

## CFO3

# Look beyond the Label

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We were delighted to receive the European Social Fund Sustainable Development Leader Award. We picked up the award at a ceremony held at the NEC in Birmingham for ESF projects.



# Welcome

Welcome to our latest edition of Look Beyond The Label. We are pleased to announce that we remain the top performing provider in England for delivery of HMPPS CFO3 contracts. Hopefully this edition will provide some insight, through the case studies and other articles, as to why Achieve NW Connect is so successful in supporting participants into meaningful training and Jobs. Our work across the North West of England is steadily growing in the range and diversity of activity we undertake on behalf of our beneficiaries and stakeholders. In one of our articles, we focus on our work in Lancashire and we will attempt to have a focus on each of our contract areas in future editions. There are however contributions looking at some of our work in Merseyside, Cheshire and Manchester with a mix of activity provided in prisons and in the community. We have a dedicated team in each of these locations supported by sub-contracted organisations, all of whom are making significant inroads into supporting offenders on their journey toward social inclusion and jobs.

There is an abundance of good news to celebrate in terms of offender achievement particularly in the volume of jobs we are able to secure. It is definitely worth reading the article submitted by our

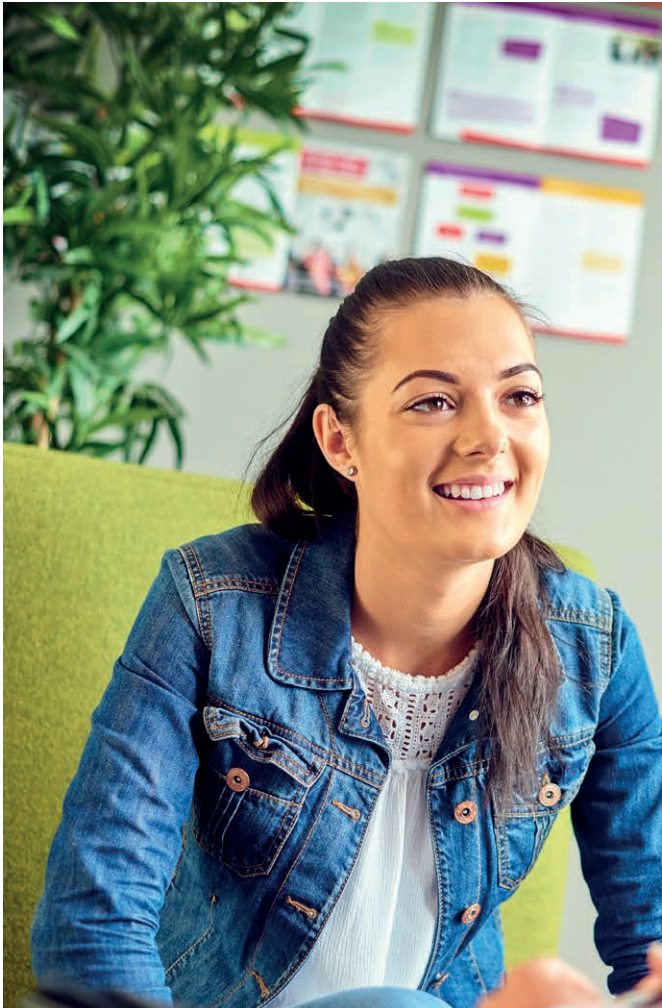
Manchester team to see just how many we are now securing on a monthly basis. We are also celebrating our own achievement in winning an award for sustainable development which we gained here at Achieve North West Connect since our last newsletter.

We hope you enjoy reading the articles in this edition as much as we have. We cannot include everything we do but we will make efforts to ensure we have a broad range in each of our newsletters to give a full flavour of the work we do.

If there is anything contained in this edition that is of interest to you and you would like to hear more about it please feel free to e-mail us and we will get back to you. If you would like to comment or offer views on the newsletter or specific content then we would welcome hearing from you.

**Chris Bennett and Dave Christian**

# Job success in Greater Manchester /Cheshire & Warrington



The Manchester, Cheshire and Warrington team have been working really hard to secure quality jobs for our participants. Our case managers provide a range of services to help our participants to gain success in the labour market. We build motivation, offer short courses and secure direct training in industry skills. We work with people to understand the requirements of the jobs market, developing CVs, interview skills, mock interviews, securing transportation and help with job search. We also offer a range of opportunities through our network of partners and sub-contractors.

I am pleased to say that our approach is proving successful. In January - February 2017 we secured 21 meaningful jobs for Achieve NW Connect participants in Greater Manchester, Cheshire and Warrington. This is not only a positive outcome for the individuals themselves but also for their families and children. As one successful candidate said "this will change my life and for the first time I can buy presents for my kids".

We pride ourselves on moving our participants into good quality employment with real career development opportunities. This is what makes us different. The range of employment that we secured in a 2 month period shows that we always tailor our support to meet the employment goals of our participants. In January – February 2017 we secured jobs in: publishing; retail; administration; warehousing; grounds maintenance; landscaping and railway maintenance.

Cilla Roberts (Project Manager, Achieve NW Connect)

## Mentoring in Merseyside

Angela Larkin, Project Support Worker for Sefton CVS

Prisoner A was referred to me by his Achieve Case Manager. Involved in altercations and transferred to another wing in the prison his underlying mental health issues were exacerbated and he began to show signs of aggression, paranoia and self-harm. Prisoner A was put on an ACCT (protective custody) and I continued to support him through this difficult time. After a couple of months he showed distinct signs of improvement.

Prisoner A had disclosed his love of art and drawing, but he was unable to access materials or attend classes due to his social anxiety. I liaised with the Security

Governor at the prison and gained permission to purchase paper, card and coloured pencils which could be used as a therapeutic intervention. The difference in Prisoner A from this intervention was markedly visible and officers commented on his improved behaviour. He gained the position of a Wing Cleaner and became more sociable and confident. He also began to rebuild relationships with his daughter and ex-partner, who then visited him.

Prisoner A continues to make good progress. He now has positive staff and peer relationships, as well as many

good conduct reports to his name. The mentoring relationship was flexible. Prisoner A was able to access my support when he most needed it and this made him feel reassured and somewhat secure. Trust was established early on and developed throughout our mentoring relationship. I still see Prisoner A, but he has shown resilience and independence in managing his own situation and moving forward. I have attended a meeting with his Offender Manager to provide an account of his progress as support for his release recommendation. I wish him well.

# Creating opportunities at HMP Styal

Nicola Thomas, Achieve North West Connect Case Manager

Since October 2016, Achieve North West Connect has been running a bespoke creative arts group at HMP Styal. This particular area of the Achieve North West project paid attention to the needs of several sub groups; offenders with mental health needs, offenders with significant alcohol or drug misuse and, vulnerable women. The sub group work gave a group of female offenders at HMP Styal the opportunity, through a range of creative art sessions, to explore their issues and build upon their confidence, self-esteem, and motivation and enable them to move forward. The sessions were delivered on a weekly basis and worked alongside HMP Styal's ethos of 'Decency being our Styal' along with the strong environmental focus they adopt within their culture and values at HMP Styal.

In the run up to the festive period, the women, as a team, decided they wanted to create something that would help them to be connected with their family and loved ones whilst in custody. As a team we explored various ways of creating a festive celebration, using recycled items from the establishment. The women came up with the idea of making a 'recycled Christmas tree' from old plastic bottles. In addition, the women made an individual 'message in a bottle'. Here they designed, made and decorated a bottle that they could send out as gift to a loved one.

The Christmas tree was a great success and culminated with a 'switching on of lights' event in HMP Styal in early December; the event was attended by Achieve managing director Chris Bennett and project manager Tracey Hill. This gave the women the opportunity to give feedback on their experiences, "brilliant", "therapeutic" and "enjoyable" being some of the words used by the women. In particular, one participant said; "If it wasn't for coming to this group, I wouldn't have had the confidence to apply for a job within Styal. It has also made me realise I can make friends with people much more easily than I thought."

Katrina Gleave; Learning Skills Development Manager at HMP Styal switched on the Christmas tree lights and gave a speech acknowledging the brilliant efforts of the women who took part in the project; into the group and solo art pieces, she said; "It has been great that Achieve North West Connect has been able to give the women here today the opportunity to explore their creative side and help them to express their feelings and emotions, I hope that this will be the first of many projects that Achieve North West creates with our women."



# Lancashire Team

Lancashire is home of the hotpot and famous for its cheese, Eccles cakes and cricket but also has a team of highly experienced Case Managers who work on the Achieve NW Connect (ANWC) project operating from both custodial and community based venues across parts of Lancashire. These case managers are based in HMP Kirkham, HMP Wymott and HMP Garth and in probation centres in Preston, East Lancashire, Lancaster and Blackpool. They deliver supported outcomes to assist offenders on their journey towards employment which is a key factor to reducing reoffending. With the support of Offender Managers who manage their risk, they work closely with participants to identify their individual work goals and aspirations on a 'case load' model. The advantage of this approach is to build rapport and confidence to address individual barriers to enable the participants to become 'job ready' over a sustainable amount of time.

## Key figures

With a buoyantly diverse economy, highly skilled workforce and efficient transport links, Lancashire offers outstanding commercial opportunities across a number of key industry sectors. Lancashire is number one for aerospace in the UK and has a vibrant, growth-driven digital and creative sector. The manufacturing industry in Lancashire is relentlessly enterprising and highly innovative, with the UK's highest concentration of activity outside South



East England. Tourism accounts for 7% of Lancashire's economy. 2.0% of employees are in food and drink activities compared to the national average of 1.3% for Great Britain. Over 12,000 people are employed in civil engineering, a key area in energy infrastructure and provision; particularly in nuclear, renewables and water. It also represents a skills base which is nationally in short supply.

## The journey in Lancashire

Part of the journey into employment is to prepare participants for employment upon release and give them the right skills and relevant qualifications to enable them to find work in a sustainable industry and be on a 'level playing field' in a competitive market. 'Through the Gate' resettlement support is offered to all participants upon release into their local communities to address

needs in relation to education, training and employment. Case Managers develop strong links with employers including local businesses and have extensive knowledge of their local labour market. They explore those employers who take corporate social responsibility seriously and actively employ offenders/ex-offenders and are able to 'target' these specific employers to ask for opportunities for work tasters, work placements and work trials, this can give a participant a taste of the workplace/role and can showcase their skills.

## Development

Working alongside and with other people can also help build confidence and help gain new skills.

**Some national employers have signed up to 'ban the box' which is an international campaign that advocates for ex-offenders, aimed at persuading employers to remove from their recruitment process the check box that asks if applicants have a criminal record.**

Its purpose is to enable ex-offenders to display their qualifications in the recruitment process before being asked about their criminal records. This approach has been very successful and during the first quarter of 2017 (January to March) the Lancashire team have placed 17 participants into employment.





The course is ideal for individuals looking to improve their employment prospects, particularly those aiming to work in a construction environment; Certificate of Professional Competence.

**Road Haulage (CPC) qualification.** A Standard Operator's Licence is needed for hire and reward operations and a Restricted Operator's Licence to carry own goods. Others include:

- **Level 1 Employability**
- **Asbestos Awareness**
- **Level 2 in Warehouse & Storage**
- **First Aid & Defibrillator training**
- **Self-employment advice, support and business planning**

### ETE Focus Group

Achieve Northwest Connect is funded to support offenders with their work goals, in order to fulfil this requirement it was necessary to increase Case Managers knowledge of employers and employer engagement to help improve their employment outcomes. Employer leads attend regular meetings to increase employment awareness and opportunities in each of the four geographic areas using localised intelligence and identifying local labour market demands and this is cascaded to all Case Managers in the North West. We target North West employers who have a social corporate responsibility or policy to raise opportunity awareness for Achieve NW Connect participants. Although the group consists of only Achieve Case Managers we would welcome the membership of employers or anyone with a responsibility in working with offenders/ex-offenders find work.

*If you would like further information or to be involved in this group please contact Traci Rabaca (traci.rabaca@achievenwconnect.org.uk).*

Achieve NW Connect procure the training and arrange the access for the trainer into the prison. The whole process is supervised by individual case managers to ensure a smooth transition for participants from prison activities to learning for the duration of the course.

### The range of qualifications we have delivered in the prisons are:

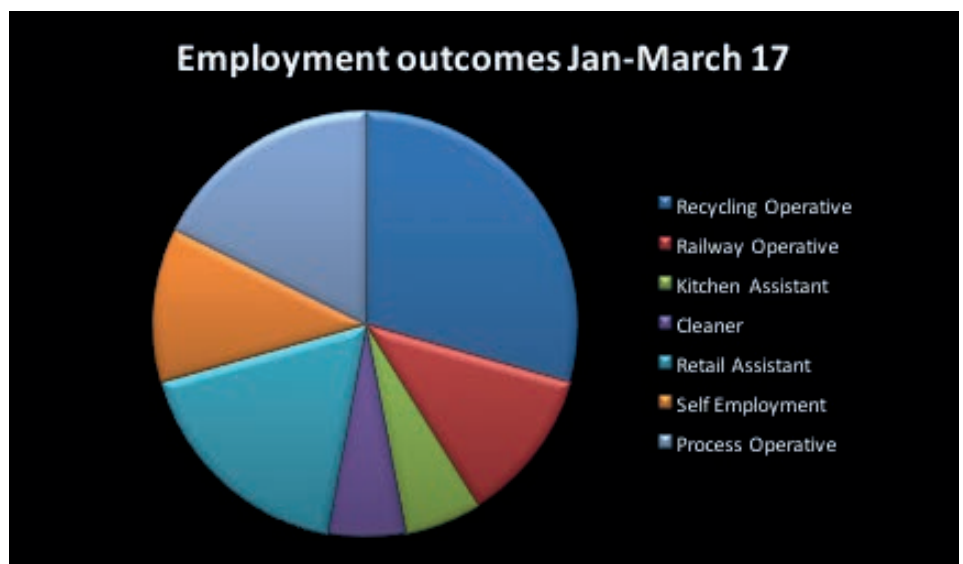
The employability and CSCS training for learners wishing to improve their job application and job interview skills alongside the opportunity to complete a Level 1 in Health and Safety in a Construction Environment. Together with achievement of the CITB Operative Health, Safety and Environment Test, this qualification will enable individuals to obtain the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) Labourers' Green Card.

A specific course to older offenders aged 55+ in HMP Wymott and HMP Garth, the course is delivered over a two week period and is called 'Achieve More' using six principles to help offenders deal with individual life challenges using DVD clips, personality test, quizzes with rewards and interactive discussions.

Working on the success of these courses we are now working with Probation/CRC participants in the community to offer the same range of courses to Achieve participants that may have found it difficult in the past to access qualifications from mainstream learning provision due to the nature of their conviction or because of restrictions on their licences.

### Custody

We have been working closely with prison Governors in reducing re-offending in the Lancashire prisons to offer free accredited qualifications to Achieve participants in custody. This added value training complements rather than duplicates existing provision and is relevant and transferable following resettlement, these sectors specific qualifications are delivered by leading providers of vocational training.



## Constructing better futures

D was seen by Achieve NW in custody in 2015 where the CFO3 project was explained to him. He was keen to leave prison with a set of qualifications and skills that would enable him to find employment upon release. However, at the outset he was more focused on issues that arose from his financial situation as he was in debt and he needed to resolve these issues before he could concentrate on his future and what he wished to do, including having no form of photographic ID and no bank account.

The Case Manager initially supported him by providing him with a Citizen Card and opening a bank account. He was thereafter referred to specialist support where he was over an amount of time able to address and deal with his financial situation.

Once these barriers were resolved, he was able to consider his employment aspirations and his future. The Case Manager identified two employment pathways (taking into considering the local labour market, growth sectors and employers who would be willing to give offenders a chance of employment) with D that he could consider which were; construction and work within the railway

sector. They both agreed it would be wise to look at both in order to maximise his options upon release into the community.

The Case Manager arranged for a Site Safety Plus course to be delivered in the prison and enrolled D onto the course to enable him to get his CSCS card to work on construction sites upon release. Once he had completed this, the Case Manager supported him in completing a vocational qualification to enable him to get his plastering qualification which was conducted via the ROTL (released on temporary licence) process at a local college.

The focus was then shifted towards the railway sector, as was agreed in his action plan and he was enrolled on a 9 week course that led to him gaining a City and Guilds Level 2 Rail Engineering qualification and the Personal Track Safety certificate.

The custody Case Manager ensured all this training was completed a few weeks before his release. Upon release, as part of the through the gate support, there was a 'warm' hand over to the community based Case Manager who was fully informed in advance of the participant's requirements, what had been achieved, any outstanding actions and his employment aspirations. Both the custody and community Case Managers ensured that the participant received swift through the gate support so no time was wasted and this enabled the participant to remain motivated.

D was then given follow-up appointments at his Probation Office with the community Case Manager and his Offender Manager in attendance to manage the risk element of his licence, once the offender Manager was satisfied with D's progress, he was given CSCS revision material and was booked to sit his CSCS test at his local test centre. Once he passed his CSCS test, the community Case Manager then applied and paid for his CSCS card.

They then started exploring employment opportunities in the two areas the custody Case Manager had identified (construction and railway sector) and started job searching and registering the participant with various job agencies. Within a short amount of time, the participant heard back



from an employment agency that were looking to recruit people with relevant PTS qualifications and a CSCS card to work on the railways. The community Case Manager and participant contacted the agency from the office and explained the CSCS card was in the process of delivery and provided a copy of the participants pass certificate which they accepted. He was then offered an interview. The community case manager completed interview support work with him, arranged for his travel to and from the interview and was D was subsequently offered employment. The community case manager has been giving D in work support and he continues to be in employment with more hours being offered weekly through the agency as he gains more experience and as he has his CSCS card he has also managed to gain other work in scaffolding with another employer and feels he is in a much better place after a very long time and 'intends to stay there.' Both the Achieve Case Managers and his Offender Manager are all extremely pleased with the excellent progress he has made.





# Sustainable Development Leader Award

Achieve Northwest Connect were pleased to have gained the European Social Fund Sustainable Development Leader Award. We received the award at a ceremony held at the NEC in Birmingham for ESF projects.

As a new company it is pleasing to know that our work is being recognised in this way. We have sought to ensure that alongside our successful delivery programme we are mindful of environmental impact. We operate a range of measures to ensure we leave low carbon footprint and seek to use

electronic communication and document storage wherever possible.

A feature of our work has been to run courses to our beneficiaries explaining the value of recycling. This to date has helped secure the employment of 40 individuals in the recycling industry. We work with partners in the sector and have developed a successful approach to both educating participants and gaining employment in this important industry.

We will continue to support sustainable development in our work as far as possible

as it fully reflects the values of our organisation. For now though it is pleasing to see this recognition at such an early stage in our development as a company.

Dave Christian  
Business Director Achieve Northwest Connect



Adelaide House Merseyside

## International Women's Day 8th March 2017

Our celebration of International Women was a great success. We were joined by The Mayor of Liverpool; Joe Anderson, numerous councillors, probation staff, CRC staff, Adelaide House committee members, staff, residents, community payback women and various staff from other partnership agencies.

The events for the day were introduced by Hostel manager; Julie Kelly who was followed by Theresa Wimsey, Community Pay Back Supervisor who thanked all in attendance for their partnership working. Pauline Reilly, Project Interventions Worker then introduced the burying of the time capsule and Sara Tipton from RASA Merseyside said a few words as they

were the beneficiaries of funds raised during the day, which exceeded £800.

During the event, various beauty treatments were on offer, including: Hair styling, Nail treatments and eye brow threading. Other activities included: Tea leaf reading, a raffle, prize bingo and a cake & jam sale. International cuisine was prepared and served by the residents and Ron (Cookery tutor from Crisis Skylight Merseyside).

The residents honoured successful International Women from around the world and shared their personal #BeBoldFor Change statements.





# Damian Carr

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I currently work in three prisons in Lancashire providing coaching/mentoring support as part of the 'Supportive Measures' section of the Achieve North West Connect journey. This work is additional to the support provided by Achieve case managers. This project was initially established in HMP Risley, HMP Manchester, HMP Hindley and HMP Styal. Salford Foundation began working with Achieve North West Connect in Lancashire back in April 2016 and now that we're a year into the contract, I thought it would be useful to provide an update of the work we do and how the scope has expanded to benefit our participants in many ways.

Initially the brief was to provide six sessions of support to prisoners of HMP Garth, HMP Wymott and HMP Kirkham; who were already participants of the Achieve North West Connect Lancashire programme. The sessions cover attitude, behaviour, debts, finance, addictions, training, employment, family, relationships and ends with action planning. The aim is to quickly build a supportive relationship which gives the participants the opportunity to discuss any challenges they are facing. We then talk through options of how they can move forward or do things differently so they can leave custody feeling more positive and confident about seeking support. This provides them with some idea of where they can go for additional support so they make informed choices to lead positive lifestyles.

The caseworkers in all the prisons were very welcoming and had lots of referrals ready. The relationship element is the key to the success of this project. I'd like to give a big shout out to Carole, John, Michelle, Shaun and Sonja for their continuing friendship and support (even though 2 of them are United fans!).

I have had to be flexible and responsive to the participants' varied needs. I've worked with a full range of participants, with a variety of offences. This can be a real challenge at times but it is especially important to manage expectations while

still trying to encourage a desire to work. A number of participants are restricted as to what types of employment they can undertake. However, it is still possible to achieve success.

The good work we do is now embedded within custody. I meet the participants wherever their daily routine dictates, I can often be found on the wings, in the workshops, in the gym, kitchens, the stores, education, gardens, laundry or the library. At first it was strange to not be located in an office but I'm now more than happy to be sat where the participant is located - as long as we have privacy.

There have been some particularly memorable moments, such as seeing a participant work hard at changing his attitude and approach and finally achieving a move to another prison. This individual, in his 40s, continually put on an intimidating front but he was actually scared of leaving the prison, where he felt safe. By challenging that front and taking the time to listen to his concerns and fears, we discussed better strategies for him to manage his sentence. Eventually he began to let go of his 'old ways', when he saw the benefit of being open and honest with his offender manager and others that he needed to work with. I'll never forget going to see him just hours before he was due to leave; he was nervous but really proud that he was making plans for his future. He was full of praise and thanks for the effort we had put



in to support him and he said that he now felt inspired and he had hope again.

It's particularly rewarding knowing that the participants have volunteered to work with Achieve North West Connect and that Salford Foundation have been instrumental in providing this additional support. Many participants feel 'lost' in the system but much more importantly, they are nervous of facing release. I'm pleased to be able to have the one-to-one sessions with the

participant to address those fears then see them move forward working with the Case Managers to access training, education and employment. I really do believe that we are making a difference to their lives.



## Restarting careers: Merseyside

Kenny Baglow, Achieve Case Manager, Merseyside

Participant B lost his job due to his conviction and was referred to me by his Offender Manager. Although he was keen to gain relevant work qualifications and work, a thorough assessment identified other areas where Participant B needed support. This included support with disclosure, budgeting, registering with a GP, communication and confidence. Participant B also identified that he would benefit from the support of a mentor.

Together we identified the areas that needed to be prioritised. This involved working on Participant B's confidence and registering him with a GP. The support of a mentor from Sefton CVS was also arranged early on. As Participant B wanted to gain qualifications and to improve his communication and confidence I

introduced a Personal Awareness course to him. He was keen to complete the course, which was accredited by Open Awards.

As his confidence grew we began to look at areas of work and other qualifications that Participant B would be interested in. I advised him of Recycling Operative positions with Restart Trust. These job opportunities were for 13 weeks and in order to be considered for an interview Participant B would need to complete a Recycling Level 2 Qualification. Participant B was really enthusiastic to be put forward for the course, so I contacted the employer and arranged a start date. In preparation for the course and potential interview Participant B found out more about the organisation. As he was concerned

about his offence together we looked at the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and how he could disclose in an appropriate manner at interview. We also completed interview training, to ensure that he would be confident.

Participant B completed the recycling course and achieved Recycling Level 2. By gaining this qualification and impressing the employer throughout the course he was offered an interview. The interview went really well and he was offered a job. Participant B worked hard throughout the 13 weeks of employment and thoroughly enjoyed his work as a Recycling Operative. He impressed the employer so much that he was asked to continue to work at Restart Trust once the 13 weeks had been completed.

## Building skills in Merseyside

Barry Fletcher, Achieve Case Manager in the Community, Merseyside

Following a conviction for assault, Participant A was referred to Achieve at HMP Liverpool. He worked with an Achieve Case Manager in custody for several months prior to his release to Merseyside. During custody, the Achieve CM completed an assessment with Participant A, which identified that he needed support in a number of areas including budgeting, decision making, organisational skills and dealing with stress. The assessment also identified that he was homeless, would benefit from the support of a mentor, that he didn't have a CV and was interested in gaining construction work.

The Achieve CM started to work on some core activities with Participant A, which started to address his needs. Work was completed around Goal Setting – how to set goals and agreeing specific goals. Short and medium - term goals included accessing mentoring, compiling a CV and gaining a CSCS card for work in construction. Long-term goals were to secure suitable accommodation and gain employment. Participant A and his Achieve CM went on to complete work around health awareness; looking at relaxation and stress-relieving techniques.

In addition, they worked on Participant A's motivation - looking at exercises and small space workouts. After completion of this initial work, the Achieve CM referred Participant A to a mentor from Sefton CVS, who provided support to him in custody over a 2-month period until he was released.

Prior to Participant's A release, the Achieve CM in HMP Liverpool liaised with me. In my role as a Case Manager in the community, I cover North Liverpool Probation Centre, which was where he would be reporting to see his Offender Manager. I arranged an appointment for Participant A to see me at my Jobclub, which he attended. The first thing that we did was to arrange for him to do the Site Safety Plus Course the week that he was released from prison. He also attended Jobclub to practice the Health and Safety Operative Test and within a couple of weeks had successfully achieved his CSCS card. Alongside this I provided him with support to move away from accommodation that he felt was unsuitable, to his own flat.

Participant A was now ready to look for work and the job search began at

Jobclub. In addition to looking for work, I worked with him to put together a CV and to prepare him for interviews. This involved interview training, as well as work around the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and disclosure of convictions. As our job search identified possible opportunities in construction via Building Careers UK, Participant A contacted them. Further certificates in PASMA scaffolding and IPAF scissor lifts were deemed beneficial for the construction industry, I was able to apply for funding and Participant A was able to access the relevant courses. I took him to the courses and on successful completion, purchased photographs that were required for the cards.

Participant A was able to return to Building Careers UK and gained construction work that he has now sustained for some time.

Thanks to all our partners for their contributions to both the newsletter and the CFO3 project as a whole – only together can we succeed. Thanks.



Thanks to everyone who contributed with their stories and experiences of CFO3 so far – please keep us informed of any good news stories and updates from your area.

Keep up the great work -  
Look beyond the Label

## Next issue

Look out for  
new stories  
coming soon!

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