



Achieve CFO3 Newsletter

SPECIAL EDITION

Achieving positive outcomes:
Celebrating the impact of Achieve CFO3



CFO3 IS PART-FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND.

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The names of all participants have been changed throughout this newsletter.

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Welcome

Sheila Clark,
CEO, Career Connect

Welcome to this special edition newsletter, which celebrates the achievements of our work on the ESF co-funded CFO3 contract.

Achieve, the criminal justice arm of our charity Career Connect, has proudly delivered this contract with our valued partners since 2015.

As a charity, our vision is a society where every individual realises their full potential.

We aim to drive social mobility by enabling more people to access and succeed in education, training and employment.

We commit to doing this by living our values of being inclusive, person-centred, aspirational, impartial and professional.

Reading this newsletter, it is clear to see these values embedded in each participant's journey. For me, this is evidence of truly collaborative delivery across all of our subcontractors and partners, and that fully aligns with the purpose of CFO.

It has been a joy to see how the CFO3 programme has developed in exciting ways – and always with the participant at the centre.

The strong relationships between Achieve, delivery partners and CFO have been key to the life-changing outcomes that we have been able to achieve.

On behalf of Career Connect and Achieve, I would like to thank ESF for this valuable funding stream and HMPPS CFO as the co-financing organisation.

I would also like to express my heartfelt thanks to all of our Achieve CFO staff, our valued partners and subcontractors who make a difference every day.

Together, we have created better futures.

Chris Bennett,
Managing Director, Achieve

There is of course a well-established link between obtaining stable and secure employment after a custodial or community sentence, and a reduction in reoffending. This is at the heart of CFO's mission.

Throughout this newsletter you will see some very impressive figures.

As you read the accompanying participant stories, you will see that behind these numbers are changed lives, hopes for the future and new outlooks.

Throughout this programme, we have been able to innovate and try new things.

This has been possible due to the well-managed and stable funding stream from ESF, and a supportive commissioner in HMPPS CFO – who is always open to new ideas that keep our shared mission at its heart.

By working with diverse partners and subcontractors, firmly rooted in their communities, we are able to offer a truly personalised service that meets specific needs.

In doing so, we provide choice and opportunity – and that in itself is extremely empowering for our participants as they look to a better future.

It is important to remember that CFO3 is a voluntary project. Our participants make a conscious choice to work with us. They are at a vital turning point in their lives, and this requires an individualised approach.

Our Achieve staff, partners and subcontractors put a range of skills into practice – creating a rapport, understanding barriers, and building links are just some of them. They listen, they advise, and they inspire.

I hope this newsletter gives you a sense of the breadth and depth of what we have achieved by working with partners over the last eight years. This is just a taster – there are countless other good news stories and life changing outcomes.

I would like to thank ESF and HMPPS CFO for the opportunity to deliver this wonderful programme promoting social inclusion in our local communities.

This has allowed us to set people on new paths which in turn, can prevent cycles of offending for future generations.



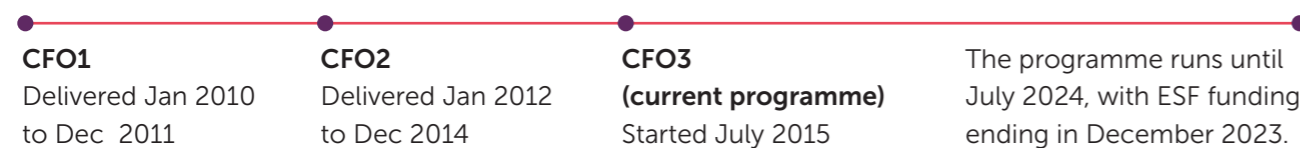
About CFO3

What is CFO3?

CFO3 is a programme of His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) that helps people in the justice system prepare to leave custody and re-enter the community.

It works by helping motivate programme participants to identify life goals, overcome barriers and make positive choices leading to sustainable employment.

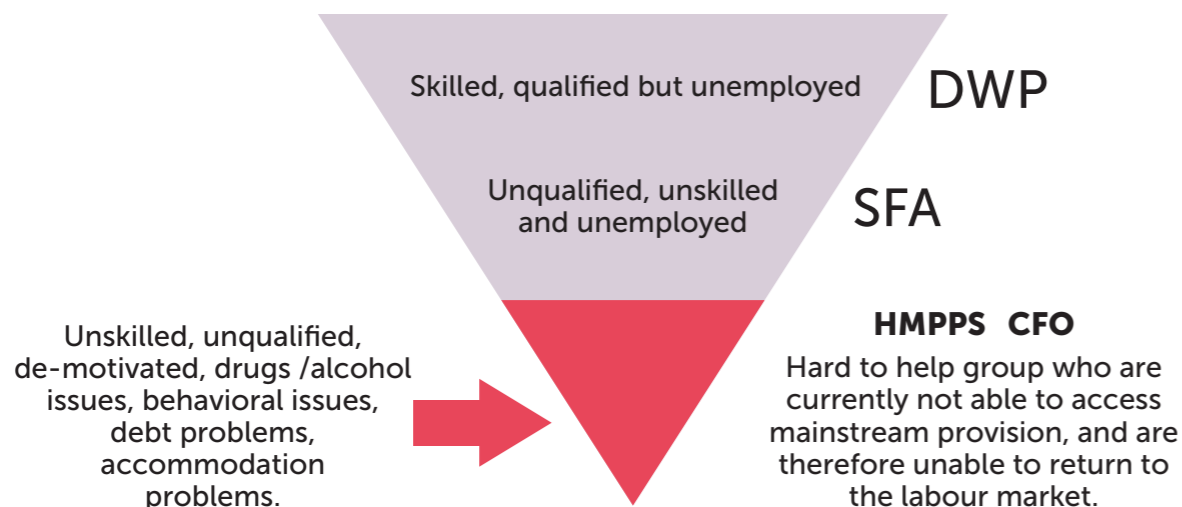
Achieve has delivered HMPPS CFO programmes since 2010.



Who is eligible for CFO3?

CFO3 is designed to help offenders considered hard-to-reach, or who experience multiple barriers which might significantly increase their likelihood of offending. Consequently, they may be furthest away from the jobs market or unable to access mainstream careers support.

Programme participants may be referred to the programme by HMPPS staff or partners in prisons and probation sites, or they can self-refer.



His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS)

HMPPS is an Executive Agency of the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) that works to protect the public and reduce reoffending by delivering punishment and orders of the courts and supporting rehabilitation by helping offenders reform their lives. HMPPS is responsible for prisons, and the National Probation Service (NPS).

HMPPS CFO aims to help offenders move towards mainstream provision, with an emphasis on social inclusion – especially those furthest from mainstream support and specific hard-to-help groups.

European Social Fund (ESF)

ESF is the European Union (EU)'s main instrument for investing in people, providing an important contribution to the EU's employment, social, education and skills policies, including structural reforms in these areas.



About Achieve

Meet the Teams



Achieve Business Unit

Based at Career Connect's Head Office in Liverpool, the Business Unit supports all Achieve teams in the delivery of our CFO3 programmes. The team is responsible for staff training, management of the Discretionary Access Fund, purchases, administration and quality assurance of all CFO3 outcomes. The team also has outreach offices in Preston and Manchester.



Greater Manchester & Cheshire

Community Venues

Manchester City Centre Probation Office (Redfern)
Salford Probation Office
Atherton Probation Office
Bolton Probation Office
Bury Probation Office
Oldham Probation Office
Rochdale Probation Office
Tameside Probation Office
Stockport Probation Office
Warrington Probation Office
Chester Probation Office

Prisons

HMP Manchester
HMP Risley
HMP Hindley
HMP Forest Bank
HMP Buckley Hall
HMP Styal
HMP Thorncross

Approved Premises

St Josephs AP
Withington Road AP
Chorlton Hostel
Wilton Place
Bradshaw House
Ascot House



Merseyside Team

Community Venues

North Liverpool Probation
Boundary Street Probation Office
Sefton Probation Office
Wirral Probation Office
Knowsley Probation Office
Liverpool Womens Centre
St Helens – Prescott Probation Office

Prisons

HMP Liverpool
HMP Altcourse

Approved Premises

Southwood AP



Cumbria Team

Community Venues

Carlisle Probation
Kendal Probation Office
Workington Probation Office
Barrow Probation Office

Prisons

HMP Haverigg

Approved Premises

Bowling Green AP



Lancashire Team

Community Venues

Burnley Probation Office
Chorley Probation Office
Blackpool Probation Office
Lancaster Probation Office
Preston Probation Office
Skelmersdale Probation Office
Blackburn Probation Office

Prisons

HMP Kirkham
HMP Lancaster Farms
HMP Preston
HMP Wymott

Approved Premises

Highfield House
Howarth House



Enrolments

Since July 2015, Achieve Case Managers have enrolled more than 19,000 individuals onto the CFO3 project. These enrolments have taken place both in custody and community settings across the Northwest.

Case Managers conduct a detailed Case Assessment and Tracking interview with the participant to identify barriers and goals. This leads to the creation of an action plan of support, which is approved by prison and probation practitioners. The plan is logged and followed on CATS – the CFO Case Assessment and Tracking System.

Action plans use the SMART model – **specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.**

Participants can then access a directory of services to help address barriers and promote personal growth. All interventions that take place relate to the needs assessment and the SMART action plan.

Once enrolled onto the CFO3 project, this support accompanies the participant through all areas of their criminal justice journey and is tracked on CATS.

Consistent support in custody and community

Participant in HMP Styal enrolls on CFO3. Case Manager 1 delivers interventions.



Participant is released from custody to Salford Probation Office. Case Manager 1 provides a warm handover to Case Manager 2. Case Manager 2 delivers interventions.



If the participant is recalled to custody:

Warm Handover from Case Manager 2 to Case Manager 1.

Delivery continues in custody by Case Manager 1 until release.



If the participant remains in the community:

Case Manager 2 provides continued support until all participant goals have been achieved.

Dealing with debt

Billy was referred to his Case Manager, Lisa Duckworth, by his Probation Practitioner. Billy's CATS assessment identified that he had multiple barriers, with one in particular that was causing him considerable stress and anxiety - his build-up of debt whilst in custody. This included credit card and catalogue debt.

Lisa said: "I engaged Billy in conversations to identify how he had started to accrue these debts. At this point, he admitted that his past issues with substance misuse had affected his ability to budget.

"I discussed a plan of action with Billy and referred him to debt management charity StepChange to help him consider his options. He attended appointments with StepChange and agreed an affordable consolidation plan.

"To support this, I delivered interventions on money management and budgeting to help Billy build his skills in this area and avoid getting into this situation in the future. Combining these two types of support – advice and practice – helped Billy to start moving on from his debt and begin to focus on his future."



Putting a family relationship back on track

David was a medium risk domestic violence perpetrator.

At his assessment with his Case Manager Jody Ollerenshaw, he disclosed that his offence had a negative impact on his relationship with his children and he was keen to improve this. Using the co-parenting communication guide, Jody and David completed a number of sessions discussing the impact of negative language, shouting and violence on children. David acknowledged this was also his own experience as a child, and he was determined to break this cycle.

Interventions focused on communication with his ex-partner when around his children and the importance of keeping communication courteous and respectful. Co-parenting boundaries were also discussed to enable his children to feel stable and secure in their environment.



Jody said:

"David felt that his support had enabled him to consider and understand the impact of his behaviour on his children, and that this in turn helped him to rebuild a positive relationship with them."

Supportive Measures



The power of mentoring

6,718 participants have accessed mentoring support during CFO3, delivered by our specialist subcontractors across the Northwest. This has had a powerful impact on participant wellbeing, motivation, and success.

Subcontractors Back on Track, Lancashire Women, Sefton CVS, and Salford Foundation have delivered mentoring.

From prison to progress: Back on track to employment

John was referred to Back on Track through his Achieve Case Manager. He had a range of skills and had supported other people whilst in custody. He was motivated to pursue a career where he could use his lived experience to help others.

His mentoring sessions with the Back on Track Achieve Coordinator started by setting realistic goals, including how to gain more community experience in peer support. John began a role as an Information Advice and Guidance Volunteer on a Back on Track employability course.

Being keen to further his skills, he was supported with access to a Counselling Level 3 course, which he completed alongside his volunteering.

Following several unsuccessful applications for support worker roles John worked with his Achieve Case Manager to maintain his motivation and resilience.

His Back on Track Coordinator brokered a job opportunity for John as a violence reduction practitioner and, following interview preparation and a successful interview, he was offered the job.

The skills and confidence he gained during his 16 months with Back on Track led John into a career about which he is extremely passionate. He has been in the role for over six months and was a guest at a Back On Track end of term event where he received a Back on Track award and shared his experience to help motivate others.

back on track >

From prison to progress: Achieve and Lancashire Women

Determined to turn her life around, **Jenny** worked with Achieve and Lancashire Women whilst on probation.

Jenny faced several challenges, particularly her struggles with her emotional wellbeing. Jenny disclosed her experience of childhood abuse and trauma to her Case Worker. She also faced unemployment and debt incurred over her prison sentence and had to rely on her ex-partner to provide for her children, causing more stress.

Through the Lancashire Women's Wellbeing Team, Jenny received a pre-counselling assessment and was able to get therapy. She also accessed an anger management course, as she was due to stand as a witness in a criminal trial against her abuser.

Jenny put in place an agreement of child maintenance with her ex-partner to help her financial situation, which allowed her to focus on her next steps.

Jenny had experience in administration but, due to her conviction, was limited in the work she could apply for. Her experience in the kitchens while in custody gained her qualifications but she lacked confidence in her abilities. With support from her Achieve Community Case Worker, she improved her CV and learned about disclosure.

Jenny now has a part-time job and is happy in her home. She values the support that helped her back into work and feels the anger management course has helped her to process a lot of the frustration and anger she felt towards her trauma and the offence.

She is now engaging in therapy and working towards being in the best place, mentally, for herself and her children.



Managing Stress and Anger: Salford Foundation



"When Christopher first started mentoring, he had no healthy coping strategies to manage his anger and stress. Reactions often ended in arguments, fights, and prison sentences for violence," said Natalie Trusdale, Mentor at Salford Foundation.

As a father to a young child, **Christopher** was open to trying new methods and being a positive role model. So, we discussed his current coping strategies and the impact they would have if his behaviour didn't change. I created a safe space where Christopher felt comfortable sharing his experiences, triggers, and emotions.

We got to the root cause of what triggered his actions and worked on building his self-awareness and essential life skills to cope with stress and anger effectively. We also worked together to identify more healthy ways to manage those situations.

Christopher has significantly improved how he manages difficult situations and feels calmer on a daily basis. He is confident in his ability to change his future by changing his reactions, and he can't wait to be a positive role model to his son.



Specialist Referrals

Some of our participants have complex needs that require specialist support that cannot be provided by our Case Managers.

Case Managers have referred 2,142 participants for specialist support from organisations including Coaching Inside and Out (CIAO), Dignifi, Genius Within, Margaret Carey Foundation, mental health providers and substance misuse organisations.

The Dignifi Project at HMP Hindley

In July 2023, Achieve and Dignifi launched a project at HMP Hindley with a focus on engaging and supporting participants experiencing trauma.

The aim is to give participants an understanding of the tools and strategies available, enabling them to develop more constructive and flexible responses.

Achieve Case Managers Jack Downs and Sacha Gordon work with participants to complete a number of sessions and core activities, to help identify whether they are suitable for the project. If the project is appropriate for the participant, they are referred to work with Dignifi.

Dignifi work with participants on a one-to-one basis to identify causes, symptoms and to better equip them with healthier coping strategies and improved emotional regulation. The aim is for participants to feel more resilient and able to cope with challenges without falling into crisis.



Once all the individual sessions have been completed, participants move onto group work. In small groups, these activities look at trauma and responses, and how the participants can change their responses to get more positive results.

Upon completion of the group sessions, participants can become Peer Mentors and provide initial support to other prisoners on the wing outside of the Dignifi sessions. This has led to increased prisoner self-referrals to CFO3.

Case Manager Jack said: "I really enjoy working on the Project alongside my Dignifi colleagues. They specialise in trauma support, something which is desperately needed in prisons. They provide the participants with the tools to deal with, move past and change the narrative of their trauma."

Participants have provided positive feedback of their experience with the project, acknowledging a more confident and positive outlook with a renewed zest for the future.

Riding Forward: The Margaret Carey Foundation

In 2015, Achieve partnered with The Margaret Carey Foundation on a bike project at St Joseph's Approved Premises, to support men with mental health needs.

To date, the project has supported more than 150 men.

The bike project aims to improve independent living skills, develop practical and vocational skills, team building and problem solving through one-to-one tuition and practical training.

A bike mechanic trains the participants to repair and recycle broken bicycles donated by organisations within the local community.



To teach and empower participants, the first bike repaired by the participant is donated to a local charity. The second bicycle repaired by the participant is theirs to keep. The model helps to promote independence, confidence, physical activity, all attributes needed to improve mental health.

The Margaret Carey Foundation runs cycle tours along Manchester's canals and cycle paths to encourage participants to use their newly owned bicycle, build on their physical exercise routines, and cycle safely and confidently on roads and cycle paths.



Andy's Story

When **Andy** started working with the Achieve CFO3 programme, he was suffering with anxiety and needed support to build his self-esteem and coping skills.

Andy was residing in St Joseph's Approved Premises. He was isolating himself, not engaging with staff and sinking further into depression.

Andy's Case Manager Mike Ormrod started working with him in short sessions. The aim was to build trust and to motivate him to engage with services and start addressing his mental health needs. Mike developed a good working relationship and slowly they were able to start achieving small goals.

To encourage Andy to engage with others and help with socialisation within the Approved Premises, Mike referred him to the Margaret Carey Foundation bike project. This helped Andy to improve his mental health, develop his communication skills, and improve his fitness. This in turn led to him feeling more motivated and positive about his future.

Mike continued to support Andy alongside the bike project tutor to overcome his barriers and look towards life beyond the Approved Premises. He was supported to claim his benefits, access training opportunities, and develop his skills.

Support continued during resettlement in the community and, once he was ready, Andy was referred to an Achieve subcontractor for employment opportunities.

Andy is now employed as a Recycling Operative. His mental health is well managed, and he is feeling good about his future.



Development, Advice and Assistance (DAA)

Achieve offers a variety of Development, Advice and Assistance (DAA) programmes to further support participants. These are short unaccredited courses to be delivered over multiple sessions in the following areas:



Mental Health: Glass Half Full, Glass Half Empty

This is for participants who have mental health needs and may struggle with low mood and anxiety. This DAA covers positive affirmation, stress reaction cycle, values and beliefs, dealing with emotions with attentive responses, distancing yourself from your thoughts and mindfulness. The Case Manager helps the participant understand more about how they are feeling and look further into coping skills and managing their emotions.



Physical Health: Be the best you can be

This focuses on managing physical health in a range of ways. Topics covered by this DAA are healthy eating, increasing physical activity, smoking, alcohol awareness, and overcoming barriers to change. This is particularly positive for participants who are released from custody, as in prison they are in a routine, eating healthily and attending the gym.



Finance: Look after the pennies and the pounds will look after themselves

Participants learn and gain skills in claiming benefits, budgeting skills, dealing with debt and money management. This is a very useful and important DAA for participants with financial concerns.



Accommodation: Get and keep your tenancy

This DAA adapts to suit the participants' needs to ensure they have safe and suitable housing. Units include managing your tenancy, benefits and budgeting, utilities, housekeeping, community awareness and isolation.

Taking action on debt

Stephanie completed the 'look after the pennies and the pounds will look after themselves' DAA at HMP Styal.

Before custody, Stephanie had got herself into debt with credit cards and online shopping accounts, and a variety of other debts that had built up over time. Stephanie felt overwhelmed with her situation and was not sure where to begin.

Stephanie attended several sessions with her Achieve CFO3 Case Manager to improve her budgeting skills, learn processes to manage her low income and the steps she needed to undertake to manage her current debts. With support from her Case Manager, she completed an application for a credit report. This gave her information on all of her debts, what stage her debt was at, and who she owed money to.

This allowed Stephanie to identify the creditors whom she needed to contact immediately to inform them of her custodial sentence. This stopped any further interest or charges being added to the accounts whilst she was unable to make payments.

She was then referred to the specialist debt support charity StepChange for ongoing support.

Stephanie felt relieved that she was finally accessing support for her debt rather than ignoring it.



Challenging anxious thoughts

Caroline was originally referred to Achieve for support with employment, but also needed support with other aspects of her life. This led to her completing the Glass Half Full, Glass Half Empty DAA.

Caroline's conviction was linked to her mental health issues which included depression and anxiety which severely affected her confidence. Caroline failed to disclose her offence at university and was dismissed from her studies, which had an even greater impact on her mental health.

Caroline attended the sessions with her Case Manager. She completed interventions focussed on confidence and self-esteem, anxiety and coping techniques. She gained an understanding about how various exercises could help her in managing her anxiety such as journaling, mindfulness, breathing techniques and self-care.

Following completion of this DAA, Caroline felt more confident to reapply to her university to complete her course, this time disclosing her offences.



Case Manager Lydia Sudworth said: "Caroline has taken massive steps to improve her mental health and has shown resilience in daring to follow her dreams again following a huge initial set back."

Accredited courses

Our participants are encouraged to build their skills and knowledge base to help them succeed in achieving their life goals. To support them with these, we have delivered and sourced a variety of accredited courses which have helped participants make progress towards a stable lifestyle and employment.

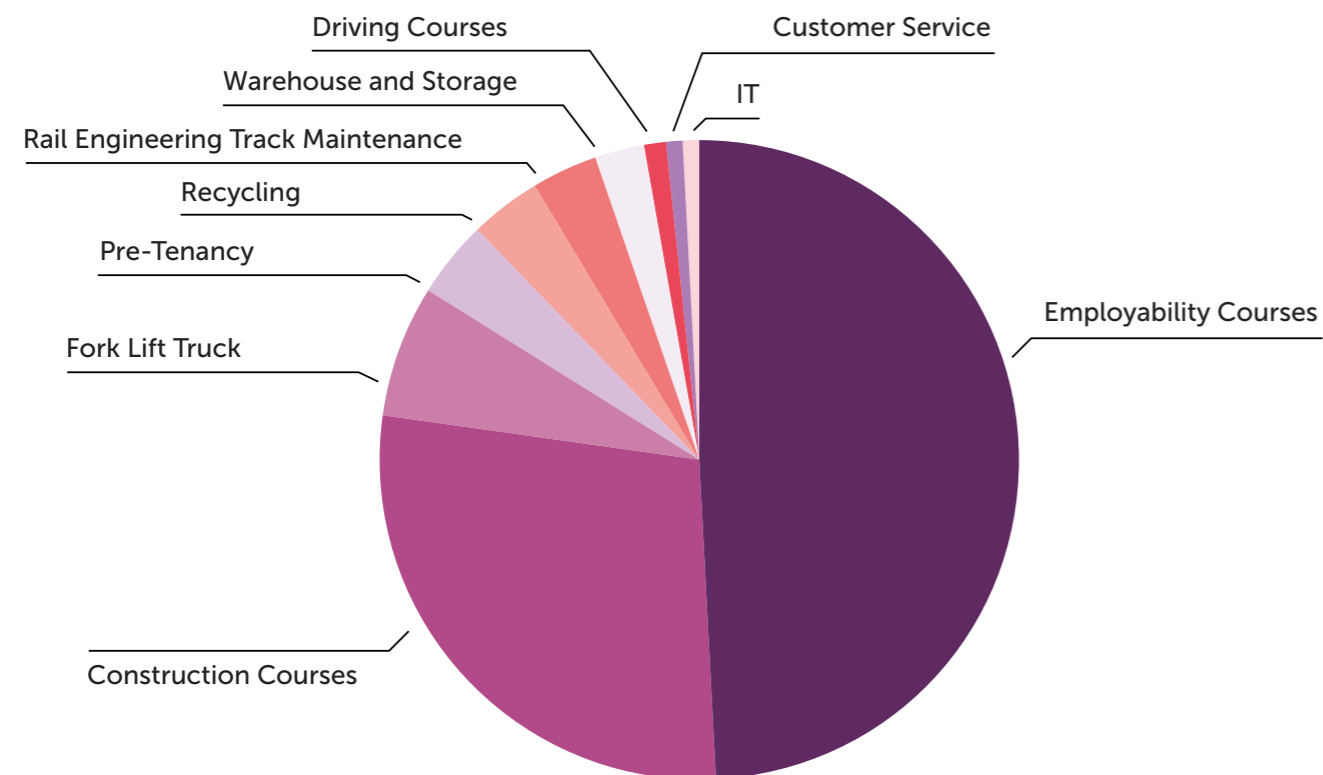
Courses are delivered in both custody and community settings to build our participants' qualifications and work-based skills.

Open Awards are delivered by our fully trained Case Managers, and qualifications have been gained in employability, pre-tenancy, anger and stress management, money management and volunteering.

We have built up strong relationships with training providers such as Quality Training Transport (QTT), Transport Training Academy (TTA), AFC Fylde, Creativity Works, Frameworks and Better Bodies.

7,413 participants have successfully completed accredited courses whilst on the CFO3 project.

Top 10 accredited courses for our participants:



Music Minds at HMP Wymott

In October 2023, Achieve piloted Music Minds, a new course in music development, production and performance, with participants at HMP Wymott.

Funded through the CFO3 Development Fund and delivered by Creativity Works, this week-long course was offered to residents of PIPE Wing – an environment for individuals with complex needs and personality disorders.

Participants had access to a range of activities, including music production, lyric writing, performance, and research and development of musical scores to produce their own music, supported by music development and instrument workshops.

The course helped individuals to develop skills, engage with other prison provisions, and with community services on release. As well as the opportunity to experience positive, enjoyable activities whilst learning transferable skills, there is evidence that music – particularly live music – can contribute to improved mental health and wellbeing.

Everyone completing the course received a Level 1 Award in Exploring Occupational Studies, while also gaining valuable experience of collaboration and team-working skills as they worked towards development of a live performance on the final day of the course.

The participant group, who named themselves *The Keys and Bars Collective*, performed original songs and music in front of a live studio audience that included senior prison leads, CFO staff and Achieve Managing Director Chris Bennett.

Feedback received from participants suggests they all enjoyed the course, engaged well and worked hard towards the live performance.



Achieve Team Manager Ant Bigley (who also took part in the performance) said: "I am very proud of The Keys and Bars Collective for producing such a memorable show and creating such thought-provoking pieces. The positive reaction from course participants is testament to the hard work of everyone involved."

HMP Wymott is looking forward to running two more such courses and already has plans in place to create a Christmas production, bringing together participants of three courses to showcase and perform their work.



Discretionary Access Fund (DAF)

The DAF supports CFO3 Project participants by providing funding to purchase goods or training courses that help them overcome specific barriers, become more employable or enter employment.

Available in both custody and community settings, the DAF is an invaluable part of the support our Case Managers offer our participants.

To access the fund our Case Managers must submit a detailed business proposal, stating why the purchase is essential to secure an education, training or employment opportunity, and how it will help the participant move closer to education and employment.

Throughout this process, we work closely with probation practitioners to ensure the purchase poses no risk of harm to either the participant or the public. All proposals must be supported by the probation practitioner, or the application will not be progressed.

If approval is received, the purchase is made on behalf of the participant, allowing them to work towards their goal.

Helping participants reach their education and employment goals

In the Northwest, since July 2015, over **13,000** unique DAF applications have been approved.

These have included;

- Accredited courses to help build participant skills and qualifications.
- Specialist self-employment support.
- Equipment to support employment and self-employment.
- Obtaining ID, helping participants prove their identity to potential course providers and employers.
- Industry-specific cards following training.
- Specific items of clothing and PPE for courses, interview, and employment.
- Travel to/from training and employment.



Employment

CFO3 aims to support participants in all areas of social exclusion, and we will always seek to support participants into sustainable employment. Being in employment after custody is proven to reduce reoffending.

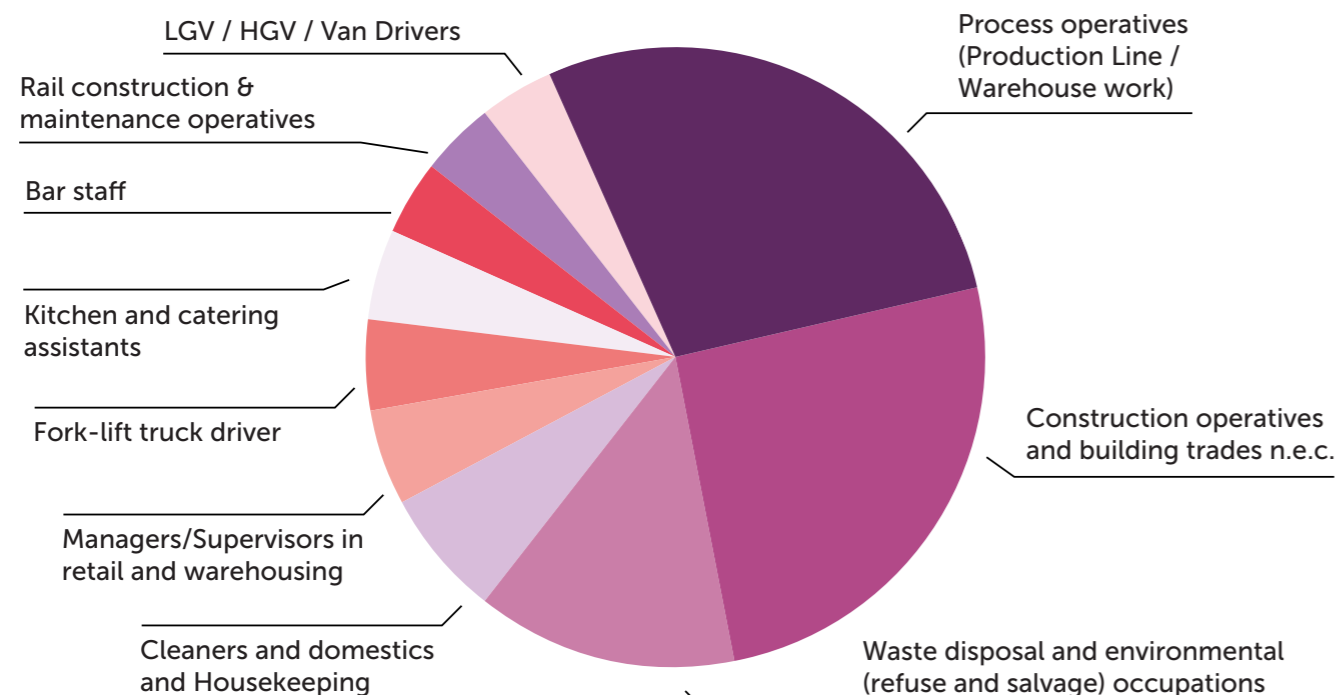
To support the transition to employment, we have delivered the following:

- Careers Advice to **over 10,000** participants
- Support to write over **5,000 CVs**
- Disclosure advice given to **over 8,000** participants
- Over **2,000** industry-specific cards
- Interview skills training to **over 2,000** participants
- Job search and application support to **over 3,000** participants
- Obtained ID and bank accounts for **over 5,000** participants
- Specialist self-employment support for **over 600** participants

- Volunteering and work placement opportunities secured for **over 1,000** participants
- Accredited employability courses for **over 3,000** participants

Achieve Case Managers use the latest Labour Market Information (LMI) to offer accurate Information, Advice and Guidance to participants. Case Managers also have the option to refer into our specialist subcontracted provision, which includes Recycling Lives, Restart Trust and Re:vision.

Over 1,800 participants have progressed through the CFO3 journey and have evidenced sustainable employment.



Recycling Lives: Luke's story

"When I got out of jail, I knew I didn't want to reoffend, so I distanced myself from those people and did some volunteering. I worked with the Achieve CFO3 programme and was referred to Recycling Lives to gain work experience. I completed two months at the Renew Hub. It was a bit of everything - proving you can show up on time and all that, but it is also learning stuff and working on electronics.

"There was no guarantee to get a job, but I suppose I just did well. They said I worked hard and got on with everyone. They arranged for me to have an interview and I got a four-month temporary contract and then, two months in, they made me full-time. It's a good job - working at the household waste

recycling centre. It's good pay and there's plenty of ways for progression.

"I've worked my way up and everything's changed for me. I'd been in jail a few times, but it was just a pointless way to live, going round in circles. I used to always be stressed and angry but I don't feel like that no more. It's helped me in every way, actually. I'm just living a better lifestyle, not getting into trouble. People are proud of me now. I'm pretty proud of myself too."



Re:vision

Re:vision offers a job broker service, that matches CFO3 participants to employment opportunities with a range of employers.

When seeking suitable candidates for a labouring job in Eccles, Re:vision contacted Case Manager, Mike Ormrod in Salford. Mike was able to refer an Achieve CFO3 participant matching the eligibility criteria and with the right qualifications. Mike had been working with the participant, addressing barriers to employment, so knew he was motivated and committed to obtain employment.

Keen to fill the vacancy quickly, the employer arranged an interview with the site manager for the next day. Mike worked with his participant to help him prepare.

During the interview and tour of the site, the participant's great attitude and skills so impressed the employer that he was immediately offered the job. Absolutely delighted with this outcome, the participant contacted Re:vision to express his gratitude. He began his new job the following week and is doing very well.

After this success, when the employer's site manager needed help helping finding two more labourers, Re:vision contacted Mike and two more suitable candidates were put forward, who were both subsequently offered jobs.

This success has helped to build a strong working relationship between Re:vision, its employers and Achieve.



Self-Employment

Many participants set goals to start their own business.

Achieve refers them to specialist self-employment organisations, funded through the Discretionary Access Fund (DAF).

These participants worked with Entrepreneurs Unlocked on a journey to self-employment, with the support of their Case Managers.



Building success

Jack was a prolific offender for most of his life. He was charged with importing class A drugs and was sentenced to 16 years in custody. Upon release, he was struggling to readjust to life in the community, lacked motivation to move forward and did not think there was anything he could do. He was lost as to what his next steps would be.

Jack was interested in running his own business as a bespoke furniture maker but had no idea where to start. He was referred to Entrepreneurs Unlocked by his CFO3 Case Manager.

With support from his Case Manager, Jack completed his business plan, created logos and business cards, obtained his UTR number, created social media pages, and learned how to complete invoices and submit his yearly self-assessment.

He has now started his business as a bespoke furniture maker and flooring sander. He remains hopeful that this will be a long-term career and he feels more confident navigating life while being self-employed.



Jack said: I am lost for words, thank you so much for what you've done for me. My direction is good now, I feel stronger and can see what I've got to do. Again, many thanks."



Creating a new path

Sam had a talent for designing and producing craft products, mainly as a hobby.

He wanted to be able to earn some additional income but lacked the confidence in his ability and had, by his own admission, just "sold the odd item here and there."

Sam was unsure of all the legal aspects of running his own business and didn't know where to start.



Working with Achieve and Entrepreneurs Unlocked, Sam was able to develop a coherent plan to focus his efforts and make a range of products that could be promoted and sold online. Weekly virtual coaching sessions moved him along the right pathway and built his confidence and knowledge.

He has now been able to gain an online presence, and has started to sell more products, earning a little extra income. He is also now registered as a sole trader, is positive about the future and about using his skills and talents.

Designing a positive future

When **Oliver** was convicted, he was not able to remain in his line of work. He had lost his way and was struggling to keep up contact with his child and be seen as a positive role model.

He needed to find a way to earn an income using his skills as a graphic designer but wasn't sure what to do and how to go about running a business. Over a period of three months, Achieve and Entrepreneurs Unlocked worked to support Oliver to develop his idea, set achievable goals and help him test trade and gain a few orders.

Oliver has increased his confidence, gained more clients and has been able to set up as a small business. He is registered as a sole trader, with a business bank account.

Just as important, he has been able to reconnect with his family and be seen in a different light as an entrepreneur and business owner.



Employer Engagement

One of Achieve's key roles is to identify and engage with employers and agencies who may have suitable employment opportunities and are willing to consider applications from people with convictions. To enhance this and provide bespoke opportunities to our participants, Achieve appointed Employer Engagement Lead roles – Gavin Theaker and Helen Wood.

Gavin said: "Every day we develop new relationships with organisations that demonstrate positive social values, and this forms a key part of our message. Identifying employers who demonstrate social value in their recruitment provides our participants with real opportunities to continue making positive steps in their rehabilitation.

"Our support includes regularly attending jobs fairs, networking events, prison employment board meetings, employer site visits and in-work support visits. A new addition to our role is the creation of virtual tours of employers with whom we work, helping future prison leavers to make decisions about the work sectors and job roles they would like to go into upon release.

"We help match vacancies with participants who meet the employer's job specifications. We support them with disclosure, risk assessments, interviews and 'conduct in work' advice. This helps ensure a positive transition to sustainable employment for both candidate and employer."

As Achieve delivers the CFO3 contract in both prison and community locations, it allows us to provide a through-the-gate model of support for all programme participants.

A new path

Liam started working with the Achieve CFO3 Project whilst in custody. This continued when he moved through the gate and was released to the Cheshire area.

Liam's Case Manager, Lisa Duckworth, supported Liam to help him develop his employability skills, including CV writing and advice on how to disclose convictions. Liam was also referred to Helen Woods, his Employer Engagement Lead, to discuss potential employment opportunities.

Helen was able to broker a Specialist Cleaning Operative role with NSS in Liam's hometown. Lisa helped him develop a good understanding of what the role involved and the expectations that his prospective employer would have of him.

Following disclosure of his convictions (current and previous), NSS agreed that Liam was suitable to be considered as a candidate for the role. He was given support to apply for the position and offered an interview at a location near his home, to save him having to travel all the way to Manchester, which was some distance away.

Liam successfully passed the interview and was offered a full-time job. He also received further support from Achieve CFO3, allowing him to purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) and work clothes.

Since starting his employment, Helen has received good feedback on how well Liam is doing. His positive attitude and good work ethic has enabled him to build a trusting relationship with his employer and he is looking forward to a brighter future.



Helen said: Liam's success shows how invaluable the Achieve CFO3 programme is in helping people turn their lives around when they get out of prison. He faced significant challenges when he was released. But his positive attitude and the support he received have helped Liam to overcome his barriers and to take his first steps to a fulfilling future."



Development Fund

The ESF and HMPPS CFO Development Fund has enabled Achieve to implement innovative projects across the Northwest.

These additional projects have added value and complemented existing provision whilst increasing opportunities for our participants.

The following case studies show the impact that these projects have had on our participants through direct delivery from Achieve, and through subcontracted provision.



HMP Risley Discovery Project

Since launching in July 2022, the success of the HMPPS CFO Discovery Wing project has been recognised with two accolades. The team won a Special Recognition Award at the CFO Veterans in Custody Support Office (ViCSO) Awards, and has been shortlisted for an Employment Related Services Association (ERSA) award for Partnership of the Year.

The project, which is targeted towards veterans and other subgroups of offenders who are more likely to have resettlement issues upon release, is delivered jointly by Achieve and HMPPS staff. Over the three phases, participants are prepared for release and resettlement through group and one-to-one interventions delivered by CFO3 Case Managers, Achieve sub-contractors and prison staff, supported by a peer mentoring model.

Over time, the team has been able to reflect on and build up partnerships to deliver an improved wrap-around service. This has included engagement with providers to offer specialised support for each cohort, and the introduction of new provision to improve personal wellbeing and mental health.

Following feedback from participants, Achieve has arranged for therapy dogs to come into the prison during each of the three phases. Achieve has directly employed an Interventions Worker, Linda Gillan, who delivers mindfulness sessions with participants.

Mike Taylor, Achieve Manager, said: "This has been a very successful project. We have set up internal and external links for participants to access on-going support and overcome barriers. This is support they would not have had if it wasn't for the project."

The Discovery Wing project has won and been nominated for awards.

Participant Feedback:



The staff from Achieve treat us like normal people and don't judge us."



The course is informative for all participants who are in different circumstances."



The course has a relaxed atmosphere and encourages individuals to think about their own future."



Offenders with Personality Disorders (OPD) Project

Funded by the CFO3 Development Fund, the OPD project was set up with Greater Manchester Probation to offer specific support to participants assessed as having a personality disorder.

The OPD project offers two elements to help participants with personality disorders:

- A specialist Case Manager providing mentoring and one-to-one support.
- An approved premises bike project, up-skilling participants in bike mechanics and providing purposeful activity.

All participants enrolled for this project are those diagnosed with a personality disorder and identified by an NPS/NHS team as leading chaotic and disruptive lives with little consistent engagement with statutory services.

Specialist Case Manager Zoe Hill supports participants to improve engagement and trust. She challenges disruptive behaviour patterns and encourages positive relationships and behaviours with peers, statutory agencies, and the public. The aim is to empower participants to tackle problems and equip them with everyday skills to become crime free.

The bike project aims to improve independent living skills, develop practical and vocational skills, team building and problem solving through 1-2-1 tuition and practical training.

Since the project has started, it has supported 109 men who have presented with personality disorders.

A new outlook

Neil suffered low self-esteem. He struggled to talk about anything but re-offending because he felt returning to prison was preferable to living in the community. He had no accommodation, recurring alcohol issues and needed support with mental health.

Case Manager Zoe first met Neil at St Joseph's Bike Project. She provided support with accommodation, settling in and food parcels, particularly over Christmas. At first Neil seemed to be doing well. His self-esteem and confidence increased, and he joined a group to help tackle his alcohol issues. However, he was struggling to cope and, following an overdose, Neil was recalled to custody.

Zoe's support provided consistency during Neil's time in custody and after release, when he was able to return to his flat. She helped him find the motivation to engage with support services and focus on his physical and mental health.

Since release, Neil has abstained from alcohol. He has a dog, which helps his mental health by encouraging Neil to go out. He has a new group of friends with whom he goes fishing. His mental health has significantly improved and he feels more positive about his future. He gets support from Zoe as he considers future employment or training.

Transport Training Academy

With labour market information showing both the UK and European transport sector suffering from a shortage of skilled professional drivers, Achieve partnered with Transport Training Academy to develop a programme giving CFO3 participants in Lancashire and Greater Manchester the skills and qualifications to become HGV Drivers.

Each programme operates over six months and participants are supported into employment following successful completion of the qualification.

To date, 32 participants have undertaken the programme, 14 of whom have progressed into sustainable employment.



Driving forward



"Trevor began his CFO3 journey in prison in September 2021. He was clear what he wanted to achieve; to pass his HGV test and become an HGV driver," said Achieve Case Manager Zubeir Chati.

"Trevor was very keen and asked to be fast tracked as his motivation was high and he was confident that he would pass. When assessed, he was determined to be a very good driver and was put through his paces by TTA.

"He rose to the challenge and passed his theory and practical tests within two months. The programme usually takes four to six months to complete.

"Trevor was now even more determined. I helped him apply for a few jobs and within weeks he had secured employment with an HGV company, where he is still employed. From his prison cell, to driving down country lanes, Trevor's dream has come true."

Interventions delivered in custody included writing disclosure statements, setting SMART goals and building transferable skills, problem solving and enterprise skills. Trevor also completed courses on synthetic cannabinoids, supporting your sleep and social media awareness.

Zubeir added: "On his release, I met with Trevor at his Approved Premises. When I told him that HGV training was now being offered through CFO3, he genuinely couldn't believe that we would help him in this. He was interviewed and enrolled on the HGV project.



Reflections

Chris Bennett, Managing Director, Achieve

Achieve, alongside subcontractors, has been privileged to be the organisation chosen by HMPPS CFO to deliver ESF co-funded projects to offenders across the Northwest since the delivery of CFO1 in January 2010.

We are proud of the success of our delivery over the last 14 years and the impact it has had on changing lives in our local communities. Our Case Managers are at the heart of what we do. Their specialist knowledge and experience to work with individual participants makes a real difference to people's lives. The Case Managers have been supported throughout by a Central Business Unit Team providing advice, guidance, training and administrative support.

To allow our participants to benefit from a wider range of interventions and opportunities, we have partnered with a number of subcontractors and local providers over the past three rounds of funding. This has added significant value to what we have been able to offer participants and has provided specialist wrap-around support to those with complex needs.

CFO3 has allowed us to be innovative in our delivery and develop nine targeted projects to provide added value and ultimately encourage participants to move closer to engaging with education, training or employment.

As well as those already illustrated, projects have included working with neurodiverse participants (partnering with Genius Within) and a Trauma Informed Project (partnering with Dignifi) at HMP Hindley.

We have also partnered with Transport Training Academy (TTA) to provide HGV training and qualifications, with Coaching Inside and Out (CIAO) to deliver a coaching programme to female offenders in HMP Styal and recently partnered with Creativity Works in HMP Wymott to deliver Music courses and qualifications for participants with complex needs and personality disorders.

We have been very lucky to have a strong working relationship with HMPPS CFO for 14 years. It has been supportive, constructive, encouraging, and forward thinking. Together we have increased the reach, depth and breadth of the service, but the focus has always remained the same: to change people's lives and set them on a new path for a future free from offending.

Over the three rounds of funding we have exceeded our targets across all contract areas. I am very proud of all our Managers, Case Managers and Business Unit Staff for these fantastic achievements.

Since 2010, we have:

Worked with over **40,000** hard to reach participants with complex needs and barriers to employment

Delivered **183,947** supporting interventions

Supported **19,211** participants into evidenced employment, training or education

Our CFO delivery has taken place over **14 prisons, 29 Probation Offices, 11 Approved Premises** and various outreach locations.

We would like to thank the staff in all these locations for their ongoing referrals and support.



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