

Spring/Summer 2021 Issue 23

forward

THE FORWARD JOURNEY MAGAZINE

NEWS AND UPDATES

FEATURED GRAD

LOCKDOWN STORIES

LOCKDOWN LIFE

POEMS AND ARTWORK

SHARES

INFO FOR YOU



Forward

The Forward Journey Magazine

Rapt

The magazine for **Forward Connect** clients

We're looking for:

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Your ideas

Your Forward Connect experiences

Your shares

Your poems

Your artwork

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Your entries are what make The Journey Magazine so please send them into us. Ideally written contributions should be no longer than 500 words (one side of lined A4 paper) where possible. Work may be edited by The Journey Team.

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How East Kent Forward Connect adapted to the lockdown

Forward Connect in East Kent has gone from strength-to-strength during Covid-19. We launched a Kaizala channel for the group in December 2019 (for those that don't know, Kaizala is a messaging app, similar to WhatsApp) which provided a brilliant way for members to connect when lockdown happened. It's been a huge success, and we were really fortunate to have put things in place before the pandemic hit.

The numbers speak for themselves. In the first three months of 2020 (i.e. pre-lockdown) just under 500 messages were sent through Forward Connect's Kaizala channel. In the first week of lockdown alone, over that number were sent – a huge increase in traffic. The channel now has around 70 members and over 20,000 messages have been sent to date. Members use the channel to reach out in difficult times, give advice, share inspiration and celebrate recovery.

To replace face-to-face meetings at each of the local hubs, we quickly set up Zoom meetings twice a week for members across the East Kent area, facilitated by a volunteer mentor and supported by the Recovery Support team. The combination of constant peer support on Kaizala and the regular Zoom meetings quickly built up a sense of community and togetherness for people at various stages of recovery. This was so important, in the face of the isolation and anxiety felt during lockdown, with members coining their own hashtag #strongertogether.

As restrictions eased, members were able to meet up in person (socially distanced of course!) for coffee and cake, to celebrate birthdays and even cheer on one Connect member at the finish line of her 100th marathon!

We're really looking forward to eventually returning to actual face-to-face meetings

and events back in our Hubs once all this is over, but in the meantime we have learnt that the accessibility digital interventions afford to connection is invaluable; they will remain in place as we grow and support new members into the Connect community.



Support you can get through Forward Connect

Kaizala is a secure chat app, similar to WhatsApp. Forward Connect has a group on this that you can join to help connect with other members. Simply download it on your smart device (phone or tablet) from either Apple's App Store or Google Play and then email forwardconnect@forwardtrust.org.uk or call our Freephone number 0300 124 0440 to get the right access code to join your local group.

Online meetings

Forward Connect runs online meetings in three areas (East Kent, London and Hull), which you're welcome to join. If you're not based in any of these areas you can still join, we'll simply connect you to the London group. If you're interested in joining, either email forwardconnect@forwardtrust.org.uk or call our Freephone number 0300 124 0440.

Being a part of Forward Trust in lockdown 2020

A Peer Mentors perspective.

Well, what a rollercoaster of emotions and life changing experiences I have been through since March and the onslaught of COVID-19!

I'm by no means wanting to dismiss the terror and sadness this pandemic has brought to so many, or all the stress and hard work put into what seemed to me like a smooth and constant delivery of support and treatment for many – often involving fast-paced adaptations. I certainly won't mention the extra grey hairs I may have spotted on the heads of East Kent's Recovery support team via our Zoom meetings!

I will, however, say a big THANK YOU.

These guys are my super heroes and have impacted my life and my recovery in ways that I am unable to express with words.

I feel very grateful, in this present moment, towards this pandemic because of the many ways it has forced my life to change and the opportunities for learning it has presented (again, not meaning any disrespect for those negatively impacted by Covid and most certainly not dismissing the seriousness of the situation. This is just about my, very fortunate, experience).

I can say without a shadow of doubt that yet again it has been Forward Trust to the rescue. I believe the opportunity to become a Peer Mentor during this time has kept my mental health intact and saved me from a possible relapse.

I hear over and over again, on the many platforms Forward uses to keep us engaged (Kaizala Connect chat, volunteer chat, Forward Connect Zoom meetings, the Dover Day programme meetings) the gratitude people who are part of these groups have for Forward.

I have absolute belief that without all of the support and connection provided through these, many of us wouldn't have made it through. Not only are myself and others making it through this, we are doing so with a new found resolve to maintain recovery, unity and the friendships we have made. Perseverance and determination appear to be catching!

To cut a long story short, due to the consequences of

my addiction, I came very close to losing my daughter permanently. Although doing well in my recovery, I was still in the process of getting her back into my life before the pandemic hit. The court had agreed I was allowed to see her, but said I would need a further 12 months of supervised visits before she could return home to live with me full-time. But then Covid struck, and my daughter was suddenly placed back in my sole care. My own personal miracle!

I am sharing this as I could never have achieved all that I have done this year without Forward's support, and I'm grateful to them for the changes they made in delivering their services and training due to the pandemic.

In addition to getting my daughter back, I've also achieved so much this year, thanks to Forward. This includes: a peer mentoring OCN level 2 qualification, being trusted by Forward to support peers remotely, co-facilitating Forward Connect meetings, and peer mentoring on the very same programme that turned my life around and taught me so much (the Dover Day programme). On top of being a full time parent!

This year has changed my life. I have built on my foundation of recovery and expanded my skill set tenfold. Dare I say I am almost employable - a huge change from being written off and placed on the sick for life!!

My confidence and self-worth has grown and I feel, for the first time ever, I'm living with intention and purpose. I have met some of the most beautiful, courageous and inspiring people ever... and I am forming lasting friendships!

I have a list as long as my arm of the people I would like to thank and have a massive debt of gratitude to. Too many to put them all down in words! So to keep it simple: if our paths have crossed at all on this lockdown journey, THANK YOU!

If you are new to Forward or reading this magazine for the first time, in any capacity, you have stumbled across solid GOLD! There are so many words that I could describe what they stand for, but here are just a few: change, trust, unity, empowerment and creativity.

Finally I am looking FORWARD to the FUTURE.



How Forward Connect has been supporting people in London and Hull through 2020

Hi I'm Lisa and I'm a Recovery Worker based in London. I oversee the Forward Connect service in London and Hull. Early in the year, I'd put plans in place for a nice social event with bowling and food for our Hull clients, which was to take place in early April. But as we all know, lockdown ended up happening so this hasn't been able to happen yet. Fingers crossed for this year!

When lockdown happened in March, we quickly had to adapt the Forward Connect service, taking it all online. We started running weekly meetings on Zoom and although it was slow to start with, we gradually built a steady group of attendees, who regularly let us know how much they love attending and how supported they feel.

We integrated the London and Hull groups so that clients from both areas can attend and it's going very well. There was some initial confusion as to what Forward Connect was about, particularly as different members had come from different services in Forward: some had come through the family service, some from substance misuse services, and still others from supported housing projects that we work closely with. This meant they all had differing experiences of the kinds of support on offer, so we had to make sure the groups on offer were suitable for everyone.

After discussing this further, and looking at people's feedback, we adapted the kinds of support on offer so that it was inclusive and not too focused on just one thing or issue. And now things are working really well!

We look at lots of different subjects, ranging from 12-step options for those who need support with their recovery, through to managing relationships, wellbeing and happiness, as well as fun stuff too.

And we're always open to suggestions from the group as to what they would like the meetings to look like. The meeting format we find works well is to play videos on various topics - decided in advance by the group - and then open things up for general discussion.

Forward Connect is a really inclusive group - it's not just for people who have done a 12-step programme, but welcomes people from across the entire range of Forward services - from family support to employment, health and wellbeing to housing. It provides an invaluable connection the bond that has been created between those who attend has been really lovely to see grow. Every member has learnt and grown from others in the group and I love being a part of it.





My Forward Connect experience

My name is Paul and my son has been in drug addiction for over 20 years. I attended Forward's 'Recovering Families' programme at ReNew in Hull (run by the Independent Family Service team) over 4 years ago and I now volunteer as a peer mentor with a Family Support Group in Hull, supporting the family and friends who have loved ones in addiction.

Last year, I was invited to join a new initiative called Forward Connect. It was explained to me as being a group aimed at anyone who had been involved in a programme with The Forward Trust. This would include volunteers, substance misuse graduates, family members and supported housing clients.

I must admit that I had reservations about joining at first. I really only wanted to be involved with family members, as they were who I could relate to. I had no interest in getting involved with anyone from the "other side", so to speak. After all, I'd had 20 odd years' experience of dealing with my own son and remembered well the chaos that ensued.

However, I decided to go for it and nervously joined my first Forward Connect meeting online, wondering what it was all about. There was a collection of people: some in recovery from substance misuse, some who we're in resettlement housing, volunteers, trainees, and also a couple of people, like me, from the family side.

At first it felt a little awkward and a bit "12-

step programme, so I wasn't sure it was for me. But I survived and decided to give it another chance.

At subsequent meetings the content broadened out a bit more, and now there are online speakers on a variety of subjects, which we all watch before starting a group discussion. Everyone in the group all got to know each other a little better through sharing what we were comfortable with - no judgement - and slowly, connections have been made. I now have a better understanding of what my son has gone through and I think others in the group have an insight to how family members are trying to deal with their own situations.

I now turn up to meetings and look forward to seeing the friends I have made. The level of honesty and insightful conversation that we have around different and sometimes difficult subjects is refreshing. It has been a real eye opener for me. I have learnt so much that has helped me understand what is going on in my world.

I'm so pleased I found this platform and can only say: give it a look and check it out! What have you got to lose? Because, just like me, you could gain so much.

By Paul Nash
Forward Trust Volunteer and Family Support
Peer Mentor

Lockdown connection

At the time of writing this, I have spent over eight months at The Nehemiah Project, a non-profit supported housing project which provides a therapeutic community for vulnerable men with a history of addiction. Thank you Nehemiah.

My name is Kris. I am an alcoholic and cocaine addict, in recovery. My journey to finally getting to the point where I can admit that was painful, incredibly destructive and plagued by years of shame, guilt and denial.

I am the guy who really had to lose everything I thought I valued - family, the Mrs, job, wealth, car, house and freedom - to finally surrender to this disease, finally do something about it, and finally get well.

It was my fifth - and what I consider to be my last - prison sentence, when it all got too much and finally something snapped inside me. I was a broken man, a train wreck - spiritually, mentally, physically and financially bankrupt. It turned out that it was for the best - the way I had been thinking all along kept getting me into trouble and I simply couldn't do it anymore. Somehow, from somewhere, I found the courage to not only accept what I was, but some willingness to do something about it.

The Forward Trust team in my prison had plenty of empathy, resources and expertise, but in order for it to make a difference it depended on me really wanting it. Although it wasn't easy - at times, it was really uncomfortable - I knew I had to go into this with bags of honesty, an open mind, and at some point show some vulnerability. My experiences to date - including plenty of failed attempts at getting sober on my own - had taught me that simply making a decision to change was never going to be enough. I'd played the 'decision and then no action' card countless times before and just ended up getting the



same results. This time I actually had to put some work in, so I set out on a plan to do everything I could, everything that was available to me.

I did every course and programme that Forward had available at the time, as well as attending AA, NA and CA fellowship meetings and getting a sponsor. I graduated from the Bridge programme and became a Peer Mentor for Forward, as well as proudly starting displaying all of my achievements and certificates on my cell wall (using toothpaste as Blu Tac!).

I now have the same certificates on display on my bedroom wall. They are there as a constant reminder of where my journey began and what is actually achievable, even in prison. As a Bridge Graduate (which means I completed a six-week, full-time programme that covers steps 1 - 3 of the 12-steps), I gained access to the Forward Trust lifetime support scheme. In short, this meant that I could now access help from Forward's Recovery and Resettlement services upon my release.

I was released from High Down on 17th February 2020, on a tag with a curfew. I certainly didn't leave with everything sorted – I wasn't cured from an incurable disease. I left knowing that I needed to keep doing what I was doing and to put my recovery first: health, family, job...in that order.

Forward gave me the assurance that they would be there for me, helping me keep sober in the world. I think I already knew that Forward were going to play another important part in my recovery. In prison, I learned to trust Forward and have belief in what they were telling me. I had to put my trust somewhere and someone!

Three weeks after leaving High Down, still adjusting to life in the community, such as building new connections, getting to know my housemates and attending AA meetings...disaster struck. The Covid pandemic sunk its teeth in to my plans and the nation – in fact, the world – shut down.

I was just getting a taste of how recovery works outside the prison walls, when the rug was suddenly pulled from under my feet. The newsfeeds were bleak. People were losing their jobs, families were struggling to put food on the table, economies all over the world were crashing and the NHS was completely overrun. And, tragically, people were dying.

Around me, people were relapsing, others I knew from prison were heading back there, fellowship meetings were shut and helplines had more calls than they could handle. I felt a bit lost; isolated and anxious. But looking back on it, I was one of the lucky ones.

Forward came to the rescue. They reached out to check on my wellbeing and offer additional support. With lightning speed, Forward set up a new client

mobile app and easy access group meetings via Zoom. This was available for all of their clients, past and present. In addition, I had access to keyworkers and was having regular check in's and catch up calls. Thank you Kieran. Thank you Lisa.

Having the means to connect with like-minded people is essential in recovery. If isolation is recognised as a vehicle for addiction, then connection is a means to recovery. No one understands me as well as another alcoholic or addict.

After some trial and error (and lots of persistence patience!), everyone got their heads around technology and Zoom, we all got connected with two weekly regional online Forward Connect meetings. One was hosted by Hull and the other London, which I now host.

I jumped at the chance to pick up some voluntary work and I can sincerely say that the Forward Connect online platform became a lifeline for me and many other people. It has turned out to be one of the most useful, interesting, diverse, and honest tools I have used throughout the lockdown and after.

In addition to my sponsor, key workers and recovery friends, Forward Connect has become my go-to place for support and connection. I am so grateful. It is sadly possible that we could be heading for a second lockdown whilst I write this. However, as unfortunate as that would be, I really do now feel well equipped to continue my recovery journey and continue to grow with the tools that Forward has provided.

It's true what they say – recovery is not easy. But it is possible and it is worth it. It's available for everyone, if you really want it. Even in a global pandemic.

By Kris



Welcome to

Forward Connect

Our nationwide community for current and former service users who are making good progress in their recovery and/or rehabilitation.

Forward Connect provides a platform for sharing information, celebrating success, supporting each other and staying connected.

What will I get as a member?

- ▶ Regular news and announcements on reunions, open days and other recovery-related events
- ▶ A chance to give back and share your story
- ▶ Volunteering and training opportunities
- ▶ A subscription to The Journey magazine
- ▶ Access to local support groups, social events and creative projects run by our regional Forward Connect groups in [Hull](#), [East Kent](#) and [London](#)

Forward

If you're interested in getting involved with Forward Connect, please either speak to your caseworker, call us on 0300 1240 440, or email: forwardconnect@forwardtrust.org.uk.

What's running where

Your guide to what Forward services are available in each of the prisons we work in.

Structured prison programmes

Prison	Substance Dependence Treatment Programme (SDTP) and Footsteps to Recovery	The Bridge Programme	IAPT	Family Ties
HMP Brixton	✓			✓
HMP Chelmsford			✓	
HMP Coldingley				✓
HMP Downview		✓		✓
HMP East Sutton Park				✓
HMP Elmley		✓		✓
HMP High Down		✓		✓
HMP Highpoint			✓	
HMP Hollesley Bay			✓	
HMP Maidstone				✓
HMP Rochester		✓		✓
HMP Send	✓			✓
HMP Stanford Hill				✓
HMP Stoke Heath				✓
HMP Swaleside	✓			
HMP The Mount		✓	✓	✓
HMP Warren Hill			✓	
HMP Wormwood Scrubs				✓

Community programmes

Community project	Residential rehab	Day rehab	East Kent SDP	Recovering Families
East Kent community service			✓	✓
ReNew Hull		✓		✓
The Bridges - Hull	✓			

SHARES AND STORIES

Life story

Hi my name's Andy and I'm an addict. Now that we've got that out the way, let me ask you a question.

What is lockdown? What does it mean to you? I don't mean in terms of what you would say to your drug councillor - I'm not a drug councillor, and I'm not a screw. I want to know what you would say to one of your closest mates first.

Well, it's fucked up, innit bruv? It's just fucked up. You can't get Spice anywhere. And even if you could, how are you gonna pay the geezer? And even if you could call this 'controlled unlock', screws are everywhere. They're gonna know you're high - they're coming round with dogs every night, sniffing out peoples cells. It's just not fucking worth it!!!!

Okay fine, but now let's dig a bit deeper. Let's think about what you might say to yourself, in your quiet moments, behind your door. Things like:

"Actually, I've been two and half weeks without Spice, and it ain't so fucking bad. I always said I was gonna do this. And here I am and not only am I coping fine, but my head actually feels pretty straight."

"Yeah, I'm a bit scared about keeping it going, but at least I can phone my mum or girlfriend

without asking for money."

"At least I'm not scared about being out on the landing, I can hold my head up now. Jesus, that's all I've ever wanted really."

If you're an addict, those thoughts and feelings should be familiar to you and the commitments you have to make just seem so hard and so impossible.

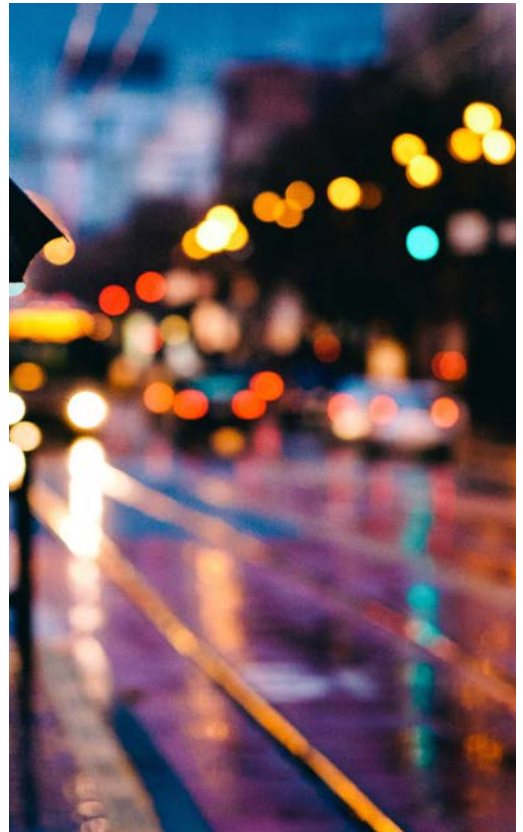
I'm using lockdown to really sort myself out. As a Type 1 diabetic, the packs that they bring to us at teatime with crisps, chocolate, popcorn and fizzy drinks are just poisonous to me. Plus with the unhealthy baguette, it's just pure carbs. And then I sit on my bed all night watching shit T.V. with my bloated gut going up and up and up.

So I decided I can't eat them. But because I'm an addict, I tell myself I need to keep them in the cupboard, just in case I have a low blood sugar during the night. So I put them in the cupboard, but then I end up giving myself more insulin than I actually need, telling me it's better to keep my BM as low as possible. All the time knowing that actually I'm risking hypoglycaemia, so I'll be forced to eat the crisps and chocolate that I crave.

This type of risk-taking behaviour is what we call cross addiction. So my only option is to say no to the pack at my door. It's a hard



better at making them. So if you want my advice, use lockdown. Use the quiet time. Think about stuff and turn into someone new.



decision to make, yet it's the best decision. I feel a very odd sense of maturity and satisfaction when I do it, and as a result I'm much happier and healthier these days.

So the moral of the story is this. I've been in recovery for nearly ten years, but I'm going to be an addict for the rest of my life.

I never forget that in the cycle of change, maintenance is RIGHT next to relapse. The decisions you make in recovery are every bit as hard as the decisions you need to make right now. You just grow and mature. You get

Andrew Lambert
Health and Wellbeing Champion (HAWC)
HMP The Mount



*Lockdown Arts and Crafts
by Justine Flood*

GOODBYE ADDICTION

By Steven Wicks

I've wrote you this, to say goodbye,
to draw a line in the sand, so I will no longer cry

A 2-year-old boy with no mum by his side
It was always going to be you that I would confide
- A matter of time, no matter when or where
As soon as we met, the void filled, right there
- A temporary fix, I thought you was my saviour It turned into full time,
once I got the flavour
- You were there for me, when I couldn't cope

I realise now, it was you that took away all hope
- In my darkest hours you took away the pain
But you was the reason, I was no longer sane
- Progressive dependence, for all those years
At the end, it was crack, at the start, 2 beers
- A destructive illness, I see you as today
But I've found a solution to keep you at bay.

- I need you no longer, I can honestly say
Thank god for the 12 steps, thank god for AA
- I confide now in god, with my dad by his side
They give me the strength, so I don't need to hide
- A new way of life has showed me great things

I now have NA, and the hope that it brings
- Counsellors and prisons tried to help me abstain All in vain,
until a miracle ended my pain
- That miracle was god, I'm not embarrassed to say
Who would have thought, I only had to pray
- You made me abandon my son and my wife
Without doubt, the tarnish on my life
- Now that you've gone, happiness and relief
I've now got the 12 steps, my higher power and belief
- One things for sure, I will never forget you
But no grey sky today, today it is blue.

- I will warn your next victim that you try to seduce
tell them my story, stop them tying that noose
- I'll show what it's like, on the other side
new found hope, happiness and pride
- Now I've closed your door, threw away the key
A new wonderful life, from you I'm now free
- An addict with a stigma, a thief and a liar
that's no longer me, thank god for Nehemiah

How The Bridges adapted to lockdown

When we first went into lockdown, it was an incredibly stressful time. Clients were devastated because they could no longer attend mutual aid meetings in the community, such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA), which are such a crucial part of their treatment. We were also in the process of recruiting new staff, but the logistics of interviewing people was difficult, so we struggled to fill some of our vacancies.

Some of the clients said it felt like they were back in prison, while we were beginning to question whether we would have to send people home. It was a really tough time.

We had to adapt quickly to prevent any major disruption and ensure our clients could keep getting the support they needed. One of the first steps was to buy webcams so the guys could do their mutual aid meetings remotely. We rigged up our recovery room with webcams and speakers, and created a timetable of online meetings that mirrored their usual routine as closely as possible. We also opened up payphones to be available to clients 24/7 so that they could keep in touch with their loved ones. Thankfully, we were also able to borrow some staff members from our neighbouring service, ReNew, which meant we weren't spread quite so thinly and could allow our residents a little more freedom within the house.

Working out and keeping fit is massively important to our clients, and really helps their recovery and mental health, so we incorporated a range of fitness sessions into the timetable. We bought skipping ropes, basketball hoops and speakers, and even had one of our clients, a qualified personal trainer, running socially distanced fitness sessions in the garden!

Our friends and neighbours have been unbelievably generous. They donated board games, jigsaws and cards - anything and everything to keep our residents occupied and entertained. We really took it back to basics: treasure hunts in the house, playing snakes and ladders, painting, music groups - we had a

lot of fun. We even had some TVs donated to us, which were particularly appreciated by our more vulnerable clients who had to shield from others in the household. We also equipped them with basic smartphones so they could dial into group therapy sessions, even from the confines of their rooms.

In April, we took on the 2.6 challenge (a fundraising challenge from the London Marathon, to help charities impacted by the loss of income when the race was postponed), with an exercise bike that had been loaned to us. It was a brilliant day, with both staff and clients doing their bit to cycle over 26 miles.

We smashed our initial fundraising target of £100, raising £420 in total! With the money, we were able to purchase eight bikes from a local charity called Revolution, who specialise in revamping bikes for marginalised groups. Now the guys can get out and about without having to take a bus, whilst getting some exercise in - they love it!

In normal times, our secondary clients (those who have completed the first stage of treatment) help out in the community. With this at a standstill, our resettlement team organised some internal volunteering activities that played on their individual strengths - painting the building, gardening, helping out with food orders, coordinating wellness sessions - so they were still able benefit from that part of their treatment.

Unfortunately, we had to halt new admissions from March through to April, because we just didn't have the policies in place to protect the clients who were already living with us. However, while our doors were closed, we worked closely with Forward's Health and Safety Team to devise a new policy around self-isolating and socially-distanced client admissions.

We set up a quarantine area so when new clients came in they could isolate for two weeks, and retrained our staff, who were equipped with full PPE, so they could attend to them. With this in place, we



could start admitting new clients again from May. It was such a powerful moment when we had our first two new clients walk down the stairs after their isolation period; everyone was waiting for them, cheering, clapping, hugging them, and embracing them into the community. Over the last few months, we've been able to take six more new clients - which is amazing.

We've used the opportunity to refine our assessment criteria, too. When someone drops out of treatment, it has such a devastating effect on the rest of our clients. That's why it's critical to find candidates who are well-suited to and ready for the programme. Because we've had the time to comb through all of our policies, we're now getting the right people into the facility, and since the beginning of the lockdown, we've had zero drop outs. That means our retention rate and occupancy is the highest it's ever been and for the first time ever, we've even got a waiting list!

We've had six people graduate in the period between May and July - which is phenomenal for us. Plus we've been able to get a tight aftercare package in place to make sure they've got a suitable house and everything in place for when they go home.

We've had a crazy time, and of course it's been an


extremely difficult one for many people, but in all honesty, the lockdown has been one of the best things that's ever happened to The Bridges. While it was a struggle at first, both our clients and staff listened and got on board with the changes admirably, and as a result the experience has only served to bring us closer together.

We'll take a lot away from this time: the closeness, the client-led fitness and therapy sessions, the digital connectivity and the volunteering in the house. It's shown us we can do things differently, when we put our minds to it.

As I write this*, things are slowly but surely returning back to normal: home visits, with thorough risk assessments and appropriate isolation periods, can go ahead right now, mutual aid meetings are starting to come back, our volunteers are beginning to return - which means we can take clients shopping in town again - but I truly believe this whole experience has left us better off than before. I, for one, am looking forward to an even brighter future for The Bridges.

Jessica Bailey, Treatment Manager, The Bridges

**This article was written before the latest lockdown*



the journey

THE JOURNEY

JUST FOR TODAY, I WAKE UP FEELING FRESH AND BRIGHT,
I LOOK AND PRAY TO MY HIGHER POWER TO KEEP SHOWING ME
THE LIGHT.

WE ALWAYS THINK WE CAN DO IT ALONE, YET OUR HEART IS
NOT SET IN STONE.

SO THE JOURNEY BEGINS IN GOOD STEAD, MY SLEEP TONIGHT
MAKES ME FEEL WHAT A LOVING BED.

I FIND BEING HONEST TO MYSELF, KEEPS ME GROUNDED LIKE
PLATES ON A SHELF.

TODAY MY FEELING OF JOY PLAYS A BIG PART OF MY LIFE,
LOVING MEMORIES OF PEACE LOOKING FORWARD TO MEETING HIM
IN THE EAST.

I AM AT A PLACE OF COMFORT I FEEL, BECAUSE MY HEART
IS SETTLED LEADING TO ME BELIEVING IN ME FROM THE START.

I HAVE HAD MANY DAYS STUCK IN THE HAZE, DON'T WORRY
HE SAID THE HEART IS LIKE A MAZE.

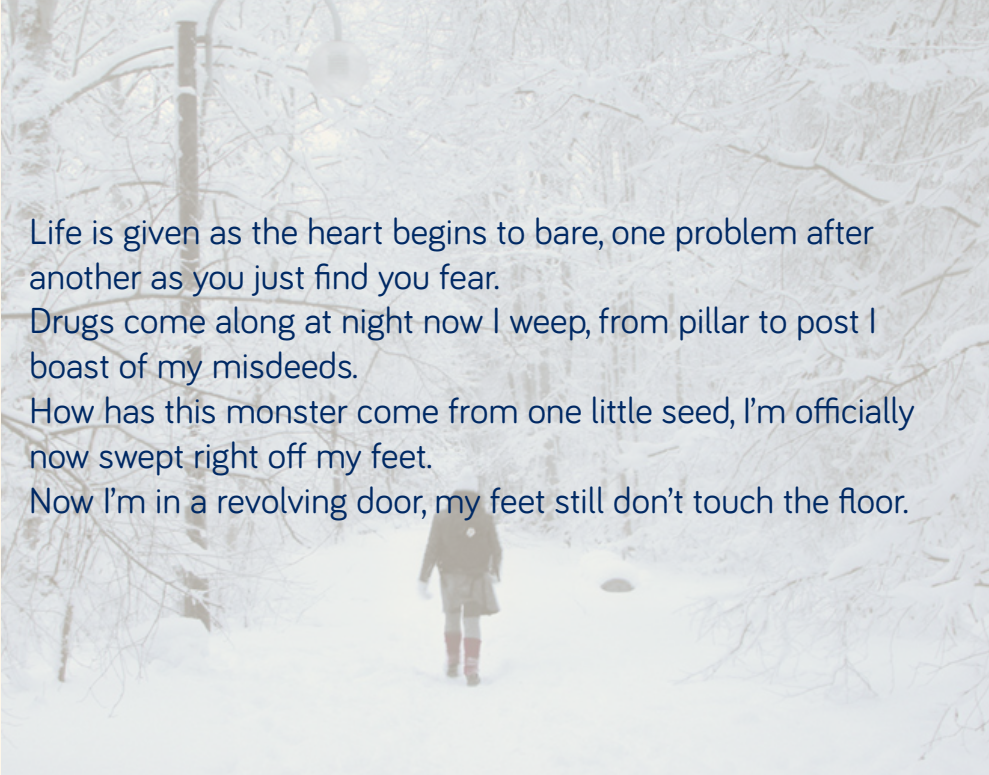
MY JOURNEY IS FINE, GETTING TAUGHT THE BEST WAY
FORWARD NOT BATTLING MY MIND.

SOMETIMES MY HEAD DRIFTS AWAY IN OUTER SPACE, IT'S
NOT A RACE, IT'S HOW YOU PACE.

I LOVE ME NOW, SHOWING HAPPINESS KEEPS ME FOCUSED,
KEEPS ME TRUE TO MYSELF, HAPPINESS IS NOT A TEST.

THE JOURNEY WON'T STOP HERE SO DON'T YOU DISAPPEAR,
LIFE'S GOOD, THE BEST IT CAN BE, I FEEL FREE.

BY VICTOR LINDSEY

A person wearing a dark coat and red boots is walking away from the camera down a path covered in deep snow. The surrounding trees and bushes are heavily laden with snow, creating a serene winter scene.

Life is given as the heart begins to bare, one problem after another as you just find you fear.

Drugs come along at night now I weep, from pillar to post I boast of my misdeeds.

How has this monster come from one little seed, I'm officially now swept right off my feet.

Now I'm in a revolving door, my feet still don't touch the floor.

A sunlit path leads through a forest. Sunbeams stream through the trees, illuminating the path and the surrounding greenery. The scene is peaceful and hopeful.

I miss the sun like the sun misses the flower on the depths of winter.

Instead of light, my heart is banished to the frozen waste lands of despair.

Then as like a beam of light bursting through the Earth's core, I now have a fight worth fighting for.

This is what I'm aiming for, a second chance to live a life worth living for.

By Nick

Forward's new IAPT service for health and wellbeing

April 2020 saw the introduction of Forward's new 'Improving Access to Psychological Therapies' (IAPT) services at HMPs Warren Hill, Hollesley Bay, High Point and The Mount. This was in addition to HMP Chelmsford, where we'd already been delivering an IAPT service for two years.

IAPT services help people who are experiencing low-level mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety. As a service, IAPT began in 2008 in the community, and has transformed the treatment of anxiety disorders and depression in adults in England. It is widely-recognised as one of the most ambitious programmes that uses talking therapies and more than one million people have accessed its services for help since it first launched.

IAPT is designed to help people take positive steps that will improve their wellbeing through structured, evidence-based interventions. It largely consists of techniques from something called Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), a talking therapy that can help people manage their problems by changing the way they think and behave.

What sorts of things can IAPT help me with?

- Depression
- Anxiety and stress
- Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)
- Sleep difficulties
- Panic disorder
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

How do I get a referral?

You can be referred by someone in the prison, such as healthcare or your personal officer, or you can self-refer if you prefer.

A little bit about the individual services, from the people that run them!

HMP Hollesley Bay and Warren Hill

Residents at Hollesley Bay and Warren Hill have welcomed the IAPT service positively since it launched. As a result, we are already seeing an increase in referrals. We look forward to the impact that the IAPT service will bring to the prisons in the future.

Noma Khabo, Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner

HMP High Point

The IAPT work at Highpoint started only very recently, with some challenges in getting this up and running to begin with. However, now we're up and running, we are happy to announce that one of Europe's biggest prisons is starting to experience a mental health revolution thanks to the IAPT service! The referral list is massive, but thankfully it is being worked on and many residents are starting to wonder, "Where has this service been for so long?" Whilst we can't answer that questions, we're delighted to be delivering the service now and helping inmates realise where they should and could be.

Zephaniah Ncube, Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner

HMP The Mount

Here at HMP The Mount we are both proud and excited to have been delivering the IAPT Service since April 2020. With a steady flow of both staff and self-referrals, we welcome the opportunity to support our residents as they work towards making positive progression in relation to their mental health. The team are eager and keen to build and maintain a strong and reliable service that offers assessment, treatment and interventions to residents in need of support.

Jodie Leigh, Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner



HMP Chelmsford

The IAPT team at Chelmsford is finally back in the driving seat after some Covid-related disruptions and have commenced work! We are continuing to work on the service that we have built over the past two years and are looking forward to new and exciting things in the future.

Katie Tuite, IAPT Practitioner and Natacha Verliac, IAPT High Intensity Therapist

Some quotes from previous service users at HMP Chelmsford

"The staff are brilliant - very understanding and patient! I got a lot out of today and would like to thank them"

"Great service. Thank you for helping me - means a lot"

"I can't thank the IAPT team enough. A huge thank you for listening and never judging. A service that has helped me in more ways than they will ever know. Thank you. P.S thanks for the coffee and custard creams!"

have completed an IAPT programme at Hollesley Bay, Warren Hill, The Mount, Highpoint or Chelmsford.

The service provides:

- Release planning workshops
- One-to-one support
- Bespoke release packs
- The opportunity to be connected to a mentor in the community
- Signposting to recovery, resettlement, mental health and wellbeing services
- The opportunity to be connected into our national Forward Connect network in prison and in the community
- Support up to eight weeks after release into the community

Eligibility criteria

Anyone who has completed an IAPT programme at one of these prisons and is within three months of their release date is eligible for this service. Ask a member of the IAPT team how you can be referred. We look forward to working with you in the near future.

Additional support for IAPT clients from the Recovery Support Service

Recovery Support supports people who have completed one of our programmes, and can help with the transition back into the community. The Forward Trust are now offering this service to IAPT clients who



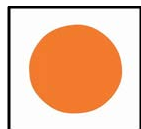
Apps for Mental Health



Chill Panda is for children and adults who want to learn how to manage stress, relax and feel better. It uses your phone's camera to measure your heart rate and suggests playful tasks to suit your state of mind. Tasks include simple breathing techniques and lighter exercises to take your mind off your worries.



Calm Harm is suitable for people who are trying to manage urges to self-harm. It is based on the principles of dialectical behaviour therapy – a type of talking of therapy that is often effective in people with mood disorders. The app suggests task to encourage users to distract themselves from urges to self-harm and help manage their emotional mind in a more positive way.



Headspace helps you to let go of stress and relax with guided meditations and mindfulness techniques that bring calm, wellness and balance to your life in just a few minutes a day. There are exercises on topics including managing anxiety, stress relief, breathing, happiness and focus.



Cove lets you create music to capture your mood and express how you feel. Instead of using words, create music to reflect emotions like joy, sadness, loneliness and anger. You can store your music in a private journal with text or send it to someone when you are struggling to express yourself through words.



Happy Not Perfect is a toolkit for your mind. Backed by science Happy Not Perfect enables you to play the daily happiness workout to reduce stress and improve sleep, learn breathing techniques, let go of negative thoughts, practice a positive mindset, meditate, set goals and track progress.



Cypher is an anonymous peer-to-peer social network. It is a space to share your thoughts, feelings and secrets, give and receive support and connect to other support organisations. You can create a virtual pet who gets happier the more good you do.



Thrive: Feel Stress Free

Feel Stress Free helps you manage stress, anxiety and related conditions. Use the app to relax before a stressful situation or as part of your regular routine.



iPrevail connects you with people who face similar situations and know what you're going through, with communities on stress, anxiety, depression and more.



Catch It

Learn how to manage feelings like anxiety and depression with Catch It. The app will teach you how to look at problems in a different way, turn negative thoughts into positive ones and improve your mental wellbeing.



My Possible Self

The My Possible Self app aims to help you take control of your thoughts, feelings and behaviour. Use the app to help manage fear, anxiety and stress, and tackle unhelpful thinking.



Pzizz

The Pzizz app aims to help you stop your mind racing, get to sleep, stay asleep and wake up refreshed.



Health Unlocked

Use Health Unlocked to find and connect with people with mental health conditions, including low mood, panic and anxiety.



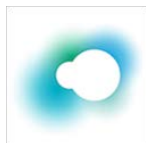
Feeling Good

Feeling Good uses the principles of cognitive behavioural therapy to help improve thoughts and feelings, self-esteem and self-confidence.



Emotional Fitness Game

Use adventure games designed by psychologists to help you increase your emotional fitness



Silver Cloud

An eight week course to help you manage stress, anxiety and depression at your own pace



ieso

Connect confidentially and securely with mental health therapist using instant messages



Stress and Anxiety Companion

Breathing exercise, relaxing music, games to help calm your mind and change negative thoughts



Sleepio

An online sleep improvement programme clinically proven to help you fall asleep faster

10 tips

to help you look after your **mental health** and **wellbeing**

It's Important to take care of yourself and get the most from life. Below are some practical tips to look after your mental health and wellbeing. Making simple changes to how you live doesn't need to cost a fortune or take up loads of time. Anyone can follow this advice, Why not start today?

1. Talk about your feelings

Talking about your feelings can help you stay in good mental health and will help you to deal with times when you feel troubled. Whether you are in the fellowship and share in meetings; or phone someone you trust, reach out and connect to another person, talk honestly about how you are feeling and don't be alone.

2. Keep active

Regular exercise can boost your self-esteem and can help you concentrate, sleep, and feel better. Exercise keeps the brain and your other vital organs healthy, and is also a significant benefit towards improving your mental health. Online workouts from home are available through different social media platforms. Walking outside is a great way to get fresh air and get your heart rate up. Or if you are a fan of the gym, commit to a weekly class maybe as that is also a great way to meet people as well as keeping fit.

3. Eat well

Your brain needs a mix of nutrients in order to stay healthy and function well, just like the other organs in your body. A diet that's good for your physical health is also good for your mental health. Breakfast is an important meal so it's good to have just a little snack if you are not a breakfast person. We need energy like cars need fuel so eating little and often works if you are not one for big meals.

4. Keep in touch

There's nothing better than catching up with someone face to face, but that's not always possible. You can also give them a call, drop them a note, or chat to them online instead. Keep the lines of communication open: it's good for you!

5. Ask for help

None of us are superhuman. We all sometimes get tired or overwhelmed by how we feel or when things don't go to plan. If things are getting too much for you and you feel you can't cope, ask for help. Your family or friends may be able to offer practical help or a listening ear. Local services are there to help you. (Please see the general mental health organisations section for more details).

6. Take a break

A change of scene or a change of pace is good for your mental health.

It could be a five-minute pause from cleaning your kitchen, a half-hour lunch break at work, or a weekend exploring somewhere new. A few minutes can be enough to de-stress you. Give yourself some 'me time'.

7. Do something you're good at

What do you love doing? What activities can you lose yourself in? What did you love doing in the past? Enjoying yourself can help beat stress. Doing an activity you enjoy probably means you're good at it, and achieving something boosts your self-esteem

8. Accept who you are

We're all different. It's much healthier to accept that you're unique than to wish you were more like someone else. Feeling good about yourself boosts your confidence to learn new skills, visit new places and make new friends. Good self-esteem helps you cope when life takes a difficult turn.

9. Care for others

'Friends are really important... We help each other whenever we can, so it's a two-way street, and supporting them uplifts me.' As we get older and are no longer in situations where making friends is easy, think about what you enjoy or any interests you may have where you could find some likeminded people. Even looking at voluntary work perhaps, another way to meet people and do something potentially very rewarding that could lead who knows where.

10. Sleep well

Getting enough sleep is so important and running on empty is not good either. Hungry, angry, lonely and tired are not a good combination but we are able to do something about tiredness. It is good to try and get into a routine of switching off social media and trying to get your head down before midnight as this helps with getting a better quality of sleep. Trying to get around 6-8 hours of undisturbed sleep a night can help life feel a bit more manageable.

General mental health services

If you're having thoughts of suicide, are harming yourself or have thought about self-harm, it's important to tell someone.

If you can't wait to see a doctor and feel unable to cope or keep yourself safe, contact one of the organisations below to get support right away, or seek support from the emergency services explaining that you are in a mental health crisis. If you're having a mental health crisis, go to A&E.

Anxiety UK

Charity providing support if you have been diagnosed with an anxiety condition.

Phone: 03444 775 774 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5.30pm)

Website: www.anxietyuk.org.uk

Bipolar UK

A charity helping people living with manic depression or bipolar disorder.

Website: www.bipolaruk.org.uk

Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)

CALM is for people in the UK who are down or have hit a wall for any reason. They offer a free, anonymous webchat service, run by trained staff.

Phone: 0800 58 58 58 (daily, 5pm to midnight)

Webchat: <https://www.thecalmzone.net/help/get-help/> (daily, 5pm to midnight)

Website: www.thecalmzone.net

Childline

If you're under 19, you can also talk to Childline. The number will not appear on your phone bill.

Phone: 0800 1111

Men's Health Forum

24/7 stress support for men by text, chat and email.

Website: www.menshealthforum.org.uk

Mental Health Foundation

Provides information and support for anyone with mental health problems or learning disabilities.

Website: www.mentalhealth.org.uk

Mind

Promotes the views and needs of people with mental health problems.

Phone: 0300 123 3393 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm)

Website: www.mind.org.uk

No Panic

Charity offering support for sufferers of panic attacks and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). They offer courses to help overcome phobias or OCD. Call to their telephone number cost 5p per minute plus your phone provider's access charge

Phone: 0844 967 4848 (daily, 10am to 10pm)

Website: www.nopanic.org.uk

Papyrus

If you're under 35 and feel that life isn't worth living any more, Papyrus's Hopeline can help. They are open from 9am – midnight every day of the year (weekends and Bank Holidays included).

Phone: 0800 068 41 41 (9am to 10pm weekdays and 2pm to 10pm on weekends)

Text: 07786 209697

Website: <https://www.papyrus-uk.org/>

Rethink Mental Illness

Support and advice for people living with mental illness.

Phone: 0300 5000 927 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 4pm)

Website: www.rethink.org

Samaritans

When life is tough, Samaritans are here to listen at any time of the day or night, 24/7. You can talk to them about anything that's troubling you, no matter how difficult.

Freepone: 116 123

Website: <https://www.samaritans.org/>

SANE

Emotional support, information and guidance for people affected by mental illness, their families and carers.

Text care: comfort and care via text message, sent when the person needs it most: www.sane.org.uk/textcare

Peer support forum: www.sane.org.uk/supportforum

Website: www.sane.org.uk/support

SHOUT 85258

Confidential, 24/7 text support for when you need immediate assistance.

Text "SHOUT" to 85258

Website: <https://giveusashout.org/>



Introducing our new

IAPT Recovery Support Service

The Forward Trust are now offering support upon release to anyone who has completed the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme.

What does the service provide?

- ▶ Group release planning workshops
- ▶ 1:1 support
- ▶ Bespoke release packs
- ▶ The opportunity to be connected to a mentor in the community
- ▶ Signposting to recovery, resettlement, mental health and wellbeing services
- ▶ The opportunity to be connected into our national Forward Connect network in prison and in the community

If you are within three months of release and you are interested in benefiting from this service, please speak to your IAPT key worker.

forward

Lockdown

Coronavirus epidemic versus the Dover Day programme

Nobody could have predicted that a virus would have this much of an impact on the world as we knew it. Or how we would have to adapt every aspect of how we work to accommodate the new 'Covid-secure' rules and keep us all safe.

Covid has hindered our world in so many ways, particularly how we interact with one another, as well as highlighted the importance of mental health. It's destroyed so many lives: taking away loved ones and forcing us to isolate ourselves – especially hard if you're already in a lonely place. Communities are working together helping each other stay safe and practice social distancing. We've had to look at new ways to stay connected, be it with family or in a work environment.

For me, the work place looks very different. I work in a hub in Kent and help to facilitate the Dover Day programme, supporting people with substance misuse issues.

Before the pandemic, we'd all come together as a group - in the same room - and help clients support one another



to stay abstinent. Staff would also deliver one-to-one key work in person. Being able to connect visibly in a therapeutic environment is so important. The programme usually ran from 10am - 3pm, Monday to Friday.

When lockdown happened, this changed almost overnight. We knew we had to adapt quickly to make sure the programme could still be delivered. Clients were in the middle of their treatment process and we had to support them - no matter what!!!

As a team, we looked at running the programme on line, using digital services such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom. This wasn't easy for me personally, as I wasn't

very technically literate and I struggled at times. But with the help of my team I was able to get up to speed quickly. In addition to running groups online, we also set up a secure group for clients on Kaizala (a chat app similar to WhatsApp), where people could access the out-of-hours support if they needed. One-to-one key work was now done over the phone, and we also used the phone to speak to any clients who needed a chat after online group sessions. I also helped support my colleagues remotely when service users wanted check-ins, providing people the chance to talk to or be an ear to listen - in confidence, of course - as well as signposting to other services if they needed. Clients were offered remote support with their assignments as well.

Despite all the changes, we've had the pleasure of seeing two participants actually graduate from the programme. Usually we would celebrate the achievements of the graduates with cake, but I guess cake can wait a bit longer!!!

I am personally passionate about change, and what better opportunity does a person get to embrace change than

during these times. We can all learn from these experiences and listen to the powerful messages of hope as we come together again, just in a different way.

We're still receiving new referrals for the programme and are able to accept new clients who hope to gain the tools they need to maintain recovery.

Forward are seeing a lot more people coming into our services right now because of substance misuse. Our ability as an organisation to be support these clients hasn't wavered despite the challenges of running a service during a pandemic, because we have adapted to the situation and - in many ways - actually improved the way that we work together.

I guess the message is out there for all to see. We never give up because everyone deserves a chance. If we all pull together we can work towards a future where change is possible!!!

S Davies

Calendar of events*

Feb – August 2021

March 2021

Alcoholic Anonymous - 15th International Convention

Date: 13th March 2021

Location: Seashells Resort, Suncrest Hotel, Qwara, Malta

Registration: Please email convention@aamalta.org.mt and Quote first name, surname initial (EG: Bill W) & country for all members of your party

NA – Ski and Recovery

Date: Monday 15th March 2021 - 09:00 Sunday 21st March 2021 - 16:30

Location: Trysil Mountain, 2420 Trysil, Trysil

Contact: naoutdoor@outlook.com

April 2021

NA London Convention - LCNA #28

Date: Friday 9th, Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th April 2021

Likely location: Friends House, 173-177 Euston Rd, London NW1 2BJ

Contact: londonconventionna@gmail.com

CA - A New Freedom

Date: 16th April 2021 - 18th April 2021

Location: Royal Bath Hotel, Bath Road, Bournemouth, BH1 2EW United Kingdom

Price: £20

Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/a-new-freedom-tickets-72413882873>

Website: <https://www.casouthcentral.uk/>

May 2021

AA - London International Convention

Date: 1st May 2021

Location: The Tower Hotel London E1W 1LD

Pre-registration: www.londonaaconvention.com

Cost: £25 Whole weekend available online only before 31st December. £15 day/evening, £10 Evening only (after 7pm).

AA - 64th Scottish National Convention

Date: 14th May 2021

Location: Stirling Court Hotel, University of Stirling, Stirling FK9 4LA.

Contact: convention.snc@aamail.org

June 2021

15th AA International Convention

Date: 4th June 2021

Location: Seashells Resort at Suncrest Hotel, Qawra, Malta.

Price: 40 Euros

Website: aamalta.org.mt

29th AA Welsh National Convention

Date: 4th June 2021

Location: The Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod, Wells, Powys, LD1 5DY

Event Type: Convention

Cost: £10 for whole or part weekend.

Contact: Email: welsh-convention@aamail.org,

Website: www.aa-gb.org/wnc

***Please note - this information was correct at the time of putting this publication together. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, some in-person events may be subject to change. Please contact the event organisers direct to confirm the latest arrangements - Forward are not able to confirm these changes for you.**

NA - Sussex Area Convention

Date: Friday 25th June 2021 - 15:00 to Sunday 27th June 2021 - 17:30

Price: Full weekend ticket £25, day ticket £10 and pre-registration required

Location: Holiday Inn, 137 Kings Road, Brighton, BN1 2JF

Contact: convention@sussexna.org

July 2021

CA - Back To Basics

Date: 10th July 2021 @ 20:00 - 11th July 2021 @ 20:00

Price: £15

Location: The Hop Farm, The Hop Farm, Maidstone Rd, Paddock Wood, Tonbridge, TN12 6PY

Tickets: <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/cakent/310546>

August 2021

NA - Sussex Area Campout

Date: Friday 27th August 2021 - 13:00 to Sunday 29th August 2021 - 10:00

Location: Blacklands Farm, Chiff Chaff Field, East Grinstead, RH19 4HP

Price: £35.00 waged, £30.00 unwaged

Contact: Email: sussexnacampout@gmail.com

Phone: 07523 826276

Other dates to be aware of

No Smoking Day - 11th March All Day

International Day for the Elimination of racial Discrimination - 21st March

LGBT History Month Feb 1st -28th Feb 2021

LGBT History month takes place for the whole of feb every year, buy a badge and show your support of the LGBT Community. Find out what events are happening locally.

Random Acts Of Kindness Day Feb 17th 2021

It is a favourite day to many, as people everywhere are enjoying doing these acts of kindness.

And here are some additional links to keep an eye on for upcoming events in 2021:

Sober Events - www.sober-events.co.uk

Sober is Fun - www.soberisfun.co.uk

Morning Gloryville - morninggloryville.com

The Sober Buzz - www.thesoberbuzz.co.uk

Tuned out - www.happydaysforeveryone.com

Fitness

Coping through Football:

www.copingthroughfootball.org

Sport in Mind: www.sportinmind.org

Featured Peer Supporter



I'm 35 years old and since the age of 14 I've spent 17 years in prison - partly due to alcohol and drug abuse. I got a life sentence in 2005 for a violent offence while heavily under the influence of alcohol. I can't even remember what happened, but a man was in a coma and nearly died. I didn't think I had a problem with drink or drugs, I just thought I was a violent person. So I did lots of violence-based offending behaviour programmes.

I was released in March 2017. Within four weeks, I started to use drink and drugs. I got myself in some bad situations, which lead to me being recalled to prison after

eight months out. In my head, it wasn't the drink or drugs that was the problem, it was everyone else. Wrong place, wrong time; no way am I an addict.

I battled addiction on my own for two years while on recall, not knowing any different. I'd never even heard about the 12-steps or recovery. It was hell. I was using, thinking it was the answer to all my problems, yet they were all still there and worse every time.

Then I came to HMP High Down in March 2019 and met a couple of lads on my spur who were going to fellowship meetings put on by Forward where people come in from outside and share. I went along and enjoyed them, but knew there was still no way I was an addict! I was different to all these people in the rooms, I thought, but I liked going so I kept it up.

After a few months I'd heard a lot of shares and the penny finally dropped. I am an addict and I'm 100% like all them in the rooms. Different backgrounds to many, same to others. Different drink and drugs, but all one thing in common: the disease of addiction. So now what was I going to do?



I feel lucky as I had the right people around me at the right time. Firstly, those lads on my spur had started their own meeting so I started going to them. The first time I heard the threefold illness explained to me, I knew I was in the right place. I sought help and guidance from Forward and they were great. I did every course I could: Stepping Stones and The Bridge, as well as keeping up the Forward fellowship meetings and the one on the spur as well. I started to read every day and pray.

Since I put all this work in, my thinking and attitude have both changed and I

have a real hope for my future. Forward gave me a job as a Peer Supporter in October 2019 and my recovery has got stronger and stronger. But that doesn't mean I can stop. I now help others and, along with other peers, set up the Peer Lead User Support (PLUS) group, which will carry on once I'm gone and go on to help many more addicts in the future. I'm very thankful to the whole forward team at HMP High Down. They've been amazing and helped me grow, supporting me all the way and putting trust in me by making me a Peer Supporter. I can't thank them enough as they have helped me change my life, as have the people who come in to do fellowship meetings and those lads I first met on the spur.

I'm due for release in September 2020 and feel confident and hopeful for my future, as long as I put my recovery first. I've got lifelong support from Forward and some good friends who are in recovery. Thank you again to all the Forward team in High Down. I will never forget what you all did for me.

By Jamie Talbot

How Forward's staff at HMP Swaleside adapted to the challenges of Covid

At HMP Swaleside, we at Forward work with over 400 Category B offenders, out of a population of 1080 men – over a third of the population. We provide a variety of interventions, from the Integrated Drug Treatment System (IDTS) and case management service, through to low intensity workshops and help to support people using New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) like Spice.

Forward work on a designated wing, from which we run our flagship intensive programme, called the Substance Dependency Treatment Programme (SDTP). We're also working towards building a therapeutic community, engaging the men in fellowship meetings, team building exercises, community events and family days. We pride ourselves on the interaction and communication we have with the men. This personal, knowledgeable contact underpins our service, helping us provide the appropriate, relevant care for each individual.

When we saw the way in which the pandemic was developing, the team began preparing for how COVID might affect the way we worked. When lockdown happened, our Managers and Head Nurse, alongside the prison Governors, devised a safe and controlled way to deliver IDTS. As a team, we set up rotas to cover the days to come (as not all staff were allowed into prison at the same time, to help with social distancing) and set about plans to keep the men engaged. We hosted a COVID Poetry competition, and sent entries on to Forward Trust, to go into The Journey Magazine (some of which you might read in this very magazine)!



We also built and distributed numerous 'in-cell packs', including puzzles, word searches and Sudokus – very similar to the distraction packs that Forward Head Office create, but with additional content on everything from coping strategies and in-cell workouts, to recovery quotes and grounding techniques.

With visits and movements severely restricted, we knew that it might become harder for illicit substances to find their way into the prison, and that people who used them regularly might struggle to get hold of their usual supply. So we sent out a leaflet to every single resident (not just Forward clients!) to help, covering the important things they needed to know about safety, tolerance levels and harm minimisation – particularly important for people who planned to use if supply started to get back to pre-lockdown levels.

Supplies of illicit substances drying up meant that many

CHOICE	
WHAT I GAIN	WHAT I LOSE
My Entire Canteen Rebuild Family Ties Trust Respect Self-respect Debt Free Calmness Sleep	



residents would find sobriety (albeit unintentionally), some for the first time in quite a while. We knew for some people, it might be the opportunity they'd been waiting for (but maybe not realised) to make a more permanent change. To help support these people, we sent out another leaflet, promoting the service and the benefits of abstinence, helping instil belief that change was possible.

All group work had to be postponed. However, we wanted to keep as much engagement as was possible with our clients on the wing. We regularly checked-in with them, asking for feedback on what could we provide during the uncertainty, as well as having daily welfare checks with all IDTS service users.

One of the most innovative ideas was sourcing aromatherapy rollerballs to give to service users. The pens had a specific blend of natural oils that supported clients to detox, combated stress and anxiety, and aided sleep.

Members of the team worked from home while not on rota and spent the time thinking up ideas for relevant workshops. They also create a set of simple 'user guides' explaining everything from the initial assessment process to what services Forward offers, as well as fact sheets with information on the risks of common prison drugs.

"Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success." - Henry Ford



As the year progressed the lockdown eased slightly and, working alongside the prison, we slowly increased the number of Forward staff allowed into the establishment. The prison slightly relaxed the COVID regime, and service users now had 90 minutes out of their cell a day. They were organised into 'bubbles' by landings, around 40 - 50 men per bubble.

We used this time with clients effectively, completing all outstanding assessments of new arrivals and doing our utmost to check in with every single service user on our books. This included completing a health and wellbeing check with each man: asking how they'd felt during lockdown, whether they'd wanted to use, whether they had used, and how we could either help if they had, or continue to promote the new way of clean thinking if they had stayed abstinent. For those who had used, advice on harm minimisation, safety, tolerance levels was given. For those looking to continue staying abstinent, we encouraged them to relocate to the Therapeutic Wing.

"When patterns are broken, new worlds emerge." —Tuli Kupferberg

The team have continued to engage with the men and embrace all the changes that have been forced upon us. As I write this piece, we are back in lockdown, yet the men on our client load know that we are here to help: still constantly approachable, willing to signpost men in their personal journey and rehabilitation, being innovative and - along with the rest of the world - looking forward to getting back to our normal routines.

Swaleside Poetry Competition

Addiction is Addiction

Addiction is addiction,
No matter what form.
Is it nature or nurture?
Is it just how I'm born?

It started off innocent,
Recreational use.
Quickly but quietly,
It became abuse.

In the rooms of recovery,
We each take our turn.
We share why we started,
And we begin to learn.

Some to fit in,
And some to look cool.
Some were peer-pressured,
In the alley before school.

The earlier days were some of the best,
Until it lead to that first arrest.
The raves, the parties,
The sessions too.
Asking who's got gum,
And the 'come-up poo.'

The obsession creeps in,
And we must have more.
Some borrow, some steal,
Anything just to score.

By Connor Ashworth-Driver

In the rooms of recovery,
Full of guilt and shame.
We share our past,
But there's no judgement, no blame.

We work the steps
And we become aware,
Our mindsets change
And we embrace self-care.

Life is much better,
We like who we've become.
I'm happy, I'm strong,
I'll just have the one.

My friends and family,
They all gather round.
They stand and they weep,
As I'm lowered into the ground.

I thought I had control,
I thought I was tough.
But one is too many,
And a thousand is
NEVER ENOUGH.

At the end of the rainbow

Right now, we are facing times like never before, the whole country are being forced behind their door,
Every day this horrible illness takes more lives, but we will get through it and we will survive,
Life on lockdown is proving not easy; but needs must as this illness is o so greedy,
We must remember, it is not just us going through it, instead it has turned into a global pandemic.
Every Thursday at 8 o'clock, we clap for the NHS who are working o so hard to prevent so many deaths,
So this virus will not beat us, o no o no o no because together we can all see the end of the rainbow

By Ben Clark

Addiction and Covid 19

So, I'm an addict and that's hard enough, but those with covid are finding it so much more tough,
Both of these illnesses are ruining so many lives. Sons, daughters, mums, dads, husbands and wives,
We must try our hardest to remain clean and strong, hopefully this illness will not be here for long,
Being apart from each other is very tough, but it must be done as this illness is so rough,
So patience is a virtue and that's for sure because one day both of these illnesses will be no more.
I have been an addict for such a long time but never thought it would make a rhyme.
Addiction can and will be beaten with strength of mind, but with this new illness it's a cure we must find.

By Ben Clark

This is a story, poem and rap all in one. It's about a young boy growing up with a drug addicted mother and how it leads him to a life of crime and drug abuse. I need you to visualise the story I'm telling, let the words paint the picture for you!

Mikey

Mike had it tough since a young brother,
His mum used to smoke white so he had no mother.
I mean he had a mother.... But she was always on the pipe so he had no mother,
And what's a father figure, Mike ain't never seen him,
Just another sperm donor with some semen.
Years hungry he was in the shops stealing,
Different man in his mums house in the evening.
I think that scarred his vision,
Now he's on the path to the hardest living.
Now he's like 12 doing street moves,
Yeah Mike's a real street dude.
His friends do it for the money and the thrill of it,
But if Mikey don't rob he don't eat food.
Sometimes he thinks about his brother up in foster,
I think he got adopted by a doctor.
And all on his estate there's bare hyping,
Bare gunshots, bare knifings.
Poverty, blue sirens,
Used to get bullied so now Mikey's moving violent.
He's 16 now feeling like an old man,
Can't tell Mikey nutin he's a grown man.
Got himself a drug line it does an 8th of each,
And a three eight he ain't slipping he's prepared for beef
Got himself a pretty girl but don't know how to treat her,
A prolific cheater
When she cuss he beats her
Feds always at his house for domestics
But he cant let her go cos he's invested,
Ride or die when he reloads they both bag it
He's 18 with a coke habit
And his mother just overdosed
Now hes in his flat liquored getting comatosed.

By Rikko Marks

How to get a postal sponsor



A sponsor is another member of the fellowship, who has been through the steps and can share their experience to support you in your recovery.

If you would like a sponsor from Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous or Cocaine Anonymous please send your name, prison number and address to the relevant address below. You will be sent an information pack and details of how to write to your sponsor. It can take some time to match to a sponsor so please be patient. Please note that the 12- step fellowships are in no way affiliated with The Forward Trust.

To get an AA Sponsor write to:

AA Prison Postal Service, General Service Office, PO Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ

To get an NA Sponsor write to:

NA Sponsor Request, Prison Sponsorship Committee, UKSO, 202 City Road, London, EC1V 2PH

To get a CA Sponsor write to:

CA UK, PO BOX 1337, Enfield, EN1 9AS

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GAMES PAGE

Riddles

1. What month of the year has 28 days?
2. What is full of holes but still holds water?
3. What question can you never answer yes to?
4. What is always in front of you but can't be seen?
5. There is a one-story house in which everything is yellow. Yellow walls, yellow doors, yellow furniture. What colour are the stairs?
6. What can you break, even if you never pick it up or touch it?
7. What goes up but never comes down?
8. A man who was outside in the rain without an umbrella or hat didn't get a single hair on his head wet. Why?
9. What gets wet while drying?
10. What can you keep after giving to someone?
11. I shave every day, but my beard stays the same. What am I?
12. You see a boat filled with people, yet there isn't a single person on board. How is that possible?
13. You walk into a room that contains a match, a kerosene lamp, a candle and a fireplace. What would you light first?
14. A man dies of old age on his 25th birthday. How is this possible?
15. I have branches, but no fruit, trunk or leaves. What am I?
16. What can't talk but will reply when spoken to?
17. The more of this there is, the less you see. What is it?

Sudoku Puzzles

Easy Puzzle 1

	9	6		4			3	
	5	7	8	2				
1			9			5		
		9		1				8
5								2
4				9		6		
		4			3			1
				7	9	2	6	
	2			5		9	8	

Hard Puzzle 2

		2		5				7
7				1			4	
	4	1	9		8			
2			5		9			
	8		4	6	7		2	
			1		2			4
			6		3	1	7	
	9			2				5
1				4		6		

Trying to find a way out

I'm serving a four year, eight month sentence for fraudulent evasion of the prohibition on the import of controlled drugs. Basically, I bought a large quantity of cocaine into the UK from a South American country. I can't say which one, but you get my point.

I'm actually writing a book about my life. You see, on the outside, my life looked like I was living nice. I kind of was: traveling the world, going to different countries, doing my thing. I was making good money, partying, having sex with loads of women and buying nice cars. But on the inside I was depressed.

I'm from Chicago. We call it 'Chiraq', because in one year, more people died from violence here on the streets than in Iraq. It was war zone, literally. I grew up with no father so the streets raised me. My birth mum couldn't take care of me, so my auntie legally took me over. I joined a gang at nine years old, started carrying a gun at 11 and began selling drugs at 13.

As I sit in this cell and write this letter, I regret a lot of things I did. I hope they can forgive me. I was doing my thing on the streets 'till I got locked up at 18. I realised nobody was really there for you except your family, so when I got out of jail I told the gang I was done. They were cool with that - by that time there was a lot of in-house beef and the 'hood was falling apart anyway.

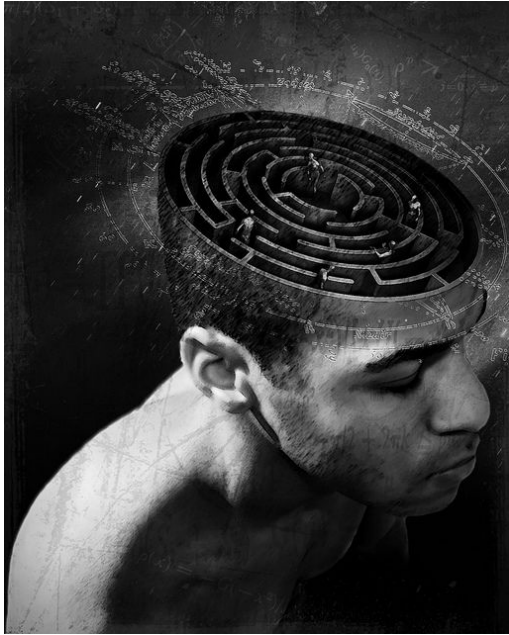
I ended up linking in with some real players in the game. Finally, I had a Columbia connection. I started as a drug mule and that was the first

place I travelled to. I started doing my thing. The plug liked me and told me to invest, "Start buying your own kilos". So I did.

Everything was going good. I started bringing coke home: selling it, sniffing it, having coke parties. My mistake was mixing some friends that aren't drug dealers with business. I wanted everyone to eat - my mistake. I made my money but still had some coke left on the side. I bought a car then lost it in a week - I got pulled over and my licence was suspended.

My bro said people in my 'hood being buying coke. I don't fuck with the 'hood so I gave two grams to them to test it out. This guy brought them to my house. Next thing you know, the guns come out and I get pistol whipped. Two shots go off, one guy chased my homie and I was on my knees. I told the guy take it and leave, but he shot me five times. Slowly, it was mirror in front of me. I was waiting for death. As the fifth bullet struck my neck and came out of my jaw, my soul left my body. I was ready to die, but lord knows my mum needs me.

I was in hospital for two months, lost half a lung, had seven surgeries, lost 20kg and ended up with severe nerve damage. Have you ever felt electric shocks before? Well, I felt that for 2 years. This wasn't my first time being shot. I'd actually been shot twice before but this one messed me up mentally and physically. I went into a depression. That man took my dignity from me, to come in my crib and take me out like that. I was empty. My relationships never lasted because I just didn't care anymore. I was



drinking every day, doing coke – hell, I almost beat a person to death. I pushed away family and friends.

I got arrested at Heathrow airport with a kilo and half of cocaine. I swallowed the packages (yes it's possible!) but they kept me at the border force for two weeks until the packages passed. Then I got sent to HMP Wormwood Scrubs. It kind of reminded me of jail back home. Once I got sentenced, I was sent to HMP Maidstone, which has changed me dramatically.

I started to focus on myself more, gained more knowledge and maturity. Most officers are helpful if you need someone to talk to.

Forward Trust and Inreach really helped me a lot. I was going to group sessions every week which was helpful, but when the virus came along everything shut down. I started getting depressed, but Forward and Inreach checked on my wellbeing every week so that helped. I worked out a lot in my cell, read books, listened to music and am also writing my book and just planning for the future.

You have to have a plan - that's what keeps you motivated. I'm bipolar, but I stopped taking my meds eight months ago, although they think I should start taking them again. I'm all over place - still angry because of what happened to me, especially at friends who I thought would have my back that just aren't there. Not gonna lie, it hurts. But at least I know the fake from real.

I have seven months left and I'm just focused on my book and my business: I'm going to start selling hair weave for women. Trust me, the way I feel, I can't do this shit again. It's not worth it. Freedom is priceless, but I did get a lot from this experience. I got a chance to find my purpose, mature and see the fake from the real. If I hadn't come to prison I wouldn't never have thought about writing a book. I want to help other youths telling my story; travelling from school to school, city to city, state to state. I hope reading this inspired you to do something positive in your life.

By Yoafi Eshun

I've had a hard life - rap

If you don't know me Ive had a hard life,
Ive done a load of things for myself to survive,
Im out ere rapping bars and Im feeling nice,
If you don't no me Ive had a hard life (x2)

So my mum left me when I was about 6,
I didn't know what happened cos I was just a little kid,
I know that every day I was always in bits,
I got left with my dad and I wanted it to fix,
I don't know why she left us at home,
Left us alone Left us alone,
I don't know why she left us at home,
Left us alone, Left us alone,
She done it for a reason dat I don't no,
dat I don't no, dat I don't no,
She done it for a reason dat I don't no,
dat I don't no, dat I don't no,
At the time dat made me low,
made me low made me low,
At the time dat made me low,
made me low made me low,
A couple yrs later she chose to come back,
With another man and we started to crack,
That hurt my dad dats a fact,
That hurt my dad dats a fact,
So when I was 12 my dad had a stroke,
That changed me so I started smoking dope,
I wanted it to all be a joke,
Cos I no he is a gd bloke,
Cos he is my dad and it made me sad,
made me sad, made me sad,
Cos he is my dad and it made me sad,
made me sad, made me sad,
It really hurt me seeing him in pain,
I was bad at the time and I thought I was to blame,
I no I wasn't but our lifes not the same,
I had to be his carer so I started to change
Cos he is my dad and hes done it for me,
done it for me, done it for me,
Cos he is my dad and hes done it for me,
done it for me, done it for me,

If you don't know me ive had a hard life,
Ive done a load of things for myself to survive,
Im out ere rapping bars and im feeling nice,
If you don't no me ive had a hard life (x2),

So when I was 13 my nan passed away,
I was confused and I wasn't ok,
It knocked me for six in every single way,
Cos I use to see her every single day,
She was a nan who was there for you,
there for you there for you,
She was a nan who was there for you,
there for you there for you,

She was a mum but also my nan,
She done her best that she very can,
I wish I could hold her hand ,
Just to say I love you my nan,
I love her I miss her every single day,
every single day, every single day,
I love her I miss her every single day,
every single day, every single day,
So when I was 20 my big cuz died,
We all miss you by our side,
We think about you every day goes by,
even been some days when we've cried,
I don't say it much ive got love for you,
love for you, love for you,
I don't say it much ive got love for you,
love for you, love for you,
You're gone now but always in my life,
always in my life, always in my life,
You're gone now but always in my life,
always in my life, always in my life,
he was a savage and a big guy,
Smoking weed riding bikes was his high,
He died from it now hes in the skys,
RIP my cuz and I hope your feeling nice,
Now im 23 and im rapping so 3,
Ive changed the way From how I used to be,
Like doing crime going jail and smoking weed,
Cos im more then dat and I no its not for me,
Im a guy who likes to be with my g's,
and my family,
Cos dats how I'll be,
Family is what means to me,
for people to see,
That im being me,
I want people to no deep down im a gd guy,
Whose battled through the struggles and the hard times,
Its made me who I am for a gd side,
and this is a rap about a hard life,

If you don't know me ive had a hard life,
Ive done a load of things for myself to survive,
Im out ere rapping bars and im feeling nice,
If you don't no me ive had a hard life (x2).

“So my name is Clouds and ive had a hard life, This is a rap about having one , its about heartbreak, feeling pain, losing family, and having struggles. I wanna put it out here if anyone can relate to it, listen to the words, listen to the story, listen to my rap, so everyone out ere, just listen !

The Message of Having a Hard Life 09/05/2020

By Daniel Clouder

Recovery for me

Drifting away into my own imagination
Finding ways to deal with the forsaken frustration
My life has been taken, 3 year sentence Im facing,
And its all down to the drugs I was taking
But there is no point in hating its just an over rating.
Focus on using time wisely, working on rehabilitation.
With sheer determination and help
From the rapt team I know I will keep myself clean
No more low self esteem
My mirror reflection will gleam
Because for the first time in a long time
It smiles back and I see Lee.
That's because I no longer see a drug fiend, I say this with honesty
As it is the best policy.
Id always be in denial and say it wasn't me.
We live in a world of biodiversity that includes you, him, her, everyone else and me.
Some work hard and succeed phenomenally, while others choose to abuse drugs
and live miserably.
Im just glad that Im finally free, even though I am locked in a penitentiary
I will eventually go back to living a life of normality.

By Lee Avery

I'm gonna believe

I'm gonna believe	
I'm gonna achieve	
I'm gonna walk right out that door	Then I'm gonna walk right through that door
I ain't gonna look back no more	I ain't gonna look back no more
	Then I'm gonna walk straight down that street
Away from the night and into the light	
I'm gonna aspire	
I'm gonna climb higher and higher	To follow my dreams
I'm gonna believe, believe in me	I'm gonna persevere
	I'm gonna believe
I'm gonne be somebody	I'm gonna be me
Somebody it seems with God on my side	I'm gonna be free
I ain't gonna hide	

By Dirk Holding



Goodbye drugs, alcohol and addiction

Good bye drugs, alcohol and addiction.
You made me break promises to my daughter
An convince me to sniff quarters
You was my best friend for years
But now all you do is cause tears,
Living a life of crime & surviving the grind, snorting lines and doing
time,
I know drink and drugs do not combine
Eventually they sent me out my mind
My childhood you took
And changed the way I look
You've effected my life for long enough
Yes I've took drugs till I feel rough
I've drank until I couldn't drink no more
But God has spoken, he levelled the score
Now I must resist,
My life will have a positive twist when I put God first on my list
So bye bye drink and drugs I'm no longer one of you mugs!

By Scott Thompson



Insight: Housing clients during the pandemic

Covid-19 and lockdown presented our Resettlement housing team and the people we support with significant risks and challenges. With an increased risk of street homelessness (in particular for prison leavers) people were no longer able to 'sofa surf' with friends, which brought with it a health risk from exposure to the virus. In response, the Government put emergency measures in place to find hotels for homeless people and also to enable people in temporary accommodation to remain in situ while the pandemic lasted. While this provided effective short-term respite (in London, over 4,000 homeless people were accommodated in hotels, including prison leavers with only six Covid-related deaths compared to 86 in New York), long term housing solutions were and are still needed and we offered and adapted our services to meet the needs of local authorities and charities in order to support.

For our Resettlement housing team based in London, who source private rented sector accommodation for clients and provide a tenancy sustainment service, one of the greatest challenge in responding to this demand was not being able to view potential properties in person due to social distancing rules, we quickly adapted our assessment and viewing processes, organising online viewings with landlords and providing pictures and videos for clients. Once in their tenancy, as with other parts of the organisation, we maintained remote support for clients 7 days a week through telephone and video contact (providing smart phones and move in packs for those who needed them); our efforts were supported by volunteers. Between March 2020 and June 2020 we arranged 86 viewings and supported 16 people into private rented flats Whilst continuing to support another 51 clients who we had housed pre March through the pandemic with tenancy

sustainment and wellbeing support. We continue to support local authorities and charities to support individuals who need stable accommodation and our move on services have made a difference to so many people.

Quotes from clients:

"Forward have been helpful. It's great that you ring me and make sure i'm OK and I know you're there if I need anything."
Shamiron, housed April 2020

"A really good service, you did a great job and I give Forward five stars for accommodation, service and support."
M.R., housed April 2020

"Excellent. Forward has provided everything I needed at the time from start to finish. Louisa has been splendid, I'm really happy with Forward and grateful for the service and keeping in touch."
Paul, housed April 2020

"I'm speechless. Accommodation and care received from Forward has been over and above what I would have expected. I'm very grateful. I'm hoping to get a job in Sainsburys and probation and Forward helped me a lot to get back on my feet during Covid. Landlord has also been good. I've asked him for a few things and he is looking into it. I'm very grateful. Thank you."
Abdol, housed August 2020

What makes a good tenancy?

1. Identify support needs

Please tell us honestly what needs or concerns you have at assessment stage, so we can tailor support accordingly. This enables us to work together with you to address any barriers to independence and preventing future homelessness.

2. Pre and ongoing tenancy sustainment support

Practical advice to help you develop the knowledge and skills needed to gain and successfully sustain a tenancy in the future. This can include things like advice on being a good neighbour, how to set up utilities, benefits advice, reporting repairs, paying rent, managing disputes, learning to clean and keeping areas tidy. In addition, making a house feel like a home is important. That's why we provide 'move-in packs' and smart phones to clients to ensure you have the basics you need and can communicate effectively.

3. Communication

Above all, a successful tenancy relies on good, honest communication from a tenant to their landlord - and vice versa. This can help you to effectively manage situations before they hit crisis point. We'll support you to communicate with your landlord, and will also act as liaison between landlords and partners, including charities and local authorities where needed, to let you know about support and local initiatives that may become available.

4. Work with our partners to make sure they understand and support you

It's important that our referral partners and landlords understand your needs. This helps manage their expectations and ensures that you have the right support, accommodation and facilities. We foster positive communication with our partners about how to engage with you and provide opportunities for them to better understand our clients through training, updates and regular meetings.

5. Provide quality accommodation

Too many tenancies fail because of substandard living conditions. That's why we have a simple rule for our team when they look for new accommodation: "If you wouldn't want to live there, our clients won't either." We know unsuitable accommodation impacts quality of life and wellbeing, so strive to source quality places to live.

6. Monitor and praise progress

Once you've set a goal, we'll help you to measure your progress towards developing the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to achieve it. This means not only are you growing in confidence and skills, but can track that progress for yourself. It also means we'll know when you're ready to start living a bit more independently and might want a bit less support from us. We use something called a 'Wellness Tracker', which we review regularly through our mentoring and tenancy support, to capture this.

7. Empowerment

Our end goal is always to empower you to develop the skills and confidence to be independent and sustain your own tenancy - not just now but in the future.

Recovery Housing

We currently have two recovery houses: one in Hull and one in Kent.

In Hull, we have supported five people with their recovery journey, in partnership with The Goodwin Trust. Two clients have since moved from here into their own accommodation, and two current graduates from The Bridges are living in the property and engaging with all aspects of the programme, enhancing and supporting their recovery. After 6-12 months in the recovery house we support clients to move into their own property. Through the success of this pilot project we are working with The Goodwin Trust to find more properties for future clients.

In Kent, we have set up a beautiful recovery house for women. This project, called Ashford House, will initially support three women on their recovery journey for one year after being released from prison (or as part of a community sentence). Once clients have completed their programme in the community, they will be supported to secure their own private rented tenancy. We plan to expand to three more houses, supporting 12 women, by the end of July 2021.

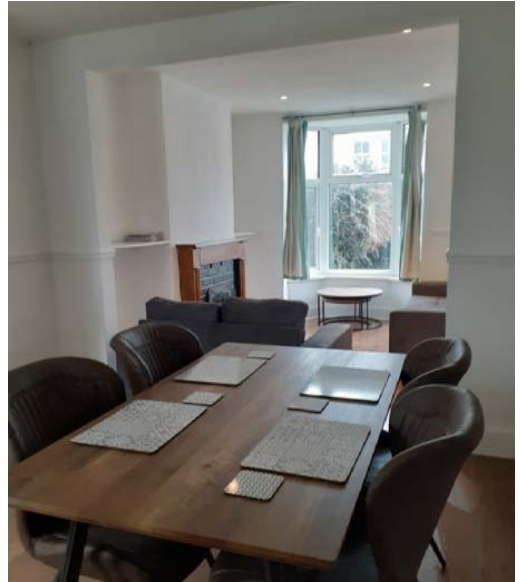
We would love to hear from women who have been housed in the community and their stories: what worked, what didn't and how they would shape a women's service. To send us your thoughts on this, email Tara Moore, Resettlement Service Manager, at tara.moore@forwardtrust.org.uk.

In addition to our own recovery houses, we continue to work in partnership with a number of recovery housing organisations who support our clients from prison into stable accommodation and a recovery programme. Using our **Vision Housing** service and with help from our recovery team, we



can then support those clients who complete their programme with their next steps, securing a private rented tenancy through our partnerships with landlords and our 12 month tenancy sustainment service. This service includes 'move-in packs', mobile phones and links to community agencies who can support people on their journey. Recovery partners include Kairos, Neimeyer, Acorn House and Steps to Recovery, amongst others.

Our work with the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner has enabled us to support those leaving Surrey prisons with accommodation in the community, either direct from prison or as move on from community supported housing. **If you are currently in supported housing or in prison and want support with move on accommodation or accommodation please get in touch and we will look to see whether we can support you. Email forwardconnect@forwardtrust.org.uk if you're in the community, or if you are in prison, please ask your key worker to get in touch on your behalf.**



Joe's story

Joe was referred to us by one of our local authority partners in Surrey in conjunction with probation. During his sentence, Joe engaged well with mental health services and completed a thinking skills behaviour programme, which he'd never done before and found changed his approach to life. It made him focus on the positive and what he could achieve. Joe used this new found confidence and was very proactive in prison, securing employment with the Clink restaurant.

On release from prison the approved premises he was due to go to in London was closed due to Covid and he was sent to a totally different city. This meant the logistics of him attending viewings in London was tricky as his probation officer had to issue a travel warrant each time he left his accommodation. Trying to go to London and back, as well as fit in the viewing, all in one day, was almost impossible.

Forward's Resettlement team worked with Joe to secure viewings with our approved landlords who

understood his situation and could be flexible. We supported him to sign up to his tenancy, going through all of the legal requirements and advising him on things like how to main his tenancy through our one-to-one sessions. We also helped him move in straight away, supporting him with his utilities set up and benefit updates, as well as ensuring all the basics, like getting him registered with a doctor and dentist.

Everything was put in place with his benefits and landlord, and we also provided a 'move-in pack' to get him started. Joe also started to work with one of our volunteers for weekly mentoring support and welfare check ins.

Once Joe was settled into his property, he was then able to get some work with the new Clink delivery service, where he continues to do really well. In fact, he's doing so well that he's planning on volunteering as a peer mentor with us in the future and has some paid work in the pipeline!

Recovery Support Service



The Recovery Support Service delivers ongoing support to clients who have done one of the following:

- completed a Forward Substance Misuse Programme, or
- have engaged with a Forward Substance Misuse team, are abstinent, and have shown motivation and commitment towards their recovery.

Support includes:

Meet and Greet. Support for people to attend appointments and arrive safely at their destination on the day of release from prison or on the day of transition into residential rehab or recovery housing. The service is for clients who have engaged in a Forward substance misuse service that are on an identified recovery pathway and wish to have support

Mentoring. Recovery Mentoring is a service that matches any people who meet the above criteria and need ongoing support to a Recovery Mentor.

Forward Connect. A network of Forward clients across the country. Look out for local meetings and social events in London, East Kent and Hull (if you're in the community) or in your prison.

One-to-ones, brief interventions and workshops. Face to face, by phone or online.

Signposting to local services and fellowships.

Linking into other external organisations, including: housing, employment and probation services, financial support and residential rehab.

Help to get a Mentoring qualification. This is available to all Peer Supporters, Peer Mentors, Mentors and Volunteers across our Forward services.

Call 0300 1240 440, email forwardconnect@forwardtrust.org.uk or speak to a member of your local Forward team about how you can access support.

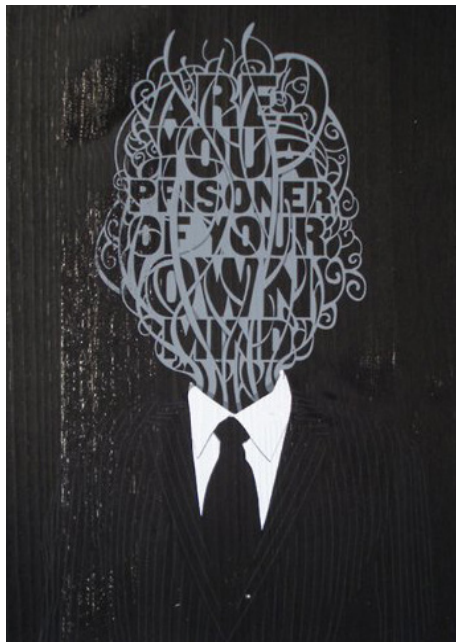
SHARES AND STORIES

Recall I saved my Life

Is the title true? YES!!! Honesty is the only way I can move forward. Back in High Down, broken and very down, where did I go wrong? I didn't know for a good while. I met a couple of people on the wing who told me about an AA meeting on the wing on a Saturday. Didn't want to go - been there before and jailed. Forgot about the four years sober and freedom that the steps and meetings and sponsorship had achieved. Just looked at all the negatives. I got hijacked one Saturday to go to a meeting - didn't want to go but it was the best thing that happened to me. I didn't know it at the time, only later. One of the people from the meeting came down later with a pair of trainers for me, and then another. The generosity and kindness is just what I needed at that time.

I started attending AA meetings on a Thursday and a Saturday on the wing. They were all good people and I started to pray evenings and in the mornings. This took a few months but reconnecting with AA and my higher power helped me realise that all was not lost. I started to remember the good things and not the bad things, learning that I had done wrong in the first place to relapse. Now that I am a Peer Supporter I hope that my experience of the good and bad will be able to help others.

I had to admit to myself that I had become complacent and didn't put the work in that



I should of. If you don't put in the work to keep you away from a relapse you can't be of help to anyone. I'm now back to where I want to be and am hopefully going to a rehab, to build on the foundation that I have built. To learn from my relapse, take the steps to avoid it happening again and hopefully inspire others.

It's never too late to change. One hiccup isn't the end. Thank God for being hijacked.

By Steve M

Career advice from the Employment Services Team

We're living in very challenging times. Covid-19 has devastated the economy and the job market, with 3.5 million people out of work. People deemed to have low skills, those doing 'atypical' work (e.g. casual labour or agency work) and in low paid jobs have been more likely to become unemployed.

Education, up-skilling and retraining will be crucial if we want to succeed in the future. The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) mentions in its most recent report that "automation and technology will bring millions of new jobs in the UK...there will be a big rise in demand for skills such as digital, STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics] and interpersonal skills". Future roles that rely on human skills such as advising, decision-making, reasoning, communicating and interacting will rise in demand.

Here are my tips for things to think about...

If you're in work and want to progress in your career it will be important to take the plunge and refresh, update or learn new skills. The best way to do this is to access adult education (through local colleges, local authorities or training providers) and apprenticeships training, funded by levy paying employers. Don't forget there is a lot of free online learning out there too.

If you're unemployed and claiming Universal Credit, your starting point is always your local Job Centre Plus Work Coach. Ask them (in person or virtually) about what programmes are available to you, such as the Work and Health programme, JETs scheme, Kickstart for 16-24 year olds, traineeship and apprenticeships. They can also refer you to local providers.

If you need help working out the best career path, access the National Careers Service (nationalcareers.service.gov.uk) if you're in the community. This has great tool kits and information on a range of occupational roles.

Top tips for preparing your CV, searching for or applying for a job:

Find the right role: In the current crisis it's easy to take the first job that is offered, but make sure that the role, employer, pay/benefits and contract matches what you want so you can have the stability of being in a good job or apprenticeship. The worst thing for you and your family is to accept a job and then leave it too soon, going through the cycle of being employed and then unemployed. This can be very demoralising. So please, choose the right role!

forward

Tailor your CV: Make sure your CV is targeted at the specific job or apprenticeship you're applying for, that the skills and qualities or keywords required are mentioned and the employer/industry it is in would find it relevant. Use the job advert where possible.

Create the right type of CV: Most CVs are in chronological order, are to the point and concise. Most employers only spend an average of eight seconds reading a CV, so make it stand out!

Keep it specific with real life examples: Use real examples from volunteering, education and work, including activities you have done in prison. Use active verbs, for example 'created', to present yourself as a person who shows initiative.

Write a cover letter: You should include a cover letter or personal statement unless the employer states otherwise. It will enable you to personalise your application and draw attention to particular part of your CV or explain gaps in your work history.

Stay positive and remember that learning and improving our skills doesn't end at school but continues right through our lives.

Forward's Employment Services Division delivers a range of vocational training, enterprise and employability programmes in London, helping people over the age of 18 who are unemployed or not currently in education, employment, or training (NEET).

Resources

There are lots of resources available to help you. The below are some of the websites you might find helpful:

<https://www.forwardtrust.org.uk/our-services/employment-services/employment-programmes/>

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/find-a-course/the-skills-toolkit>

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>

<https://www.gov.uk/find-traineeship>

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit>

<https://www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators>

<https://www.gov.uk/work-health-programme>

*By Asi Panditharatna
Director of Employment Services*

Hello from the Chair of Trustees

“My name is David and I am an alcoholic”.

I have been saying those words for quite a few years now! And I can truthfully say that it is now something I say confidently, comfortably and with some pride. Because it represents self-knowledge, and it confirms my belief that my recovery from my addiction is the centre of my life today.

You can read my personal story on the **More Than My Past** website, where over 50 people have given their account of how they turned around their lives of addiction and crime (www.morethanmypast.org.uk).

I have been involved with RAPt - now Forward - for over twenty years. First as a donor, and then later as a trustee. Now, I have the great privilege of being Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

How did I get involved and what does my role today consist of? A good friend of mine was one of the founders of the organisation. She asked me if I could help with a donation to a newly established charity helping addicts in prison.

I was in recovery myself and knew that there was a tremendous need for drug treatment, so naturally I wanted to know more. I went to see the first programme RAPt was running, in HMP Downview.

I was moved and impressed by what I saw. A group of men who were talking openly and very frankly about their drug problem, where it had led them, and what they were now doing about it.

I remember to this day one of the men in the treatment group telling me that he had always tried to get arrested around Christmas time because he knew he would be able to get drugs easily in prison, while on the outside his dealer might be away over the holiday period! I was shocked to realise how serious the drug problem was in English prisons. So I became a supporter and donor.

From the very start it was clear to me that RAPt was offering the abstinence-based intensive treatment approach that I had benefitted from in the community. I knew it worked, because I was clean, and here was an organisation offering the same approach to men (and later women) in prison.

So when I was asked to join the Board of Trustees a few years later, I didn't hesitate. It was wonderful to be able to help the vital and valuable work of providing hope and a way out of addiction and crime to those who so badly need it.

More than 20 years on, that is still the motivation that keeps me involved. Mike Trace, our chief executive, talks about



“transformational change”. That is what I see Forward bringing about in people’s lives. Literally thousands of men and women are now leading healthy, constructive lives free from drink, drugs and crime because of this charity. Add in the many thousands more who benefit from this change – their husbands, wives, children, parents, employers, employees – and you begin to see the true impact of the work we do on society at large. Something for all at Forward to feel proud of.

At the moment, as we struggle to get through this pandemic, it is important to remember this. So much of our work has been disrupted by Covid. So many of the interventions we would like to perform are not possible due to restrictions in prison regimes, and in how we can work in the community. Despite this, and because of the tenacity and inventiveness of our staff, we are nevertheless still able to do much, particularly in the community programmes. In prisons it is much harder,

and we must hope that before too long group sessions and freer contact with clients will be possible.

During the time that I have been a trustee the charity has grown enormously. When I first got involved we worked in two prisons and all our income was from charitable donations from the public. Today we have over twenty projects around the country, a turnover of £21 million a year, and about 430 staff! While most of the income now comes from contracts with the prison service and local authorities and health commissioners, we still have to raise between one and two million pounds a year. So fundraising is still vital.

The role of the trustees is to oversee all of that, and help the staff and senior executive team provide the programmes and services that we are contracted to provide. We are all unpaid volunteers who share the same commitment to the goals of the charity – which I sum up as helping people turn their lives around. We are lucky to have wonderful staff throughout the organisation who have continued to carry that mission to the many thousands of clients we have now been able to help over the last 30 years. Long may that continue!

By David Bernstein

Connections service

One of the biggest challenges of the past six months, for people across the globe, has been the far-reaching consequences of separation from friends and family.

Whilst much of the world has been grappling with restrictions on contact, many of our prison clients and their families have been dealing with a "lockdown within a lockdown" with social visits cancelled and an increased reliance on phone calls, letters and video calling 'visits'.

In the community, many of our concerned significant others have been faced with the suspension of face-to-face support and groups transferring online. Circumstances have also meant that family members have been forced to spend longer periods at home with loved ones, many of whom are still struggling with drug or alcohol dependency.

During this time of uncertainty, Forward's Family Connections Service has continued to offer help and support by adapting interventions and working in a more remote capacity. All practitioners have worked hard to find ways to deliver the service and to continue to offer hope and much needed guidance.

Within our prison units, all groups were cancelled and face-to-face contact was restricted for some time. During the early part of the pandemic, we created 'distraction packs' for clients which focussed on self-care and positive thinking. We also put together some 'Parent and Child Contact Packs' to send out.

In total 400 packs were distributed, 50 for each of our Family Work teams in Rochester, Standford Hill, Wandsworth, Brixton, Lewes, Coldingley, Send, Maidstone, East Sutton Park and Downview prisons.

The packs included blank cards, crayons, jokes, pictures for colouring and a letter of support with guidance on letter writing and keeping in touch with family - particularly children - during this difficult time.

Within our prison community, the focus has been around emotional support and check-ins to try to reverse the negative impact of lockdown. As lockdown measures

eased, Connections Family Workers were able to meet with clients face-to-face while adhering to social distancing guidelines. The most common intervention has been checking on welfare, while other appointments have been more in-depth, focussing on managing the impact of the pandemic on family relationships.

The usual areas of support are still very much needed, such as help navigating social services and supervised contact along with managing worries about family members getting sick. We have also worked with other professionals in the prison and community to support our clients and their families far as possible and the results have been largely positive.

At **HMP Coldingley**, for example, support has continued to be focused on contact with children, and ongoing Family Court proceedings. A lot of the men have been struggling due to not having connection with their children, and worrying about their health and wellbeing during the pandemic. Sessions have included emotional support to manage these difficult times. As we have been unable to run our family workshop programme Family Ties for some time, clients have been encouraged to complete the sessions as in-cell packs on a one-to-one basis.

At **HMP Send**, many of our female clients have been deeply affected by loss of physical visits with their children. In these situations, access to Purple Visits (a video calling service that allows clients to make virtual calls) has been vital, and our family workers there have been instrumental in getting these set up, liaising with Social Workers and Foster Carers to make this happen.

Meanwhile, at our **Hull ReNew Family Community Service**, the team are, as always, creative and passionate about developing ideas to engage family and friends. The service also has a designated Facebook page which is updated daily with inspiring quotes and messages of support.

Currently, there are no plans to resume face-to-face contact in the community so assessments and one-to-ones are conducted by phone or Zoom depending on the client's preference. Therapeutic groups are also on Zoom and our



Recovering Families workshops have now been delivered online twice a week for six months.

We are lucky to have a thriving peer support group too, which is made up of graduates from the Recovering Families programme. Paul Nash, a family service graduate himself, understands the importance of support for family members. Before lockdown, Paul ran a face-to-face peer group and as soon as physical groups ceased, he set up a peer support WhatsApp group to ensure everyone could keep in touch. He has now developed that into a weekly Zoom meeting, which gets between nine and 12 attendees each time. Paul has also established a second peer gathering which meets for a 'coffee and natter'.

Given the success of transferring our family service online

in Hull, we are currently in the process of setting up a similar model in East Kent which we plan to have up and running soon.

As the Covid situation will continue for some time, the challenge is to find new ways to reach and engage clients to ensure family support is still accessible and available to those who need it.

For now, we acknowledge our blessings, truly appreciating our wonderful Connections Family Work practitioners, peers and volunteers who make all of this possible. Words do not feel enough to express our thanks to them for working so hard and passionately to help make this happen.

By Rebecca Mistry, Family Work Coordinator

"Being given the chance to attend the online meetings has changed me considerably. Whoever came up with the idea of these video links, I am truly grateful. I'm about a 30 min drive from Hull and not too keen on driving so I'm not 100% certain I would have gone to Hull every week for a meeting in person.

I've learned that addiction is an illness and I have come to terms with the fact that I cannot change my boys, they have to do that themselves. But I can change myself. The Family Support Services helped me understand how to put boundaries in place and be more caring of myself. I value the Family Peer Group on WhatsApp and Zoom and I try my best to attend as many meetings as possible because I know that there will be something I can take from them.

We now link up with a group from London twice a week, many of whom are recovering addicts, which has given me another insight into addiction.

Knowing there is hope for my boys after seeing some of these guys recovering after 20 or more years is truly heart-warming. I sincerely thank Family Support Services for the help I have received."

Lyn, Family Support Service client



Lockdown and I

When lockdown first started, I loved it. Locked in, locked up. No maths (education) – woop, woop! No mixing with other inmates, no bitching, no confrontations. Prison life really slowed down. It's my first time in prison. I was scared but my fears soon disappeared as I settled into the prison regime: work and education was a must, so I was always busy. No time to think. So the lockdown was quite a respite – lunch and canteen delivered to my door, exercise was cut down.

Eight months on, I've got a new friendship - a close, compassionate one - with someone special: me. I've sat behind my door, I've cried, I've laughed, I've been lonely and scared. Why have I wasted my life!? Why did no one care for me? Love me? Why did no one guide me? Show me 'LIFE'? There have been times I've wanted to give up, give in. I've questioned my existence, I've connected with thoughts I've never thought before. Feelings! I'm learning what they are and what they mean, something I've never done before.

I've felt the same all my life, the drink and drugs made sure of that. Why did no one show me? I'm learning that some of my choices in life weren't all my fault, I'm not all to blame. So I'm learning to drop some of my guilt and shame. Unpack some of that baggage I've kept for so, so, so long!

I've forgiven myself. Accepted what was and what was not. I have actually grown through lockdown. Yes! I've missed out on my visits with my two youngest children. Visits have been replaced by phone calls and Purple Visits video calls. My eldest son and I have built up such a



rapport, a relationship that was meant to be. We talk everyday on the phone, we laugh and have meaningful conversations. At last I'm realising my errors, my mistakes. I'm being mum and moving forward, not as fast as I would like, but I'm growing in areas I never thought was possible.

In lockdown I have had a very good look at myself and my life and I have accepted it in all its horror and glory. It is only onwards and upwards from here on. I have made a plan and I will have to fight and work very hard to keep everything in place. If it wasn't for prison I feel I would have died with my life choices and behaviours at the time. I am very grateful for where I am at and where I am going. I know life is a roller coaster with ups and downs, but at least they don't go backwards. It has been hard and sad, lonely at times, but I wouldn't change my lockdown. It's given me time to learn to love myself and get to know myself.

By TB

HMP Send



Family Support

Do you need support with your family relationships?

Speak to your case worker about the Family Support Service.





Artwork by
Derrick Laurence Miller

YOUR CREATIVE WORK



forward

IT'S COMPETITION TIME!!

Be Creative. Inspire Others. Express yourself

Please send us your
Poems. Stories. Artwork. Shares
Creative Writing. Photographs

There will be a prize for the winner and runner up
MORE WILL BE REVEALED

**The winning piece/s of work will also be published in
the next edition of the Journey Magazine**

CLOSING DATE IS 1st MAY 2021

Please send your entry alongside permission to:

Email - forwardconnect@forwardtrust.org.uk

Or to our freepost address:

The Journey Magazine
Freepost THE FORWARD TRUST

Permission to print

Please attach this form to your submission and send to:

The Journey Magazine
Freepost THE FORWARD TRUST

Title of work (submission):

Please circle the most appropriate description:

- Personal story
 - Poetry
 - Article
 - Artwork
 - Other (specify below)
-

I grant The Forward Trust the right to use my submission, titled above, for the purpose of raising awareness and continuing support for those with addictive and criminal lifestyles, helping them to lead positive and fulfilling lives.

I authorise The Forward Trust to use the submission for lawful purposes such as publicity, illustration, advertising and web content.

I authorise The Forward Trust to copyright, use and publish the same submission in print and/or electronically.

Please indicate if there is any form of publication or purpose where you would NOT like The Forward Trust to use your submission.

I agree that The Forward Trust may use my submission (please tick)

___with my full name (e.g. John Smith)

___with my first name only (e.g. John)

___without my name (Anonymous)

I have read and understood the above. Signature:

Date:

Printed name:

If applicable, please state your prison establishment

HMP:

Prison number:

Easy Puzzle 1 solution

2	9	6	1	4	5	8	3	7
3	5	7	8	2	6	1	4	9
1	4	8	9	3	7	5	2	6
6	3	9	5	1	2	4	7	8
5	8	1	7	6	4	3	9	2
4	7	2	3	9	8	6	1	5
9	6	4	2	8	3	7	5	1
8	1	5	4	7	9	2	6	3
7	2	3	6	5	1	9	8	4

Hard Puzzle 2 solution

9	6	2	3	5	4	8	1	7
7	5	8	2	1	6	3	4	9
3	4	1	9	7	8	2	5	6
2	1	4	5	8	9	7	6	3
5	8	3	4	6	7	9	2	1
6	7	9	1	3	2	5	8	4
4	2	5	6	9	3	1	7	8
8	9	6	7	2	1	4	3	5
1	3	7	8	4	5	6	9	2

Riddles Answers

1. All of them
2. A sponge
3. Are you asleep yet?
4. The future
5. There are none, it's a one-story house.
6. A promise
7. Your age
8. He was bald.

9. A towel
10. Your word
11. A barber
12. All the people on the boat are married.
13. The match
14. He was born on February 29.
15. A bank
16. An echo
17. Darkness

Cocaine Anonymous (CA)

The members of CA are all recovering addicts who maintain their individual sobriety by working with others.

Address: CAUK, PO Box 1337, Enfield, EN1 9AS

Website: <https://cocaineanonymous.org.uk/>

Helpline: 0800 612 0225

Email: helpline@cauk.org.uk

Online Meetings: <https://www.ca-online.org/>

Families Anonymous (FA)

FA is a world-wide fellowship of family members and friends affected by another's abuse of mind-altering substances, or related behavioural problems.

Address: Families Anonymous
Doddington & Rollo Community Association
Charlotte Despard Avenue, Battersea,
London, SW11 5HD

Website: <http://famanon.org.uk/>

Helpline: 0207 4984 680

Email: office@famanon.org.uk

Online Meetings: <https://www.familiesanonymous.org/meetings/virtual-meetings/>

Al-Anon Family Groups

Al-Anon Family Groups is an organisation for the relatives and friends of alcoholics

This anonymous fellowship provides understanding, strength and hope to anyone whose life is, or has been, affected by someone else's drinking.

Address: Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire,
57 Great Suffolk St, London, SE1 0BB

Website: <https://www.al-anonuk.org.uk/>

Helpline: 0800 0086 811

Email: helpline@al-anonuk.org.uk

Podcasts: <https://www.al-anonuk.org.uk/podcasts/>

Narcotics Anonymous

NA offers recovery from the effects of addiction through working a 12-step programme, including regular attendance at group meetings

Address: 202 City Rd, London EC1V 2PH

Website: <https://ukna.org/>

Helpline: 0300 999 1212

Online Meetings: <https://ukna.org/online>

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

AA is a fellowship of people who share their experience, strength and hope with each other so that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

Address: Alcoholics Anonymous, PO Box 1,
10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ

Website: <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/>

Helpline: 0800 917 7650

Email: help@aamail.org

Online Meetings: <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/AA-Meetings/Find-a-Meeting/online>

Gamblers Anonymous (GA)

GA is a 12-step programme for people who have a gambling problem. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop gambling.

Address: GA, The Wellness Centre, 45
Montrose Avenue, Intake, Doncaster, DN2 6PL

Website: <https://www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk/>

Phone: 0330 094 0322

Email: info@gamblersanonymous.org.uk

Online meetings: <https://www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk/find-a-meeting/>