

Forward



SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT

November 2020

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WELCOME TO THE REPORT

Mike Trace, CEO, The Forward Trust

Welcome to Forward's third Impact Report, covering the period 2019/20.

Covid-19 and lockdown happened towards the end of this reporting period (March 2020) and though it has only had a marginal impact on our data for that year* it has, of course, had a devastating impact on our services and our clients. It seems fitting therefore to start Part 1 of this report with a summary of the challenges it has brought us as an organisation and how we have responded. The rest of the first part provides an update on organisation-wide initiatives that we introduced in last year's report. This includes our 'opportunity escalator' to support lived experience within our organisation; our Theory of Change and the stages of progress that our clients have moved through in achieving transformational change; our Forward Connect community for people making progress in their lives; and our More Than My Past campaign to challenge stigma and celebrate stories of recovery and rehabilitation.

In Part 2 of the report, we focus on particular services and what we have achieved in 2019/20 in terms of reach and impact. We present insight into particular areas of success but also areas for improvement. In this section, as in previous years, the delivery of Drug and Alcohol Recovery Services accounts for most of our client reach and impact. However, we have seen significant growth in our Employment Services (that now operate in 10 prisons) while Mental Health and Wellbeing, Housing and Family Support are also steadily growing.

Finally, Part 3 of the report presents highlights from our programme of service development and innovation, including the development of remote and digital services developed in response to lockdown. While not yet areas of work that can demonstrate impact to the same extent as our more established interventions and programmes, we are committed to developing new approaches and models and to evaluating their value over time.

We hope you enjoy reading this report.

(*We already know that data on our reach and impact will decline significantly when we report on 2020/21 in next year's report.)



Part 1: The Organisation

COVID-19 AND LOCKDOWN

Like any organisation that provides care and support for people, the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting lockdown presented Forward with unprecedented challenges. Over this period, the vast majority of our clients (both in prison and the community) have not been able to access 'in-person' one-to-one support from our staff, nor group programmes. This lack of access has been acutely felt, in particular by people who are in recovery from drug, alcohol or gambling addiction, comprising approximately 90% of our service users. Our mission, and the proven effectiveness of our support models, is based on the insight that the true antidote to addiction is connection (with others in recovery, family, friends and the wider world). Enforced social isolation is therefore hugely problematic, denying access to face-to-face sources of human contact and support, professional and peer-based. How have we responded to this challenge?



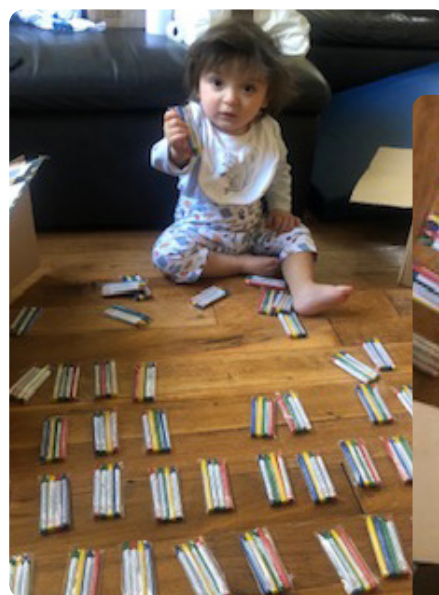
Ensuring staff and patient safety at The Bridges



Prison-based services

Our options for clients in prisons have been extremely limited, with prisoners confined to their cells 24/7 without access to phones or the internet. However, wherever possible, our staff have worked creatively to maintain connection, hope and motivation for our clients. For example, our team at HMP Downview women's prison kept clients engaged during lockdown through regular rounds and by dropping off in-cell 'distraction packs' containing origami sheets and mindful colouring.

Our Connections Co-ordinator, Rebecca Mistry, took the initiative to put together 'Parent and Child Contact Packs' to send to our prison services, working with her own children, Aaria and Ethan (pictured right), to compile material that 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. As Rebecca says: *"Never underestimate the power of a letter or card, particularly at a difficult time like this. It's the small things that are really making a difference, and a handwritten letter from someone you love can put a smile on their face. Aaria wanted to be able to help mummies and daddies who weren't able to see their children keep in touch with their little ones, and also to give prisoners some good drawing opportunities – because who doesn't love drawing!"*





Community-based services

Following lockdown, we adapted – essentially overnight – all of our community drug and alcohol services to make them more accessible, maintaining remote contact with clients through telephone and video calls. We also made smartphones available to service users where needed. This enabled essential and life-critical services, such as clinical appointments for prescriptions and regular ‘welfare checks’ with vulnerable clients, to be continued without interruption.

Responding to client and staff enthusiasm for digital approaches, we also developed a suite of remote and digital services – including a chat line, digital workbooks, social messaging and group video (see part 3 for more detail on these innovations). There were also various examples of staff going the extra mile in caring for clients.

“I now have a job and somewhere of my own to live. I feel like a new person. If it wasn’t for Forward I would still be using drugs and be homeless.”

(Forward client)

At The Bridges, our 18-bed residential rehabilitation centre for ex-offenders in Hull (the only one of its kind in the UK), although we had to close our doors temporarily to new clients, we continued to support existing residents and maintain delivery of our recovery programme. We ensured resident and staff safety by sourcing personal protective equipment (PPE) from local dentists’ surgeries, which were closed due to the pandemic. Following the implementation of new health and safety policies, the centre reopened to new admissions in May and, by the summer, was fully occupied.

In our East Kent community substance misuse service (where we support over 3,000 clients), our staff volunteered to deliver, by hand, prescriptions for clients to all our pharmacies, in light of the reduction in postal services. In Canterbury, we worked with the council’s Rough Sleeper Initiative Team one night to escort the homeless population into hotel accommodation, also working with local charity Catching Lives to supply all service users with three meals a day.

Our Recovery Support service (for graduates of our prison-based recovery programmes) supported clients across the whole country, introducing an emergency plan which coded clients according to their level of need and then provided appropriate support. This included checking on clients’ mental health, linking those in need to local food banks, and assessing the risk of domestic violence.

Finally, in Employment Services, while support for prison-based learners was restricted (as it was for substance misuse clients), in the community we supplemented regular telephone-based contact with various creative initiatives. For example, we worked with our partner Nando’s and their furloughed staff to offer virtual support to our learners, including mentoring, mock interviews, coaching and virtual work experience workshops. Nando’s have been in the process of re-opening many of their restaurants, although the proposed national winter lockdown in England will temporarily pause this process. We will continue working with Nando’s and there are plans for them to offer job interviews to our clients once the restrictions ease, sometime in late 2020/early 2021.”



LIVED EXPERIENCE

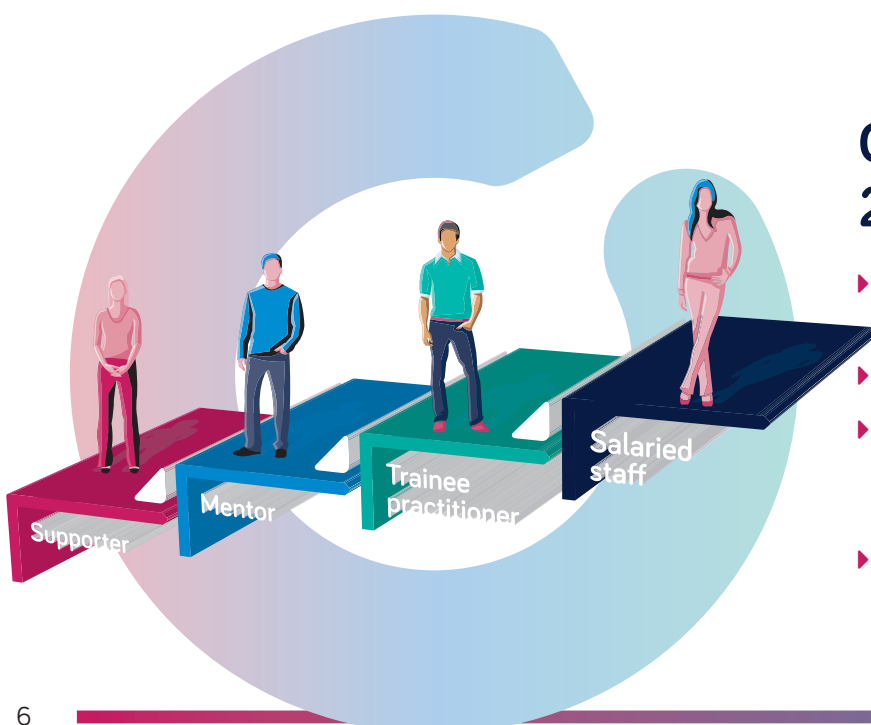
Client key Characteristics (19/20)

- ▶ Over half of our service users left school before 16
- ▶ 49% have not had a job for three or more years or have never worked
- ▶ 56% are parents, yet 86% don't live with their children
- ▶ One in three have mental health problems
- ▶ 50% report they will be homeless on release from prison
- ▶ 13% have a behavioural or emotional disability
- ▶ 40% have a possible dependence on alcohol or are at high risk

We support some of society's most marginalised people to achieve transformational change – as summarised in the box opposite, this includes clients with histories of profound disadvantage and hardship. But not only do we believe that anyone, regardless of their past, can move forward with their lives, we also believe that our clients can inspire hope and motivation among others that recovery and rehabilitation is possible. At Forward, service users are also service providers.

In last year's report, we introduced our 'opportunity escalator' – setting out progressive opportunities for service users to 'give back' and to develop valuable skills in the process that can lead to jobs and career development.

- ▶ **Supporters:** being a peer supporter is the first step on the escalator; peer supporters help out by promoting our services and by co-facilitating workshops, drop-ins, activities and graduations. Some of our peer support roles focus on promoting and role modelling recovery while others – our Health & Wellbeing Champions (HAWCs) – focus on health and wellbeing
- ▶ **Mentors:** are further progressed in their recovery and play a more formal role as volunteers. They are provided with accredited training (Level 2 NCFE Peer Mentoring) while supporting clients to prepare for recovery and co-delivering programmes and other interventions
- ▶ **Trainee practitioners:** we offer salaried placements for up to 12 months within Forward to support service delivery. This includes our award-winning 'Apprenticeship Scheme', which has employed over 120 people in recovery, with 90% progressing to full-time employment in the sector following the 12-month placement
- ▶ **Full-time salaried staff:** we work hard to ensure that people with lived experience make up a high proportion of our workforce



Our achievements in 2019/20

- ▶ **123** peer supporters across our prison and community services
- ▶ **21** peer mentors enrolled in formal training
- ▶ **15** trainees completing a 12-month placement with us, with 90% gaining onward employment
- ▶ **32.5%** of our salaried staff identified in a survey as having had lived experience of either addiction or offending

Building on this experience, we are now 'supercharging' this programme to provide new opportunities across our business, and to provide a genuine, supported route into full-time employment. We are aiming to offer a range of traineeship opportunities in several new areas including placements in our Finance Team, Business Development Team and Employment Services division.

Traineeships are being expanded to include both those with lived experience in broader terms i.e. ex-offenders, recovery, homelessness, as well as to the general public. This will provide wider opportunities for individuals for whom gaining a qualification and furthering their work experience is critical to accessing full-time work.

We are refining our support package for these placements and are leveraging the experience of our Employment Services division to link them to appropriate and expertly delivered skills programmes, and suitable permanent jobs.

Case Study: Andy Jackson

"I run one of The Forward Trust's drug and alcohol centres in Kent, where my team of over 20 practitioners help local people get treatment for their addictions. On top of this wonderful but demanding work, I'm also a part-time firefighter. Amazing, considering that only five years ago, I became the first-ever serving prisoner to become a full time paid employee of the Forward Trust. I left school at 16 with few qualifications – I'd always found it hard to fit in, so I acted up in class. Feeling lost, I got an apprenticeship as a gas service engineer. The weekly pay enabled me to go to the pub most nights, and I began experimenting with drugs. My using soon grew out of control. Before long, I was smoking cocaine and taking ketamine, isolating myself for days on end in the grip of paranoia.

My relationships with friends and family suffered, but I managed to hold down my job – allowing me to convince myself I didn't have a problem.

My drug-taking exposed me to a new group of people who I thought were my friends. When they offered me an all-expenses-paid trip to St. Lucia, I couldn't believe my luck. But when I arrived, it became clear I was expected to traffic drugs back

into the UK. I caved into the pressure and was arrested at Gatwick with three kilos of cocaine. I was sentenced to ten years in prison.

While inside, I found Forward's substance misuse programme and got help for what I learned was my addiction to drugs. From then on, everything began to get better.

When Forward advertised a place on their traineeship scheme – offering full-time, paid opportunities to their former clients to help them access new careers – I decided to apply. By then, I was serving in an open prison, and Forward had never taken on a serving prisoner before. But they gave me a chance. Becoming a trainee meant that I finished my sentence with a sense of security and stability, knowing I had a job to go to.

Today, as well as a job I love, I have two wonderful children and have fulfilled my childhood dream of being a firefighter."



THEORY OF CHANGE

Forward's mission is to empower people to break the cycle of crime and addiction and to achieve transformational change. Our 'Theory of Change' sets out a series of service pathways that clients can follow to make changes and ultimately turn their lives around, with a range of interventions available at each stage to enable progression. These cover: drug and alcohol recovery, health and wellbeing, connections (with family and friends), employment and housing, and with peer supporters and mentors providing hope and motivation at every step.



Pause



Engage



Develop



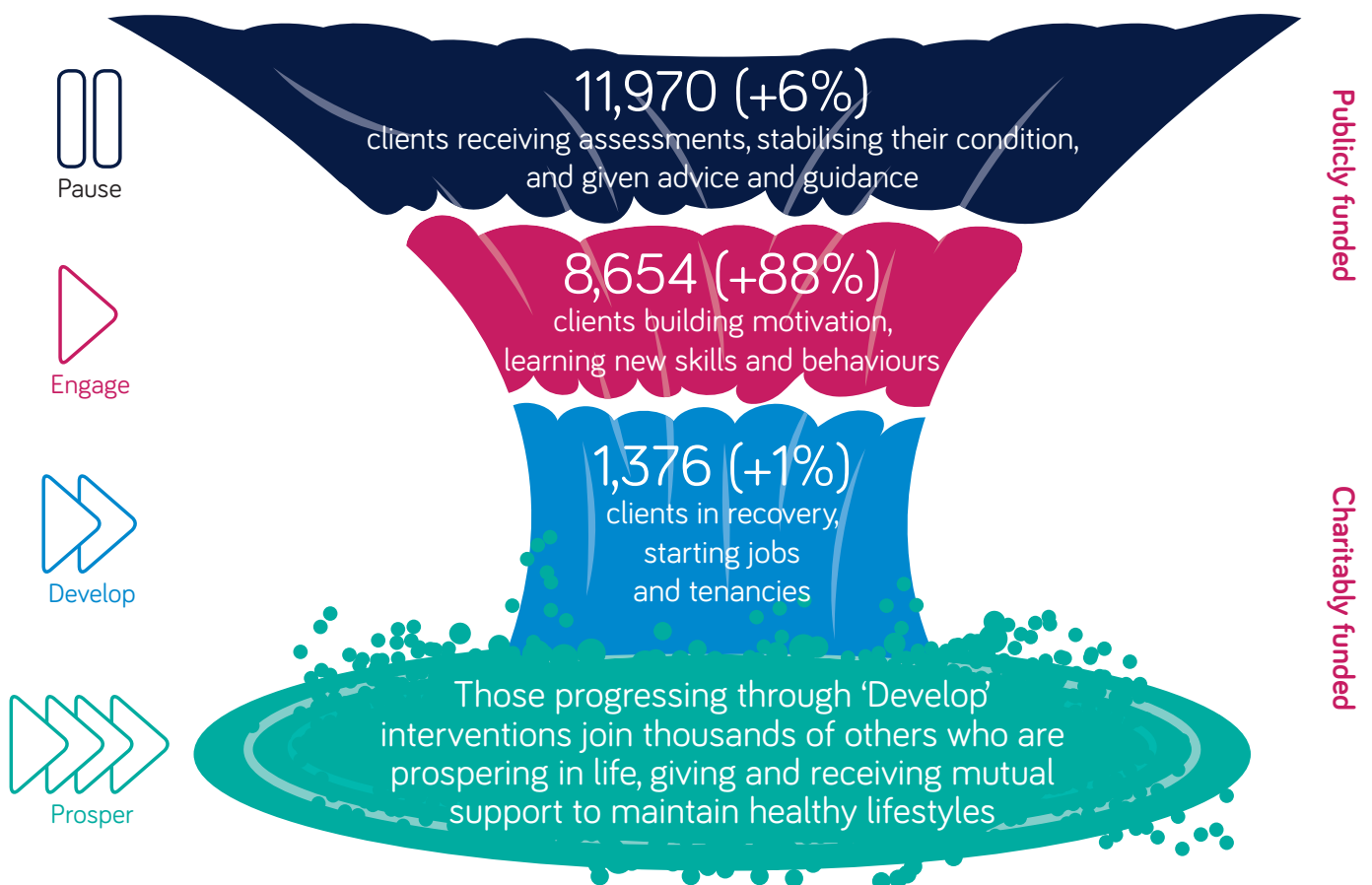
Prosper

Drug and Alcohol Recovery	Assessment and stabilisation of drug use. Immediate medical care and prescribing	Working on motivation to change, skills and recovery	Working through our 12-step recovery programmes, engagement with support networks	Independent and positive lifestyle, free from crime and addiction	
Health and Wellbeing	Assessment, triage, and harm reduction advice and information	One-to-one support and group workshops to promote wellbeing and healthy behaviours	Pursuit of safe and healthy behaviours, and activities that generate mental health and wellbeing	A long, contented and healthy life	
Connections	Mapping and reviewing key relationships	Reaching out to family, friends and peers to develop positive connections	Working through difficult issues, building positive networks	Lasting, supportive and positive relationships with family and social networks	
Employment	Assessment of employment status, and realistic job opportunities	Articulating dreams and ambitions; vocational skills and work-ready behaviours	Placement into real jobs or work experience	Economic independence, self-worth, career progression	
Housing	Assessment of housing status, advice and information	Support planning aimed at starting and maintaining tenancies	Sustainable and safe independent housing with wrap around support	A sense of stability and belonging with a foundation for the future	

In 2018/19, we started to collect data on the number of our service users who were accessing support at different stages of our Theory of Change, from Pause through to Engage and Develop. This is data that can be visualised as a 'funnel' which flows into our ever-growing reservoir of people who are 'Prospering' in life (becoming part of our 'Forward Connect' and 'More Than My Past' communities – see below).

The diagram below shows the performance of our funnel for 2019/20 with numbers in brackets showing the percentage increase from 2018/19.

The Forward Funnel: Clients at stages of our Theory of Change in 2019/20



Analysis

- ▶ We served a total of 16,500 clients in the year, an increase of 10% in our overall reach for 2019/20 compared to 2018/19. Just under 12,000 of these were new clients at the Pause stage of our Theory of Change, a 6% increase compared to 2018/19, which stems from new contracts gained by our Employment Services division, partly offset by the loss of one substance misuse contract.
- ▶ There has been a significant increase (88%) in the number of clients supported at the Engage stage, largely attributable to the delivery of employability and skills support as part of new contracts in six prisons. We include all clients receiving opiate substitution treatment in the Engage figure, but are acutely aware that a proportion of these are not receiving the psychosocial support they need to move forward to the Develop stage.
- ▶ There has been a small increase (1%) in the number of people at Develop, the stage where people commit to more intensive changes to their lifestyle by starting jobs or structured programmes of recovery, or by moving into new tenancies. Our aim is to enable as many clients as possible to reach this stage; however, while our public sector contracts pay for Pause and Engage activities, they rarely pay for the personal development activities that lead to lasting and transformational change, for which we need ongoing charitable funding. Our strategic challenge is to find ways to increase the number and proportion of our clients in every project who are motivated and enabled to move into these Develop programmes and pathways, and to join our communities of people in recovery.



“Since I have been back in contact with my daughter I have been able to sleep and feel so much better in myself.”

(Forward client)

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FORWARD CONNECT

Forward Connect is a new initiative to bring together current and former clients who are making good progress in their recovery or rehabilitation journeys, and who want to stay in touch and support each other, give back to people in early recovery and to the wider community, and celebrate success (the three 'rallying cries' of Forward Connect are illustrated opposite).

Over the past year, we have identified over 1,100 people as inaugural members of Forward Connect, drawn from mailing lists for our long-standing Journey magazine and for our programme of reunion events (for graduates of our recovery programmes). We have also established three local 'branches' of Forward Connect in Hull, London and East Kent (where we have a high concentration of former and current clients) and worked with their members to:

- ▶ Define a collective identity and purpose for Forward Connect
- ▶ Identify the range and type of social and volunteering activities that they'd like to be involved with to support each other and the wider community
- ▶ Design an online platform to enable networking and support nationwide

Examples of Forward Connect activities:

- ▶ book clubs
- ▶ free museum visits
- ▶ fun runs to break stigma/raise funds
- ▶ expressive writing
- ▶ dog-walking
- ▶ drama groups
- ▶ bowling
- ▶ yoga and mindfulness
- ▶ gardening
- ▶ walking groups
- ▶ chess clubs

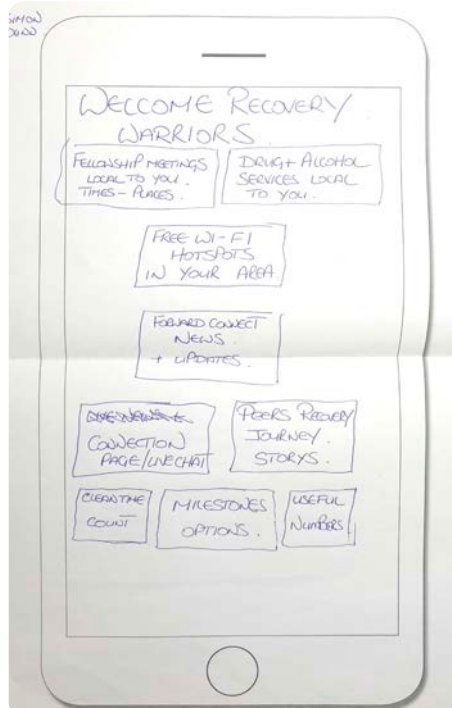


Photo of a flipchart from a workshop held with Forward Connect members on what a possible online platform for the group could look like



1. **Team Up:** Sustaining and strengthening each other's recovery and preventing relapse through mutual support and encouragement



2. **Help Up:** Recruiting from among their ranks volunteers and mentors to inspire and motivate others who are looking for a way out of their life of addiction and criminality, for example by visiting prisons to deliver talks



3. **Speak Up:** Celebrating and promoting successful recovery through sharing their story, challenging public opinion and inspiring employers and policy makers among others to believe in change

Towards the end of last year and in the run-up to lockdown, Forward Connect members started to put their ideas into action – for example, in Swale, members helped in a soup kitchen for homeless people.

However, when lockdown hit and social events were no longer possible, the groups remained active and increasingly connected online. Using Kaizala (Microsoft's version of WhatsApp), members have been providing each other with constant motivation and support, with over 31,000 messages exchanged on the app.

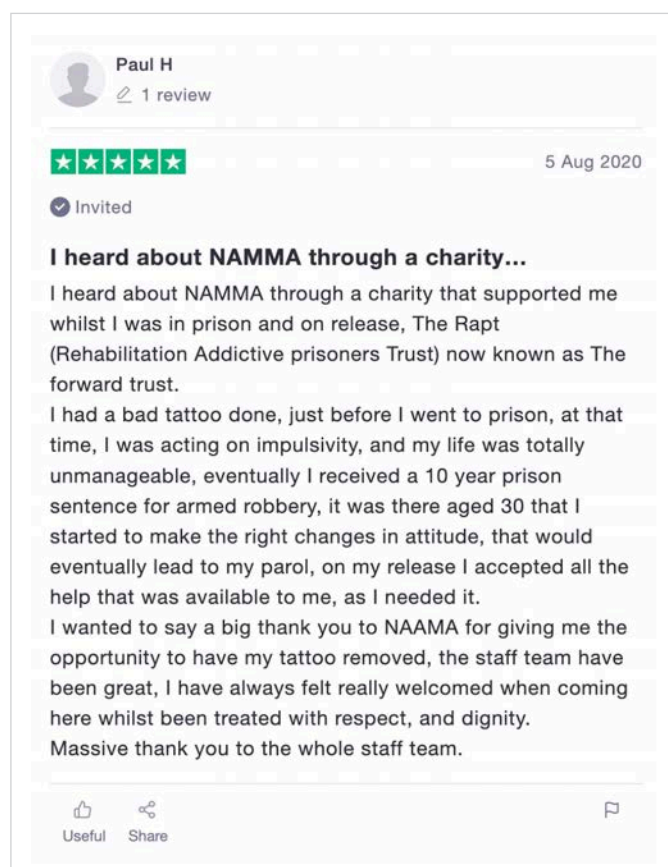
31,000
messages of peer
support during
lockdown



Deadly PJs, pedals and cake – a film by Forward Connect members

Forward Connect members have also been using the Kaizala platform to share 'recovery resources' such as daily meditations and fitness regimes, and also in collaborating to produce films and poems – such as the YouTube film featured above.

Being part of Forward Connect is about receiving rewards as well as giving back to others and to the community. Forward has developed a unique partnership with NAAMA that offers tattoo removal which is kinder to the skin using the latest laser technology, helping our service users to redefine their identity by removing unwanted tattoos that remind them of past troubled relationships or unhealthy affiliations. We have agreed with NAAMA free treatment (that normally costs thousands of pounds per person) for up to 50 Forward Connect members a year. We are pleased to announce that the first members received their initial treatment over the summer, which has been extremely well-received (see Trust Pilot testimonial opposite).



Connected Lives:

Interviews with Forward Connect members

"Whilst I was in prison I received support from Forward, known as RAPt at the time. They made sure when I left prison I was able to go into The Bridges, a rehab centre in Hull, to continue on the second part of my recovery journey. Since leaving The Bridges in January 2007, I've tried my hardest to settle into everyday life. When I first came out of rehab, Forward were always there to offer me support and even helped me to get a job. Since then I've started a successful career as a Maintenance Operative, I've got married and I now have a wonderful family. I suppose I've done all the 'normal' things people want to do when they're starting their life over again.

I am still in touch with other graduates from The Bridges via a WhatsApp group, where we share stories about our recovery journey and offer motivation to one another. Being a part of the Forward graduate community is a great way of keeping in touch and hearing stories about people's lives beyond rehabilitation. I also try and visit The Bridges a couple of times a year to do some volunteering and offer my help at the services. It's nice to give back to the place that helped me back on my feet."

Craig Else



"I first accessed Forward's services at HMP Wayland. I was on what was then called the RAPt wing as a peer, before moving on to become a peer supporter for ten months. Whilst I was a peer supporter I would visit the induction wings every Monday morning to talk to new arrivals about Forward's services and how the charity could help them turn their lives around. When I was released from prison, Forward continued to support me and my recovery. I even went on to do a bit of volunteering with them. Now I am able to sponsor other people in recovery and help people where I can to battle their addictions and start over.

I have previously worked in drug services, but I am now fulfilling a lifelong dream of working in trucking and seeing where life takes me from there. Forward gave me the foundation to do all the things I wanted to do outside prison.

My advice for anyone struggling with addiction and wanting to find recovery is that you need to take direction from people you trust without being in a rush to get it right. You have to listen to what others have to say, which is hard when you're full of fear, but is worth it in the long run."

Nick Lewis



MORE THAN MY PAST

'Speak Up' is one of the rallying calls for Forward Connect members and this is what many former service users have been doing over the last fourteen months since our More Than My Past campaign was launched in September 2019, along with other members of the public who have lived experience of addiction and crime.

More Than My Past's aim is to raise awareness of the potential for ex-offenders and people in recovery from addiction to turn their lives around, including through employment. The campaign challenges the stigmas that can prevent people with difficult pasts from reaching their full potential – calling on the Government, employers and the general public to share a belief in people's capacity for recovery and rehabilitation, to celebrate their stories of achievement against adversity, and to take action to support this agenda.

The campaign website (www.morethanmypast.org.uk) and social media channels share the stories of people from all walks of life – from celebrities to former



Forward service users – who have successfully confronted their problems and moved on to prosper in their personal and professional lives, showing the inspirational truth about those who have overcome addiction and offending.

It proves that many offenders and people with drug and alcohol problems not only want to change and succeed – they can and do! To date, there are over 40 inspirational stories on the website, people like Julie (pictured above).

Here are a few key highlights in the first year of this campaign...

Press and social media



In just the first two weeks of launching the campaign, the traditional press coverage alone was seen by 4.8 million people. During this period, we had 2,203 unique website users, nearly 22,000 unique social media video views, 1,152 social media followers and nearly 6,000 social media engagements.

Since this initial launch period, we have grown the conversation about the campaign. At our one-year anniversary:

- ▶ Our campaign website had been viewed nearly **44,000** times by nearly **15,000** people
- ▶ Campaign films had nearly over **11,000** views on YouTube and nearly **50,000** on social media
- ▶ Over **40** people had got in touch to share their story for the campaign
- ▶ Our podcast had been downloaded over **3,200** times



Ambassadors lunch and video

In early March (just prior to lockdown), we got together with around 25 of our campaign ambassadors for a lunch to celebrate the success of the campaign so far and to create a community offline, in addition to online. We made a short celebratory film – “What does More Than My Past mean to you?” to share online and then headed to Westminster together for the Parliamentary Reception.



Parliamentary Reception

We welcomed over 70 guests to a Parliamentary Reception about the More Than My Past campaign, where we urged parliamentarians and key stakeholders to support our call for a Recovery Community in every town. Guests enjoyed a welcome from Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe, a brief introduction to the campaign, three ambassadors – including Chris Difford of the band Squeeze – sharing their personal stories and having the opportunity to talk to representatives of our three Recovery Communities.

#MTMPLockdownStories

At the beginning of the lockdown, we invited our More Than My Past ambassadors to share a message of strength and solidarity with the rest of the More Than My Past social media community. We had a brilliant response – including from footballing legend Tony Adams – and it's been hugely encouraging to see how well each of them has been coping with the extraordinary circumstances, as well as the advice they have for others.

Podcast

In June 2020, we launched our More Than My Past podcast series, hosted by film star Jason Flemyng. Guests included More Than My Past ambassadors as well as others with relevant stories to tell. Episodes have featured Tony Adams, Big Issue founder Lord John Bird, and More Than My Past ambassador and Forward graduate, Kirsty Day.



Part 2: Our Services

DRUG AND ALCOHOL RECOVERY

PRISONS

In 2019/20, Forward delivered drug and alcohol services, both clinical and psychosocial treatment, in 18 male and female prisons and one Immigration Removal Centre across London, Kent, Surrey, Sussex,

Hertfordshire and West Midlands. We also provided recovery support 'through-the-gate' for graduates of our prison programmes.

Reach

- ▶ **10,030** clients accessing structured treatment
- ▶ **3,458** Engage interventions delivered (e.g. pharmacological interventions and Stepping Stones, a four-week group work programme)
- ▶ **391** Develop interventions delivered (e.g. structured treatment dependence programmes)

31-37%

reoffending rate for completers of structured programmes compared to estimated re-offending rates of 58-76% for drug/alcohol dependent offenders who do not access these programmes¹

Outputs & Outcomes

78% 

Completion rate for Stepping Stones (49% above the national average completion rate for substance misuse treatment in a secure setting)

43% 

Completion rate for structured treatment dependence programmes

Analysis

We continue to deliver a wide range of services to prisoners with drug or alcohol problems, but in the current circumstances it remains difficult to make a long-term impact and support people to make truly transformational change. Most clients receiving opiate substitution treatment are getting only minimal psychosocial support (essential to achieving change), the numbers of prisoners getting access to structured programmes is reducing, and the completion

rates for these programmes (while higher than the national average) are not as high as previous years, when we were able to deliver them to higher quality standards, and with better support from prison management. Our record on continuity of treatment is good – with almost all clients (97%) moving on in a planned way and over 53% of prisoners released from Kent prisons engaging positively with our community services (20% above the national average).

1. Source: Social Impact Report (2019), The Forward Trust



Insight: Step Back (violence reduction at HMP Swaleside)

As outlined earlier on in this report, the decline in numbers completing our structured treatment dependence programmes is partly caused by an increasingly violent and therefore disruptive prison environment, making it difficult for clients to engage and focus on recovery. To tackle this problem, we are piloting a violence reduction programme ('Step Back') in HMP Swaleside, a Category B men's prison in Kent, where we have delivered substance misuse services for 18 years.

With funding from the Colyer Ferguson Foundation, we are recruiting dedicated practitioners to identify and work with clients who

are the most frequent cause of violent incidents. The work will centre on one-to-one sessions (using CBT techniques) and group workshops to help clients manage their behaviour in the short term whilst also tackling the underlying causes of violence (e.g. substance misuse, debt, gambling, involvement in gangs). The programme will also feature distraction packs (e.g. containing mindfulness exercises, puzzles and craft materials) and alternative therapies (acupuncture and therapy dogs), alongside visits from More Than My Past ambassadors. Finally, we will train peer supporters who are positive role models in de-escalation techniques, allowing them to intervene to prevent violence where appropriate.

Case Study: Francesca

I was 10 when I realised I was gay. In the 80s, there wasn't any help for young people struggling with their sexuality, so I turned to alcohol. I then progressed to cannabis, speed, ecstasy and acid when my parents separated. At 17, I began to use crack and tried to take my own life. When that didn't succeed, I turned to heroin.

I'd been dealing drugs as well as taking them, which led to prison. I started to get myself clean and felt better for a while but, after 14 months, depression began to creep back in. I decided to transfer to HMP Send where I encountered Forward.

During my induction, one of Forward's Peer Mentors came to chat with me. Before I knew it, I was telling her about my past. She suggested I enrol in Forward's 12-step programme. It helped me understand who I really was. I could talk about my feelings, rather than bottling them up. I became a prisoner adviser, meeting new prisoners and encouraging them to seek support.

This January, I was approached by someone from Forward who asked if I would share my story with some external visitors.

It wasn't until the morning of the event that I was told who I would be meeting: HRH The Duchess of Cambridge!

She asked about my background, and what had led me to prison. I told her that coming to prison was the best thing that happened to me, to which she laughed and said, "Why does everyone say that?" I explained that it allowed me to resolve a lot of the problems I'd been avoiding for a long time.

If I hadn't agreed to do Forward, none of this would have happened. I wouldn't have found myself or recovery. And I never would have met the future queen of England! I truly feel blessed.



HRH Duchess of Cambridge Meeting Francesca and other clients at HMP Send in January 2020.

COMMUNITY

In 2019/20, Forward delivered drug and alcohol recovery in East Kent (an integrated service across five sites in Ashford, Canterbury, Dover, Margate and Sittingbourne) and in Hull (The Bridges residential rehabilitation centre, and the ReNew service, in partnership with Change Grow Live, delivering group programmes and a family service).

Reach

- ▶ **3,084** clients accessing structured treatment
- ▶ **1,615** Engage interventions delivered
- ▶ **215** Develop interventions (e.g. Dover Day Programme, ReNew Day Programme, The Bridges and Recovering Families). N.B. Recovering Families interventions are also counted separately in Connections, see page 26 for more detail)

Outputs & Outcomes

75%  ◀ Completion rate for Stepping Stones

43%  ▶ Completion rates for Develop interventions

“If Jess or the team ever calls me asking for help to support The Bridges – whether it’s fishing or doing a talk – I will absolutely do it, because I believe they’ve saved my life. Thank you Forward Trust and thank you Hull.”

(Anthony, former Bridges client)

“My drinking progressed when I was 40. The turning point was falling down the stairs and fracturing both shoulders. My GP mentioned different programmes, one of which was Forward. The staff were brilliant. Many of them are in recovery themselves, so know what its like.”

(Keith, former East Kent client)



Analysis

We continue to increase the number of people helped through our East Kent and Hull community services, which we are pleased to be able to report during a period of reduced funding. Looking at the client 'funnel' in these services, however, we still need to increase the number of clients moving into Engage and Develop stages where clients build motivation and skills to help their recovery. We do this

through our Alcohol and Opiate pathways, and our Dover 12-step day programme (see Insight section below), in the East Kent service, and our ReNew and Bridges structured programmes in the Hull service. Our aim in the coming years is to expand these offers to a higher proportion of clients in our community services ('broadening the funnel'), and progressively increase the completion rates and long term outcomes.

Insight: A Beacon of Recovery in Dover

In summer 2019, Forward launched an intensive abstinence-based day programme in Dover, adapted from programmes that we have successfully run in prisons for many years, and based on 12-step principles. Demand for the programme in Dover was identified following an intensive co-design process in East Kent involving over 250 service users.

Nothing similar had been available in the area before Forward took over the contract in 2018. Indeed, very few recovery-orientated programmes of similar intensity are available anywhere in the country.

Spearheaded by Andy Jackson (see case study on page 7), the programme has enrolled 63 clients to date with completion rates of 48% (pre lockdown). The programme (lasting 13 weeks, five days a week) features a combination of 'step work', intensive group therapy and more holistic practical support (e.g. employability skills).

Integral to the delivery model is a team of peer supporters who are programme graduates and who help to promote and co-facilitate aspects of the programme.

Since lockdown, key aspects of the programme have continued to be delivered through Zoom

meetings with participants also supporting each other through the Kaizala social messaging app.



The experience of remote delivery opens up new possibilities of delivering similar programmes across East Kent and in other parts of the country, bringing people together with similar motivation to engage in abstinence-based recovery who would otherwise not be able to meet face-to-face given geographic or mobility restrictions.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

In 2019/20, Forward supported the health and wellbeing of clients in a number of ways:

- ▶ We increasingly address clients' wider health needs as an integral part of our substance misuse services (see Insight section below)
- ▶ At HMP The Mount, we continued our Health & Wellbeing Champions (HAWCs) programme, training peer supporters to promote access to healthcare alongside substance misuse services, and also introduced the model at HMP Stoke Heath
- ▶ We continued to deliver our Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) service at HMP Chelmsford and from April 2020 extended this provision to HMP Warren Hill, HMP Hollesley Bay, HMP Highpoint and HMP The Mount (where we are able to integrate substance misuse and mental health care)

180

clients supported through the IAPT service at HMP Chelmsford

Reach

- ▶ At HMP The Mount, our Health & Wellbeing Champions (HAWCs) delivered:
 - Health and wellbeing advice at induction for **732** prisoners (77% of all new prisoners)
 - **1,491** Body Mass Index clinics
 - **4,652** healthcare and dentist appointment slips to clients as a reminder and to ensure their attendance at vital appointments
 - **44** workshops on a range of subjects including Alcohol Awareness, Drug Awareness, Mental Health Awareness and Communication Skills
 - **180** clients supported through the IAPT service at HMP Chelmsford

1,491

Body Mass Index clinics run by Health & Wellbeing Champions at HMP The Mount

Outputs & Outcomes

61%



of IAPT finishers showed reliable improvement in their anxiety symptoms, indicating reliable long-term recovery

57%



of service users who completed an IAPT intervention showed reliable improvement in their depressive symptoms, indicating reliable long-term recovery



Analysis

As well as direct delivery of primary mental health (IAPT services) in five prisons, there is increasing evidence of the positive impact of a range of our services on clients' mental wellbeing, in particular to alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression (e.g. 10% and 9% fewer cases respectively among completers of our Stepping Stones substance misuse programme).

However, we acknowledge that there is more that we need to do to address the experience of childhood trauma (the third of the three most prevalent mental health problems experienced by our clients, alongside anxiety and depression) and will be implementing a trauma-informed strategy across our services in the coming year.

“I was on the wing taking a prisoner's blood pressure and an officer came up to me. She said she wasn't feeling that well and asked if could I take her blood pressure as well. I was happy to help and did so. Her reading was high, so I told her to go and see her GP straightaway. A couple of days later, the officer came to see me on the wing. She said 'thank you very much' and let me know that she's seen her doctor, who had diagnosed dangerously high blood pressure and put her medication up.”

(Forward Health & Wellbeing Champion)

Insight: The Health and Wellbeing Wing at HMP Brixton

For many years, Forward has delivered our Substance Dependence Treatment Programme (SDTP) at HMP Brixton within a dedicated 48-bed 'recovery wing' devoted to those undertaking the programme. More recently, and working in partnership with our healthcare partner Care UK, we have re-launched the wing as a place of health and wellbeing, allowing access to a wider group of people than those already signed up to the SDTP. Health and wellbeing clients remain on the wing for a period of three months. They then have the opportunity to either engage on SDTP or become a Peer Supporter. There is a range of health and wellbeing interventions available to them. They include sleep hygiene, managing stress and worry, managing mood, yoga, acupuncture, and more time at the gym. All clients are also invited to some of

the SDTP groups such as 'mutual aid' fellowship. They are also asked to SDTP graduations.

After completing health and wellbeing interventions, more clients are opting to engage with SDTP as they feel more prepared for an intensive programme and are used to the wing and the regime (completion rates have improved by 14%). Officers on the wing are involved in key decisions regarding de-selections and the whole wing works together to create a positive environment with recovery at the heart of what it does. The new approach also gives those service users who may not have enough time left on their sentence to do SDTP an opportunity to engage with a structured timetable of interventions prior to their release. This helps them prepare for release, keeping them safe and motivated.

Case Study: Terry

I was left by my mum at the age of 14. From then on, I had to bring myself up. I started taking drugs. At first, it was just weed but then something happened that messed me up mentally – I was kidnapped for three days, tortured and abused. I started taking harder drugs to cope with the trauma, but that led to prison.

I first heard of Forward when I came to HMP Stoke Heath. It's the first time I've ever engaged properly with one of these services. I wanted to change, to try and get to the root of my drug use and break the cycle I'd got into. I've been given loads of support and encouragement: from just a simple chat, through to courses and even becoming a 'Health & Wellbeing Champion' (HAWC).

I now do yoga and read a lot. I also find writing poems very therapeutic. I've learnt loads of things since I started seeing the Forward team, such as coping strategies for when I'm struggling, grounding and breathing exercises. One of the best things I've learnt is just to talk and not bottle things up. I've realised I'm not alone and that

there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

Since becoming a HAWC I've been able to help many of the other lads here who are struggling. They feel they can relate to me as they know I've been there too.

To begin with, it was very hard being locked down, but I've learnt to use the tools I've been given to help me. For example, I only started doing yoga and writing poems after lockdown happened, and they've been a massive help.

Things are so different for me now. I don't think I ever would have changed without Forward's help. I would urge anyone who thinks Forward can help to give it a try. They've changed my life and for that, I'm eternally grateful. Thank you."

Terry Harold, Health & Wellbeing Champion, HMP Stoke Heath



“A guy on my wing was worried about a lump on his neck. I took his form straight to healthcare, who saw him that day. He'd been bitten by something and had an infection so they gave him antibiotics. After a week the lump had gone.”

(Forward Health & Wellbeing Champion)

61%

of IAPT finishers showed reliable improvement in their anxiety symptoms, indicating reliable long-term recovery

EMPLOYMENT



In 2019/20, Forward's Employment Services division delivered a range of services both in prison and in the community, starting with pre-employment support (one-to-one coaching; accredited learning and qualifications; non-accredited learning with a focus on soft skills, employability skills and mindset) and leading to three routes to employment:

- ▶ **Working for others** – Support into further education, traineeships, apprenticeships and jobs with a network of employers, plus in-work support for those to sustain their jobs
- ▶ **Working for us** – Support into work experience, apprenticeships and jobs within the Forward Trust, including our social enterprise Blue Sky Services
- ▶ **Working for yourself** – Financial and business support for enterprises (run by and for ex-offenders and people in recovery) including grants, Crowdfunding appeals and loans (Forward Enterprise Fund)

Reach

- ▶ **340** ex-offenders were supported in the community in 2019/20 with employability training to get a job or apprenticeship
- ▶ **2,585** learners in seven prisons received employability and vocational training as well as careers advice in prison
- ▶ **50** employers were engaged to offer 350 vacancies to our clients – sectors include environmental services, hospitality, construction, leisure, retail, digital and business services
- ▶ **98%** of unemployed clients completed their programmes (including one-to-one support) with us in the community

2,585

learners in seven prisons received employability and vocational training as well as careers advice in prison

Outputs & Outcomes

220



clients progressed into jobs and apprenticeships (including 12 employed by Forward social enterprises)



80%

of clients sustained their jobs or apprenticeships for at least three months

30



Enterprises run by and for ex-offenders and people in recovery were supported – six received crowdfunding of £20,000, five received external business support grants totalling £27,000 and two received business loans of £65,000

Analysis

We are proud of the rapidly growing reach of our Employment Services, with almost 3,000 offenders benefiting from our training, job coaching and work placement services this year. We have a deep belief in the potential of offenders to become valuable employees or successful entrepreneurs, and current outcome analysis is very encouraging that this belief is well-founded.

Compliance with our interventions is very high amongst both prisoners and offenders in the

community – only a handful of participants do not complete their courses and programmes. This suggests that what we are offering, and how we deliver it, is seen by our clients as attractive and useful. The outcome data we have so far is also encouraging, with hundreds of clients moving into jobs, and an 80% job sustainment rate (well above national averages for work with marginalised groups). We now need to do further evaluation to understand the link between job sustainment and long term recovery and rehabilitation.

“Forward's customer service course was great: it enabled me to step out of my comfort zone and develop lots of new skills. The mentoring I had was also amazing. After completing the course, they helped me to find a traineeship with Google Academy.”

(Salma, Forward client)

Insight: Information, Advice and Guidance services (IAG) at The Hertfordshire, Essex and Suffolk (HES) Prison Group

In 2019/20, we launched our first IAG service at the HES prison group, a major achievement for the organisation as part of the Employment Services division's strategic expansion. The IAG service supports all residents or learners across the five HES prisons, providing impartial careers advice and guidance, aligned to the Matrix standard and Gatsby benchmarks. The service supports residents at reception, followed by regular reviews to help them access the right vocational training and work in prison (careers in custody), as well as getting them ready for jobs, apprenticeships or further or higher education once they leave. The IAG service also works closely with the prison education framework provider, libraries, allocation teams, Open University, Community Rehabilitation Companies and the New Futures Network.

The service has supported job and career fairs and also provided additional services such as our Enterprise Coaching service into HMP Warren Hill and Highpoint. The service has also introduced new systems to improve the quality of the careers advice given, such as the Kudos AD which provides a skills mapping tool that residents can use to link their interests to current live roles in local labour markets. In 2019/20, the service supported over 2,000 residents in the HES prisons, meeting and exceeding its performance targets and securing the service for 2020/21. Says John Algar, Group Head of Learning and Skills, HES Prisons Group, with whom we have been working to establish the service: *“I have no doubt that this has been one of, if not the most, successful IAG contracts across the prison estate within the last 12 months.”*

Case Study: Martin

"Before Forward, I'd never had a proper job. In fact, I'd spent half of my life in custody. I couldn't go to school and started working at 11 to support my family. I have a history of drug and alcohol addiction and had a tough childhood. I come from a Traveller background and suffered physical and mental abuse from family members which lead to my life of crime. I was only 15 when I received my first prison sentence.

I came across Blue Sky (now part of Forward) in prison and was offered a role as soon as I was released. I now work as a Grounds Maintenance Operative and am part of a team that provide grounds maintenance services in and around London and Buckinghamshire. This includes mowing lawns, leaf and garden clearance, void house clearance (cleaning out houses that have been recently vacated), hedge cutting, wildflower seed sowing, gravel path laying and waste clearance. I really enjoy my job; I love working outdoors and with nature. I also enjoy

the fact that I'm never working in the same place for more than a few days at a time and that each job presents different challenges and tasks. I enjoy doing a hard day's graft and the feeling of achievement.

I've changed my life completely. If it wasn't for Forward, I'd be back in prison or even worse, dead. They've helped me so much: from registering with a GP and getting my birth certificate and driving licence, to supporting me with issues with my family.

My manager, Steve, helped me find stable accommodation, and they've also supported me with my substance issues. I owe so much to Forward and Blue Sky for helping me transform my life."



Case Study: Reece

Reece was referred to Forward by the Youth Offending Service in East London. He'd left school with poor GCSEs, dropped out of college and had been NEET (not in education, employment or training) for six months. He'd also been involved with criminal activities, although this hadn't resulted in prison.

Reece was keen to improve his social skills and team working abilities. Forward's Employment Coach prepared a learning plan for him that blended one-to-one support with our Level 1 Customer Service qualification. Reece improved his communication skills by interacting with other learners, as well as his time management and presentation skills.

After completing his course, Reece expressed an interest in the digital sector. With help from

his Employment Coach, they explored Digital Marketing Apprenticeships but soon discovered he lacked sufficient experience. The coach contacted Ixion and arranged for Reece to be enrolled onto a Traineeship in ICT. After completing this, the Employment Coach introduced him to our partner LDN, an apprenticeship provider in London. Reece was supported to attend an assessment day and interview with the Wine Buyer Club who were looking to hire Digital Marketing Apprentices. Reece was successful at interview and offered a role.



CONNECTIONS

In 2019/20, Forward employed dedicated family workers in 13 prisons, and drug and alcohol practitioners leading on family work in two others, supporting clients to reconnect and improve their relationships with family and friends, including through our Family Ties programme. In our community services (in East Kent and Hull), as well as supporting individual clients, we also established Recovering Families group programmes for family members and concerned significant others (CSOs) to help them understand their loved ones' addiction and to foster mutual support.

Reach

- ▶ **316** clients supported with structured family support work
- ▶ **192** clients accessed the Family Ties group programme
- ▶ **105** concerned significant others accessed the Recovering Families group programme

Outputs & Outcomes



63%

of concerned significant others (CSOs) completed 'Recovering Families', a structured programme specifically for the friends and family of those with a substance misuse issue

Improved scores for clients completing Family Ties across all measures, including:

- ▶ 'Understanding of how behaviour affects their family'
- ▶ 'Confidence to make changes to their relationships'

Analysis

With very little funding support – there are no specific government contracts for support on family and significant relationships issues in prisons – our Connections team has steadily grown the reach of our support to families and significant others: over 300 clients across 13 prisons. We have refined our model so that all clients receive some specialist advice and support. Those who want to use group work to confront their family issues – the majority this

year – are offered a structured and manualised programme: Family Ties for prisoners (192 participants this year), and Recovering Families for family members/significant others (105 participants this year).

Completion rates for these programmes are encouraging – 68% this year – we now need to do more evaluation of how people's engagement with these services leads to better relationship outcomes.



Insight: Recovering families during lockdown

For years, Forward has been running 'Recovering Families' groups for the friends and family of those affected by addiction. This intervention supports participants to look after themselves and understand their own feelings, as much as help their loved ones achieve recovery. Prior to lockdown, ReNew in Hull ran three separate Recovering Families groups, each with six to nine participants. When lockdown started, all face-to-face contact (including groups) had to stop. We initially supported clients with one-to-one telephone sessions and then introduced virtual groups as part of our organisation-wide digital response (see page 31). While most family clients engaged well with virtual groups, there were key differences in their response, compared to other clients.

Some family clients disengaged saying the situation at home had improved because their loved one wasn't drinking or using drugs as they were unable to leave home. Others wanted to engage but felt unable as they worried about being overheard; this was particularly true of clients who were experiencing domestic violence. Furthermore, while referrals have increased for other client groups at ReNew, referrals to the family service have reduced. This is because most referrals are generated by 'footfall' as clients accompany their loved ones to appointments at ReNew. In the last six months, family clients also seem to prefer to receive brief advice on how they can improve the situation and encourage their loved one to access treatment, rather than the more structured group sessions for themselves.

Case Study

"I learned my wife was a heroin addict a year ago. I had no idea. She said she'd used when she was younger, but it was always talked about in the past tense. Then she pocket dialled me whilst out. I overheard her buying drugs. I confronted her and it turned out she'd been involved with drugs on and off ever since she was a teenager. She'd been clean for five years but relapsed earlier that year. I didn't know where to turn.

She mentioned ReNew, which was supporting her, had a service for family and friends, although she wasn't keen for me to get in touch. I later learned that was because keeping your addiction a secret is one of the best ways to avoid confronting it. I didn't know what to expect when I called. But ReNew put me at ease straight away. They invited me to chat with a caseworker, so they could understand my situation and talk me through my options. I decided the weekly family group meetings would be the best fit, so I could meet other people experiencing similar things.

Group was different from what I expected. I thought it would teach me what I could do to help her "get better". I didn't realise it was about helping me cope and address my feelings. I learnt there's no right way to feel and to not be so hard on myself. Mostly though, it taught me that I'm not alone. I've now graduated and am still in touch with someone from group. It's nice to have someone get what's going on.

The last 12 months have been a shock, but right now things are pretty good. As far as I'm aware, my wife is doing well in her recovery. She's completed her own course and is abstaining from illicit drugs. I've learnt a huge amount from ReNew; from not 'enabling' her, to setting healthy boundaries, and making sure we don't keep things a secret. I understand the difference between what I can control, and what I can't. Most importantly, I know that it's not my job to 'fix' her.

ReNew has saved my mental state and relationship. I have so much gratitude for the team. I don't know where I'd be without them."

HOUSING

Housing

In 2019/20, Forward assessed the housing need of clients and offered advice and information across all our services (e.g. for prison clients, we know that over 50% will leave to no fixed abode). We also offered a range of housing options to clients, depending on their need and readiness to live independently:

- ▶ Referrals to supported housing partners (providing accommodation with professional support)
- ▶ Vision Housing – access to private rented accommodation, with mentoring support to sustain tenancies
- ▶ Recovery Housing – shared houses where groups of four to five people in recovery live together providing mutual support (see page 32)

Reach

- ▶ **238** clients referred for housing support
- ▶ **500** private rented properties sourced through our network of private landlords in **16** local authority areas
- ▶ **420** one-to-one mentoring sessions delivered to support maintaining a tenancy
- ▶ **30** clients provided with starter packs containing a variety of items (depending on the clients' needs) including bedding, duvets, towels, cutlery, white goods, plates and dishes, cups and mugs, irons, ironing boards, kettles and toasters

500
private rented
properties sourced
through our network of
private landlords in
16 local authority
areas

Outputs & Outcomes

133

Clients referred to and housed in supported housing



49

Clients housed in private rented properties with mentoring support to sustain tenancies and in Recovery Houses (see page 32)



94%

of individuals housed by us sustaining their tenancies for a minimum of six months





Analysis

With three established housing pathways for our clients (supported housing/high-care residential settings, Recovery Houses and independent flats in the private rented sector) and with good sustainment results for each, our priority in the coming period is to scale-up each of the options, increasing placements, whilst maintaining these

positive outcomes. Whilst limited public funding impedes the availability of supported housing, we have exciting plans to expand Recovery Houses (see page 32). We also hope to encourage more private landlords to make their properties available by working with Forward's housing team.

“For me, alcohol and homelessness went hand in hand. I was in an abusive relationship which often caused me to drink, and when I left my partner and kids to try and escape it, I ended up homeless.”

(Forward client)

Insight: Responding to lockdown

Covid-19 and lockdown presented our resettlement housing team and the people we support with significant risks and challenges. There was an increased risk of street homelessness (in particular for prison leavers) with people 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 such as hostels 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 still needed and we offered our services to local authorities to support.

For our housing team, who source private rented

sector accommodation for clients and provide a tenancy sustainment service, 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 seven days a week through telephone and video contact (providing smartphones 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 privately rented flats. We did this whilst continuing to support another 51 clients (housed pre-March) through the pandemic with tenancy sustainment and wellbeing support.

Case Study: Samy

Samy was referred to our housing service in 2019. He was assigned a Resettlement Case Worker (Louisa) who completed an assessment. This showed that, as well as being homeless and unemployed, Samy had a range of additional needs. These included a limited understanding of the benefits system (meaning he had no money); poor mental health; difficulty communicating in English (not his first language); limited social connections and no proof of right to live or work in the UK.

They agreed on a support plan, initially focused on stabilising his situation. This included help to activate a Universal Credit claim, setting up a work capability assessment with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to ensure he received his entitled benefits, and arranging viewings through our network of local landlords.

Within four weeks, Samy moved into a self-contained studio. Louisa arranged a 'move-in pack' with essential items such as kitchen utensils.

Louisa continued to meet him weekly, supporting him to sustain his tenancy. She helped him apply for a white goods grant from the council, supported

him to complete residency paperwork, registered him with a GP and referred him to mental health charity MIND. She also helped him with referrals to agencies that could help with his English and linked him in with the local mosque to help engage in social and cultural activities. When Samy was a victim of hate crime, we implemented safeguarding procedures, working with police and his council to source alternative accommodation.

Samy also attended a Forward Connect event, which helps participants engage with local communities and build strong support networks.

Samy is now settled, financially stable and addressing his emotional and physical needs. He is still attending his English as a Second Language (ESOL) class. 'The Forward Trust feel like family... they have given me a chance to start my life again'.



“Because of this traineeship I am able to have a car and a flat – it hasn't just given me a chance in the world of employment, it's given me a home.”

(Trainee Recovery Worker, Ashford Hub)

238

clients referred
for housing
support

Part 3: Innovation and Service Development

REMOTE AND DIGITAL SUPPORT FOR RECOVERY



We always try to improve the quality and range of our services, responding to our understanding of client need. In this section, we present highlights from our 2019/20 service improvement programme, alongside emerging evidence of impact.

Restricted by lockdown from being able to deliver the bulk of our 'in person' services (one-to-one key work sessions or groups), Forward – like many organisations that care for vulnerable people – had to switch overnight to a telephone-based service to maintain core support for community clients (audio/video calls and text messaging). However, motivated by client demand, we then piloted a wider, more ambitious range of digital tools, aiming to further enhance connection with and between clients:

- ▶ **Reach Out** – an online, text-based chat service to reach people in need of advice and support, providing a 'friendly voice' of hope and motivation
- ▶ **Digital workbooks** – self-help resources to raise awareness and help address problematic use of alcohol, cannabis and powder cocaine during lockdown
- ▶ **Social messaging apps** – to enable peer-to-peer connection and support for groups at various stages of treatment and recovery
- ▶ **Online group programmes** – using video call software to continue delivery of structured group programmes for both service users and recovering families

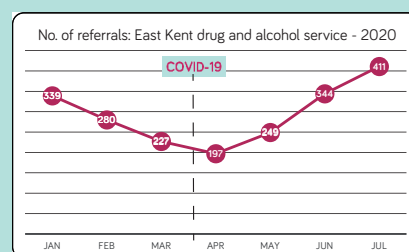
More than 'filling the gap' during lockdown, initial findings suggest that these tools can enhance traditional models of face-to-face support in the future, offering benefits of:

- ▶ **Greater reach** – engaging more younger and older (70+) client groups than previously supported and also friends and families of people in need
- ▶ **Safety and confidence** – many people feel more comfortable connecting from home (once online protocols are in place); barriers such as transport, childcare and the stigma of being seen at a service hub location are also overcome
- ▶ **Stronger engagement** – clients who use online tools and platforms enjoy the experience and come back for more; they also feel more likely to return to or commence 'in-person' groups
- ▶ **Service user empowerment** – clients use tools 24/7 to support each other and also to create motivational content (e.g. recovery films); they are 'running with the tech' unconstrained by set times or locations
- ▶ **Wider influence** – technology captures and shares messages of peer support at a greater scale than can be achieved through face-to-face communication; this amplifies 'visible recovery'

“People have voted, not with their feet, but with a click of their mouse...”

(Jennie Leigh, Team Leader, ReNew (Hull))

Headline Impact



- ▶ Rise in referrals over lockdown period (East Kent) bucking national trends
- ▶ **43%** reduction in Did Not Attend Rates (Hull) for online group programmes and 40% increase in numbers participating
- ▶ **31,000** messages of peer support and visible recovery on social messaging apps (East Kent)

“Why can't we use Zoom for group meetings? It's what I use with my family...”

(Hull ReNew client (aged 70))

Building on this intensive period of innovation and learning in response to lockdown, Forward is committed to the further development of digital tools and approaches and to measuring the outcomes they achieve compared to traditional approaches, acknowledging that digital access is not possible for everyone or not to everyone's taste. However, client feedback already demands that remote and digital support continues as an option in a future beyond lockdown, part of a 'blended' approach alongside 'in-person' services.

RECOVERY HOUSES

For many years, Forward has been helping clients leaving prisons to resettlement in the community through partnership arrangements with 'supported housing' providers, offering accommodation to clients who also need additional professional care and support to manage their substance misuse. Since 2018 and our merger with Vision Housing, we have also been able to offer to clients who are ready to live more independently the option of private rented accommodation, together with 'light touch' mentoring support to sustain their recovery and to manage their tenancies.

More recently, we have identified the need for a third type of housing option (a 'half-way house' between the other two) for clients who are in reasonably stable recovery, who need more freedom than is offered in supported housing but who are not yet ready to live independently.

To meet this need, and learning from partners such as Kairos Community Housing who have been operating similar models, we have developed 'Recovery Houses' whereby three to five people at a similar stage of recovery live together in the same house, supporting each other with the practicalities of living such as cooking and cleaning as well as motivating each other to maintain healthy lifestyles.

This model is informed by Forward's longstanding belief (as expressed in our Theory of Change) in the value of positive peer influence and networks of support to build motivation and sustain recovery.

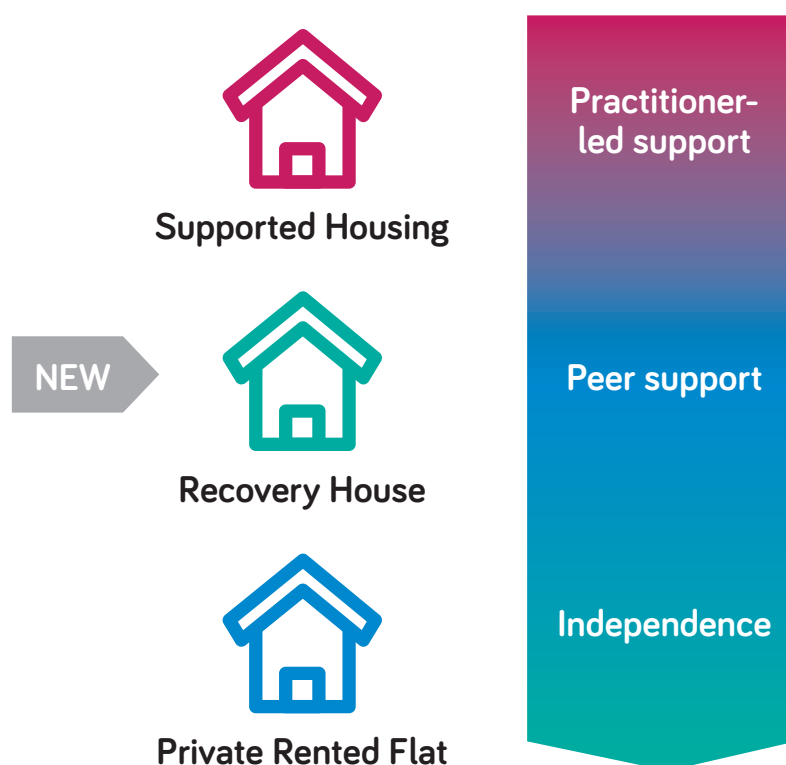
Working in partnership with Goodwin Trust, we piloted our first Recovery House in Hull in July 2019 to support 'graduates' of The Bridges, our residential rehabilitation centre for prison leavers, which is also based in Hull.

This Recovery House helps clients take the next step in their lives once they complete their treatment programme. At the time of writing, of four original tenants in this Recovery House, two clients have since progressed into their own tenancy with two others still managing their licence in the property and waiting to welcome new housemates.

Building on the success of this pilot project, we are working with Goodwin Trust to secure further properties in Hull to support more clients.

In Kent, where we operate the community substance misuse service and also the drug and alcohol service in all prisons in the county, we have also set up a Recovery House exclusively for women that will support three people for a year after being released from prison or on a community sentence. We plan to expand to three more Recovery Houses for women by the end of July 2021.

Forward housing options



THE WORTH WOMEN'S PROJECT

With funding from the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner's Violence Reduction Challenge, Forward launched the Worth Women's Project in November 2019, a gender-specific violence reduction project delivered to women in Thanet, Margate (one of the hubs where we deliver services as part of the East Kent community substance misuse contract). The project aims to protect women by reducing their vulnerability to threats of violence and is targeted at those in contact with the criminal justice system who may have experienced domestic violence, substance misuse issues, trauma, involvement in violent crime, or any combination of these factors.

The project was initially delivered through face-to-face workshops, exploring healthy relationships, attitudes towards crime, safe-coping mechanisms, decision-making, recognising danger and managing potential pitfalls. Using trauma-informed approaches (Seeking Safety) and evidence-based practices, Worth participants learned more about their own behaviour and developed new skills to challenge unhealthy responses, building resilience and preventing risk from harm. When Covid hit, the project co-ordinators continued to work remotely with one-to-one sessions over the phone and twice-weekly Zoom coffee mornings. This was particularly important as a result of the many media reports about the rise in domestic violence due to lockdown.

“I just wanted to thank you for all the help and support you have given me over the past few months. Without your advice and being a welcoming voice at any time I needed a chat or was having a bad day emotionally I don't think I would have come this far.”

(Michele, Forward client helped by the Worth project)

“After release, Forward got me a place in rehab. When I graduated, they helped me find supported housing. When it was time to move on, they helped me get a place of my own through Forward's Surrey PCC housing initiative. The process was straightforward and helpful – I signed a lease in December 2019, a couple of weeks after my first viewing.”

(Former Forward client)

Over 60 women have engaged in the project to date, ranging in age from 22 to 76 years old; 60% of women were single and had never married, while 15% were married and/or living with their partner; almost a quarter of clients have children living at home, and three women were pregnant while engaging with the project. Clients completed validated scales before and after the interventions, which measured depression, anxiety, mental wellbeing, self-worth, resilience and attitudes to crime (general attitude to offending, anticipation of reoffending, victim hurt denial, and evaluation of crime as worthwhile). The Worth Women's Project was found to have statistically significant improvements on all of these measures – e.g. a six point improvement in scores for depression and anxiety. There has also been extremely positive informal feedback.

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“I live on my own, having been domestically abused in the past, along with suffering mental health and alcohol addiction I have found the Worth project to be invaluable during the Covid-19 pandemic. I received phone calls from Victoria every day. To me this was an absolute lifeline, as being in isolation there are times that I am not able to go outside for days... I am sure there are many people like myself who have benefited from this and I would like to say thank you”

(Jackie, Forward client helped by the Worth project)

ENTERPRISE AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT

As part of a range of employment options for clients (which includes 'work for us' and 'work for others'), we are increasingly looking to develop 'work for yourself' as a third option for ex-offenders and people in recovery.

This is because self-employment can bypass employer prejudice that so many continue to face, while also responding to an entrepreneurial mindset that many of our clients exhibit. A Centre for Entrepreneurs study in 2016 reports that prisoners and entrepreneurs score similarly on 'need for self-achievement', 'aspiration for personal innovation', 'desire to plan for the future' and 'independence'.

Building on our experience of running the Forward Enterprise Fund (which has supported seven organisations led by ex-offenders or people in recovery since April 2018 with loans to a value of £397k), over the last 12 months we have extended our enterprise support to target those who need more initial help in starting their business rather than those who are ready for loans.

For example, we have delivered one-to-one advice and support sessions and 'enterprise awareness' workshops in the prisons where we deliver drug and alcohol recovery services and information, advice and guidance services.

We have also established an Enterprise Club to offer mentoring support for our clients. The club involves people with lived experience who have established businesses helping those who wish to start a business.

It also has a pilot micro-grant scheme to support start-ups. During lockdown, the Enterprise Club has featured video blogs, webinars and 'masterclasses' for entrepreneurs from our corporate partners such as Deloitte.

With new business ideas more in need than ever following the lockdown-induced economic downturn, unlocking the entrepreneurial talent of our clients is a vital component of our Employment Services division as it continues to expand.



“My Employment Coach is considerate and actually delivers on what she promises.”

(Mark, Forward client who has been helped by the Enterprise Team to set up his own business)

“When I was using, I was quite imaginative at making money. Today I use the same imagination legally.”

(Ilario, business owner supported by Forward's Enterprise Team)

Enterprise Case Study: Pink Umbrella Studios

Pink Umbrella Studios is a digital and design agency that supports serving and ex-offenders to become skilled in coding and web design. Founder Michael Vreugdenhil says,

"I set up Pink Umbrella a week after I left prison. I'd had the idea of starting the business whilst I was inside, but the impetus to get registered so quickly was actually after a conversation with my probation officer, who was trying to convince me to get a job in the construction industry – something I had no qualifications, experience or interest in.

I knew it would be hard to set up a company – it's challenging at the best of times, let alone when you have a criminal record – but I also had faith that this was a good idea and that I had the drive and skills to do it.

I first started working with The Forward Trust in 2018. I was given training and support in financial planning and then applied for £55,000 from the Forward Enterprise Fund.

The money was life-changing for me and my business. Before the loan, the only way I could support both myself and the company was by doing additional part-time work on the side to financially tide me over. The loan meant the company could pay some staff salaries (including mine) and allowed me to focus full-time on the business.

"It's so reassuring, as an ex-offender, to get genuine support. Not only have Forward supported the development



of my business, but they've introduced me to a network of other business owners who have similar lived experience and social goals for their companies. That network has been invaluable, a great resource to bounce ideas off."

I'm always able to chat to Forward's Enterprise Advisor Stephen whenever I need some advice.

Forward also made it possible for me to chat to some of their clients in prison (before lockdown, of course) which was an amazing way of being able to inspire the guys in the wings and showing them what's possible.

It's hard to start a business, even without the label of being an ex-offender, but when you have the likes of Forward there, lending a hand, it makes a real difference."

ABOUT **Forward**

Forward empowers people to break the often interlinked cycles of addiction or crime to move forward with their lives. For more than 25 years we have been working with people to build positive and productive futures. We believe that anyone is capable of lasting change. Our services have supported thousands of people to make changes to create better lives with jobs, family, friends and a sense of community.

If you are interested in learning more about our work or collaborating with us, please email development@forwardtrust.org.uk or call **020 3981 5533** and ask to speak to a member of the Business Development Team.

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