



ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014



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ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014

The Chair of CROPT Trustees writes:

As Chair of Trustees, it is my pleasure to commend to readers this annual report of the work and progress of Cumbria Reducing Offending Partnership Trust (CROPT) over the period 2013-2014.

The report shows that throughout the period in question, CROPT's established projects – Circles of Support and Accountability, the Buddy Project, the Carlisle Allotment Project and the regular publication of The Seagull newspaper – have continued in a variety of ways to provide quality rehabilitative activity for a wide range of service-users. 2013-14 also saw continued progress in the setting up of the ARETE trading enterprise with HMP Haverigg and in the development of Together2Change, a consortium of voluntary organisations offering a wide range of services to offenders and their dependents in Cumbria. In addition, CROPT began working with local partner organisations aimed at providing programmes for offenders leaving custody, for veterans and for perpetrators of domestic abuse.

The above developments have been driven to no small extent by Government's reforms of the Probation Service which are currently in process of being implemented. On 1 June 2014, the work of the former Cumbria Probation Trust was split between two newly-formed bodies – a new National Probation Service which is responsible for the supervision of high-level offenders and a joint Cumbria and Lancashire Community Rehabilitation Company (CL CRC) which is responsible for providing services for offenders classified as lower risk. Whilst the National Probation Service remains a statutory body, from April 2015 CL CRC and other CRCs will be outsourced by Government to a range of private service providers.

Whilst the new arrangements will no doubt take some time to bed down, it is hoped that they will eventually bring to CROPT and to other voluntary organisations in Cumbria opportunity to tender for the delivery of a wide range of rehabilitative services.

All that said, I should wish to assure all those who in any capacity have supported CROPT over recent years, that CROPT is intent on holding fast to its founding values and will seek to ensure that its enterprise does not morph into just another hard-headed business venture. Whilst tendering for, and winning contracts will be likely to be CROPT's principal way of securing funding in the future, at the core of CROPT's work will still remain a genuine concern for the welfare of its service-users and a belief that for all people change is possible. CROPT will not lose its heart.

Finally, I should like to thank all those who in any way over 2013-14 gave their support to CROPT – funders, Trustees, salaried staff, volunteers. At the same time, I should like to welcome on board CROPT's new Chief Executive and Business Development Manager, Kevin Royston, not least because his taking up post means that I personally, whilst remaining for the time being Chair of Trustees, can begin to think of taking something more of a back seat in so far as the day to day running of the charity is concerned.

The Revd Canon Dr David Peacock

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THE PROJECTS



THE BUDDY PROJECT

Mentoring project meeting with offenders on a one-to-one basis, working towards progression onto volunteering, training or employment.



CIRCLES OF SUPPORT & ACCOUNTABILITY

Circles build safer communities through local volunteers working with sex offenders to minimise alienation, support reintegration and so prevent sexual reoffending.



THE ALLOTMENT PROJECT

Based around a community project is run by volunteers and provides opportunities for offenders and ex-offenders all year round. The allotment produces seasonal vegetables, fruit and flowers.



THE SEAGULL NEWSPAPER

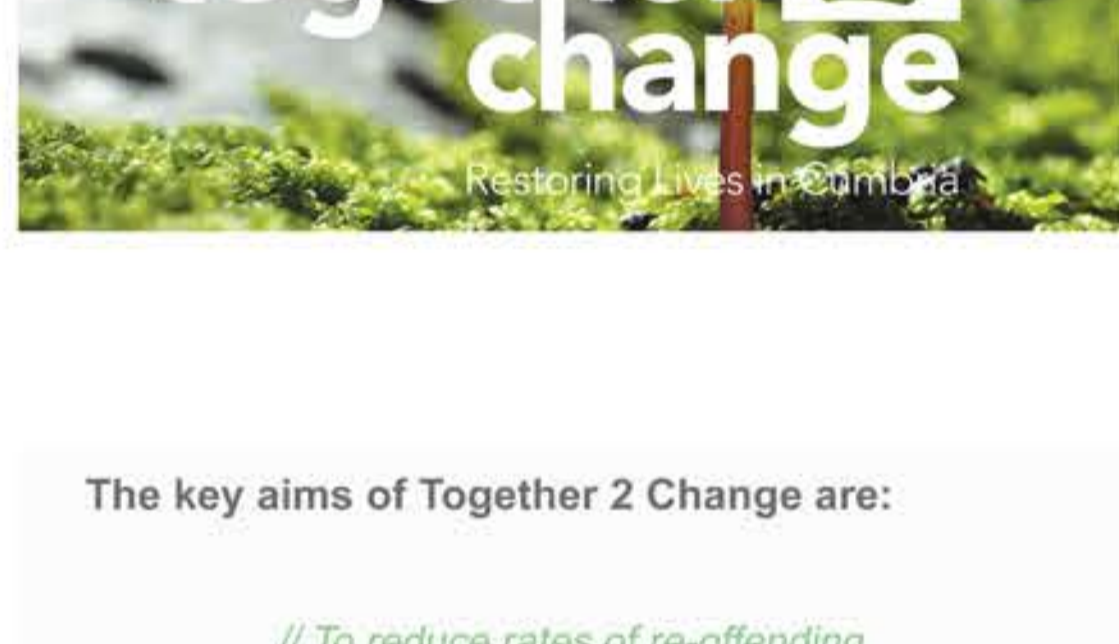
Based around a community project is run by volunteers and provides opportunities for offenders and ex-offenders all year round. The allotment produces seasonal vegetables, fruit and flowers.



KNOWLEDGE, INFORMATION & SKILLS EXCHANGE (KISE)

The KISE (Knowledge Information & Skills Exchange) partnership forum has continued to develop significantly over the past 12 months. Chaired and serviced by CROPT, KISE is enjoys a high regular attendance.

There are now around thirty organisations, agencies and professional individuals on the mailing list.



Rising out of the work of KISE, a consortium has been developed called 'Together 2 Change' and is now registered as companies house with its own website (www.together2change.org.uk) and publicity literature. The consortium is made up of Cumbrian voluntary organisations that provide a wide range of interventions and services for offenders and ex-offenders, which include accommodation, drug and alcohol treatments, mentoring, life-skills, training in practical skills, preparation for and work experience work placements.

The key aims of Together 2 Change are:

- // To reduce rates of re-offending
- // To encourage independent and healthy living
- // To provide life-skills training and training for employment
- // To contribute to the building of safer communities

Members have undergone diagnostics checks to ensure contract readiness.

THE STATISTICS

These are the statistics for the 12 month period starting in August 2013 and ending in July 2014.



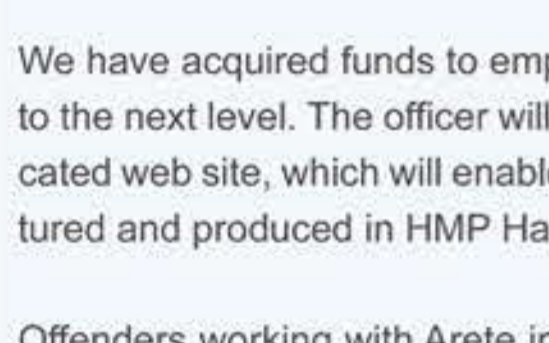
The statistics relating to offenders who engaged in projects during the year 2013-2014:



Re-engaging with community examples:

Art Course, Basic Food Hygiene Course, Voluntary Employment, Job Interviews, Accessed Support, Gym Membership, Theatre Group, Dog Walking, Treatment Programs, Regular at Allotment and more.

ARETE ENTERPRISES



Arete Enterprises is an exciting commercial partnership forged out of a strong belief that providing offenders with through the prison gate employment skills and capabilities will significantly increase their chances of successful reintegration into the community. The introduction of a sustainable business enterprise that manufactures and distributes high quality premium goods will allow both HMP Haverigg and CROPT to provide offenders working in the business with support and work experience that facilitate the development of skills and experience in a real life business environment.

We have acquired funds to employ a development officer who will work on moving this partnership to the next level. The officer will work with our web designer to conclude the development of a dedicated web site, which will enable the public to purchase those high quality premium goods manufactured and produced in HMP Haverigg, and thereby spreading the brand nationwide.

'The introduction of a sustainable business enterprise will allow both HMP Haverigg and CROPT to provide offenders with support and work experience that facilitates the development of skills'

Offenders working with Arete in prison will be able to demonstrate proven work readiness abilities when applying for future employment opportunities. Arete Enterprises will also provide a longer term financial benefit to both CROPT and the Prison. This will be achieved through increased product sales that ensures the prison reduces its reliance on tax payers money and operates a financially viable manufacturing operation and CROPT through Trading reinvesting any profits made from its sales and distribution activities back into the main charity to provide a source of sustainable revenue to meet its charitable objectives.

CROPT are also committed to ensuring any employment opportunities arising from this partnership will be open to ex-prisoners who have worked on Arete enterprises manufacturing within the prison. Thus offering a continuity of employment through the gate.

VOLUNTEER MENTORS

CROPT continues to develop mentor-based projects that bring about an increased understanding in the underlying causes of offending or unwanted behaviour and actively engaging with individuals to support them in making constructive changes in their lives. Current projects such as Cumbria Circles of Support and Accountability, The Allotment Project and Buddy Project clearly demonstrate that where offenders actively engage with projects and activities the likelihood of re-offending is significantly diminished.

Experience continues to prove that investing time in a person's life can produce huge life changing differences. Volunteering provides an opportunity for communities to help reduce re-offending, which is a benefit not only to offenders, but also their families, victims and society as a whole.

Volunteers are a vital and essential factor for a number of reasons, bringing flexible and responsive support to the needs of the offenders on the project. CROPT has witnessed that offenders are very often bemused that someone is willing to give up their own time to be with them, which provides a magnificent source of encouragement for those individuals. Coming from a wide range of backgrounds, volunteers bring to projects a whole spectrum of skills and experience which will allow effective delivery of outcomes.

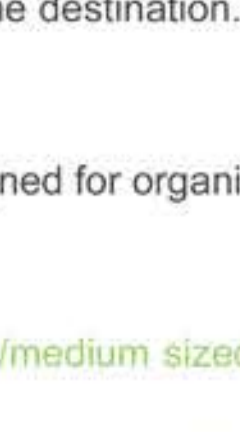
CROPT is building on its experience to expand provision and has developed a coherent and strategic approach to volunteer recruitment, selection, training, support and supervision. This will contribute directly to reducing social exclusion and isolation within communities, and aim to integrate offenders back into their communities

It is intended that there will be unique specialist mentor provision for various individuals supported, for example a disorientated, vulnerable veteran leaving the armed forces will be offered support from a Mentor who has personal experiences and a deep understanding of the issues leaving the armed forces; an offender would be offered support from a reformed ex-offender who can act as a positive role model, be non-judgemental and demonstrate that change is possible.

QUALITY STANDARDS

There is a growing recognition that third sector organisations need to be able to better demonstrate how valuable voluntary organisations are, along with the impact they have within communities. Consequently quality standards are now high on most organisations agenda.

CROPT has been working towards the Approved Provider Standard, which is the national quality standard for mentoring, made possible via a bursary from NOMS (National Offender Management Service).



The accreditation process was interesting, demanding and challenging, leading to processes and procedures being revised and updated. The accreditation granted by Mentoring & Befriending Foundation involved demonstrating compliance using 12 standards to look closely at purpose, users, volunteers, safeguarding, support, monitoring, etc.

The feedback from the APS assessor concluded that CROPT delivers a well-managed mentoring service, delivering a highly-valued service across the region of Cumbria. "It has a strong commitment to the rehabilitation of offenders and to the transformation of individual lives. APS Assessor.

Over the past twelve months, CROPT has also been working towards PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations). This is a straight forward quality assurance system which is built upon twelve quality areas. These include planning, governance, leadership, user-centred service, managing people, development, managing resources, communications, monitoring and evaluation. Charities Evaluation Services state, "Research has shown that organisations that take their time to implement PQASSO gain the most from it. Many of the benefits arise out of the learning that takes place. PQASSO is as much about the journey as it is about the destination." Charities Evaluation Services ©PQASSO 3rd edition

Finally, CROPT is also working towards Community Justice Standard via Community Development Foundation. It is designed for organisations that wish to improve on the work they are already doing.

"This quality framework helps commissioners manage funds transparently, primes show their social value and gives small/medium sized enterprises a quality mark to show those commissioning and contracting with them that they are a sound investment."

Lea Milligan, Crime Prevention Associate

TESTIMONIALS

Circles Participant

I really value my meetings with the circle and particularly since my probation has finished. Having my dog has helped which I wouldn't have made the effort to get without the help of the group.

Football Participant

It gives me something to do, keeps me out of trouble. I wasn't allowed to play football at school - I love playing football.

Circles Participant

I didn't think I would stick at Circles, but I have grown into it. They push me to challenge myself. It has made me much more confident in myself just by trusting [the volunteers].

Allotment Project Participant

I'm loving the allotment - even when there's been hard things to do and it's been raining, I don't care - I just battle on. The Allotment volunteer has been great with me - he really knows his stuff.

Circles Participant

I'm throwing myself into all that's being offered to me - I want to pick up as much help and support as I can whilst it's being offered.

Seagull Newspaper

The poetry reading event drew 14 attendees and went very well. The prisoners read favourite poems and some had written their own. These will appear in The Seagull newspaper.

For more information visit: www.cropt.org.uk