



NEWS

from Wales Community Rehabilitation Company

Issue 2 January 2015

Cwmni Adsefydlu Cymunedol
Cymru Wales
Community Rehabilitation Company



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



Message from the Chief Executive

Since our last newsletter we have taken a major step towards the Government's probation reforms. The contract with our new owners Working Links has been signed and together we are committed to delivering first class probation services across Wales.

It is an exciting time for us as we will be able to combine Working Links' experience of designing innovative services with Wales Community Rehabilitation Company's experience of managing offenders and their risk of harm and protecting the public.

This will be a powerful and effective alliance which will contribute to building a safe and prosperous Wales.

We are now working on developing new Through the Gate services in preparation for the new Offender Rehabilitation Act. These services will see prisoners sentenced to less than 12 months in jail receiving probation support from ourselves for the first time.

Together we have been visiting

Welsh prisons and HMP Stoke Heath and HMP Eastwood Park where Wales CRC will also be responsible for Through The Gate resettlement provision. There is lots of work to do between now and 1st May to ensure we implement a seamless and effective Through The Gate service including a modular resettlement service to prisoners with up to 12 weeks remaining before release.

Offender Managers will have a key role in signing off resettlement plans prepared by new resettlement advisors and providing consistent support to their offenders whilst in custody and following release.

Work is also underway to design future services that will be available under the Rehabilitation Activity Requirement (RAR). While we will continue to provide many of our current activities for offenders, we will also be working with Working Links and Innovation Wessex on how we can introduce new ways of helping offenders change their lives for the better.

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300

offenders a month completed a
Community Payback Order

in October 2014

Liz Rijnenberg
Chief Executive
Wales Community Rehabilitation Company



@WalesCRC

www.walescrc.co.uk

New owners confirmed for Wales CRC



The new owners of Wales Community Rehabilitation Company have been confirmed as Working Links.

The Secretary of State for Justice, Chris Grayling, signed contracts with the new providers for the 21 Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) across Britain. This marks another significant step towards completing the Government's probation reforms.

Working Links officially takes over the running of Wales CRC on February 1 2015.

Liz Rijnenberg, Chief Executive of Wales CRC said, "I am delighted that Working Links have been confirmed as new owners of Wales CRC. This marks a new and exciting period of development for us and I am looking forward to leading the CRC as we move to the next stage of our transition."

Working Links is a public, private, voluntary company owned by the UK Government's Shareholder Executive, Manpower, Capgemini and Mission Australia. They offer a wealth of experience in the successful delivery of employment and justice services. They are committed to supporting offenders in changing their lives through partnership delivery, working in the community and with an emphasis on providing a high quality service.

Liz said: "Working Links' mix of ownership gives flexibility, scope and investment opportunities to consistently deliver positive futures for individuals and their communities. They will be able to invest

in and innovate around services to improve them and to deliver a saving to the taxpayer.

"We are now able to move forward and focus on the future as we work towards our common goals of protecting the public and reducing reoffending while also respecting individuals and believing in their ability to change.

We share a combined value in supporting offenders to become responsible members of the community and working within communities to create a safer Wales through high quality services delivered in partnership with other agencies.

Liz added: "Wales CRC's strength is the quality and professionalism of our staff and I am pleased that Working Links is an organisation that also values its employees' knowledge and experience and has a high rate of customer satisfaction."

Wales CRC was created on June 1st 2014 as part of the Government's Transforming Rehabilitation scheme and provides probation services for around 8,000 low and medium risk offenders across Wales.

Formed in 2000, Working Links has worked with offenders on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the Skills Funding Agency and the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) to help those with convictions move toward social inclusion.

They have also won the contracts for two other CRCs, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall and Bristol, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire.



Left to right: Ella Rabiotti (Local Delivery Unit Head for Dyfed-Powys for Wales Community Rehabilitation Company), Judith Magaw (LDU Head for North Wales, Wales CRC), Clare Davey (HR Director, Working Links), Brian Bell (Chief Operating Officer), Phil Andrew (Chief Executive, WL), Emma Richards (LDU Head for Swansea and South Wales Valleys, Wales CRC), Diana Binding (LDU Head for Gwent, Wales CRC), Dean Tams (Senior User Support, WL) and Dave Bebb (LDU Head for Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, Wales CRC).



Special Programmes

Nathan is a lifesaver

Offender's thinking skills save baby's life

One of our offenders has proved himself a lifesaver after stepping in to help a baby who had stopped breathing.

Nathan Hodges was woken at 2am by his neighbour in a state of panic and asking for help.

When Nathan went to their home he found that their one week old baby had stopped breathing and was turning blue. He telephoned for an ambulance and while on the phone to the emergency services was able to find an obstruction in the baby's throat and remove it.

The baby started breathing again and when paramedics arrived a short time later they told Nathan that without his intervention the baby would probably have died. The parents are now naming the baby Nathan in his honour.

Nathan's Probation Services Officer Andrew Blackhurst from our Merthyr office said that Nathan had put his ability to cope with the emergency down to a thinking skills course he had followed as part of his probation.

"Nathan reported being calm and focused and was very surprised by his ability to cope with such a situation.

"As Nathan's supervising officer I have observed a dramatic improvement in his

thinking skills, coping skills and emotional control over the last few months. Nathan felt that if this incident had occurred six or 12 months ago he would have reacted very differently and stated that he would probably have run away in a panic.

"We discussed what had changed in this time and Nathan stated, without any prompting, that he felt that the TSP modules he has completed so far have equipped him to deal with stressful situations. He said, 'I don't think I would have been capable of this without probation'.

It is great to see such an extremely happy and positive outcome."

54

per cent of people we worked with were in employment at the end of their order - 14 per cent above target.

Building history with CP

Offenders help raise the roof on Iron Age farm

Community
Payback

Community
Payback



Offenders paying for their crimes with unpaid community work are creating a bit of history in the woods of St Fagans near Cardiff.

They are helping thatcher John Letts prepare traditional thatched roofs for two round houses, part of an Iron Age farm being built at the St Fagans National History Museum.

The offenders are on a Community Payback placement at the museum and one team helped harvest and thresh a crop of spelt, an ancient grain, while another team are now responsible for cleaning and bundling the stalks ready for thatcher John to use for the roofs.

It is time consuming work as they use hand rakes to clear out the dead grass and any remaining grain which would otherwise attract rodents. John, an archaeobotanist who has done extensive research in historic thatching methods, is delighted with the team provided by Wales Community

Rehabilitation Company.

"The lads are doing really good work. It will take eight tons of spelt to create the roofs and it is all the pre-processing work they do which helps us get on with the actual thatching. No one has thatched a roof quite like this in a long time," he said.

The farm called Bryn Eyr is based on a 2,000 year old site in Anglesey. It is one of the 'lost buildings' that will be built at St Fagans as part of the museum's five year plan to redevelop the visitor experience.

The walls are made from clom, a traditional mix of sand, stonedust, clay and straw and the roofs are basket-like frames topped with heather and gorse, a deterrent for rodents, barley and wheat straw and a final waterproof thatch made from the spelt stalks.

It is cold and muddy work as the team tries to recreate the farm in authentic detail.

Mike Gerlach, Community Payback Officer with Wales CRC, was instrumental in setting

up the partnership and hopes more museums will benefit from working with Wales CRC on similar schemes in future. "I'm really delighted that we are able to contribute to such an exciting project. Some of the offenders live locally and it's rewarding for them to be involved in something like this."

The spelt was grown and harvested at St Fagans and the grain will be used for various archaeological experiments such as baking bread at the museum's onsite bakery.



CP Supervisor Andy Morgan with thatcher John Letts at the St Fagans National History Museum, Cardiff



Offenders clear the way for outdoor pursuits at YHA

Offenders in North Wales have delivered a five-star service to help transform a youth hostel in Conwy into a top outdoor destination for visitors and local schools.

Eric and Julieanne Audigé-Soutter, managers of YHA Conwy, asked offenders sentenced to unpaid work by the courts to help out with their plans to expand facilities at the hostel to attract more visitors.

Over the last 18 months Community Payback Supervisor Martin Trigg of Wales Community Rehabilitation Company and his teams of offenders have spent more than 1,600 hours working at the 82-bed hostel.

Their efforts have cleared the way for Eric and Julieanne to receive funding from other business partners to create an assault course and archery area at the hostel which overlooks Conwy's medieval castle. They will now employ a part time instructor to offer lessons to visiting schools and groups such as the Scouts and Beavers.

They have also teamed up with the North Wales Wildlife Trust to provide an environmental area to teach visitors about local wildlife.

Offenders carried out major clean up and repair work in the grounds: levelling and fencing off an overgrown, disused area to make way for the assault course and archery area, clearing leaves, cutting back hedges and repairing and painting fences, picnic tables and benches. Inside they decorated and renovated all 25 bedrooms, corridors and communal areas.

As part of the project, one of the offenders, a qualified carpenter and joiner, took the lead to give a run-down wooden pavilion a makeover. The pavilion is now being used as a seating area on the archery course and will house an environmental information display for the 'bug hotel', where visitors can watch insects.

Eric said: "The amount of work the CP team has

An offender on CP and the new assault course at YHA Conwy (inset).

done has been amazing. YHA Conwy is part of the YHA England and Wales Association, a registered charity which relies on help from members and donors to support the work we do with limited funding. We rely on volunteers and without the work of Wales CRC we would not have been able to go ahead with our plans so soon. The amount of work the offenders have done in one winter would have taken us seven years to complete."

Richard Purton, CP Team Manager for North Wales, said: "It was great to see the offenders taking so much pride in their work and how it benefitted the charity."

Eric added: "The standard of work is great. The place looks better and tidier than it's ever been."

"We will continue to work with Wales CRC on future projects and are already planning the decoration of nearby YHA Rowen, a 20-bed self-catering, mountain youth hostel run by volunteers. I would certainly encourage other hostels to take up the offer of having work carried out by the CP teams."

Changing lives in challenging times

In a sports hall in the centre of Porthmadog, seven men are sitting in a group, discussing violence against women and sexual respect.

They have all been found guilty of domestic abuse against their partners and have been ordered to take part in the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP)

The men-only course is one of a range of accredited programmes delivered by Wales Community Rehabilitation Company, which aims to change an offender's behaviour. For some offenders it's an alternative to prison, for others it becomes part of their licence on release from prison.

The IDAP in Porthmadog is one of eight domestic violence programmes run by Wales Community Rehabilitation Company's North Wales Local Delivery Unit but the only one to take place in a public venue.

The nine-month programme is delivered in nine modules, run in

weekly 2 ½ hour-long group work sessions. During the sessions offenders are given a manual and workbook and in the group setting, using videos and discussions, the men examine their behaviour and learn how to control and adapt their reactions. Throughout the programme Women's Safety Workers are able to provide a safety plan for the victims and keep them informed of the offenders' progress on the programme. For the offenders taking part their crimes can range from serious physical assaults to emotional torture.

During the sessions run by Probation Services Officers June Hughes and Sian Williams, perpetrators of domestic abuse examine topics including sexual respect, non-violent behaviour and responsible parenting in group sessions.

June Hughes, a PSO based in Wales CRC's Bangor office, explained: "IDAP has been running for more than eight years and I have been trained as a tutor in the programme for approximately seven years and in that time we have had many

success stories."

"We once received a letter from the partner of one of the men thanking us for changing their lives after he had completed the course. As a couple they found they were able to communicate and understand one another better.

"Another man had not been able to have access to his baby as a result of his offence. Through the programme he started to stop being angry and use the skills he had learnt to become more assertive using the correct channels. As a result he was able to get access to his daughter."

"It's always rewarding to receive positive feedback from men who have completed the programme. The success of IDAP is that it challenges people's beliefs."

The IDAP course is one of a series of specially-designed courses where offenders are directed by the courts to work with their offender manager and other specialist staff to help them develop the skills they need to lead law abiding lives.

What's so special about the IDAP Programme in Porthmadog?

The widespread rural nature of North Wales had made it difficult for some offenders to access courses, which had previously been run in Wales CR's offices in Colwyn Bay or Bangor. For some men living in the more remote rural towns and villages, it meant a 150-mile round journey, which could take up to four hours and was almost impossible without a car. The distance also caused problems for offenders to fit the workshops around their work.

Tracey Owen, Deputy LDU Head for North Wales, explained: "The IDAP course in Porthmadog Leisure Centre is innovative and supportive to building

community links within North Wales as it is delivered from a public building instead of a probation office and has been really successful.

"To support Wales CRC using the sports hall for the course, risk assessments were carried out by Wales CRC and provision has been put in place to ensure the safety of CRC and leisure centre staff.

"We recognised location had been a barrier for some service users, but the leisure centre is right in the centre of town next to the train station and bus stop, so it's much easier to access."

"Since the course was launched the numbers have increased and the attendance records have improved."

Special Programmes

Community Payback

Operation Mistletoe keeps city streets safe at night

What started out as a festive scheme to keep Christmas revellers safe on their nights on the town has now expanded into an all-year project.

Operation Mistletoe sees offenders clearing the streets of broken glass, bottles and other potential weapons.

The offenders who have been sentenced to Community Payback patrol the centres of Cardiff, Swansea, Merthyr and Pontypridd, clearing them of dangerous items which could cause serious injury or prove a temptation for use in an assault. In Cardiff the teams are out every Friday and Saturday night from 8.30pm to 3am, clearing areas near clubs and pubs.

Phil Martin, Community Payback team manager with Wales Community Rehabilitation Company, said the project was popular with the public.

"We get a good response from people who see us out in

high visibility jackets making the streets safer and we are in radio contact with the police in case we see any problem areas or someone is injured.

"We are trying to reduce violent crime by taking all the weapons off the streets. If someone suffers a glassing injury it costs £30,000 in health service, judiciary, police and probation costs. We carry out our patrols all year and see very few incidents," he said.

Wales Community Rehabilitation Company works with local authorities and alongside the police and street pastors. The Swansea team works with the Safer Swansea Partnership and operates sweeps of the main routes into the city centre every Saturday night.

Graham Thomas, Community Payback manager, said: "The work groups provided re-

38,600

hours of unpaid work was completed in Welsh communities in a single month.

(October 2014)

assurance for the public in the form of increased, high visibility presence on the streets.

"From the offenders' point of view, they are able to make direct reparation to the community by keeping roads and pedestrian areas cleaner and safer. They are also able to see for themselves how excessive alcohol consumption affects people's behaviour and better understand how this can lead to offending.

"Due to the success of the scheme, projects are also now well established in Swansea. The Wales Community Rehabilitation Company is proud to be a key partner in these projects and hopes to make the festive season safer and more enjoyable for everyone."





Jo from Gibran with some of the dresses made by offenders

Offenders make dresses for Sierra Leone children

Women offenders have turned plain pillowcases into colourful dresses for children in one of the world's most troubled countries.

The dresses have been sent to Sierra Leone in West Africa, a country still recovering from years of civil war and now affected by the Ebola epidemic.

They have been made by female offenders taking part in a Community Payback project at Gibran, a not for profit social enterprise at Llanover near Abergavenny.

A visiting tutor taught the women basic sewing skills, including the use of a sewing machine, and the offenders personalised the dresses with pockets, appliqué and colourful buttons.

The project has been made possible thanks to a partnership between Gibran and Wales Community Rehabilitation Company. David Bidgood, Community Payback Officer with Wales CRC, said it had been a great success with 24 women working with Gibran since March.

"Previously female offenders given Community Payback orders by the court were carrying out work such as grass cutting and graffiti removal, but it was apparent that many of them had issues in their lives such as domestic violence and problems finding accommodation and these were not really being addressed.

"We approached Gibran who do a lot of support work with women coming out of prison and they were able to provide placements for our offenders to work on a clothing recycling project. The offenders also receive support during their

order and afterwards.

"It's been a real success and we've had a lot of feedback from the women. One has even managed to go on to study at university."

Jo, senior projects manager with Gibran, explained how the women on Community Payback spend mornings on learning activities which could include money management or basic skills and their afternoons sorting clothes.

Gibran's Glad Rags project sources school uniforms for children whose parents are in prison, clothing for people leaving prison with nothing to wear and smart workwear for ex offenders preparing for job interviews.

"We believe people can change and we want to create the opportunities for them to do so," said Jo.

The Dresses for Africa day was a special activity for the women run in conjunction with Vintage Vision, a social enterprise centred on vintage clothing which teaches people to sew and recycle clothes. They provided a tutor while the Esme Fairbairn Foundation funded the materials.

61,936

is the number of times our
Tweets were read in the last three months.