



# NEWS *from Wales Community Rehabilitation Company*

Issue 1, October 2014

Cwmni Adsefydlu Cymunedol  
**Cymru  
Wales**  
Community Rehabilitation Company



Probation services which reduce reoffending and make the people of Wales safer



Welcome to the first newsletter of the Wales Community Rehabilitation Company.

Over the next few pages we will be telling you a little about the work we do and the changes due to take place in probation.

Many of you will have seen our recent prospectus which shows how we tackle reoffending by supporting people to lead crime-free lives through specialist programmes and packages of support.

We work alongside the National Offender Management Service in Wales and our colleagues in the National Probation Service to make Wales a safer place and will continue to use innovative and effective ways of reducing reoffending as we start our exciting new journey in private ownership.

Despite the changes we are undergoing it is still very much business as usual and we are confident the new organisation is in excellent shape as we wait to hear who our new owners will be.

We continue to do all we can to protect the public and reduce reoffending while respecting individuals and having faith in their ability to change.

We are very fortunate in having a highly skilled, dedicated staff and are keen to build on a learning culture so our experiences inform our future success.

We are particularly keen to work in partnership with you, our stakeholders, as we strive towards our common goals.

Liz Rijnbergen  
Chief Executive  
Wales Community Rehabilitation Company



## Helping hand for veterans

A drop-in centre to help Armed Forces veterans who are struggling with the return to civvy street has opened in Haverfordwest with the support of Wales CRC.

Probation staff, led by Community Payback Officer Marc Woolcock have teamed up with Change Step, a peer mentoring service set up to help veterans finding it hard to cope.

It is estimated that 40,000 Welsh veterans will need some kind of support in future and the Armed Forces Covenant has provided £1m to fund services across Wales.

Dave Knight from Change Step said: "We are there for all veterans of any age, the oldest person we support is 91"

Wales Community Rehabilitation Company will provide volunteers for the drop-in centre and use contacts among local employers to source work experience opportunities. The hope is that by supporting the scheme, the CRC will reduce the likelihood of veterans ending up in the Criminal Justice System.

**90 Skills for Life literacy and numeracy awards have been achieved by our offenders in our first three months**

## Wales CRC goes live

There's chance to find out much more about what we do on our new website [walescrc.co.uk](http://walescrc.co.uk).

It showcases the breadth of our work which ranges from running Community Payback schemes where offenders carry out unpaid work to benefit the community, to specialist courses to tackle issues such as domestic violence, drug abuse and anger management.

Among the first to see the website go live was Alun Michael, Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales who was visiting our Churchill House office in Cardiff on the day of the launch.



South Wales PCC Alun Michael takes a look at our new website with Head of Operations Dawn Blower and Chief Executive Liz Rijnenberg

## Clean sweep at the beach

The lovely Gower beach of Port Eynon is looking even better after a team of offenders on Community Payback did their bit for Tidy Wales Week by picking up sacks full of litter.

Community Payback workers have rid the Swansea area of 33.5 tonnes of rubbish in the last year, clearing fly tipping, picking up litter and cutting back overgrowth – a massive achievement.



## Bidder announcement

On June 1<sup>st</sup> the probation service was split into the Wales Community Rehabilitation Company, responsible for low to medium risk offenders and the National Probation Service which deals with high risk offenders and victim services.

The Government is expected to announce the name of the preferred bidder to take ownership of Wales CRC very shortly. The four bidders are MTC Amey, Working Links, Sodexo and Crime Reduction Initiatives (CRI).

Once the preferred bidder is announced there will be final discussions before the contract is awarded and then a 10 day standstill period before the contract is signed and mobilisation begins as the CRC passes into new ownership.

We are ensuring our staff are kept well informed on the progress of the competition and are embarking on a series of briefings with opportunity to explore their hopes for how we will work together in future.

One of the very exciting opportunities will be the provision of services to offenders sentenced to less than 12 months custody. This is a group which has received no such support in the past and has been at high risk of reoffending.

## Norwegian prison officers visit

North Wales probation staff had the pleasure of hosting a visit for 19 trainee prison officers from Norway.

The trainees listened to presentations by the National Offender Management Service, National Probation Service and Wales CRC staff on a wide range of issues including Integrated Offender Management, Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements and the new prison being built in North Wales.

During an informal lunch the trainees were able to find out about similarities and differences between the Criminal Justice System in Norway and the UK.

The afternoon was spent at Plas y Wern Approved Premises which provides enhanced levels of community supervision for offenders released from prison. The visitors learnt about Community Payback, where offenders carry out unpaid work in the community, and the programmes we run to reduce reoffending.

Judith Magaw, head of North Wales LDU, said: "It was really interesting to hear that the largest prison in Norway has 400 inmates and the smallest just 17."



## The future of probation in Wales



Nineteen new Probation Service Officers (PSOs) have begun work with Wales Community Rehabilitation Company and they have brought with them a wealth of talent and experience.

Just what a wonderful asset they will be was highlighted at a corporate induction day held at Cardiff's Maldron Hotel when they shared their wide ranging backgrounds. The group included criminology and psychology graduates, former teachers, police officers, business managers and staff with experience of working as PSOs and administrators in other CRCs.

Many of the latest recruits have already worked as volunteers for youth offending panels and have experience supporting sex offenders released back into the community. Others have worked in the areas of mental health, social care and substance misuse - we even have someone with a vast experience of fostering children.

They were joined at the event by Chief Executive Liz Rijnenberg and Head of Operations Dawn Blower (pictured above with the group). Welcoming the PSOs, Liz said: "You bring with you a fantastic breadth of experience which will be really useful to you in your work."

She urged them never to lose faith that those we work with can move away from offending and turn their lives around with the right interventions.

Former service user Megan Jenkins who now works as a service user co-ordinator gave an inspirational talk about what makes a successful offender manager.

"I am proof of how a good PSO can change lives. It takes a lot more than a 10 minute chat in an office once a week but you have that power. Yes, probation is about punishment but it's about guidance too. Many offenders want to change. Don't give up on them."

**1,000 successful unpaid work orders have been completed by offenders in our first three months**

## Royal approval for Atal-y-Fro



Our unique partnership with the domestic abuse charity Atal y Fro in Barry has received Royal approval and a prestigious national award.

The partnership which runs the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme IDAP - set up by the National Offender Management Service and Welsh Government - has been presented with a trophy by the Princess Royal after being highly commended in awards organised by the Howard League for Penal Reform.

Gus Vowles, accredited programme treatment manager with Wales CRC was delighted with the project's success. He is pictured with Her Royal Highness and Julie Grady, Facilitator at Atal-Y-Fro.

The programme is one of the few Women's Aid projects which works with perpetrators and is a great example of how multi-agency working and intervention can achieve positive results. Atal-y-Fro provides a wraparound, holistic service to help the whole family including a women's refuge and work with the police domestic violence unit and social services. Some offenders have graduated from the programme to become mentors.

## Conquering the mattress mountain

A staggering 12,000 mattresses are thrown out in Pembrokeshire each year thanks to the large number of tourists and oil workers who bed down in the county.

And most of those mattresses will be finding their way to Second Stage, Haverfordwest, a social enterprise which recycles them with the help of offenders on Community Payback.

Marc Woolcock, CP supervisor said: "As well as providing a very useful recycling service to the county, offenders can also work towards Open College Network qualifications in subjects such as health and safety and the environment. They can build up a portfolio of work related skills and we also help them to produce a basic CV."

Second Stage is part of Frame, a social enterprise which was set up in Haverfordwest 20 years ago by Jenny Simms as a way of helping the socially excluded and vulnerable.



Marc Woolcock, Community Payback Supervisor with Wales CRC and Tim Phillips of Second Stage