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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the second edition of 'NEON News' centred around the theme of drugs, alcohol and physical and mental health: which is hopefully a timely read, given recent policy developments. In this issue some of the featured items include a case study from Unlocking Potential; the NOMS drugs and alcohol strategy and developments within Jobcentre Plus.

We hope you find this newsletter valuable. Please email submissions for the next issue themed around **case management** and **finance** to [Gemma Buckland](#) by Friday 23rd February. We aim to highlight best practice within NEON News and personal case studies or examples of how partners have overcome barriers have been received well by our readers.

It has been estimated that 70% of prisoners suffer from two or more commonly classified mental disorders (*Social Exclusion Unit 2002*). In November

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the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Prison Health published a report on The Mental Health Problem in UK HM Prisons calling for a "fundamental shift in thinking" on the treatment of mental health problems in UK prisons. The report demands a boost to community services to support people at risk of offending, and improvements to court diversion schemes and to the links between mental health services inside and outside prison. In addition a report from the Healthcare Commission reported Primary Care Trusts (*PCTs*) are failing to provide adequate mental health care for young offenders, making the task of reducing re-offending rates more difficult.

Drug-Misuse in Prison: NOMS Drug Strategy

The NOMS Drug Strategy sets the overall framework for delivery of drug interventions in custody. Its three key, mutually-reinforcing strands are:

- reducing supply – through security measures and drug testing programmes;
- reducing demand – through individually-targeted treatment; and
- effective through-care – ensuring timely continuity of community-based treatment, to safeguard the gains made in custody.

Effective delivery is helping achieve:

- less drug-misuse during and after custody;
- reduced levels of re-offending – particularly high-volume, acquisitive crime committed to fund a drug habit – post-release.

For more information on interventions, delivery and effectiveness as well as alcohol mis-use in prison please click [here](#) and log into the partners section using the password 'equal'.

EVENTS

PHOENIX DEVELOPMENT FUND

The Phoenix Development Fund (PDF) offered funding for four years between 2001 and 2006 to encourage enterprise in disadvantaged areas and groups under-represented in terms of business ownership. The PDF addressed eight themes: women's enterprise, ethnic minorities, serving and ex-offenders, people with mental health conditions, refugees, housing associations, industry sectors and enterprise areas. Some 160 projects were funded before the programme ended.

Consideration has been given to the best way to ensure the legacy of the Phoenix Development Fund is not lost. Fifty-four of the projects that received 3rd round funding have participated in a lessons learned research exercise. The subsequent report, "Investing in Success" has been published on the [SBS website](#) along with the PDF Final Evaluation Report.

The Small Business Service is planning to hold a series of national and local events, in conjunction with key partners (such as the RDAs and Government Offices) between Autumn 2006 and March 2007 to promote the lessons learned and to help interested parties connect with each other and explore how the successes of PDF might be

built upon. The target audience for the regional events is Business Links, other business support advisers and local community groups. For further information please contact Rik Martin at the Small Business Service on 0114 279 4320, or email rik.martin@sbs.gsi.gov.uk



Reset held a one day event around resettlement in Manchester on 8 November which was attended by delegates such as Youth Justice Board, practitioners from youth offending teams and the secure estate, NOMS and Connexions. Case management and action planning workshops revealed common aspirations for resettlement which included engaging social workers in the process, better housing, clearer roles for those in the chain and more engagement of employers. The Greater Manchester Police, National Children's Bureau, YJB and Reset provided seminars and presentations on the day.

Please email laura.thornton@raineronline.org if you would like to attend any future resettlement events, either in the North West or London.

Real Life

Case Study: Unlocking Potential (UP)

South Wales Probation Service

'Jane' was referred to the project by the Probation Service ETU - at the time she had recently been released from prison and was still on HDC. Though well educated and with a good employment record, her conviction for theft, driven by family debt, was causing her real problems finding work. Jane was very worried about disclosure and though she had found a number of jobs that she appeared well suited to, lacked the confidence to apply for any of them. ETU were able to assist her with disclosure of offence and application/interview techniques.

Jobcentre Plus identified an employer who they thought could offer employment opportunities to an ex-offender and Jane's CV and disclosure letter were submitted to them. Unlocking Potential accompanied Jane to an interview and she started on a work trial, initially for three weeks. During this time Jane was able to prove herself as a keen, motivated and reliable employee, willing to learn and capable of taking on a range of duties.

An offer of full time employment was subsequently made and UP was able to support the employer with financial subsidies for the first four months of employment. During this time Jane was trained to cover admin and reception duties including the basics of Welsh language. She now has a permanent contract and has been employed for nearly five months, growing in confidence and ability.

There were initial teething problems, notably in the early weeks of employment when Jane had to deal with accommodation issues. She found herself homeless and had to live in hostel accommodation for several weeks. The employer has supported Jane throughout and Jane repays this with loyalty and continued enthusiasm in her work which is of a high standard.

Here is the employer's story:

"As the managing director of a multi software company I have overall responsibility for our staff and until some six months ago, had never employed an ex-offender. I was nervous about the prospect but after our experience I would now recommend it to other employers. Although we obviously had to consult senior management about the recruitment decision, the process was relatively simple and we felt fully supported by 'Unlocking Potential'

"I was encouraged by Jane's honesty and transparency and also felt secure knowing if anything went wrong with the placement, we would be able to walk away without any penalty. Jane's attitude was so positive – she really wanted to make a go of the job and was eager to prove herself. Her hard work ethic and determination meant that within three months she had received promotion and is now a valued, full time senior administrative officer.

"I think it is important that employers give these people a second chance and at least offer trial employment placements. Our experience has shown that employing an ex-offender can work if the right support is offered to both the employee and business".

news

JOBCENTRE PLUS HELP FOR DRUG/ALCOHOL MISUSERS progress2work(p2w)/progress2work-LinkUP (p2w-LinkUP)

progress2work (p2w) now available in every region in the country

Jobcentre Plus can now announce that p2w is available in every region of the country having recently agreed contracts for the East of England. Essex and Norfolk providers will soon be taking on their first participants, with Suffolk to follow. p2w has been hampered in the past by market failure, especially in locations, where premises, geography and in particular the more rural nature of certain areas has made setting up provision very challenging, so this is really great news.

the success of progress2work

So far almost 50,000 customers have been helped by p2w/p2w-LinkUP, with approximately 25% moving into work. Furthermore approximately 20,000 customers have also participated in mainstream and specialist provision or gone into further education. This is remarkable given the barriers which these customers need help to overcome.

This is truly great news and is a result of strong partnership work and the commitment of a number of key organisations, including the Drug Action Teams, treatment specialists and other employment agencies. As a result Jobcentre Plus and its partners continue to help the most disadvantaged find work and support the Inter-Ministerial work which is taking place to provide "Wraparound Services" for drug misusers.

background information

The progress2work initiative was developed as part of the Government's wider approach to help those customers who are farthest away from the labour market, as set out in the Department of Work and Pensions' Employment Green Paper "Towards Full Employment in a Modern Society"

p2w provides support for customers who have made sufficient progress in their recovery to be drug free or stabilised, but whose history of drug misuse is likely to be a significant factor in preventing them from getting or keeping work. It is estimated that up to 80% of these customers will also have an offending background and therefore supports the drugs and alcohol pathways and the Drug Interventions Programme. p2w provides one-to-one support, assessment and development of a customised action plan, based on the specific needs of a customer to support their transition into training or employment.

A recently produced Home Office Practice Paper highlights some of the key elements of p2w and the benefits of continuing to develop strong links in order to help drug misusers. It is often the case that disadvantaged customers have multiple barriers which prevent them getting a job. With this in mind Jobcentre Plus introduced a pilot based on the on the p2w model. The progress2work-LinkUP pilot operates in almost half of Jobcentre Plus districts and specifically addresses the employment needs of offenders, alcohol misusers and homeless customers.

For more information please contact
Mick Donelan, Labour Market and Employer Products
Tel: 0114 2596072, Email: Mick.donelan@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

EXODUS HOSTS TRANSNATIONAL EVENT

As part of the transnational programme for the Caravel partnership, visitors from Portugal, Italy and Belgium were entertained at Leeds Castle in September by a wide range of EXODUS project staff and beneficiaries, including an excellent recovery band, Rent Free. All the musicians have suffered from serious alcohol and/or drug addiction and are using their musical talents as a focus for their recovery.

During their three day visit, the trans-national partners were impressed by the range and quality of the resettlement services provided through the EXODUS project, particularly the commitment and co-operation of the prison service staff involved. There was also an employer forum, hosted by the Home Office, to promote ideas about how employers can become involved in the process of reintegrating ex-offenders into the labour market.

transnational news

LISBON EVENT

NEON UK partners EXODUS, RESET, IMPACT, Unlocking Potential and Reachout attended the Passport to Freedom EQUAL exchange event in Lisbon on 24th and 25th October. The event brought together EQUAL development partnerships from 18 countries across Europe to share policy and practice messages about their work with offenders. One of the aims of the event was to identify policy messages to be fed into a further event to be held next year. Watch this space for more news from the Lisbon event and for details of the forthcoming Policy Forum.



Mentor 2 Work is an innovative approach to the resettlement of offenders with mental health problems. Its purpose has been to design and deliver peer mentoring training to offenders who have mental health problems, while at the same time offering support to gain employment on release using the Supported Employment model.

There has been an emphasis on recognising the unique skills and experience of people who have used mental health services and who live in prison – ‘experts by experience’.

Led by the IMPACT project (Innovation Means Prisons And Communities Together) which focuses on improving employment opportunities for ex-offenders; Mentor 2 Work brought together the prison service, voluntary sector and secondary mental health services.

Mentoring training expertise and materials were provided by SOVA, a national charity that specialises in training volunteers to work with ex-offenders and their families.

*Further information and a full report are available from
Shelley Lockett, IMPACT Project – shelley.lockett@hmps.gsi.gov.uk
or can be downloaded at www.equal-impact.com*

DIARY DATES

A **NEON EU Seminar** on case management will be hosted by NEON UK in early spring 2007. Further details are available from [Linda Pizani-Williams](#).

USEFUL WEBSITES

www.niacro.co.uk • www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk • www.kent.ac.uk/eiss • www.equal-impact.com
www.employingexoffenders.org.uk • www.reset.uk.net