

Look beyond the label

ANWC CFO3

Welcome to the latest edition of Look beyond the Label. We hope you find the articles valuable and insightful, as well as providing insight into the way we work to secure opportunity for those we support.

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***All participants' names and titles have been changed for anonymity.**

As ever we welcome feedback or ideas for new projects that we can deliver or co-deliver. Please contact us by email at:
help@achievenwconnect.org.uk



After an unusual and challenging few months of lockdown and remote working, I'm pleased to welcome you to the latest edition of Look beyond the Label.

Cilla Roberts

Lead Operational Manager, Achieve NW Connect

I'm very proud to take on the new role of Lead Operational Manager for Achieve North West Connect, delivering CFO3. Since starting my career as a Probation Officer in Moss Side, Manchester I have gained a significant amount of experience working with offenders. I loved my job, but I was really interested in the exciting bit that often comes after managing an offender's licence or community order - getting them into a good job. Gaining and keeping a good quality job can be a major incentive for an offender to stop offending and change their life.

It was an easy step for me to move from direct Offender Management into the world of Education, Training and Employment (ETE). I have now worked with Achieve since the start of the contract in 2015 and have seen how our delivery across the North West of England has changed the lives of large numbers of offenders, improving their lives, families, and local communities.

We recognise that the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to have an impact on the economy for some time. This will not only negatively affect the number of vacancies available for those we work with, but it might also alter the growth and sustainability of some industries altogether.

We wait to see what the mid- and long-term impact will be over the coming months and years. Despite this uncertain future, our Case Managers will continue to plan, generate, and innovate new ways to support our participants into employment sectors across the North West, and continue this successful project to support ex-offenders into work. Some support activities also cover self-presentation, how to disclose an offence, and how to create and implement an action plan for personal progress. Even seemingly simple things, like having a copy of your own birth certificate, makes a huge difference to the services a participant can access and their employability. These support activities are designed to deal with current issues and provide tools that can be used by our participants beyond the life of the project. After being successful in an interview, retaining a job is often just as big a challenge. Our staff source decent employers that treat their staff well. While writing this article, I looked at the types of industries many of our successful participants now work in.

The top five industries are:

01

Construction
and/or
related

02

Recycling

03

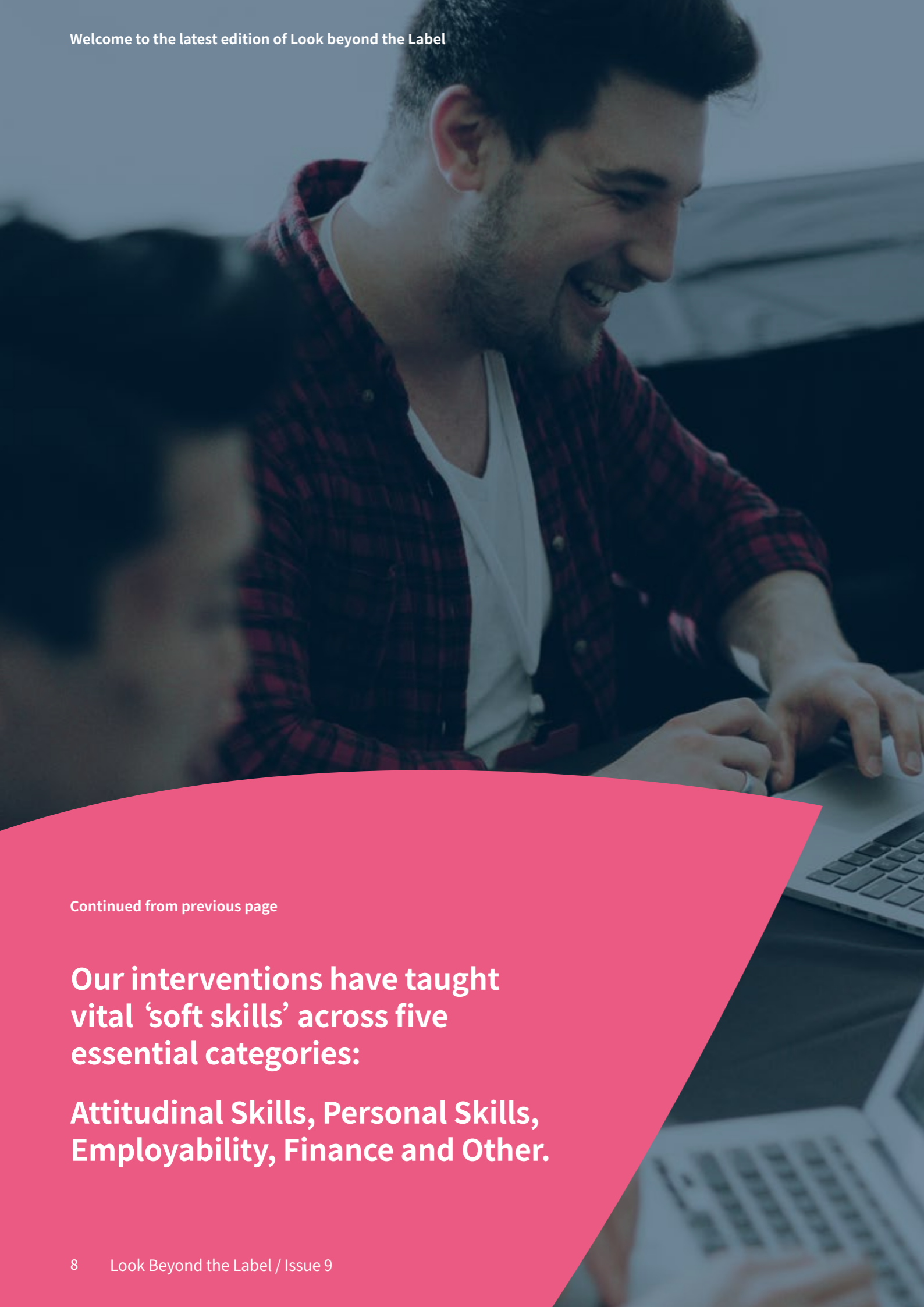
Warehousing/
Processing
Operatives

04

Driving/
Forklift
Truck

05

Cleaning



Continued from previous page

Our interventions have taught vital 'soft skills' across five essential categories:

Attitudinal Skills, Personal Skills, Employability, Finance and Other.

7,376

We have delivered 7,376 interventions to address the complex needs our participants face, including one-to-one mentoring with well-being support organisations, referrals to specialist provision (including finance, accommodation and substance misuse), work tasters, and in-house interventions that provide our participants with new skills to solve low-level problems in their personal lives.

4,125

4,125 participants have gained accredited qualifications and 227 participants have been accepted onto longer education courses. Participants have been able to leave our project with the support of mainstream agencies, including training providers with links to specific industries or colleges.

1,085

For some of our participants, this is the first time in their lives they have ever gained full employment. The planning, guidance and practical support provided by our staff has meant that 1,085 of our participants have exited the project after gaining employment, 64 of whom set up their own businesses and became self-employed.

Focus on Cheshire and Greater Manchester

In this section:

- Meet Andy Johnson : Team Manager CGM
- Successfully understanding and approaching disclosure
- Lasting support means long-term success
- Confidence: a high-risk participant builds confidence with voluntary work
- Fresh Start : a fresh start through safe housing
- Breaking down barriers : Working with Achieve breaks down barriers to employment
- Problem solving through trusting relationships

Meet Andy Johnson



Andy Johnson
Team Manager for
Greater Manchester and Cheshire

My Achieve journey started in 2010 when I applied for a Case Manager role in Cheshire at a time when the project was in the ‘setting up’ stage. There have been many changes over the last 10 years and I have been fortunate to be involved in a number of unique projects designed to help boost participants’ self-esteem and confidence, like painting a Giant Queen’s head for Chester Giants, mock interview sessions with employers, and making a Christmas tree out of recycled plastic bottles, to name just a few.

The Achieve project has evolved and now the Cheshire and Greater Manchester team are just one team covering a geographical area from Chester to Rochdale. The team consists of 20 Case Managers based in prisons and probation offices. Being part of such a big team has its advantages - we can share good practice regularly, inform our participants about initiatives happening in their local area, and help each other out when needed. By basing our Case Managers in probation offices and prisons they can build valuable local knowledge of their area and become an integral part of the

local Education, Training, and Employment (ETE) support. I am proud of my team and how they help people to achieve their goals.

To help support the Cheshire and Greater Manchester Case Manager team we have two Team Managers and two Team Support Co-ordinators, who are on hand to help and support. The Team Support Co-ordinator role continues to be a vital part of the team’s success, as they support Case Managers working with participants and share good practice tips along the way.

When writing this article, I wanted to convey the wide range of work we complete with our participants. Summarising this is a big challenge as every participant’s experience with Achieve is unique and personal to them. I couldn’t list everything if I tried! However, some key examples are; self-esteem and confidence building sessions, support with housing, debt and employability skills, mock interviews with employers, and access to employment opportunities through our network of contacts.

As the Team Manager, I’m lucky to have such an experienced team who have supported each other to build a significant network of contacts. When a participant is in need support is never far away.

Our support is only a phone call or email away. If you would like to speak with any of my team, please feel free to contact me at:

☎ 0151 600 7764

✉ help@achievenwconnect.org.uk

This network has recently been put to the test because of the challenging circumstances we all find ourselves in. The Coronavirus pandemic meant we had to adapt our working practices and support our participants in different ways. This has been a huge challenge, but one made much easier thanks to our network and the relationship my staff have with probation teams across Cheshire and Greater Manchester.



Our referrals didn't stop during the Coronavirus pandemic. Jason Roberts, Case Manager explains how he helped a participant disclose his offence honestly and impress his future employer.

DW* was referred to me in May 2020, in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown, by his Case Manager at the Cheshire & Greater Manchester Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC), Nicola Brett. I contacted DW by phone following this email referral and introduced myself, explaining my role and how support was currently available to people being supervised through the CRC.

I completed an initial assessment screening with DW to find out whether he would be suitable for ongoing support, or whether I could support him through brief, focused interventions. DW had low level barriers to accessing mainstream employment and we were both in agreement that focused and brief intervention would be more suited to him as he didn't require help with any issues other than employment.

DW said his main concern was that he didn't know how to disclose his offence. During a telephone session it transpired that he had received misinformation from another source about his 'spent' date.

I unfortunately had to inform him his offence would be 'spent' 3 years later than he expected it to be. We also discussed appropriate disclosure in a job application process, including when, how, and who he should be disclosing his offence to. DW said he had not considered many of the points I had highlighted and felt that the nature of his offence being racially aggravated would mean no employer would want him to work for them. He came across as disheartened and frustrated on the call.

We talked through the most appropriate way to disclose an offence correctly - in the form of a written statement. I emailed DW up to date information and guidance from Nacro and Unlock, along with some sample disclosure statements I myself had prepared with some of my cases in the past with a similar offence type with all personal data removed. DW responded with a draft disclosure statement over email and after a further phone call we worked together to ensure the wording and portrayal of his offence was done in the most appropriate way.

DW was extremely remorseful about what happened and when gathering information to add more context it was evident that DW acted out of character and under extreme pressure from a toxic relationship. I advised DW that an employer needs depth and detail to add context to a person's disclosure. He was very happy he was able to explain some of the troubles he was experiencing at the time in his own words. DW's Case Manager Nicola Brett reviewed the statement and agreed it was accurate and she was happy for it to be used.

We also focused on reviewing and refreshing his CV. DW has a strong work history which I did not feel was being showcased, so he reformatted and expanded his CV to include a key skills section, and I showed him how to tailor his CV to particular jobs he was applying for depending on the required skill sets.

I received a phone call from DW telling me that he had applied for a job with an IT firm using the CV we had prepared and that he had a phone call with the director of the company. He said he had not been asked about his disclosure so far and was unsure whether to be honest and transparent, or to decide not to disclose until asked. DW said he would see how the call went and would decide if he felt comfortable disclosing if the director did not ask about unspent convictions. I advised DW that employers look for honesty in their employees and this could help him decide whether to voluntarily disclose or not.

DW contacted me after his discussion with the company director and he made a decision to disclose his offence voluntarily. The director said he valued his honesty and was impressed by him as a candidate. He read the statement we had prepared together and said he could see that DW was not only remorseful, but his actions arose from an extremely stressful situation. DW was offered the job and is now in full-time employment!

*Names have been changed to protect identity.



Jo Lyon

Case Manager

Case Manager Jo Lyon discusses the practical and emotional support some of our participants need before they can secure employment.

I met with Mr B* in March 2019 following a referral from Warrington Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC). Mr B was keen to find employment but desperately needed some support and was feeling very demotivated. He needed some identification and his National Insurance (NI) number quickly as he was in danger of losing his benefits and he couldn't access employment without them.

Mr B has limited contact with his family and was feeling overwhelmed. We developed an action plan and set some realistic goals (prioritising gaining his ID and NI number), and then working on improving his motivation.

I worked very closely with Mr B over the following months and we built a good working relationship. By the end of May,

he has received his ID and NI number, and this meant that we could start dealing with his accommodation issues.

Mr B was living with his girlfriend, but their relationship was unstable, and this was causing him a lot of stress and anxiety. We did some in-depth work around managing and sustaining a tenancy and I gave him information and advice on how to apply for social housing.

With practical barriers dealt with, we could start to focus on training and employment. Mr B was open to employment opportunities and wanted to concentrate on finding work rather than undertaking any training.

I believe I have a duty to offer an extended service to our participants. Supporting someone to find employment is only part of the rehabilitation process.

*Mr B's name has been changed to protect their identity.

Mr B was extremely proactive in his job search and took all the advice on board, including suggestions about his CV content and structure. We uploaded his CV onto online sites like Indeed and Monster and he signed up with several local employment agencies.

We started job search activities, including disclosure advice. Mr B was extremely proactive in his job search and took all the advice on board, including suggestions about his CV content and structure. We uploaded his CV onto the main online sites like Indeed and Monster and he signed up with several local employment agencies. I also encouraged Mr B to take his CV into local businesses, use social media and network with friends and family as a tool to find local employment, as some studies show that 85% of jobs are found through this method.

We kept in touch throughout this time and I was pleased to receive a call from Mr B to say he had been contacted about a position as a Kitchen Porter.

I supported Mr B with mock interview questions and advised him how to prepare for the interview. Following a telephone interview, he was offered the job on a trial basis.

Mr B started full-time employment in June 2019.

I visited the pub two weeks later to see how he was getting on. His manager spoke very highly of him, stating that he was "a grafter" with a great work ethic, was never late, had bonded with the team and was working really hard during long and busy shifts

- "we all love him!".

At the beginning of September, I received a phone call from Mr B asking for some help with housing. He came into the office and we updated his housing application online. We also had a good chat about how his job was going and his life in general. Before he left, he thanked me and stated that I was the only one that had helped him.

Even though Mr B's case had been closed with a positive outcome, I believe I have a duty to offer an extended service to our participants. Supporting someone to find employment is only part of the rehabilitation process, we must go above and beyond our job description. Mr B doesn't contact me regularly, but when he does, he knows I'll help him as best as I can, and this can be the difference between a positive outcome and a positive transition.

*Mr B's name has been changed to protect their identity.

Confidence

A high-risk participant builds confidence with voluntary work

Mike Taylor

Case Manager

Mike Taylor, Case Manager explains how he helped a participant secure a voluntary placement that would build his skills and develop his confidence.

I worked with a high-risk participant for over a year who needed a lot of help and support in many different areas. When we first met, I could see he wasn't ready for employment. He was lacking in confidence, withdrawn, demotivated, and appeared to be depressed.

My strategy was to slowly build his confidence. I started by looking at the different options available to him and how to access these careers, we then worked on disclosure issues and mental health support, eventually moving onto a job search, applications, and mock interviews.

We looked through jobs and voluntary placements that the participant would be interested in and I encouraged him to phone employers directly.

I created a script for the participant to follow on the phone to build his confidence. We also completed some mock telephone calls and his Offender Manager (OM) even contacted him, asking different questions to encourage the participant to think on his feet.

The participant gained two voluntary placements, one in a warehouse environment which had a positive impact on him. The participant has been able to continue his placement during the Coronavirus lockdown and is providing a vital service as a 'key worker'. He is growing in confidence and building a range of transferrable skills that will help him secure permanent employment in the future.

The goal was to find voluntary work to give the participant more experience, develop his skills, and build up his confidence.

Fresh Start:

A fresh start through
safe housing

Tracey Briggs

Case Manager

Secure and reliable housing is an essential foundation for participants looking for work. Tracey Briggs explains how she helped 22-year-old Ben* get a fresh start in a new home.

Ben is 22 and has been in prison a few times.

He previously lived on his own in a local authority flat which was broken into while he was in custody. Household items had been taken, leaving him with very little furniture and no fridge or cooker. On his last release in January 2020, a group had kicked his door in and wanted to harm him, making Ben fearful for his safety and in need of a new place to live.

In February 2020, I made contact with Ben's Housing Officer and explained his situation. She explained that Ben would need to complete an online application and get a statement from the police to say they supported the move. Ben was under the Spotlight Team Offender Management Unit (OMU), so I made contact with the OMU police officer who was aware of the risks Ben faced in the property. I also spoke to Ben's Offender Manager, who agreed a move would be best for Ben's safety and was happy for me to support him with this.

I made the online housing application for Ben stating his current flat was unsafe, supported by a statement from the police. The Housing Officer took Ben's case to the management meeting and informed me that his move had been approved.

A suitable one-bedroom property was found for him within 2 weeks and Ben signed for it after a viewing.

The flat was an empty shell as Ben had left his few belongings at his old flat as he didn't want to return there. I applied to the Glasspool Trust, who support those in need with household items, and he received a gas cooker, a bed, and bedding from them.

These were delivered during COVID-19 conditions so the delivery men could not build the bed for Ben, but he developed his skills by putting the bed together himself. I also asked around friends and colleagues and managed to find him some other household items to help his new flat feel like home.

Ben is now settled in his flat. This is the first time he has successfully finished a licence period and he is very pleased with his progress.

Ben is now settled in his flat. I told his Offender Manager that he was happy there, felt safe in the area, and was benefiting from his fresh start. Ben finished his licence on 6 May 2020 and is now on Post Sentence Supervision for 12 months, meaning he now reports to probation once every 2 weeks rather than every week. This is the first time he has successfully finished a licence period and he is very pleased with his progress.

I'm currently working with Ben to help him find employment. Ben has stated that he doesn't want to go back to prison and feels having a job will help him to find a routine and earn his own money. Together we've worked on writing a CV, job search techniques, and disclosure advice. After 4 months of excellent progress, Ben's risk has been reduced.

*Ben's name has been changed to protect his identity.

Breaking down barriers

Working with Achieve breaks down barriers to employment

Tyron Coley

Case Manager

J* had struggled with motivation and direction since he was a young offender. With Tyron Coley and Achieve's help, he secured a job he enjoys with Rochdale Council.

J self-referred to the CFO3 programme 3 years after his release because he wanted help finding employment in a trade-related industry. He was living in a hostel and had no work experience other than volunteering. As a young offender J had no direction or guidance, so we started by setting short, medium, and long-term goals covering his general wellbeing, accommodation, life skills, money management, and disclosure advice. He also wanted to get an ID and a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card.

J's Probation Officer Angela says "This is J's first paid job. He's really enjoying it and hasn't missed a day to date. His emotional health has improved, he is happier in himself, has clear goals, and sees life more positivity now he's working. J is improving his housing situation and is able to spend more quality time with his daughter and be a good role model for her".

*J's name has been changed to protect his privacy.



To help J move out of the hostel, we contacted the local housing association. He then attended short advice sessions covering his support needs, financial skills, wellbeing, and motivation. Once J secured his Citizenship ID card, birth certificate, and CSCS card, which was funded by CFO3, he felt much more motivated and was keen to progress.

J encountered a few issues as he tried to move forward. While job searching he discovered that employment would increase his rent, which would have a big financial impact. He also had domestic issues with his ex-partner and daughter. This affected his progression, his engagement with the programme decreased, and he lost some motivation to find employment. We worked together to try and resolve these issues. He was successfully rehoused through Rochdale Borough Housing which meant securing employment wouldn't have a negative financial impact on his housing.

After overcoming these issues and finding new housing, J's engagement levels were excellent. He became more 'job ready', developing interview and team working skills, and updating his CV to include his new qualifications. J was much more confident in his job search and when approaching potential employers.

Rochdale Council's Work & Skills Programme invited J to an induction for a landscaping job which he then secured as a full-time role. J has been able to continue working throughout COVID-19 with personal protective equipment (PPE) provided by CFO3 and the Work & Skills Programme, and a monthly travel pass provided by the Department for Work & Pensions.

It's brilliant to see how much J has improved and matured. He is now building a more stable future for both himself and his daughter.

Problem solving

through trusting
relationships

Jo Hughes

Case Manager

Living with an abuser was holding a participant back and putting her in danger. A good relationship with Jo Hughes gave her access to a new home and a more positive view of the future.

When Sue* was released from HMP Styal, she was living with a violent ex-partner who had made physical threats and used coercive control to abuse her. She had no money, no family or friends to support her, and was self-harming. She told me that she didn't want to be around anymore during a tearful phone call.

I built a trusting relationship with Sue while she was on my caseload in HMP Styal. She listened to me and I was able to support her. After her release we did some problem-solving work together, discussing her options and the consequences of her staying in her current living situation.

Sue was offered a room in a residential centre, but with no funds to get there she was stuck in her current housing.

I built a trusting relationship with Sue while she was on my caseload in HMP Styal. After her release we did some problem-solving work together, discussing her options and the consequences of her staying in her current living situation.

She was hesitant to tell her Probation Officer as she felt this information might have a negative impact in relation to social services. After a long conversation with Sue, where we discussed what support was available to her, she agreed that I should contact her Offender Manager to pass on my concerns and her own concerns.

After speaking to her Probation Officer, it has been agreed that the residential centre will take her early and the Probation Officer will pay for her transport. Sue will be safe, and with the support of Achieve North West Connect and can start rebuilding her life. I have referred Sue to Salford Foundation and she is progressing well after engaging with the Mentoring Programme.

Focus on Cumbria and Lancashire

In this section:

- **Meet Michelle Dunleavy : Team Support Co-ordinator Cumbria and Lancashire**
- **Finding opportunities through forklift truck training**
- **Off to a good start with forklift truck training**
- **Successfully moving from custody to college**
- **Change is possible**

Meet Michelle Dunleavy



Michelle Dunleavy

Team Support Coordinator
Cumbria and Lancashire

I joined the Achieve NW Connect (CFO3) project in 2014 as a Case Manager based in HMP Wymott in Lancashire. I have many years' experience working in a custodial setting with various Partners, agencies. I've supported many participants with multiple barriers, providing support and guidance, and helping them prepare for release into the community. My ultimate focus is getting the participant ready for employment, training, education or self-employment.

In December 2019 I was promoted to Team Support Coordinator for Lancashire and Cumbria, which was an anxious and exciting time, but I felt ready to embrace the new challenge. I currently support and coordinate 14 case managers across four prisons, four Women's Centres and 14 probation offices. The Senior Management, and the rest of the Lancashire and Cumbria team, were welcoming and approachable and I soon became comfortable and started enjoying my new role.

In March we faced the uncertainties of COVID-19 and the lockdown. With the support of Senior Management, and with excellent communication throughout the team, we pulled together and began to prepare and plan for the future in these unprecedented times.

We've continued to engage in regular 1-1 and team meetings via Video Conference with Microsoft Teams. Everyone has been supportive of each other, brought new ideas to maximise outcomes, and maintained participant engagement and support. Despite the hurdles and uncertainty, we've continued to provide an excellent service.

I would like to thank everyone for their warm welcome and support.

In March we faced the uncertainties of COVID-19. Everyone has been supportive of each other, brought new ideas to maximise outcomes, and maintained participant engagement and support.

Our support is only a phone call or email away. If you would like to speak with any of my team, please feel free to contact me at:

☎ **0151 600 7764**

✉ **help@achievenwconnect.org.uk**

Finding opportunities

through forklift truck training

Darren Shire

Case Manager

The timing was just right for a participant seeking his forklift truck licence and a return to work.

In January 2020 I received a referral for a gentleman who was desperate to return to work after recently being released from prison. The participant had been searching eagerly for work but was having no success, despite having a good deal of varied work experience. His lack of progress was making him feel pessimistic about his prospects.

We completed the assessment paperwork together and I identified areas we could focus on that would get the participant moving in the right direction and help him achieve his aim of returning to work. Our initial work focused on setting goals and improving the participant's understanding of disclosure. The seriousness of his offence was worrying him, so I improved his knowledge of his obligations and we developed a way to approach it.

The participant highlighted that one of his goals was to gain a forklift truck licence. He felt this would improve his employment prospects as there were an increasing number of warehouses in the local area. The participant had a CV but was receiving no responses, so I developed his understanding of how to tailor his CV to specific job descriptions and ensured he was equipped with the skills and knowledge he'd need moving forward. We also worked on job searching techniques as it was clear the participant was limited in his approach.

As a result of this expanded job search and his own networking, the participant found an opportunity by passing his CV to a friend's employer. The employer liked what he read, and was currently recruiting for a forklift truck driver, but needed the participant to hold a licence before he could offer him employment. The employer also needed to fill the role quickly which posed another potential problem for the participant.



The stars must have been aligned because a course was being run the following week and one place was available after a cancellation.

I encouraged the participant to make further enquiries with the employer to find out if he would be offered the role if he could complete the training. The employer gave him good news and said he would be happy to recruit the participant if he obtained his Counterbalance Forklift Truck licence within a specific timeframe.

I arranged a meeting with a local training provider and was able to negotiate a price that could be funded through the Discretionary Access Fund (DAF) - a fund allocated to Achieve NW Connect to allow Case Managers to purchase items supporting the participant into employment or training. I completed the DAF application and arranged a start date for the participant with the training provider, emphasising a need for him to start at the earliest opportunity. **The stars must have been aligned because a course**

was being run the following week and one place was available after a cancellation. With the help of our Manager I was able to confirm the dates and authorise the funding so the participant could start his course the following week.

The participant attended the course for a full week and passed the test with flying colours, keeping the employer updated throughout. On completing the course and receiving his licence, the employer was true to his word and offered the participant a start date the following week.

The participant is over the moon with how everything has worked out. He went from feeling very down about his prospects but successfully finding work within two and a half months of starting work with CFO3.

Off to a good start

with forklift truck training

Gavin Theaker

Case Manager

A participant gains the tools and resources he needs to become more employable and live a healthier, happier life.

CFO3 began working with Mark* while he was in custody, where he completed various interventions designed to prepare him for release into community. The work was designed to improve his confidence, prospects, and potential to meet personal goals, which would improve his opportunities in the community.

I started working with Mark shortly after his release, agreeing that regular weekly appointments would be the most appropriate and help us meet some of his expected goals efficiently. He had already secured permanent housing which gave him much needed security.

Mark felt that employment wouldn't be suitable at this time because of various barriers, but he did want to complete employability training that would improve his prospects for when he felt employment ready.

Mark lives alone and has a very limited support network in the local area, but by reaching out to Achieve he was able to address the issues he faced.



We agreed that forklift truck training would be a good option, and with programme support Mark successfully obtained his licence, which gave him a huge confidence boost.

Mark continued to attend regular appointments where we discussed health, applied for Personal Independence Payment (PIP), and worked on a financial budget. This would develop the tools he needed to manage his finances effectively and give him a sense of ownership. An application was submitted to a charity and Mark was awarded support to purchase a vacuum cleaner, which further improved his motivation to live a healthy life.

Mark and I have stayed in regular contact during the Coronavirus lockdown period, a period that could have had a detrimental impact on all the

positive progress he's made. During one of our conversations Mark explained that he had no money, no food, and was beginning to feel low. I supported Mark by delivering some food essentials and advised him to contact his utility provider, who credited his account with gas and electricity.

Mark lives alone and has a very limited support network in the local area, but by reaching out to Achieve he was able to address the issues he faced. Mark made it clear he was extremely grateful for the support of the programme and will continue to engage until he can successfully move into a position where employment is a genuine option.

*Mark's name has been changed to protect his identity.

moving from custody to college



Nathan Thompson

Case Manager

A Case Manager helped RO* enrol onto a course at College and kickstart his career as a joiner

RO signed up to CFO3 in July 2018 and worked closely with his Case Manager while in custody. He received support with improving motivation and completed work around goal setting, which gave him something positive to focus on and work towards. RO was then referred to the Prison Advice and Care Trust, who helped him prepare for resettlement in the community with a course called Coming Home.

Since his release in September 2019, RO has worked well with his new Case Manager (CM), who has been working with RO to help him achieve his goal of qualifying

as a joiner and preparing him for a career in the construction industry. RO's CM helped him obtain photographic ID so he could use it as a Right To Work document and enrol onto a college course. We also helped him complete a CV and worked on disclosure together so he's prepared for job seeking in the future. Once these core activities were completed, the priority has been getting RO booked onto a Level 2 Joinery course ran by a local college.

The CM talked RO through the College prospectus and what courses he would be eligible to apply for. He isn't very computer literate and was unsure how

to apply, so the CM helped him apply online and book himself onto a future student event. The CM also helped RO prepare for the student event by completing a mock interview with him. Unfortunately, due to personal reasons, RO missed his first student event, so his CM called the College on his behalf and booked him onto the next one. Covid-19 restrictions meant this second event was cancelled and RO was informed his interview would be over the phone instead.

The CM did some phone interview preparation to help RO prepare. The interview went exceptionally well and he was offered a place on the course, hopefully starting in September. RO was really pleased with this news and informed his CM straight away. Over the next

few months, the CM and the participant will liaise with the college to secure an apprenticeship alongside the course. The CM will also raise a Discretionary Access Fund (DAF) request to support the purchase of any necessary tools and work clothes.

RO's CM has worked closely with his Offender Manager throughout the process to ensure there are no risk issues regarding the course and a career in the construction industry, as well as health professionals to ensure RO has all the necessary support to achieve his goals.

*RO's name has been changed to protect his privacy.

Successfully

Change is possible

Sandra Holmes

CFO3 Community Case Manager -
Preston, Lancashire

A female offender becomes an award-winning hairdresser, proving it's never too late to change.

Mary signed up with the CFO3 programme and was assigned to my caseload. From the initial assessment it was clear that Mary had numerous barriers to address and we worked together to build her confidence, identify her skills and competencies, obtain photographic ID, and find a source of finance to fund her retraining and bring her closer to the labour market.

Mary told me that she was interested in hairdressing and wanted to complete a course that would lead to self-employment in hairdressing. Our first application to a college was unsuccessful, but we persevered. We still didn't give up and continued in our mission to get Mary enrolled with a college. This finally paid off and Mary was offered a place. **Through the Discretionary Access Fund (DAF) provided by CFO3 we were able to obtain a uniform and kit for Mary.**

Mary won an award for hair styling in the North West and is enjoying a new life that she previously thought was unobtainable.



With my support she came to believe in herself and saw it wasn't too late to positively change. Mary is currently working towards owning her own salon, which is a brilliant achievement.

Mary is now training for a Level 3 in Hairdressing and has been offered a 'chair' in a high-profile salon. Mary expressed her gratitude for the support and encouragement she's received from myself and the CFO3 programme.

My advice to Mary throughout her journey was that everyone deserves a chance and if you have the ambition and drive, you can do it. If you really want to change, you can.

*Mary's name has been changed to protect her identity.

Focus on Merseyside

In this section:

- Merseyside Jeannette Taylor
:Team Manager Merseyside
- Removing barriers to full-time employment
- AH's glass is now half full
- Joint working in HMP Liverpool with
OMU and CFO3
- Carrying on through Covid-19

Meet Jeannette Taylor



Jeannette Taylor

Achieve Manager on Merseyside

In 1997, I joined Merseyside Probation Service as a Mentor on a new project funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). This was at a time when Merseyside Probation was at the forefront of identifying new opportunities to motivate and assist offenders into education, training, and employment, including outdoor activities and a range of fantastic projects with Unpaid Work. Over the years, the Merseyside Team continued to grow and more opportunities for further payment by results contracts became available.

I've been the Manager for Achieve across Merseyside since the start of the HMPPS Co-Financing (CFO) ESF contract in January 2010. We're now five years into our third contract, which has been running from 2015 and will finish at the end of July 2023.

There are ten Case Managers working across HMP Liverpool, Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) and National Probation Service (NPS)

offices, Southwood Approved Premises, Merseyside Approved Premises, and Tomorrow's Women Wirral. **We've been able to ensure that as many offenders as possible are referred and supported to move on. We've been fortunate to have the support of all staff in every location, who have kept us busy with referrals and are always available to discuss risk or any other issues participants are facing.**

Following a thorough assessment where participants identify their barriers to education, training, or employment, Case Managers agree a tailored action plan to help participants overcome them. This can include goal setting, improving motivation, developing budgeting skills, raising health awareness, obtaining ID, disclosure advice, putting together a CV, gaining interview experience, and job search skills. Case Managers also make referrals to partner agencies for specialist support and mentoring where it will be beneficial for the participant.

Our support is only a phone call or email away. If you would like to speak with any of my team, please feel free to contact me at:

☎ 0151 600 7764

✉ help@achievenwconnect.org.uk

After many of the smaller steps have been achieved, participants are better prepared to work towards accredited courses, including Managing Anger and Aggression, Developing Positive Relationships, and Skills for Further Learning and Employment. Participants also take college courses and vocational training to gain the qualifications they need to work in sectors like construction, hair and beauty, retail, railways, warehouse and storage.

Case Managers provide practical advice and support for participants trying to gain employment or self-employment opportunities. Funding is available to help them access specialist training that leads to employment, such as Working at Height and Rescue, Sea Survival, Personal Track Safety and Digger Licences. Funding is also available for equipment and necessities required to start work, college, or self-employment, such as Personal Protective Equipment, travel passes, and hairdressing and beauty kits.

Covid-19 has presented a lot of challenges for Achieve and our participants. However, our close working relationships and support from staff within NPS, CRC, Approved Premises, HMP Liverpool and Tomorrow's Women Wirral has been really appreciated. We've still been able to enrol new participants onto our project and deliver support over the phone and online. As lockdown rules have started to ease, we've been able to refer participants to partners for vocational training and continue to support them in gaining employment.

Thank you to everybody, past and present, who has supported and continues to support the work that Achieve does. I think we're all a great team, which is why I've spent such a long time involved in education, training and employment on Merseyside!

Alicia Murray

Case Manager

A participant struggling to move forward secures valuable training and employment

Participant J* was referred to CFO3 by his Offender Manager (OM) while being supervised for an offence of Possession with Intent to Supply Class B Drugs. At his initial assessment with his Case Manager (CM), it was identified that J was keen to gain employment, had been unemployed for over three years, and had a number of barriers preventing him from moving forward. It was clear he would benefit from support in these areas from an Achieve Case Manager.

To help J with his long-term vision and short-term motivation, his CM completed a goal setting exercise with him. He was able to plot his goals into a working action plan and refer back to it throughout his journey.

J didn't have a bank account at the time of his assessment and was unsure how to set one up. He also lacked the appropriate ID

that banks require. His CM advised him that a particular bank account would accept an identity letter signed by his Probation Officer as a form of ID. The CM advised J how to verify himself when opening an account and discussed this with his Probation Officer, who completed the appropriate identity letter for him. J was able to use this letter as ID and successfully open a bank account.

J had numerous court fines which he hadn't addressed. His CM explained the importance of dealing with these fines as they can build up and be passed onto debt collection companies. J was receiving benefits at the time and unable to pay the fines off, so the CM advised him how to set up an affordable payment plan with the courts. J successfully set this up and now has a plan in place to pay his court fines debt. This will come directly out of his benefits every month and prevent any future repercussions.

With some of his barriers dealt with, J was feeling more settled and ready to gain employment. He informed his CM that he had childcare responsibilities which prevented him from being able to work during the day, so shift work was necessary. **J and his CM completed career advice sessions, identifying job roles which would fit around his childcare responsibilities. He identified that warehouse roles would be a good fit. His CM informed him of an upcoming course which would help him gain Level 2 in Warehousing and Storage, greatly improving his employment prospects in this industry.**

At the beginning of the course J was reluctant to complete it. However, following supportive and encouraging conversations with his CM and OM, he recognised the benefits this would bring in the long run. J successfully completed the course, gaining his qualification, and was really pleased with his achievement. **His Probation Officer commented on the positive changes J had been making since engaging with CFO3.**

Following his course, J completed a CV with the support of his CM. He wasn't computer literate so his CM conducted sessions on how to job search and apply online using his CV. His CM identified a job in a local warehouse that offered hours that would suit J's childcare commitments. J completed his application and discussed methods of disclosure with his CM so he fully understood what this meant.

J was offered an interview for this position and practiced mock interviews with his CM. He was successful and was offered the position. His CM supported him by getting the appropriate work clothes so he could start work quickly and safely.

J was extremely happy with how far he had come and that he had gained full time employment. He told his CM that he felt very settled and happy, something he had not felt in a long time.

*J's name has been changed.

His Probation Officer commented on the positive changes J had been making since engaging with CFO3.



Helen Wood

Case Manager

This participant was concerned about getting back to work after her offence. With support from Achieve she became a key worker at a nursing home.

After a referral from her Offender Manager (OM) I arranged to meet with AH to do an assessment and enrol her onto the Achieve NW Connect programme. The assessment flagged up a few areas to work on. **AH needed disclosure advice and guidance as she didn't think she could continue her 15-year nursing career, or find similar employment, with a conviction.** She also needed help with alcohol, as she didn't appear to see it as a concern even though it was a trigger that led to her offence. **Finally, AH needed help with her mental health, which had declined since her offence and dramatically affected her confidence and self-esteem.**

We started with an intensive session around disclosure, which she felt was extremely beneficial. She then attended the 'Alcohol & Me' support drop-in session at Tomorrow's Women Wirral, which she can continue to attend as and when she needs to. I then completed a Development Advice and Assistance programme called Glass Half Empty Glass Half Full with AH. This programme encourages the participant to use mindfulness and positivity to support their mental wellbeing. She found this extremely helpful and left feeling empowered.

AH was very keen to get back into work as she had been employed consistently for the last 15 years. As her motivation and confidence was on a high, we decided to start job searching next.

I gave her information about becoming an Agency Nurse and details of an agency. She registered and was over the moon to be given a shift. This single shift was a slow start, but she didn't let it put her off and continued with her job search.

I identified that a local nursing home was looking for a Deputy Manager. AH was unsure at first but felt she had nothing to lose, **remembering two key sayings from her Glass Half Empty Glass Half Full programme - 'If you don't ask you don't get' and 'NO means next opportunity'.**

She got in touch with them straight away and was offered an interview. After successfully passing the interview she completed a one-day induction, went through a DBS check, and was offered the job. AH's manager is fully aware of her offence and the circumstances around it, as well as the positive steps she has taken to change her life since, and so was more than happy to offer her full-time employment. AH could not get a reference from her last employer due to her offence and asked if I could be a reference. I explained that I could only provide a reference for the work she had done with me and her employer was happy for me to do this.

AH was offered a start date during the Covid-19 pandemic. As AH was classed as a key worker she was very much needed and could continue to go to work. After her first week, I contacted AH to see how



it went. She spoke very positively about it and said she couldn't be happier to be working again and helping those who are most vulnerable. It was clear why she went into nursing all those years ago -to help people!

I discussed getting her a monthly travel pass to help her get to work, and also advised her on budgeting her income better as she'd been struggling for money until pay day. AH was pleased to receive this help. I agreed to purchase the pass and drop it off at her home so she had it for her shift the next day. As we couldn't meet face-to-face because of social distancing, I called AH and she met me at her front window. It was a very surreal meeting, talking over the phone and looking at each other through the window, but highly amusing too. I posted the travel pass through her letterbox along with an acceptance form and

Participant Summary Form, which is completed by the participant to track their journey with Achieve. She signed it saying she had received the travel pass, completed the feedback form, and posted the documents back through her letterbox to me.

I received a text from AH thanking me for all my support and the help I'd given her. I later received an email she forwarded from the owner of the nursing home, praising her for the work she was doing during a particularly tough time for the care sector.

As an Achieve Case Manager I couldn't be happier with AH's progress. These successes make our job worthwhile.

*AH's name has been changed.



Sharon Parkinson-Burgan

Case Manager

Margie Hudson and Sharon are two case managers working in HMP Liverpool. They have a great relationship with the Offender Management Unit (OMU) team and often receive referrals from them.

When enrolling a participant on to CFO3, we check their risk and obtain their Offender Supervisor (OS) details. We make contact with them to find out if there are specific areas they would like us to support them with in the participant's journey. Often, OSs ask us to undertake relevant work relating to their offending behaviour and may stipulate specific areas, such as communication, which falls under the Attitude and Life Skills section of our work. We then plan a way forward with the participant, which is fed back to the OS on an ongoing basis to ensure we are all informed and on track.

If a participant is coming up to parole, OSs often ask for updates they can take to the Parole Board to demonstrate the type of work they are undertaking and their plans and goals for the future. We will produce this in a letter format for the OS, including a copy for the participant so they can see how they are working to achieve their goals. Participants and OSs are really happy with this process as it can help them to see their progress.

“Our relationship with Offender Supervisors from OMU is great. We often meet up in the staff mess when we all have our coffee fix and are able to chat in an informal setting and strengthen our relationships.”

- Margie & Sharon

Offender Supervisor testimonials

“Achieve are a flexible and responsive service invaluable to the working of HMP Liverpool. Delivering group and one to one work with men in custody is an essential task in terms of thinking about and addressing offending behaviour. Achieve spend time with men, supporting and assisting reflection on the reasons why a person is in custody and working to find new ways forward. This is not solely about overcoming barriers to employability, but is also about exploring relational patterns, communication and confidence. Achieve in my experience have been an invaluable service offering support and direction in custody and following this through to the community. Thank you, Sharon and Margie.”

- **Johanne Rooney, Offender Supervisor**

“Achieve North West offer a supportive, professional service to our client group, who are all men assessed as posing a high risk of harm to the public. Achieve staff are a visible and trusted presence in the prison.

The interventions around problem solving, violence and relationships have proved to be vital steps for men needing to reflect upon these areas of their life. Employment advocacy provides men with hope and focus. Achieve staff regularly provide updates that are used by the Parole Board when considering release for a prisoner.

Achieve North West staff work with the Probation team and are experienced in supporting risk management plans, I feel they offer the men appropriate professional boundaries within a pro social relationship.”

- **Eddie Doherty, Offender Supervisor**

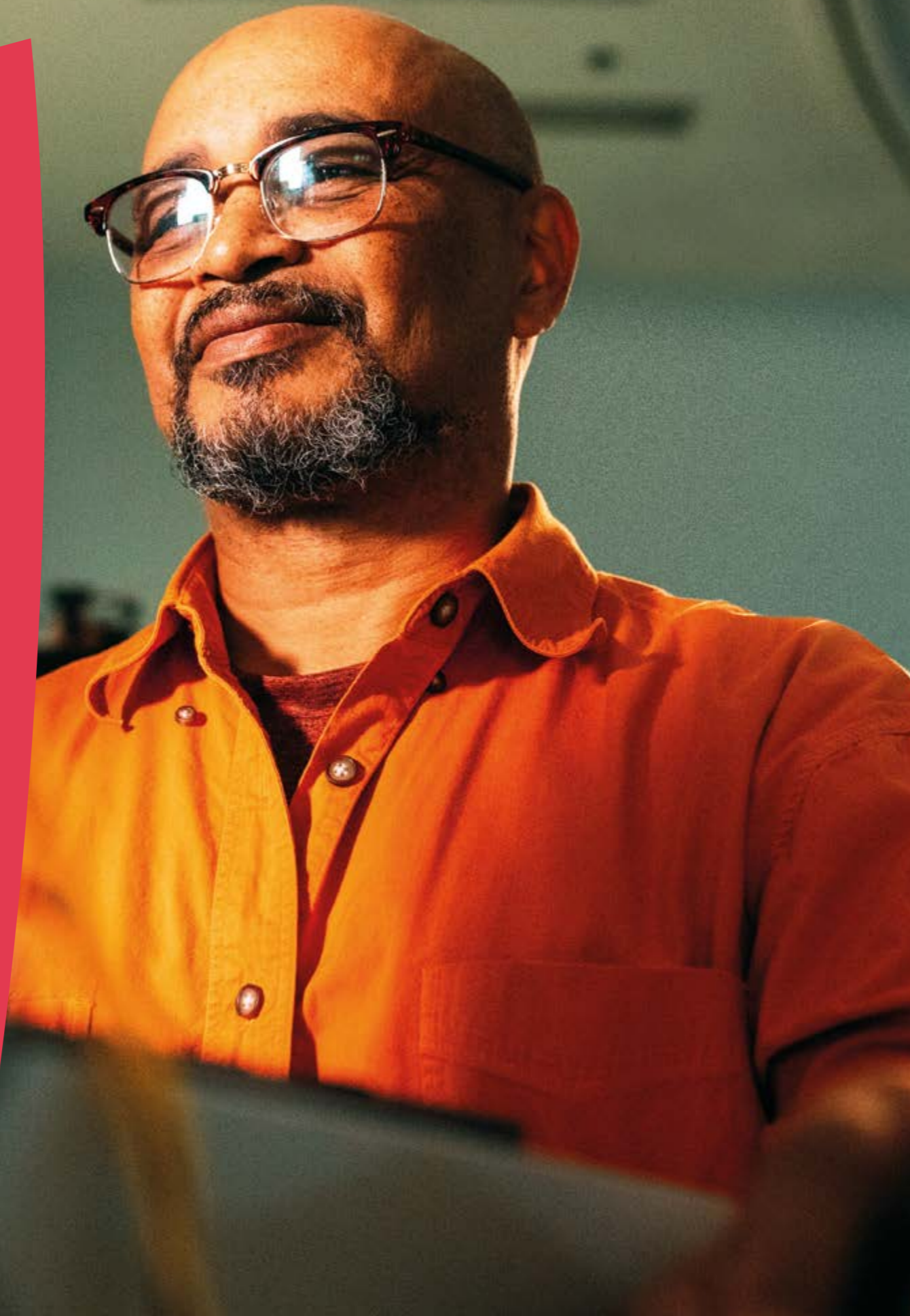
“Margie and Sharon are a very valuable part of our work. They offer support to probation staff in delivering interventions to the men on our caseloads. In an environment where we do not have access to many resources, they are a great asset and always work in conjunction with us to tailor the appropriate interventions for each individual.

- **Claire Bozkurt, Offender Supervisor**

Your services have proven to be invaluable to both us (probation) and the prisoners, filling in much needed gaps with programmes such as Healthy Relationship, helping with employment issues and the gaining of CSCS cards, gang, debt, drug and money issues, all the very practical skills people need in order to live a happier lifestyle. The prisoners on my case load that have used your service have all commented how much they appreciate you both, talking to them, giving them confidence, and the services you provide. A much needed service at HMP Liverpool.

- **Chris Horrocks, Offender Supervisor**

Carrying on through Covid-19



Michelle Hughes

Case Manager

The pandemic put education on pause for JT*, but he's made significant progress so far and keeps looking forward.

JT was referred to CFO3 for support with training and securing employment. At our first meeting JT informed me he was suffering with depression, anxiety, and feelings of paranoia. JT was not registered with a doctor and felt unable to because of his anxiety, so had spent years unmedicated.

After further discussions, JT agreed that to progress with training and employment he needed to register with a GP and discuss how he was feeling. Together we identified GP surgeries close to where he lived. I printed the list out for him along with the NHS registration form.

As I was concerned about JT, I referred him to see the Duty Officer in his Probation Officer's absence before he left the office.

I kept in regular contact with JT and his Probation Officer. JT registered with a GP and received the medication he needed. Over the next few weeks we were able to explore JT's options regarding training and employment. I identified a course covering vocational qualifications, along with funding for a CSCS test and card, which JT had expressed an interest in at the first meeting. I booked JT on to the induction and he secured a place on the course.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, JT was unable to complete the course and is currently waiting for it to restart. I have kept in regular contact with JT and his Probation Officer over the phone and through email, and we're in the process of obtaining the necessary ID for JT to progress with his long-term goal of securing employment. I completed a feedback form with JT and he feels that the programme has really benefited him to move forward with his life.

*JT's name has been changed.

In the next edition we will focus on our sub-contracted services, these range from mentoring through to employment. Thanks to all our partners for their contributions to the CFO3 project as a whole – only together can we succeed.

With thanks to our partners:



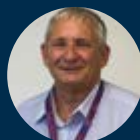
Keep up the great work - Look beyond the Label

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