

Changing Lives Together

February 2015

“ Welcome to BeNCH Community Rehabilitation Company’s first newsletter for stakeholders. ”

As many of you will know BeNCH CRC was formed on 1 June 2014 by the coming together of 450 staff formerly employed by the Beds, Northants, Cambs and Herts Probation Trusts.

Although we work with those assessed as having a low or medium risk of harm, many have a higher risk of reoffending due to their complex range of needs. Therefore our mission is to be a leading provider of innovative justice services that change peoples lives.

This year promises to be a truly exciting and transformational year for BeNCH CRC. We formally changed ownership on 1 February 2015 and moved from the public sector into the private sector under Sodexo Justice Services’ ownership.

This process will bring with it a number of significant changes for us as, over the next 12 months, we implement Sodexo’s new model of service delivery. The model is designed to take account of what we know works best to help people to change.

As part of a drive to make our service more accessible, we will be looking to move into new premises in a number of locations during the year. In addition, over the next few months we will begin to supervise a new cohort service users released from short term custodial sentences under the new *Through The Gate* arrangements we have developed with local prisons.

The development of the *Through The Gate* service is incredibly exciting to us. It offers the tangible prize of reducing the unacceptably high rates of reoffending currently seen in this cohort of prisoners, many of whom return to the local

communities where they have previously offended.

We recognise that we can only achieve our aims – of reducing reoffending and making our communities safer – through working in partnership with others. So, whilst there will be some significant changes this year our commitment to partnership working will not change. Indeed, during the course of the year we will strengthen our delivery arrangements with a number of voluntary sector partners through Sodexo’s contract with their supply chain.

We will keep you posted of developments throughout the year, through future editions of this newsletter and through letters and other briefings to you. For further information please visit our website at www.bench.org.uk or follow us on Twitter @CRCBeNCH.

Best wishes,



Neil Moloney
CEO BeNCH CRC

TURNING LIVES AROUND

Across the four counties (Beds, Northants, Cambs and Herts) BeNCH CRC works with its service users to put an end to their offending and lead crime-free lives.

Our objectives are to deliver reductions in reoffending and make our communities safer.

Our work is a combination of enforcement of court orders and supporting our service users across a number of areas such as employment, accommodation and drug/alcohol treatment.

We are proud to work in partnership with a range of organisations as we deliver our services. Our partners span the public, private and not-for-profit sectors.



BeNCH staff and partners outside our Stevenage Head Office during a visit from local MP and Under Secretary of State for Justice, Andrew Selous.

Community Payback

Community Payback gives local communities the opportunity to suggest suitable areas for probation service users to rejuvenate as part of their Community Order.

During BeNCH's first seven months, over 182,000 hours of Community Payback have been completed. This equates to around £1.2 million of free labour provided to local communities (based on the minimum wage).

Not only do projects benefit local communities but they can also help those on community orders learn new skills and improve their employment prospects. A good example being **the Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) Workshop** in BeNCH's Kettering office. The workshop provides an electrical appliance testing service to charities throughout Northants to enable them to sell appliances in their shops.

Feedback from beneficiaries of Community Payback:

"An invaluable service. Without it, we would not be able to sell any of these high-value electrical items." – Hayley, RSPCA Charity Shop, Northampton

"This was a real partnership effort. There is once again a great path so people can enjoy the local countryside without being on the busy road." – Pam Joyce, Cambs County Council



Scenic path cleared and reopened to residents of Sutton Gault, Cambs.



Ground clearing at Chicksands Army Base



Tackling 'grotspots' during one of Corby's "Weeks of Action"

BeNCH CRC Performance Update

Since launching on 1st June 2014, BeNCH CRC has delivered strong performance against the majority of our contracted measures with the government's National Offender Management Service (NOMS).

Our strong performance was due largely to the quality and commitment of staff who transitioned from the former high-performing Probation Trusts to BeNCH. And also due to our partners' continued contribution. Thank you.

Key Performance Indicators (June - Nov 2014)

	<u>Target</u>	<u>Achieved</u>
Community Orders/Licences Successfully Completed	73%	82%
Service users in accommodation at end of community order/licence	80%	88%
Service users in employment at end of community order/licence	47%	58%

N.B. Rate of reoffending is measured by the Ministry of Justice. Latest statistics for former Probation Trusts between Jan-Dec 2012 are available on www.gov.uk (link: <http://tinyurl.com/oqzdgqb>).

REACHING OUT FOR WORK

We work hard to support service users as they seek employment or improve their employability. Darren's story below demonstrates how our interventions can change lives for the better:

Darren* was bored and lacked energy. His motivation and enthusiasm had been severely dented due to convictions and directions. When he attended BeNCH's REACH Project induction in Northants, Darren was immediately signposted to the Wellingborough Princes Trust (Tresham College).

Darren attended the full-time 13 week programme every day which resulted in him gaining a Level 1 Certificate called 'Employment, Teamwork and Community Skills'. This qualification enabled Darren to gain a recognised qualification by employers and served as a positive springboard to move on in his life.

During his REACH support we undertook personality profiling which provided a clear and positive written profile of employment characteristics which Darren was encouraged to use as a reference.

The REACH Job Club provided Darren with support and begun making job applications resulting in him registering with a local recruitment agency (Face-to-Face) who recognised his potential too.

Darren commenced full-time work at a local engineering company working as a general operative coiling steel and supporting engineers in forming steelwork.

Darren's life has been transformed recently and he is now focused, motivated and buzzing as a result of achieving sustained employment.

**Real names have been changed to protect identities.*

What is the REACH Project?

Based in Northants, the REACH Project is an Employment, Training and Education (ETE) service for hard to reach service users. The project is working with Tresham College in order to provide REACH participants with access to the new qualifications to obtain the Construction Skills Certificate Scheme (CSCS) Card.

We have also been working in partnership with a local social enterprise Goodwill Solutions. This is part funded by Northampton University, Northants Police, Northampton College and the Youth Offending Service to develop accredited work experience in warehousing and logistics.

REACH is just one example of BeNCH's work to improve service users' employability. We also have a similar Job Deal project in Herts as well as Job Centre Plus and SOVA Job Deal staff co-located in our offices.

We recognise that employment is a critical factor in reducing the likelihood of our service users re-offending.



A new Dawn for women service users

The Dawn Project is an award-winning initiative run by BeNCH CRC in partnership with Cambridge Women's Resources Centre, offering women in Cambs and Peterborough information, support and an opportunity to change their lives for the better.

The Project offers women somewhere to go where they can feel safe and supported in a women-only environment, and provides opportunities to meet other women to share experiences and support.



"I loved it so much that I wanted to stay here to try to support other women."
Kelly, ex-service user, now mentor

Support is offered on a range of issues including suitable accommodation, education, training or work, health issues; drug or alcohol, finances, parenting, violent relationships or sexual abuse and prostitution.

Last year, the Dawn Project's achievements were recognised when they won the Pride of Cambridge Community Group award and came runner up at the national No Offence! CIC Justice and Redemption Awards in the 'Innovation' category.

The icing on the cake was when one of our ex-service users, Kelly Brand, was nominated in the top three in the Inspirational Award category for her commitment to change following frequent criminal justice interventions.

Across BeNCH CRC, women service users have access to women-only support environments in Northants (courtesy of our Breakthrough Project), Beds (Womankind Project) and Herts where Women Specified Activity Requirements (WSARs) sentenced by the Courts are run from external sites in conjunction with partners.

Prolific Offender Programmes

In Beds and Herts, BeNCH CRC and its partners deliver intensive community based programmes to prolific offenders who would have faced a custodial sentence, typically for offences such as burglaries and other thefts.

There are three main stages:

1. Bail assessment for one month
2. Deferred Sentence period, usually 5-6 months
3. Community Order lasting three years

There is a strong emphasis on victim work – all participants must consider victim empathy in their supervision sessions and some participants take part in Restorative Justice work.

The programmes (Choice and Consequences in Herts and Prolific Intensive in Beds) are designed to provide high levels of support from the joint efforts of Police, Probation and partners. If participants re-offend, chances are they'll be imprisoned for the new offence and any offences they have admitted to as part of the programmes.

These programmes simply could not happen without excellent partnership working taking place or without the support and commitment from the Crown Courts. It succeeds through the dedicated work of all the staff involved and the commitment and resolve of the Service Users.

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