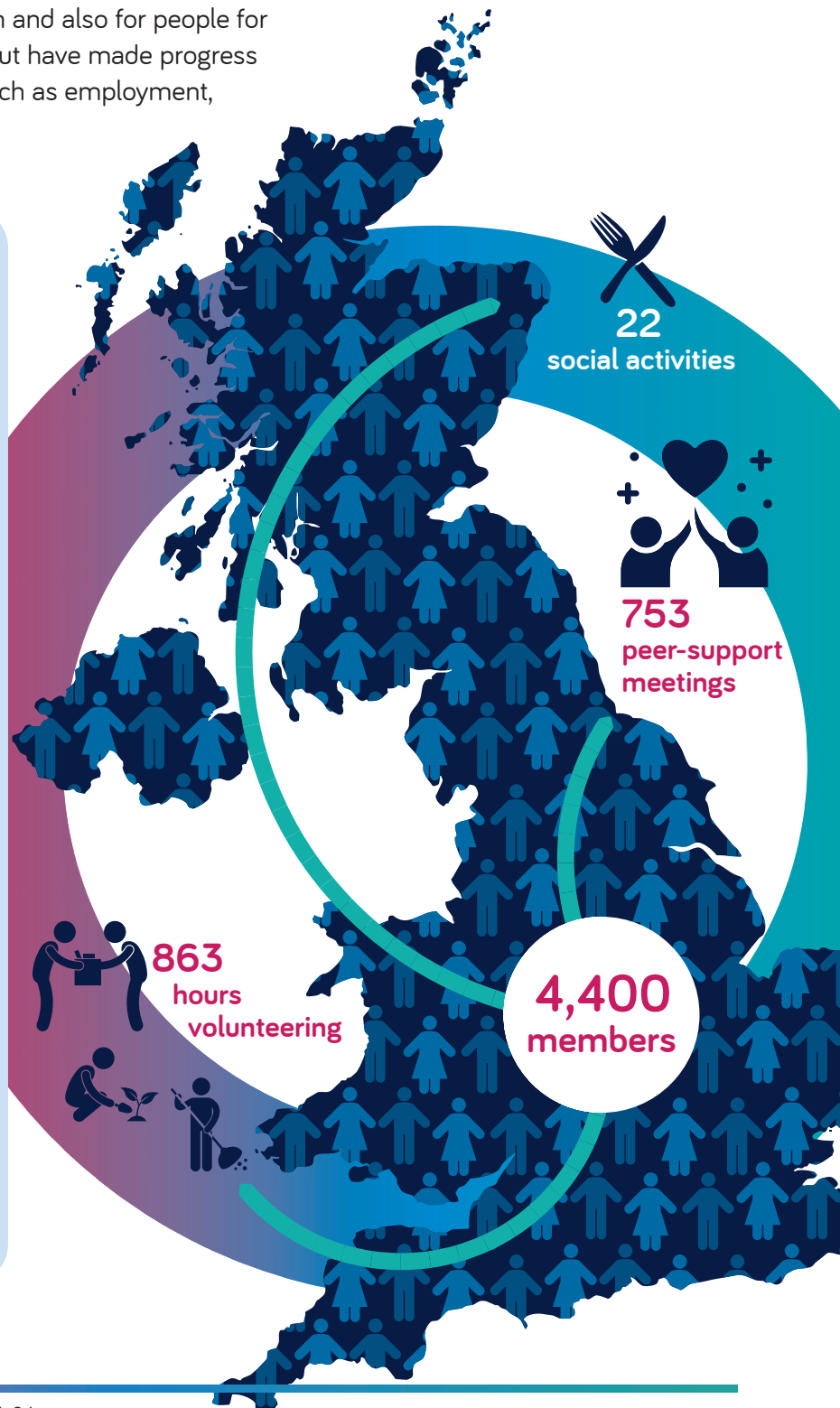
### REACH

Currently Forward Connect has over **4,400** members nationwide, with particularly strong pockets of engagement in areas where we deliver commissioned services.

During 2023/24, members took part in

- ▶ **753** meetings (424 online; 329 in person)
- ▶ **863** hours of volunteering activity
- ▶ **4** Large scale Reunion events and Unity Days, celebrating recovery (see below for the London Reunion)
- ▶ **22** social activities organised such as curry nights and bowling trips, attended by 728 people

Through our online peer messaging service we have also facilitated **19,719** messages of help, encouragement and support, as well as inspirational digital content such as spoken word poetry.







## London National Reunion

Our National Reunion in London was attended by 410 people, the largest ever. Here is a short write-up from one of our volunteers who attended the event, who has recently become a trainee member of staff:

*“What I enjoyed about the national reunion was the atmosphere in the place, the people who are all going through their journey, the smiles, the laughter, everyone looked happy... the shares and the stories that was told.*

*Me personally I really enjoyed doing the friendship bracelets and people were like “oh my goodness, is these free?”. It was nice to see people standing there doing them and we'd be talking as they're doing them so you're getting to know each other. The food at these events is always good, tea and coffee all day and doughnuts! The venue was stunning.”*

Click here to see a short film about the event.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEaU35mcKpk>



## Innovation & New Developments

- ▶ **Islington Peer Support.** Commissioned by Islington Council, Forward is now running peer support to local residents, offering online groups and face-to-face sessions on the weekend. Participants are able to engage in the Forward Connect community throughout London and the rest of the UK.
- ▶ **Forward Connect App.** In summer 2024 we launched a new app for Forward Connect, co-developed with members, that enables 24/7 peer messaging, a newsfeed of events and happenings across the country, and access to resources such as videos that help sustain recovery.
- ▶ **Virtual Reality.** We are also offering Virtual Reality experiences at meetings where members can engage in meditations together and also play fun games such as table tennis and golf.





# REACH OUT

Reach Out is Forward's online chat service that offers helpful advice and a friendly source of support for people who want to talk about their own or their loved ones' substance misuse or mental health problems.

Launched during lockdown, the service has gone from strength to strength and during 2023/24 received **3,520** calls, an average of almost 300 calls a month. The service has been particularly successful in reaching:

- ▶ **People new to treatment** – **90% callers** have never before engaged with a service, and are encouraged to find out that help is out there
- ▶ **Under-represented groups** – for example, **63% of callers are women** who value the anonymity and flexibility of initial contact online (by comparison, across the country only 33% of people who access in person support are women)
- ▶ **Friends and family** – **13% of callers** are getting in touch for advice and guidance on behalf of people they are worried about, giving them options to explore support

*“ The agent was really caring and reassuring, and made me feel comfortable. They also reassured me that I'm not alone, which is so helpful in a situation like this where I feel so isolated. ”*

*“ I have thoroughly enjoyed taking on this volunteer role - it has been ... so rewarding knowing we are helping an individual in their time of need. I appreciate all the opportunities and experience this role has given me. ”*

*“ I has been great work experience and has helped me progress with my career goals, while also giving me a sense of achievement after every shift as you can see the direct impact of your time for the visitors of the online web-chat service. ”*

The service is delivered by a pool of trained volunteers who include former Forward service users and other people with lived experience. As well as providing an opportunity to 'give back', volunteering has offered a stepping stone to employment for many, with people progressing to jobs within Forward (e.g. Recovery Workers and the LERO Co-ordinator) or elsewhere (e.g. as call handlers for the NHS 111 service).

*“ The agent was so empathetic. She provided several options for my husband and I to get help for my son. ”*

## Impact – connecting people into treatment

For Reach Out callers who want to take the next step into structured treatment, here are just a few example of how we have facilitated direct referral during live chat exchanges:

- ▶ Nichole had never accessed treatment before and was worried about her alcohol, cocaine and ketamine use and the detrimental effect this was having on their mental health.
- ▶ Harry had been advised by their GP to contact Forward, which he did via Reach Out, and sought support for the first time after a 25-year history of drinking. The caller was very pleased and surprised that he could complete his referral there and then online.
- ▶ Hanif was a partially deaf caller who was very pleased to be able to use webchat as he noted it would be difficult to communicate over the telephone.

# LIVED EXPERIENCE EMPLOYMENT PATHWAY (LEEP)

Forward's Lived Experience Employment Pathway (LEEP Forward), previously known as the Opportunity Escalator, offers a structured route into employment within Forward for our service users or other people with lived experience. We are proud to be an employer that specialises in giving people with lived experience a

chance to build skills, get experience, and show us what they can do. As a result, our workforce has a strong culture of mutual aid and understanding.

Set out below are the steps in the pathway and the numbers achieved during 2023/24:

<b>Peer Supporters:</b> 'entry level' voluntary role for current service users with lived or living experience.	<b>71</b> at any one time
<b>Peer Mentors:</b> more advanced voluntary role with wider duties; for people no longer using our services	<b>100</b> at any one time
<b>Trainees:</b> salaried roles with a comprehensive training programme, leading on successful completion to permanent appointments	<b>6</b> trainees with lived experience employed
<b>Employees:</b> full-time roles across the organisation prioritised for people with lived experience of recovery or offending	<b>35%</b> of all employees have lived experience

During 23/24 we were also proud to launch our Lived Experience in Action Employee Resource Group, a membership group which offers a safe space for staff with experience of the Criminal Justice System to voice concerns, champion achievements and share their lived experienced with others within the organisation.



“ I'm delighted to be part of the Lived Experience in Action ERG, which provides a support network and collective voice around lived experience of the criminal justice system for staff within Forward Trust. Through our regular meetings and discussions we bring about real change – e.g. we have already facilitated changes to our volunteering and staffing policies for ex-offenders joining Forward making the guidance clearer and easier to interpret... ”

**Tevfick Souleiman, Head of Enterprise.**

# M-PACT

The Moving Parents and Children Together (M-PACT) is a whole family structured support programme which aims to improve the wellbeing of children and families affected by substance misuse.

Each M-PACT programme brings together a small number of families (up to 8), usually including at least one parent (or parenting figure) with a substance use problem and at least one child aged 8-17 years. In many cases at least one other adult will also participate. A standard M-PACT programme consists of a family assessment followed by 10 face to face sessions.

We support organisations to deliver M-PACT through licencing and training.



## REACH

- ▶ **37** licence holders across the UK, Ireland and Isle of Man
- ▶ **171** new M-PACT practitioners trained
- ▶ **30** programmes delivered (6 internally and 24 by external licence holders)
- ▶ **196** families supported

“ I would like to thank everyone from M-PACT group for making our sessions so enjoyable. It has definitely helped to bring our family closer together again and we have definitely gained so much from the sessions. It is lovely to see the children in the group really getting along and sharing their feelings, and most importantly that we are all in the same boat. So many thanks. ”

Parent

“ My dad told me he loved me (for the first time) the other day. I think it is because of MPACT. ”

Child/YP

“ My Dad has made the most progress then he ever has before. ”

Child/YP

“ My mental health is in a much better place than it was before. I have met some of the most important and loving people that have helped me and my family. ”

Parent



# Innovation & New Developments

We continually strive to improve the programme through consultation with practitioners and the families taking part. One of our most significant projects this year was reviewing the practitioner training and programme through a neurodiversity lens, to ensure the programme continues to be as inclusive and accessible as possible. We were able to work with an external consultant, Yasmin Darling, who is a holistic education and neurodiversity specialist:

“It was an honour to work with The Forward Trust on improving outcomes and raising awareness for neurodivergent people. Together we were able to make powerful changes that contribute to the greater good.”

**Yasmin Darling**

With Yasmin’s supportive and expert guidance we were able to make improvements to the programme which have already started to benefit the families we support.



**MPACT**  
Moving Parents and Children Together

**Case study** - all programmes now provide a separate space with sensory equipment to enable children, young people and their adult family members to spend time in. The spaces help participants to process their experiences on the programme and also help individuals to manage any feelings of overwhelm. One programme saw the incredible benefit of this space which allowed a young person attending the programme to communicate with practitioners in her own way. Using a white board found in the space they were able to write down thoughts and feelings which could not be verbalised. This supported them to finally express to their family how they were feeling and how parental addiction had impacted them. Consequently, they continued to engage and completed the programme with their family.

**Case study** - through the new assessment process staff were able to establish that a young person attending the programme particularly disliked food with colour and was especially sensitive to the texture of food. As a consequence, food was discussed prior to every session with them so that meals could be appropriately planned to meet their specific needs. Food separating plates were used so that they could keep her food and food textures separate. A sensory zone was provided so that she could use it if she ever felt overwhelmed. As a result of the above, the daughter ate at every session because the food and the environment were tailored to her specific needs. She therefore engaged well with the programme as it had provided her with the psychological safety she needed. She trusted that the staff delivering the programme respected and valued her.

# SOCIAL VALUE

Forward is committed to maximising the Social Value that we generate through our work, working with the Social Value Portal to use evidence-based metrics for reporting.

Building on this foundation we are proud to launch our Social Value Charter, setting out a clear set of principles and commitments:

Charter Principles	Charter Commitments – examples (not exhaustive):
<p><b>1. Raise community aspirations &amp; contribute to the wider community</b>  <b>Theme: GROWTH</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Maximise employment of people who live local to where we deliver services, and who are long-term unemployed, disadvantaged, ex-offenders or young people not in employment, education or training.</li> <li>✓ Create employment opportunities within Forward for ex-service users through our Lived Experience Employment Pathway (LEEP Forward).</li> <li>✓ Develop work placements opportunities e.g. for student social workers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Be a responsible employer</b>  <b>Theme: WORK</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Maximise the proportion of contract value delivered by local charities through sub-contracting</li> <li>✓ Maximise spend on, e.g. catering, through local micro, small and medium enterprises.</li> <li>✓ Provide expert business advice to local charities (e.g. fundraising) alongside training opportunities (e.g. EDI) and the offer of facilities for use for a number of hours per year.</li> <li>✓ Create new volunteering opportunities with local charities for our service users to access.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Support local community organisations and businesses; to grow</b>  <b>Theme: ECONOMY</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Embed a positive commitment to the health and wellbeing of employees, including the provision of health insurance (Simply Health), wellbeing days and other health and wellbeing initiatives.</li> <li>✓ Provide Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training for staff and supply chain staff.</li> <li>✓ Provide fair employment contracts, paying staff as a minimum the Real Living Wage.</li> <li>✓ Develop staff opportunities for Continuous Professional Development, Training, Qualifications, etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Apply environmentally friendly and sustainable business practices</b>  <b>Theme: PLANET</b></p> 	<p>Implement Forward's Environmental Action Plan with a particular focus on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ethical and responsible sourcing practices in line with our procurement policy / preferred supplier list.</li> <li>✓ Minimise energy consumption, working towards becoming carbon neutral.</li> <li>✓ Avoid the creation of waste (especially single-use plastics) and promote reusing and recycling.</li> <li>✓ Support the conservation of local biodiversity by using outdoor space at FT sites e.g. allotments, etc.</li> </ul>

















***CHOOSE***  
**LIFE.**

# OUR PARTNERS

We recognise the value of working with partners in all our services, who bring expertise and local knowledge to enhance our provision, and are proud to have worked in 2023/24 with the following organisations:

Partner	Services they provide	Where we work with them
 Adfam	Digital families support	Southend on Sea
 Breakeven	Gambling support	Southend on Sea
 catch 22	Dependency and Recovery	London
 NHS Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust	Healthcare	Surrey, Bronzefield and Aylesbury prisons
 community led initiatives	Personal Wellbeing for people on probation	South East
 hcrj	Healthcare	HMP Chelmsford
 DIGITAL KENT	Access to Digital Resources	Kent
 DrPA Secure Healthcare solutions	Healthcare	IRC Campsfield House
 DVip	Personal Wellbeing for people on probation	South East
 ersa aelp iep Employment Related Services Association	Access to networks and resources for skills and employability providers	England and Wales
 GANGSLINE	Personal Wellbeing for people on probation	South East
 GROUNDWORK EAST	Personal Wellbeing for people on probation	South East

	Referrals of participants	London, Kent, Thanet
	Personal Wellbeing for people on probation	Lincolnshire
<b>Magistra</b>	Personal Wellbeing for people on probation	South East
	Prison	HMP Millsike
	Young persons and recovery services	Southend on Sea, Medway, Thurrock
	Healthcare	London and Midlands, Heathrow
<b>Reed in Partnership</b>	Restart Scheme, employability	Thanet
<b>REFA</b>	Personal Wellbeing for people on probation	South East
	Transport for London Car Park Maintenance	London
	Peer support literacy	Islington
	Personal Wellbeing for people on probation	South East
	Personal Wellbeing for people on probation	South East
	Support for women who sell sex	Medway
	Debt management	Thanet
	Employer support	Various prisons

# OUR COMMISSIONERS

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Department  
for Work &  
Pensions



Education & Skills  
Funding Agency



HM Prison &  
Probation Service

GREATER  
**LONDON**  
AUTHORITY



**NHS**  
England



# THANK YOU

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*We are always extremely grateful to the many individuals, companies, and trusts and foundations who generously donate towards the essential work that we do, including those who fundraise for us, and those who wish to remain anonymous. Thank you also to those people who have made provision for The Forward Trust in their will and to those who have left us a legacy gift during 2023-2024.*

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forward



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