

Community Chaplaincy-Norfolk Quarterly Report for our Supporters

QUARTER ENDED 30TH APRIL 2022



Community Chaplaincy- Norfolk (CCN)

CCN works alongside people leaving prison, together with their families, offering mentoring and holistic support within prison, at and through the prison gate and in the wider community. The service is open to Clients of any faith or none. CCN supports Clients towards changes in attitude and behaviour, to enable desistance from crime, reducing the likelihood of returning to prison and improving their chances of reintegration into the community.

Through provision of Volunteer Mentors offering regular appointments, CCN gives Clients support to engage with positive activities, reducing the likelihood of the continuation of addictive or anti-social behaviours by identifying and encouraging personal interests, and working towards engagement in education, training or employment.

CLIENT WORK OVER FEBRUARY, MARCH AND APRIL 2022

We received twelve referrals this quarter. Referrals have come from Probation services both in prison and in the community, from staff at an Approved Premises, from Chaplains at HMP Norwich and two individuals referring themselves to our service. Of these referrals one person declined support (he still had a long time to serve on his sentence and may be interested to engage nearer to release time), one was an inappropriate referral due to the nature of offences, two did not turn up for initial appointments/respond to initial contact, two are awaiting assessment, and the others have engaged with Mentors.

Mentors engaged with a total of 41 Clients in this period, with 32 currently on our database. We are supporting two men who are receiving pen-pal only contact. After an extended period of preparation and

training, with guidance from the National Community Chaplaincy Association, we have begun work with the first of our Clients to be convicted of a sex offence. Utilising a circle of support model, we have three Mentors collaborating to work with this Client and will limit the number of people we work with at any one time from this demographic. People convicted of a sex offence make up 18% of the prison population, and few categories of offender invoke as strong a response as sex offenders. Integration back into society is fraught with multiple challenges and barriers, and CCN fervently believe that supporting people with this type of conviction is vital work, for both the individuals involved and for wider society.

THE VOLUNTEER MENTORS

We currently have 16 active Mentors. Maintaining a steady stream of suitable, trained volunteers is integral to the functioning of CCN. Our newest recruits are making a strong start with their first clients and six new volunteers are currently taking part in our eight-week training course, with a further course planned for Autumn 2022. This quarter our Mentors have benefited from training delivered by the Harbour Centre around supporting those affected by sexual assault, and a session on assisting those recovering from substance misuse. Volunteers have also heard from a guest speaker from the Welcome Directory, a resource which lists faith communities who are willing to offer a warm welcome to prison leavers.

EVENTS AND SERVICE NEWS

We were pleased to receive a blue plaque from Lady Dannatt, the Lord Lieutenant of Norfolk in recognition of the service we provided to the prison leaver community during the pandemic. The award took place at our base in St Stephen's Church and was attended by staff, Clients, Trustees and Mentors (see picture).



In February 2022 we interviewed and appointed four new Trustees to join the CCN Board. His Honor Stephen Holt is a retired Barrister and Crown Court Judge, Laura Bell works at the University of East Anglia as an Outreach Worker encouraging under-represented demographics to study, Rev Danny Doran-Smith is a Curate, and the Director of a youth charity and Sarah Watson is a musician with a passion for helping prison leavers. They are currently undergoing training and induction and have brought a new wave of energy and enthusiasm to proceedings.

CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Many of our Clients face multiple complex needs and have a long history of repeat re-offending and recall to prison. Our model of support means that we do not stop supporting a person just because they return to prison, and we are prepared to travel with an individual through highs and lows. This high level of need has an impact on staff and Mentors, and we have invested in extra support and supervision for our Client facing staff as well as continuing to provide monthly supervision for our Mentors, to support their wellbeing.

We are becoming increasingly aware of the need for a trauma informed practice and have incorporated consideration of this into our Mentor training package. We are considering how we might improve prison leavers access to trauma counselling and have had initial conversations with local counselling agencies who may be suitable partners.

As ever, thank you for all your support and encouragement which we appreciate,

Melanie Wheeler, Manager, 30th April 2022