



Achieve CFO3 Newsletter

Summer 2023

Inside this issue:

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- Coaching Inside and Out
- Achieve CFO3 staff award winner

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Welcome to our new look Achieve newsletter.

I'm Sarah Burrows. I'm the Achieve Quality & Compliance Manager, and the new editor of our newsletter. I previously worked at the Greater Manchester Probation Trust and joined Achieve in 2011. I have undertaken a range of roles on CFO contracts, which I feel has given me a great deal of knowledge and experience in areas which I find very rewarding.

My first role with Achieve was as a Case Manager within the Manchester team. I was based in various probation offices and community locations for specialist group work. I moved into a custodial setting in 2015, as a Case Manager at HMP Hindley, and then on to HMP Thorncross in 2018 in the same role.

In February 2020 I became Team Support Coordinator for the More Developed Team, where I was in post for one month before the Covid lockdowns took place. I supported the team through lockdown restrictions and moving back to face-to-face delivery.

In October 2021 I became Quality & Compliance Manager. This regional role has allowed me to build relationships with our commissioner and learn about more aspects of the work our incredible staff do to support our participants. I now work directly with our Business Support Unit and all of our area teams to ensure we deliver excellent quality support.

There are a number of themes that run throughout this edition, which I feel reflect the way we work at Achieve on the CFO3 contract.

Collaboration is key to everything we do. The Coaching Inside and Out programme sees us collaborate with a social enterprise, participants, and prison staff to roll out personal development sessions for female inmates at HMP Styal.

Innovation is another key aspect of our work. Futures Through Football sees our Achieve team at HMP Wymott team up with National League North champions AFC Fylde, to help participants improve interpersonal skills and gain a qualification.

Creating tailored provision ensures that our work has impact. The Discovery Wing project at HMP Risley was created to address the specific needs of those who have served in the armed forces and other hard to help groups.

I hope you will enjoy the mix of news, insights and - most importantly - the words of our participants.

At Achieve, we are here to serve our participants, the communities into which they return, the criminal justice sector, and society as a whole. We hope the articles in this issue give you an insight into how we do that.

*The names of all participants have been changed to protect their identity.

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Meet the Director Chris Bennett

What is your role at Achieve?

I am the Managing Director.

How long have you been working for Achieve?

I started working for Achieve 13 years ago, back when it was part of the Probation Service. Eight years ago, I joined Career Connect and have been leading the delivery of the programme there, ever since.

What is your favourite part about your job?

I find that every day is different, and I enjoy overcoming the challenges that we face - whether that is working to secure funding support for our services, or by persuading employers about the benefits to be gained by employing one of our ex-offenders.

What do you like about Achieve?

What I most enjoy about Achieve is the fact that I have a team and we all work together to make a real difference to the lives of the people we support.

What is your most memorable moment?

One of the most satisfying moments I've had with Achieve was seeing one of the participants we had previously worked with and helped get a job, come back into prison to give a talk to other participants about his journey away from offending.



we all work together to make a real difference to the lives of the people we support.

Teaming up with AFC Fylde

Futures Through Football at HMP Wymott



At the start of the week, we walked in to 12 individuals from across the prison who were not communicating and not making eye contact. Today, each of the men are leading a coaching session made up of men from other wings, and are doing a great job."

Chris McNally
AFC Fylde Community
Foundation



Futures Through Football is a new football-based programme from Achieve in association with CFO3 and National League North champions, AFC Fylde.

With a focus on diversity, it aims to build relationships through the power of football. With the help of Achieve Case Managers, it is tailored to the participant to maximise its impact.

The one-week course, which took place for the first time in October 2022, gave 12 men from HMP Wymott the opportunity to work with AFC Fylde Community Foundation coaches to improve communication, teamworking and leadership skills through football coaching – and come out with a foundation level certificate that they can use as they look for employment or further education on release.

The first programme gained such a positive reputation in HMP Wymott that there were almost 60 men on the waiting list for the next one.

AFC Fylde Community Engagement Leads, Mick Whittle and Chris McNally were involved in leading the participants through the course.

Chris said: "We started the week demonstrating some basic sessions, and the men have been able to adapt these and create their own sessions which we can see today."

Helen Wood and Gavin Theaker, who are part of the Achieve Employer Engagement Team, reflected on the first programme.

"All of the men on this course were due for release within 12 months. A few of the men had already expressed an interest in employment or self-employment," said Helen.

Gavin added: "The men all struggled with injuries during the week as it was a while since they were able to exercise with this intensity. Despite this, they were all committed 100% to this course, with lads finishing tasks in their own time."

Ant Bigley, Team Manager at Achieve added, "The prison have been brilliant - the staff, the governors, everyone. Mr Beck [HMP Wymott Governor] has taken time out of his schedule to ask how the men are doing, and he was able to get this course up and running with only a short amount of notice. We've been incredibly lucky to have such a supportive prison."

Men who took part in the first programme have become ambassadors for future courses and are working with Carole Johnson (Case Manager at HMP Wymott) and CFO3 to create materials to develop the course even further and advertise it across Way Out TV and via kiosks.

The project has since been rolled out in other establishments. It is currently running in HMP Styal, and there are plans to run it in other prisons in the coming year.

Feedback from the participants



AFC Fylde Foundation
@afcft

Fantastic first day at @hmpstyal supporting prisoners to gain qualifications in sports & leadership with the #CFO3 programme working with @achieve_nw @connectmycareer



Photo caption: l-r: Gavin Theaker (Employment Engagement Lead), Mick Whittle (AFC Fylde), Ant Bigley (Team Manager Achieve), Carole Johnson (Achieve Custody Case Manager), Helen Wood (Employment Engagement Lead).

“

This course has been brilliant, I've always been into my gym and fitness, but this is giving me that extra element when looking for jobs when I get out too. I'm dead keen on being an ambassador for the programme and helping the coaches with the next one too if I can.”

“

I've been taking the work back to my cell at night, and Carole [Case Manager at HMP Wymott] has helped me with some bits as well. [This course] gives you a bit of confidence and the skills to back it up. All the lads have listened to me this week, and I've listened to them - I've never been able to communicate like this. It's been a quality experience.”

“

I've even enjoyed the assessments. I took a specific drill, made an advancement to it and then gave feedback. It's been wicked, and nice to be here. It's been three years since I last played football, so to be out and doing something like this, yeah it's been wicked.”



Achieve CFO3 team in front of the camera

Members of our Achieve CFO3 team spent time in front of the camera recently, sharing their honest experiences of what it is like to support people in prison and on probation.

In the fascinating interviews, they talk about the path to their current role, how they help participants overcome barriers, the most rewarding parts of their job and what motivates them.

The video will be shared later this year by Career Connect, as part of a series of videos showcasing the impact that the charity makes on people's lives.

Pictured l-r: Sacha Gordon (CFO3 Case Manager) Laura Emsley (CFO3 Team Manager), Meghann Hudson (CFO3 Case Manager), Andy Johnson (CFO3 Team Manager).

Hidden Entrepreneur at HMP Thorn Cross

Three CFO3 participants were supported to take part in an enterprise event at HMP Thorn Cross arranged by the prison and partners – with one of the men awarded £400 for his business idea.

Men at HMP Thorn Cross were encouraged to submit their business ideas to a panel, with three of them shortlisted to present their ideas in a 'Dragon's Den' style event to local business entrepreneurs and the Minister of State for Prison, Parole and Probation, Damian Hinds.

All three of the shortlisted men were CFO3 participants and were supported by their CFO3 Case Managers as they prepared for their presentations.

Lindsey Marsh, CFO3 Case Manager, said: "It was wonderful to see that those shortlisted for the presentations were all working with Achieve at the time.

"I supported one of the individuals, who has a diagnosis of autism, as he practised his presentation. He struggles with self-belief, so we did this to increase his confidence and reduce some anxieties.

"He was delighted when he was announced the winner and was presented with a £400 award by Damian Hinds, which he will use for equipment and marketing to set up his business idea upon release."



All three CFO3 participants involved were at different stages of life, had faced different barriers and had varying needs and experiences, yet they were all able to stand up and present their idea to the panel which is a massive achievement in itself."

Lindsey Marsh, CFO3 Case Manager.

Coaching Inside and Out: Changing Futures

The Achieve CFO3 Team at HMP Styal is rolling out a new life coaching course to engage with hard-to-reach and vulnerable female prisoners.

The first cohort successfully completed the project in January 2023 and a second cohort is currently underway.

The programme, which includes a combination of six one-to-one sessions and three group sessions, helps women in custody to develop resilience and life skills.

Coaching Inside and Out (CIAO) coaches don't give advice, but rather ask questions to help people understand and change their lives for the better.

The programme also offers support in dealing with transitions – whether that is moving from the Waite Wing to more independent living in HMP Styal houses or preparing for release.



Prisoners struggling with a wide range of detrimental behaviours changed their lives for the better in ways they didn't think possible."

Judi Geisler, Styal Coordinator, Coaching Inside and Out.

Lydia Sudworth (pictured), Team Support Coordinator for Achieve says: "Women attend a one-to-one appointment where they are assigned to a coach. This is a chance to focus directly on the person, what it is they would like to change, discuss how they could manage their lives differently, and how outlooks can change.

"The group sessions are run at the start, middle and end of the project. The combination of both individual and group work is working really well. The facilitator from the first CIAO cohort said she noticed how the participants had built a rapport with one another, built empathy and were a support network to each other for the journey they had all been on.

"Our Achieve CFO3 teams can then work with the participant after the session, to help them consolidate their learning and support them in putting their plans into action."

Judi Geisler, Styal Coordinator at social enterprise Coaching Inside and Out said: "This great partnership with Achieve helped us create a unique mix of sessions that uses CIAO's coaching expertise in new ways.

"Participants clearly benefited from one-to-one time working out their own solutions to problems that were troubling them. Group sessions also built their listening skills and confidence in getting their voices heard."

Coaching
inside & out



Coaching Inside and Out: Participant impact

Coaching
inside & out

Louise

- Louise had difficulty opening up at the start of the course
- Her confidence has improved
- She has continued to work with Achieve post-release
- She recently gained her CSCS Card and attended mock interviews with employers
- She approached employers asking for their contact details, so she could speak with them in the community
- Louise credited Achieve and CIAO with helping improve her confidence

Jenny

- Jenny did not speak to any other participants in the first group session as she was too nervous
- Since undertaking the course, she has been supporting other women in the prison, teaching them what she learned
- Jenny wants to look for work after release
- Jenny has successfully transitioned from the wing at HMP Styal into one of the houses - something she never thought she would be able to do

Megan

- Before release, Megan promoted the coaching course to other people in prison, encouraging them to put their name forward so that they could also benefit
- Megan said coaching has been life changing for her
- She no longer catastrophises things, she thinks clearly, and approaches situations differently.
- Megan said her coach has helped her change her outlook completely

Discovery Wing Project

HMP Risley

CFO3 in partnership with HMP Risley and Achieve have launched a bespoke programme to help armed services veterans and other hard to reach prisoners access support both in custody and in the community, as they prepare for release.

Linking with support for veterans: Kieran's story

The Discovery Wing Project was in its early stages when Case Manager Adam Fairchild and Community Case Manager Kasey Lee helped a former soldier and terror attack survivor get his life back on track.

Kieran, an armed services veteran, was working as an onsite security guard at the Manchester Arena on the night of the terrorist attack in 2017, and has since suffered severe PTSD.

Whilst serving a prison sentence, Kieran struggled with family relationships and accumulated a significant amount of debt. He was referred to the Achieve CFO3 programme through the Discovery Wing Project at HMP Risley.

Adam and Kieran worked together to create a detailed and personal disclosure letter, CV, character reference, and cover letter to increase employability once he was released from prison.

Adam also referred Kieran to veteran charities such as Veterans HQ and The Royal British Legion who put in place plans to help him with rent arrears, broadband/internet arrears, and car insurance arrears – all of which helped him to maintain positive mental health upon release.

To ensure continuity of support, Adam contacted Achieve Community Case Manager, Kasey Lee, shortly before Kieran's release to plan his transition through the gate.

Kasey received all relevant information regarding debt management and future employment aspirations and scheduled an appointment for release. Adam also provided Kieran with a food bank voucher.

Kieran was released from custody and attended his first probation meeting at the Salford Probation Centre. Here, he was met by Kasey who immediately began working on his employment aspirations and debt management support.

Since his release, he has continued to engage well with Kasey, he is actively working to manage his debts and overcome any barriers he faces. He has recently also gained his Class 2 HGV Licence.



I am incredibly proud of the steps Kieran has made and I am pleased to have been able to help him rebuild his life and get back on track.”
Kasey, Community Case Manager.



What does the Discovery Wing Project involve?

Phase 1:

- Motivation and goal setting
- Individual and group sessions
- Disclosure advice
- Stress management
- Mindfulness and coping strategies
- Benefit advice and housing support
- Job searching techniques and interview preparation
- College/university applications
- Volunteering opportunities
- Managing the outside world

Phase 2:

Learning new skills through working in the Bike Workshop.

Phase 3:

Engaging in community activities for the benefit of the prison estate..

A focus on motivation: Connor's story

Connor has also benefited from the Discovery Wing Project.

Connor was in prison for the first time when he signed up for the Discovery Wing Project. He used drugs recreationally, had very little work experience and his main income was from crime. He had a carefree attitude but was demotivated and didn't want to change.

Over the course of the initial nine weeks on the programme, Achieve Case Worker Kate Riley helped Connor explore various barriers and motivation techniques through intense support within the group and in a one-to-one setting.

This included goal setting, how to disclose convictions, ways to change mindset, and developing interview skills for when he applied for work.

Kate said: "His limited work experience was another factor. Connor had never had a CV and was worried about finding work because he was moving to a small town with very limited employment opportunities."

Through Kate's support, Connor was able to create a CV, set up an email address and create an account on Indeed, to support his job search. Kate also put him in touch with the prison's Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) representative to arrange a benefits appointment to address his money worries.

When Connor successfully secured early release on Home Detention Curfew (HDC), Kate worked with the community CFO3 Case Manager to help him continue to achieve his goals.

He was enrolled on a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) course and is working towards his Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) five-year green card. Connor continues to make good progress. He is now rebuilding a positive relationship with his child, managing his finances, gaining qualifications and employability skills and continues to engage well with his CFO3 Case Manager.



Motivation was an area of particular focus that Connor had struggled with in the past. We identified that his child was a prime motivator, so we decided to use this as the key to wanting to better his life, stay out of prison and be able to provide for his child."

Kate, Achieve CFO3 Case Worker.

Working together: successful approaches to through the gate

A cohesive approach to supporting participants is vital in achieving engagement and continued success. Achieve works across teams and locations to make this happen.

Designing a future

Achieve Case Managers Debbie Sykes and Kate O'Brien explain how they helped a first-time offender take his creative skills in a new direction.

Jason started to engage with Achieve's CFO3 support after Debbie attended a Street Soccer session at HMP Forest Bank, to give an overview of the support available on the CFO3 programme. Debbie completed an assessment of Jason's needs, finding that he was motivated to achieve his goals for release.

Prior to being in custody, Jason had worked in the music industry.

He was keen to continue to work in this area of employment but had worries about how his offence may now be a barrier. He was due for release and unsure of what opportunities would be available to him now that he had a criminal record.

Debbie explained, "Our first session together was about getting to know each other, building up a rapport and explaining how we could support Jason with the transitions he was facing. We discussed in detail his support needs and we created an action plan to work toward so Jason felt more confident and secure about his release.



we created an action plan to work toward so Jason felt more confident and secure about his release."

Debbie, Achieve CFO3 Case Manager



"As a first-time offender, Jason didn't know much about the 'through the gate' journey, how to address practical issues like making benefit claims, settling back in at home, and building his relationships back up. He told me this was causing him some anxiety. I went through each step with him, explaining everything as clearly as possible and putting things in place where needed to make the transition easier for him."

Debbie then introduced Jason to CFO3 Community Case Manager Kate O'Brien, who visited Jason at HMP Forest Bank. This allowed Jason to meet Kate before release, making him much less anxious about meeting up with a stranger in the community.

Kate said: "The next stage was to explore in detail what Jason needed upon leaving custody, reassuring him that he wouldn't be without support after release. I explained how I would meet with him on the day he was released, to ensure that everything was followed up and in place for him. This was a big relief to him."

On release, Kate continued to work with Jason and arranged additional support from Achieve subcontractor Back on Track, where Jason undertook courses in cooking and art. He was also able to achieve continuity by attending Street Soccer sessions in the community – which he still attends regularly.

Due to building his skillset, Jason's goals evolved, and he became passionate about moving his job search into the area of design.



Jason said: Having that first meeting inside with Debbie really helped me think about moving back into the community. I felt like I'd just got my head around being in prison and then I had to start thinking about what I was going to do outside. I have felt very supported by Debbie and Kate, and they always do what they say they are going to do.

I feel hopeful and excited for my future now. I enjoyed attending courses at Back on Track, in cooking and art. The support I received from all involved gave me confidence and skills to start my own business, and Kate is still helping me by linking me up with entrepreneurship programmes. I'd say my experience with the Achieve CFO3 programme has been excellent."

Changing mindset for a new start

With support from Achieve CFO3 Case Manager Lindsey, who introduced him to the Glass Half Full, Glass Half Empty Programme, Jim has moved into employment.



With a clear goal of leaving his criminal life behind, Jim sought support to help him make positive changes in his life as he recognised it was time to move on from his offending behaviour and prioritise his family's needs.

Jim was facing several challenges including unemployment, physical and mental health issues, and a history of substance misuse.

Whilst in custody, he worked closely with his Case Manager Lindsey Marsh to set achievable goals for the short and long-term.

With the support of Lindsey, Jim was able to gain a better understanding of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and the implications of his unspent convictions, so that he was better able to disclose his convictions when looking for employment.

Through the completion of the Glass Half Full, Glass Half Empty programme, Jim was also able to effectively manage his stress and anxiety, equipping him with coping strategies for the future.

Whilst working with Jim, Lindsey provided support so that he could access the Health & Safety in a Construction Environment course and worked with the Community Case Manager to ensure he was able to complete the Health & Safety Operative test upon release.

Jim was able to gain his CSCS card, which qualified him to start looking for employment in the construction sector.

Jim was preparing to move from HMP Thorn Cross in Cheshire, to release in Merseyside, so was introduced to Community Case Manager Michelle Hughes.

To make him even more employable, Michelle supported Jim to access advanced qualifications in the construction industry.

Helping Jim overcome barriers to employment was a priority for Michelle, who provided support in areas such as job searching skills, interview preparation, and accommodation.

With the progress Jim has made throughout his journey with CFO3 support he has now been successful in gaining employment as a Recycling Operative. He is due to start work soon and is eager to take this new opportunity as a stepping stone to a better future.

“

I am so happy that the participant has managed to find work. He has worked incredibly hard to turn his situation around and all of us that have worked with him are very proud of his progression.”

Michelle Hughes, Community Case Manager.

What is the Glass Half Full, Glass Half Empty programme?

The Glass Half Full, Glass Half Empty programme helps participants develop skills to manage their mental health efficiently, and addresses issues such as depression and anxiety.

The programme follows:

- Positive affirmation: focusing on positive qualities and skills
- Stress reaction cycle: discussing anxiety and what makes a participant anxious
- Values and beliefs
- Dealing with emotions with attentive responses
- Distancing self from thoughts: using a mood diary and understanding triggers for negative thoughts
- Decrease negative behaviour: looking at developing patience to combat negative behaviour
- Developing coping strategies
- Mindfulness: looking at mindfulness and understanding patience, de-stressing, trusting, and being non-judgemental



Achieve Award Winner

Kasey Lee, Achieve CFO3 Case Manager won the Professional Award at Career Connect's first ever ConnectUs awards.

Achieve is a wholly owned subsidiary of Career Connect, and the ConnectUs awards recognise those who embody the charity's values – inclusive, impartial, professional, aspirational and person-centred.

Kasey has been working at Achieve for two years and was recognised for motivating people to achieve positive outcomes for themselves.

Kasey said: "I enjoy meeting people from different walks of life and supporting them to overcome barriers to employment so they can better life for themselves. I like to see their journey and how they develop from when they first sign up with Achieve to their exit once they have gained employment.

"My most memorable moment is when I supported a participant who was a prolific offender, who had not been in employment since 1980 and had disengaged with services before.

"He has since started full time self-employment which is becoming more regular, and he is focused on moving forward with his life. To see his complete turn around and how proud his Probation Officer was of him was great, and it gave me a real sense of achievement and making a difference to people's lives."

Congratulations to Kasey!



I re-engaged the participant with the Achieve service, referred him to Entrepreneurs Unlocked for support with self-employment and supported him to obtain suitable PPE and tools to set up his business."

Understanding neurodiversity

Stephen's Achieve Case Manager and Offender Manager worked together to support him in communicating his additional needs to his training provider.

Lisa Duckworth, Achieve CFO3 Case Manager, shares Stephen's story.

"Stephen has ADHD and is autistic and had difficulties in engaging with support. He was referred to me by his Offender Manager.

"When I met Stephen for the first time, he was very anxious. However, I have a good understanding of Neurodiversity and a working experience and knowledge of ADHD and autism, and I was able to help him feel calm and comfortable in planning to move forward. This positive rapport led Stephen to discuss his goals, which included completing a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) course, and creating an updated CV.

"Stephen struggled with his behaviour in certain situations. Due to his own feelings relating to his offence, he also needed coping mechanisms to stop his negative thoughts, and guidance on how to be around new people. We completed some work together to address this and work around boundaries and how his behaviour could be interpreted by others. Stephen responded well.

"I supported Stephen with motivation and in building his employability skills. I also liaised closely with his Offender Manager to check his suitability for a CSCS course and spoke to the provider to explain Stephen's additional needs and behaviour traits. In the lead up to the course, Stephen attended weekly sessions on boundaries and dealing with new people.

"On the day of his enrolment for the CSCS, Stephen struggled when asked questions, as he had not taken his medication. As the CSCS provider was already aware of Stephen's additional needs, they were understanding. I was able to help Stephen reflect, and Stephen spoke to the provider and explained the situation.

"Stephen was able to continue to attend the course and he was encouraged to take his medication to help him focus. I spoke to him daily during the course, and Stephen achieved his CSCS qualification.

"Stephen continues to work with Achieve and is now even more focused on gaining employment in the construction industry.

"Due to the clear communication between myself, the CSCS provider and Stephen, he was able to pursue his goal, and be open and honest about his additional needs. This was vital in helping Stephen put in place strategies on which he could build for the future."



Stephen said: Lisa was one of the first people who listened to me. She helped me find ways to calm down, whereas normally I would have become angry in situations. She gave me time to talk, and she listened to my goals helping me achieve training in CSCS and employment. I feel she helped me be work ready and am grateful for her support."

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