

forward

Thinking

The newsletter of The Forward Trust

April 2019

Welcome to the first edition of Forward Thinking, The Forward Trust newsletter, that aims to keep our supporters and partners informed of what we are up to – showcasing the creativity and commitment of our staff, volunteers and service users, and publicising new or distinctive pieces of work. We will produce and send one of these newsletters round every few months – I hope you find it an entertaining read.

We continue to struggle – in a time of Brexit and austerity – to deliver support to as many people (offenders and those struggling with drug/alcohol problems) as we can, and to motivate and inspire them to turn their lives around, breaking the cycle of drugs and crime. We are increasing the pathways through which our clients can seek recovery – as well as our 12-step substance misuse programmes, we also offer other substance misuse and mental health interventions, pathways in to real jobs, and safe and supportive accommodation – all infused with the belief, spirit and mutual support that gives some of the most marginalised people in society the confidence to make a ‘career change’.

Thank you to all of you – staff, volunteers, commissioners, partners, funders, donors – who help us to deliver on this mission. I hope you continue to support this important cause, and that the news items below give you an idea of the diversity and impact of the work.

Best wishes,

Mike Trace
CEO
The Forward Trust



Forward volunteers meet Russell Brand

Forward volunteers were delighted to meet Russell Brand, one of Forward's Patrons, at an event to launch his new book, "Mentors: How to help and be helped."

At the event, run by the 'How to: Academy', Russell was interviewed by journalist Hannah MacInnes.

He opened up about how accepting help has been a route to happiness, as well as speaking about the different mentors he has in every area of his life.

Russell encouraged attendees to find mentors of their own, and talked about how becoming a mentor himself has been a key part of his journey to self-acceptance.

Chris Peters, a Recovery Mentor at Forward, enjoyed meeting Russell: "It was great to see him – he was so down to earth – and a lot of his mentoring work is based on the 12-step recovery process."

Mike Trace, Forward CEO, said: "Mentoring – people with experience of recovery from addiction giving advice and support to those still struggling – is at the centre of our work. It has been great to see Russell focus on this in his latest book and to see him share some insights and experiences with some of our own volunteer mentors".

To find out more about the event, click [here](#).

To find out more about the 'How to: Academy', click [here](#).



Latest edition of Pulse is launched at Dover and Folkestone Hub open day

On the 17th January 2019, The Forward Trust held an event at the Dover and Folkestone hub to highlight the inspirational work being done.

As well as celebrating the achievements of the Hub and the wider East Kent service, the event also served as the launch of the latest Pulse report.

Pulse is a series of briefings from Forward for partners, commissioners and stakeholders to communicate insight from our research team's analysis of client data and other findings, examples of innovation and continuous service improvement and evidence of our personal, social and economic impact.

Among those attending were the High Sherriff of Kent and one of the Deputy Lord Lieutenants for Kent, as well as our commissioners and representatives from local partner organisations, some of whom were involved with the co-design project.

Those attending had the chance to listen to a panel discussion with former clients and peer mentors about their experiences, personal struggles and how they've been engaging with services such as the new Dover Day Programme. This is an intensive, abstinence-based treatment programme for substance misuse - similar to the type of interventions run in residential rehabs but for people who want or need to live in their own home.

To find out more and read the Pulse briefing in full, click [here](#).

#ForwardInThePress

The Forward Enterprise Fund is a £2 million social investment fund that supports charities and enterprises who prioritise creating employment opportunities for ex-offenders and people in recovery from addiction. Two of the businesses we have supported through the fund have been in the media in recent months. They are:

HMPasties, a bakery run by ex-offenders, won the Heart of Salford Award for Social Enterprise. Please click on the name of the publication to see the story:

[Inside Time](#)

[Russell Webster Blog](#)

[Cost Sector Catering](#)

[Rooftop News](#)

WeAreNotSaints - a radical new approach for the music industry

We Are Not Saints is an independent record label dedicated to finding and working with people with real talent who are in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction. It launched in January 2019 following funding and support from the Forward Enterprise Fund. We secured the following media coverage:

[BBC Sussex \(piece is not available to listen to\)](#)

[Rooftop News](#)

[The ISM Trust Blog](#)



Forward co-hosts the UK's first Novel Drug Trends conference

In November 2018, Forward co-hosted the UK's first Novel Drug Trends conference alongside Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust. The aim of the conference was to examine the risks and challenges from the newer synthetic Psychoactive Substances (PS) such as "Spice". We secured the media coverage in Third Sector online news website The Rooftop News - see below for more details:

[Rooftop News](#)

Friends of Forward raises over £13,000 for the charity by holding carol celebration at HMP Brixton



On December 10th 2018, a Carol Celebration was held at HMP Brixton to raise funds for Forward. The event was attended by a range of external attendees as well as some well-known musicians, famous actor Jonathan Pryce and some of the service users. Forward staff, including members from the team at HMP Brixton, helped to run the event on the night, aided by some of the Peer Supporters. The evening was organised by Friends of Forward (our Ambassador group who fundraise for us) and raised over £13,000. Many thanks to everyone involved for all of their hard work to put this event together.

To find out more about the evening, please visit our website by clicking [here](#).

Volunteer Spotlight

Chris Peters, Forward Volunteer



How did you first get involved with Forward?

I first heard about Forward at HMP Brixton where I did their 12-step programme, which helped me to address my issues with drugs and alcohol. I heard about the volunteer opportunities they have for people when they leave prison and when I got out, I knew I wanted to give back and go and help them. I got in touch less than a week after leaving prison, and I've been volunteering here now for over seven months.

What sort of things do you do for Forward?

No day is the same when you volunteer here! I help them in lots of different ways – from talking to people who are still in prison to inspire them that they can turn their lives around, to meeting people on their day of release and helping them get to their first appointment or rehab. I also help the Communications and Fundraising teams quite a lot by speaking at events and to journalists who want to talk to someone who has been helped by Forward.

What has been your proudest moment or most rewarding experience at Forward?

Being nominated for an award for volunteering at Forward. It meant so much to me that the people I work with thought highly enough of me to nominate me. I also really like working in an office environment. I spent a lot of time working on building sites over the years and being in an office is so different – I really like it!

Do you have a favourite band?

I like all kinds of music but I'm particularly drawn to hip hop, in particular a guy called Rick Ross, who is a rapper, entrepreneur and record executive.

What is your boxset of choice?

I'm very into my Netflix when I have the time and I quite like shows with a supernatural element, such as Vampire Diaries, Van Helsing, Black Lightning and the Umbrella Academy.

Finally, what is your favourite thing about Forward?

They don't judge you. For lots of people or companies, my background might have been an issue. But no-one at Forward has ever made me feel that way – they have always been so welcoming, supportive and grateful for me volunteering my time. That's a beautiful thing.

If you're interested in finding out more about our volunteer service or volunteering with us, click [here](#).

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