





Annual Review and Impact Report

2025/26

Forward






THE JOURNEY
SOUTHEND STARS







forward

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Message from our Chair and CEO

We are delighted to introduce The Forward Trust's Annual Review and Impact Report for 2025/26.

This has been another year of growth and deepening impact. Across England and Wales, we supported more than 39,000 people, around 4,000 more than the previous year and our greatest reach to date. Behind those numbers are thousands of individual stories of people overcoming addiction, moving away from crime and building more positive futures.

This report provides an overview of what we do, where we work and who we support, as well as how we help people progress through our stages of change. It then describes in more detail our work across drugs, alcohol and mental health, criminal justice and employment, together with our distinctive Recovery and Belonging services, which provide recovery, housing and family support alongside the lifelong peer community of Forward Connect.

Throughout the report, we bring this work to life through highlights from our services, lived experience stories and evidence of the reach, outcomes and impact we have achieved. We also reflect on our campaigning and national policy influencing work and recognise the commissioners, partners, funders and supporters who make so much of our work possible.

We are immensely proud of what has been achieved this year and, above all, of the people we support who continue to show that lasting change is possible.

We are also proud of our 900 dedicated staff – over a third of whom have lived experience of the issues we support - who help realise this impact and change, day after day.

We hope you enjoy reading about their achievements and the difference we are making together.



Tony Adams MBE, Chair



Mike Trace, Chief Executive



Tony Adams MBE, Chair



Mike Trace, CEO












Image credit: Laura Lewis

About Forward: An overview

What we do

The Forward Trust is a social justice charity that supports people to recover from addiction or leave behind crime, helping them move on in life with family, friends, jobs, homes, and a sense of belonging.

We deliver drug and alcohol, mental health, criminal justice, and employment services in more than 80 community settings and prisons across England and Wales (detailed on page 11). These services are commissioned through contracts with a range of local and central government departments. Clients making progress through these pathways can access our unique range of 'Recovery and Belonging' services that help them maintain lasting recovery and transformational change - housing, family, and recovery support, and the Forward Connect peer community.

We also campaign to change public attitudes and policy, so that more people feel able to ask for help in a society that believes in the power of second chances and long-term recovery.

Whatever their history or circumstance, we believe that almost anyone, with the right support, can overcome their problems and fulfil their potential.

All too often, individuals who experience addiction or perpetrate crime are written off as beyond hope, or a lost cause. The work described in this report, building on our 35-year history, proves otherwise, having supported thousands of individuals from all walks of life to achieve transformational change and lasting recovery. We exist to give this life-changing opportunity to as many people as possible.




CHOOSE
LIFE


TAKING
ACTION
ADDICTION
BY THE FORWARD TRUST
FT
FINANCIAL
TIMES
VISIBLE
RECOVERY
Steps 2 Recovery
music



Where we work

In 2025/26, Forward delivered over 80 contracted services in addition to a range of charitably funded projects and support:

Drugs, Alcohol and Mental Health

Prison services

- Substance misuse services integrated with healthcare in 16 prisons.
- 2 abstinence-based group programmes ('Y Bont') run as part of recovery units at HMP Cardiff and HMP Swansea.
- Talking Therapies in 5 prisons.
- Reconnect (linking vulnerable prison leavers with healthcare) services across all 7 counties in the East of England, working in 16 prisons.

Community services

- 4 integrated substance misuse services in East Kent, Southend-on-Sea, Thurrock and Medway.
- 7 structured day programmes – two in East Kent, two in Essex and one each in Medway, Hull, and Liverpool.
- Residential rehabilitation programmes in two centres in Hull (The Bridges) and Wiltshire (Clouds House).
- An intensive online programme (Recovery Online) available to clients across the country.

Criminal justice

HMP Millsike

- Connections Service: desistance, drug strategy, families and relationships.

Probation services

- Personal Wellbeing services in 9 counties (Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Essex, Kent, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Sussex, Surrey).
- Accommodation support in 3 Welsh probation regions (Dyfed-Powys, Gwent and South Wales).
- Dependency & Recovery services (connecting people with community treatment) through 2 contracts in Humberside and London.





Employment services

- Employment Support in 4 community contracts.
- Individual Placement Support (IPS) service in Medway.
- Enterprise support and employment opportunities through Blue Sky Services (grounds maintenance) delivering 10 contracts.

Recovery and Belonging

Housing

- Access to private rented sector accommodation and mentoring support in 9 London Boroughs and in Kent and Surrey.
- 7 Supported Accommodations schemes in Kent and Essex.

Family Support

- M-PACT (whole family support for addiction) delivered through licence in 27 local authority areas.
- Family Workers supporting Forward clients in 9 prisons, as well as in our community drug and alcohol services, including the Renew Family Service (Hull).

Recovery Support

- For people who have accessed Forward's services across the country and want ongoing recovery support to maintain and strengthen their progress.

Forward Connect

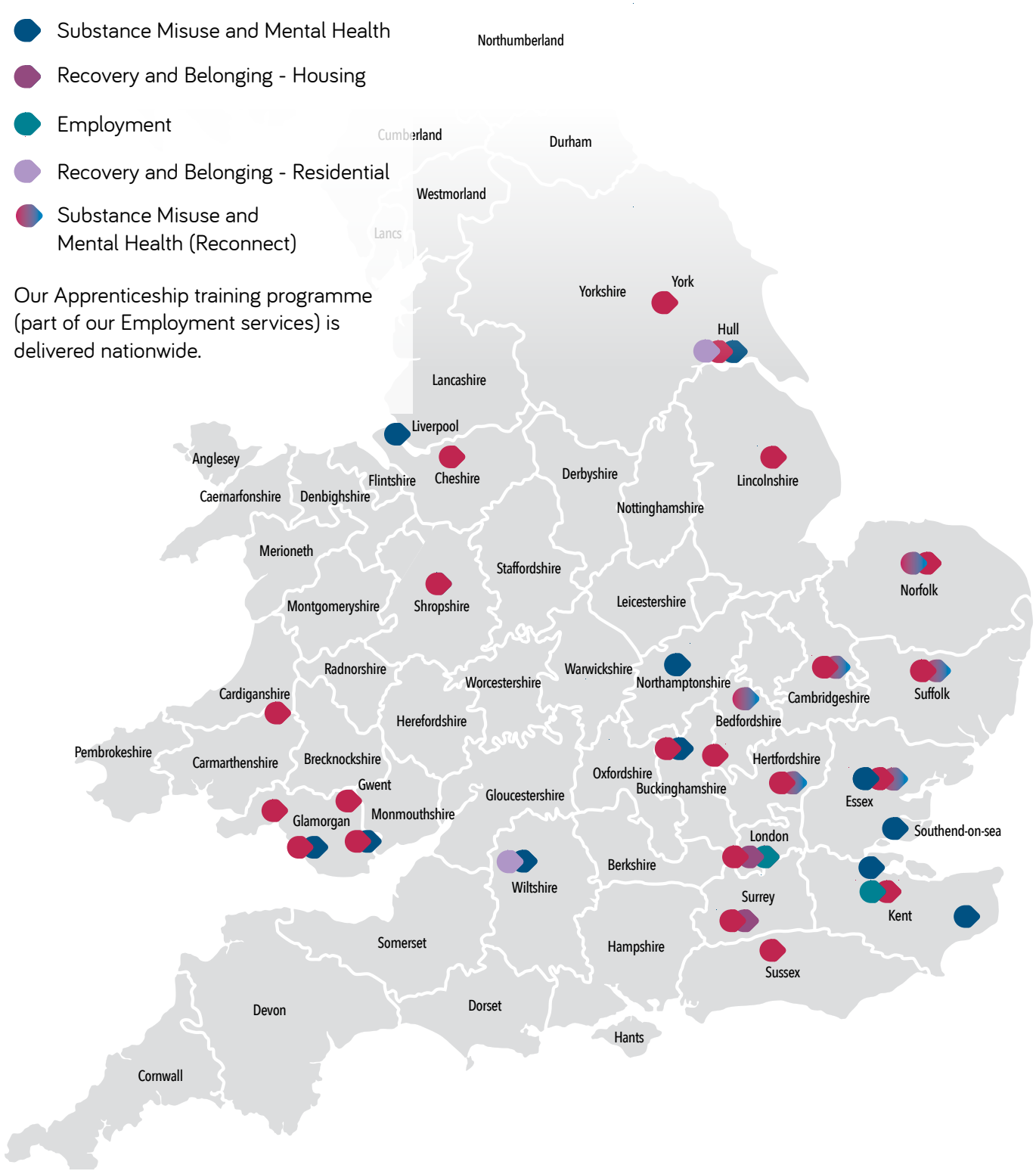
- Nationwide, a mutual aid community of like-minded people who run peer support meetings, social events, arts and sports activities, and take part in voluntary work.

Through these services we reached **39,199** people in 2025/26.

These services spanned the breadth of England and Wales as set out in the map below, including delivery in **33** prisons (detailed in the table.)

- Criminal Justice Services
- Substance Misuse and Mental Health
- Recovery and Belonging - Housing
- Employment
- Recovery and Belonging - Residential
- Substance Misuse and Mental Health (Reconnect)

Our Apprenticeship training programme (part of our Employment services) is delivered nationwide.



Forward's prison-based services

Area	Prison
London	HMP Brixton
	Heathrow Immigration Removal Centre
	HMP Wormwood Scrubs
Thames Valley	HMP/YOI Aylesbury
	Campsfield Immigration Removal Centre
	Oakhill Secure Training Centre
Surrey	HMP Bronzefield
	HMP Coldingley
	HMP Downview
	HMP High Down
	HMP Send
Yorkshire	HMP Millsike
East of England	HMP Bedford
	HMP Bure
	HMP Chelmsford
	HMP Highpoint
	HMP Hollesley Bay
	HMP Littlehey
	HMP Norwich
	HMP Peterborough
	HMP The Mount
	HMP Warren Hill
	HMP Wayland
	HMP Whitemoor
	HMP Woodhill
Midlands	HMP Onley
	HMP Rye Hill
	HMP Stoke Heath
Wales	HMP Cardiff
	HMP Parc
	HMP Prescoed
	HMP Swansea
	HMP Usk

Who we work with

We support a diverse population, spanning different ages, backgrounds and circumstances. The profile of the people we work with varies significantly between services and settings.

Key demographics

Age

People accessing our drug and alcohol services in prison are predominantly in their 30s and 40s, while our community drug and alcohol service population is older, with almost a third aged 50 or over. However, some of our newer services (e.g. Oakhill Secure Training Centre) will see us gradually reach much younger people.

A similar average age profile is evident in our Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRS): almost seven in ten of our Personal Wellbeing and Accommodation clients are aged 25 to 49, while Dependency & Recovery clients are older, with 60% aged 50 or over.

Our Employment Services reach a younger population on average. While people aged 35 to 44 make up almost four in ten clients, a further 40% is aged between 20 and 34.

Gender

Gender also varies according to the service and setting. In community drug and alcohol services, 67% are men and 33% women, closely reflecting the national treatment population. There is a similar breakdown for our Employment services.

In prison drug and alcohol services, 81% of clients are men and 19% women. Forward delivers services in three of the 12 women's prisons in England, representing a quarter of the female prison estate.

Almost all CRS clients identify as male because these contracts are commissioned specifically for men, with specialist provision for women commissioned separately.









Ethnicity

The ethnic diversity of the people we support varies considerably by service and geography.

Around 87% of community drug and alcohol clients identify as White British, compared with 57% of prison clients, making our prison caseload substantially more ethnically diverse. While these profiles broadly reflect the diversity of local community and prison populations, we continually strive to identify and reach underserved groups.

There is considerable variation within CRS too. White clients account for 87% of Personal Wellbeing and of Accommodation clients, compared with just over half of Dependency & Recovery clients, reflecting the London boroughs where we support most clients (19% of clients are Black, 10% Asian and 8% from Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups).

Employment Services similarly reflect the communities and programmes in which they operate. Restart and Adult Skills predominantly support White British clients, while Enterprise has a much more ethnically diverse profile.

The challenges facing the people we support

Demographics tell only part of the story. Many of the people who come to Forward experience significant and sometimes overlapping challenges around housing, employment, physical and mental health, disability, substance use, family relationships and involvement with the criminal justice system.

Housing insecurity

Lack of stable accommodation is one of the clearest indicators of disadvantage within our drug and alcohol service population.

Almost one in two (47%) of prison clients had no home of their own at assessment. More than one in four (28%) had been rough sleeping and 6% sofa surfing, while only 2% owned their home and 15% were renting. Housing status was unknown for a further 29%, meaning the full extent of housing need is difficult to determine.

Housing insecurity is also significant in the community: almost one in four community substance misuse clients had no home of their own, including people rough sleeping, sofa surfing or staying temporarily with friends and family.

Distance from the labour market

Many clients also face substantial barriers to employment.

Among community drug and alcohol clients, only 27% were in regular employment. 23% were long-term sick or disabled, while a further 26% were unemployed and not seeking work.

The picture among prison clients is particularly stark. 28% had never been employed and a further 28% had not been in paid employment for more than three years.

Our Employability services work directly with people seeking to address that need. At entry point, all clients were recorded as unemployed and seeking work. Of these, 85% had been out of paid employment for between one and two years, with the remaining 15% out of work for less than a year.

Mental health and disability

Mental health and disability add another layer of complexity. A (co-morbid) mental health treatment need was recorded for 65% of our community drug and alcohol clients, though for only 32% of prison clients, which is almost certainly under-reported.

Behavioural and emotional difficulties are the most commonly recorded specific disability or difficulty within our drug and alcohol services, affecting around one in seven clients. Within our commissioned rehabilitative services for people on probation, this rises to one in four.

Family relationships

For some people, these challenges sit alongside separation from their families. Among clients recorded as parents, around four in ten in community drug and alcohol services were not living with their children. This rose to more than seven in ten for parents in prison at the time their sentence began.

Supporting the whole person

Taken together, our data shows that Forward works with people facing much more than a single presenting issue. For many, treatment, rehabilitation or employment support sits alongside insecure housing, poor health, disability, long-term unemployment, disrupted family relationships or involvement in the criminal justice system.

These challenges do not exist in isolation. Although our current data does not allow us to quantify exactly how frequently they overlap, it reinforces the importance of seeing the whole person, rather than simply the service or referral that brought them to Forward.

That means helping people address immediate needs while creating connections to the wider support, opportunities and relationships that can enable lasting change. It also means continuing to improve our understanding of who we reach, who may be missing from our services and how we can make support more accessible and responsive to the different communities we serve.





INDICATORS OF MULITPLE DISADVANTAGE

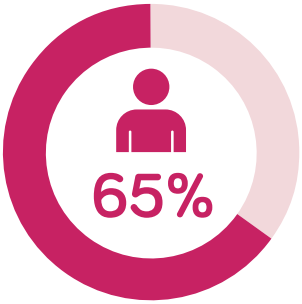
EMPLOYMENT NEED

1 in 4 prison clients have never been employed.

Only 1 in 4 of our drug and alcohol clients in the community have regular employment.

MENTAL HEALTH

65% of drug and alcohol clients in the community have a (co-morbid) mental health need.



HOUSING NEED

1 in 2 prison clients didn't have a home before they started their sentence.

1 in 4 drug and alcohol clients in the community are homeless or insecurely housed.

FAMILY BREAKDOWN

7 in 10 prison clients who are parents didn't live with their children before starting their sentence.

4 in 10 drug and alcohol clients in the community who are parents don't live with their children.

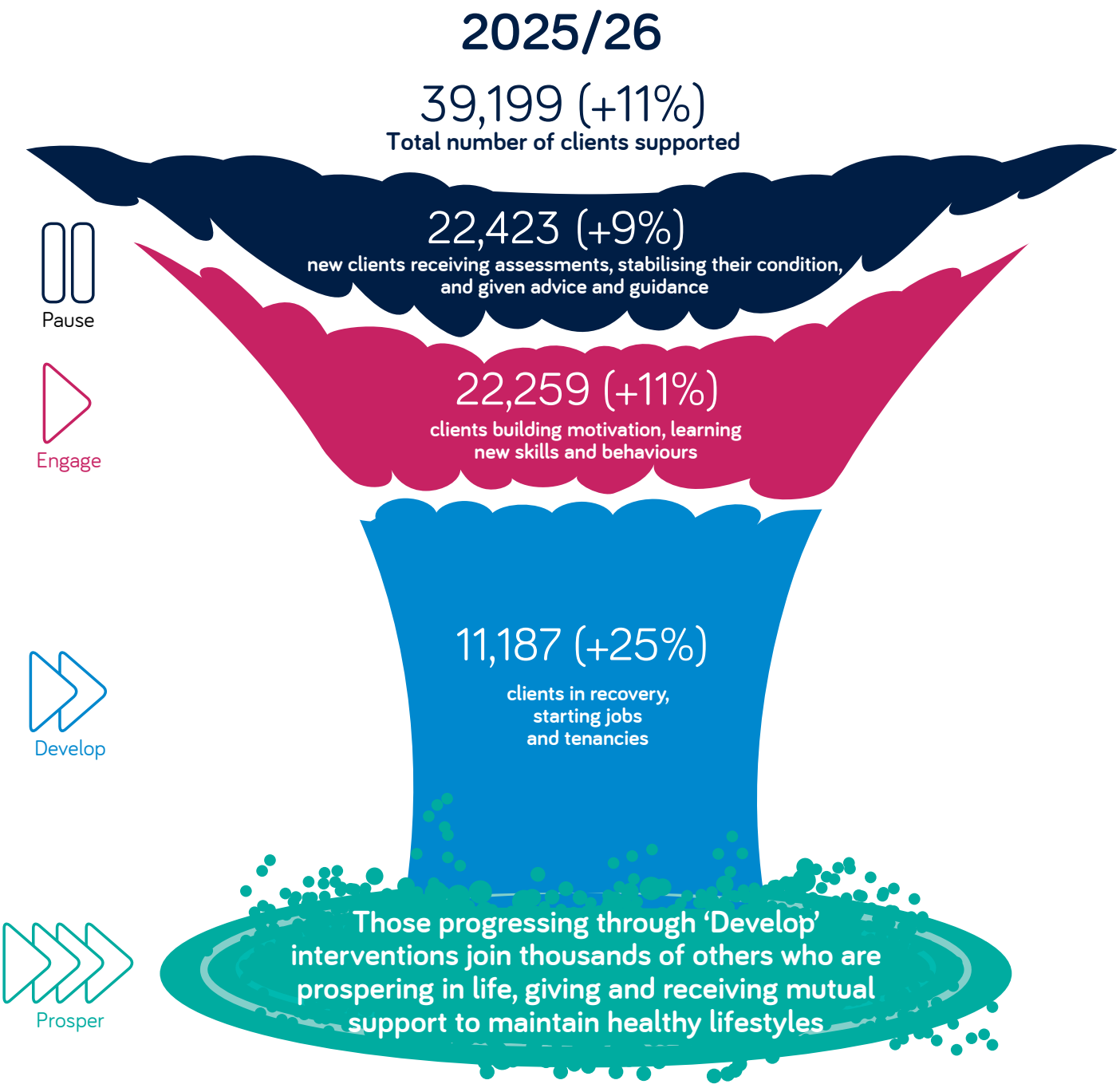
How we support people

Our services are structured according to four clear stages of Forward's 'Theory of Change' (illustrated below). This evidence-based model sets out for service users pathways to build and sustain progress through a range of support, interventions and programmes, with each step increasing in intensity, building human capital and enhancing connection.

Stage of change	Pause	Engage	Develop	Prosper
How we help clients across all services	Supporting clients to take stock of their situation, while addressing immediate health and care needs. We support clients to assess what changes they want to make and decide what sort of help they need.	Working with clients to instil a belief that change is possible, give them confidence to take the first steps, and offer personal and practical support and interventions to get them started on their journey.	Progressing people's personal development and recovery, through structured and intensive programmes, developing new skills and knowledge, and making new positive connections.	Where clients feel the rewards of a more independent life, characterised by positive self respect, personal wellbeing, social connection and positive contribution to family and community.

For over five years, we have collected data on the number of clients who were accessing support at each of these stages, from 'Pause' through 'Engage' to 'Develop'. This data can be visualised as a 'funnel' that flows into our ever-growing reservoir of people who are 'Prospering' in life (becoming part of our 'Forward Connect' recovery community – see p61).

The diagram below presents a comparison of the size and shape of our 'funnel' in 2024/25 and 2025/26. It highlights the change in the number of interventions delivered during this period. Of particular note is the growth in both Engage and Develop interventions, which represent our most targeted and transformative methods of client engagement.



Drugs, Alcohol & Mental Health

Service Overview

In 2025/26, we delivered advice, support and treatment in 7 community services and 16 prisons to help people achieve personal goals related to their use of drugs and alcohol, whether that is to use more safely, cut down, or become abstinent and achieve recovery. We offered 'psychosocial' support (therapeutic interventions on a one-to-one and group basis including intensive recovery programmes) alongside 'clinical' support (opiate substitution treatment and other health interventions).

In prisons, we also delivered mental health support (Talking Therapies) in 5 prisons and Reconnect (linking prison leavers with healthcare in the community) across the East of England.



Personal reflections on 2025/2026

Jason Moore, Executive Director for Drugs, Alcohol and Mental Health



In 2025/26, we continued to strengthen the quality, reach and integration of our drug, alcohol and mental health services. Across prisons and communities, our focus has remained on providing support that responds to the whole person, recognising that substance use is often closely connected with trauma, mental health, physical health, housing, relationships and wider life circumstances.

This year has underlined the importance of reaching people at the right time and maintaining support through periods of transition. The expansion of RECONNECT across the East of England has strengthened the help available to people leaving custody, while our new service at Oakhill Secure Training Centre has extended specialist support to vulnerable young people. In our community services, assertive outreach has helped people with complex needs reconnect with treatment, while dedicated women's provision and improvements for neurodivergent clients have made support more accessible and responsive.

We have also continued to develop more flexible and personalised approaches. The introduction of Step by Step therapy has enabled women on remand or serving shorter sentences to benefit from meaningful therapeutic support, despite uncertain release or transfer dates. Innovations in Talking Therapies, together with creative and trauma-informed work through our recovery programmes in prisons in Wales (Y Bont), demonstrate how evidence-based interventions can be adapted to the realities of prison environments and the individual needs of the people we support.

Alongside innovation, we have placed particular emphasis on quality and consistency. The new Male Prisons Practitioner Handbook provides staff with practical, accessible guidance to support confident and evidence-based delivery, building on our community handbook launched the previous year. Our intelligence-led response to changing drug markets has also enabled teams to identify risks, share learning and adapt harm-reduction approaches as new threats emerge.

It has been especially encouraging to see growing evidence of sustained change. Our evaluation of community day programmes found that participants continued to report improved health, stronger relationships and abstinence six to nine months after completing support. Across our services, people have progressed into volunteering, peer support and employment, demonstrating how recovery can create purpose, connection and opportunities to give something back.

None of this would be possible without the skill, compassion and commitment of our staff, volunteers and peer supporters, or the strength of our partnerships with health services, prisons, commissioners and community organisations. Most importantly, I want to thank the people who place their trust in us. Their courage, progress and willingness to support others continue to inspire our work and show that, with the right support, lasting recovery and positive change are possible.

HIGHLIGHTS: **PRISONS**

RECONNECT – NEW CONTRACT

In April 2025, we launched our new RECONNECT service in the East of England, commissioned by NHS England, and expanded to cover Norfolk, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Milton Keynes, Essex, Hertfordshire, and Suffolk.

RECONNECT provides care for people leaving prison or an Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) with an identified health need, working with them to support their transition to community-based services. The service supports some of the most vulnerable prison leavers, helping them access healthcare, mental health services and community support. Particular features of our new service include:

- Multi-language support and information to ensure non-English speaking residents can access our service, especially from the IRC.
- Innovative use of Virtual Reality headsets to help clients leaving prison (especially those completing long sentences) to visualise and prepare for their first day out of prison.
- Extended promotion to veterans (an underserved population in the East) to ensure the service is widely offered and known about.

Transforming Young Lives at Oakhill Secure Training Centre – NEW CONTRACT

In May 2025 we launched our new substance misuse support service at Oakhill Secure Training Centre in Milton Keynes, delivered in partnership with Dr PA Secure, bringing Forward's expertise in psychosocial intervention to vulnerable young people aged 12-18.

The service provides comprehensive assessments, one-to-one sessions, workshops, psychoeducation and ongoing case management. Young people can access support directly or be referred by staff, ensuring help is available when it is needed most. Practitioners work alongside each young person to address substance use, risk-taking behaviours, emotional wellbeing and recovery goals, adapting support as needs change.



Alongside evidence-based interventions, the programme includes holistic approaches such as auricular acupuncture to support wellbeing and emotional regulation. From the outset, a strong focus on continuity of care helps young people prepare for life beyond custody, linking them with community treatment, healthcare and recovery services to give them the best possible chance of building healthier, more positive futures.

Surrey prisons counselling service

Our Surrey prisons counselling service provides women at HMPs Bronzefield, Downview and Send with a confidential, non-judgemental space to explore their thoughts, feelings and experiences. Available to anyone on our drug and alcohol caseload, counselling can support people before, during or after structured treatment programmes, helping them address underlying issues, sustain recovery and reduce the risk of reoffending. Clients can access up to 24 individual counselling sessions with professionally registered counsellors.

This year, we introduced a flexible Step by Step therapy model at HMP Bronzefield to improve access for women on remand or serving short sentences. Each session is designed to work as a standalone intervention, ensuring women can benefit even when release or transfer may interrupt longer-term counselling.

We have also begun expanding counselling into Surrey's male prisons, supported by nine trainee counsellors, extending the reach of this specialist support.



Health and Wellbeing Champions commended at HMP Stoke Heath

At HMYOI Stoke Heath, our Health and Wellbeing Champion (HAWC) programme, where clients are trained as peer-to-peer advisers, was commended by HMIP inspectors (Feb 2026):

"The health and well-being champions identified at the previous inspection continued to provide valuable peer support. These prisoners had developed an impressive skillset and were active in the prison in supporting well-being. They were available as a resource and to signpost prisoners to other services, but also undertook simple procedures, such as weight and blood pressure monitoring. They were all well-coordinated, trained and supervised."

Among a range of activities, including supporting individuals with substance misuse issues through groups and 1-2-1 support, HAWCs undertake 'dry blood spot testing' for Hepatitis C.

Prisoners are tested when they first arrive at the reception, and when they leave, which has helped the prison to achieve micro-elimination status for Hep C. HAWCs are also trained Cancer Champions and Mental Health Ambassadors.



Practitioner Handbook: strengthening consistency and confidence across prison services

In spring 2026 we launched the Male Prisons Practitioner Handbook to support high-quality, consistent practice across our prison services. Co-produced with frontline staff, managers and subject matter experts, the handbook brings together practical interventions, harm reduction guidance, structured resources and clear explanations of prison processes and terminology. It also helps practitioners understand how their work contributes to Forward's Theory of Change.

The handbook has been widely welcomed by teams, providing a single, accessible resource that supports both experienced practitioners and new starters. Services reported that it helps staff develop confidence more quickly, understand treatment pathways and deliver interventions consistently across different establishments.



"It is a useful resource for understanding all the different elements of our role and the possible different treatment pathways." Forward staff member

Beyond induction, the handbook is now used as a day-to-day practice resource, offering exercises, discussion prompts and practical materials to support one-to-one work on topics such as harm reduction, anger management, and release planning. By strengthening workforce capability and promoting consistent, evidence-based practice, the handbook is helping improve service quality and outcomes for people accessing support in custody.

Responding to emerging drug trends in prisons

During 2025, prisons faced an increasingly complex and rapidly changing drug market, contributing to growing concerns around people presenting under the influence, and a rise in drug-related deaths. Coordinated centrally by our Service Development Manager, Forward prison teams developed an enhanced approach to psychoactive substance presentations, drug-trend monitoring and harm reduction, adapting our interventions as patterns of use changed. Closer joint working with prison partners helped ensure emerging risks could be identified and responded to quickly.



Our approach was increasingly intelligence-led, with information and emerging trends shared with local authority partners to build a wider understanding of risks. This intelligence informed the timely distribution of our 'Substance or Illicit Drugs' alerts, alongside discussion and shared learning through our 'Forward Thinking' forum, open to all prison services, sharing insights and good practice.

Innovation in Talking Therapies

Across our Talking Therapies services in Eastern prisons, we have continued to develop the range of support we can offer in response to increasing mental health need. Innovation and new interventions include Virtual Reality mindfulness programmes (using simulations of nature to create a sense of calm in often noisy prison environments) and EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) interventions, an interactive psychotherapy treatment designed to help people recover from trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), particularly prevalent in the prison population.

Wales Prisons Recovery Programme: Y Bont

Forward's Wales Prisons Programme (Y Bont) embedded in Incentivised Substance-Free Living units, has developed a strong model of trauma-informed, recovery-focused practice across HMP Cardiff, HMP Swansea and HMP Prescoed. The programme combines structured recovery support with creative, relational and community-building interventions that help people in custody feel safe, connected and motivated to sustain change. Across the different prisons, the work has focused on strengthening peer support, increasing confidence, promoting emotional wellbeing and creating more hopeful recovery cultures.

At HMP Cardiff, we introduced innovative pre-course engagement and creative recovery activities to prepare men for the 12-week programme. This has included "Building Bricks to Recovery" using LEGO Serious Play, reflective discussions on masculinity and emotional wellbeing, and a partnership with Maverick Sounds to deliver a trauma-informed music intervention. Participants wrote, rehearsed and professionally recorded an original recovery rap, enabling them to express their experiences through music, build trust with one another and develop confidence in a positive, constructive way. The work at HMP Cardiff was also recognised through the Safer Communities Award for commitment and dedication to creating safer communities across Wales.

"The intervention put us all in good spirits. I learned to use my mind to be creative, and the extra interventions like LEGO and music really helped." Service User

At HMP Swansea, the programme has developed monthly ISFL Recovery Coffee Mornings that bring residents together in a more informal, community-style setting, featuring guest speakers who have lived experience of addiction and recovery. The involvement of visitors from HMP Prescoed gave participants the opportunity to hear directly from people further along in their recovery and to ask questions about progression to Category D conditions.

And at HMP Prescoed, monthly wellbeing events and lived experience evenings have strengthened recovery networks, partnership working and through-the-gate planning. These events bring together residents, prison staff, Forward Connect, recovery communities and partner agencies in a relaxed setting, often centred around a shared meal.

Delivered in partnership with the British Hen Welfare Trust, 'Jail Birds' is a further innovation: giving a new home to ex-commercial laying hens while providing programme participants with a therapeutic opportunity to care for the birds, build confidence and develop a sense of purpose.



WHAT OUR SERVICE USERS SAY: **PRISONS**

Drug & Alcohol Services and Programmes

"Thank you so much for helping me become a bigger and better version of myself. I wish you all the best!"

"The help and support have been amazing and has really helped me understand myself and my behaviours more. I've been taught how to manager my addictions better than anyone else has ever taught me."

"The work we've done has really helped me, I really do understand myself more and I genuinely feel like I'll never fall back into my old habits. Thank you for contributing to me finding myself again."

"Thank you so much for all your support. People like you matter and your ongoing support has meant the world to me."

RECONNECT

"RECONNECT has been brilliant. Thank you for all your kindness and patience with me. You have helped me a lot."

"I'm so grateful this service exists & thank you for supporting me with my release & move back home. I really can't thank you enough..."

"Thank you so much for supporting me on the day of release. It's so nice to have a service that follows you through & I couldn't have done it without you."

Talking Therapies

"I have always felt listened to, understood and assisted. I have recommended this service to others with similar issues to myself as it has been a great help to me. Thank you for your kindness, patience, understanding and care you have shown me."

"This service has been, by far, the most helpful and beneficial therapeutic work I've done."

"The help and support I've received has enabled me to make positive changes in my life. It's help I can use in the future to ensure I'm able to deal with a range of difficulties. It has changed my life."

REACH AND ACTIVITY: **PRISONS**



Drug and alcohol

- **10,349** male clients and **1,675** female clients
- **3,010** prescribed for opioid use, **447** for alcohol use
- **1,842** life-saving Naloxone kits issued
- **148** clients starting our Stepping Stones programme (▶Engage).
- **206** clients starting structured abstinence-based group programmes (▶▶Develop)

Talking Therapies

- **1,136** new client assessments
- **426** clients commenced Step 2 or Step 3 interventions (▶Engage)



1,136
new client assessments

Reconnect

- **1,725** referrals made to the service
- **983** clients engaged and supported
- **405** clients successfully engaged with community services following prison release



983
clients engaged and supported

CLIENT OUTCOMES







Drug and alcohol services

- **1,535** clients completing treatment drug/alcohol free
- **99%** of feedback respondents rated their experience of Forward services in prisons as 'Good' or 'Excellent'
- **97%** would recommend the service to someone else who needed support
- **77%** average completion rate across all Develop prison programmes
- **67%** of people in prison who completed the Stepping Stones programme increased confidence to avoid drug use and 55% increased confidence to avoid alcohol use
- People who completed The Bridge abstinence-based programme improved scores in:
  - resilience (**64%** of participants),
  - depression (**59%**)
  - anxiety (**67%**) and
  - confidence to avoid alcohol and drug use (**77%** and **82%**)





Surrey prisons counselling service

167
referrals received

809
hours of counselling

Reach and activity

- **167** referrals received
- **809** hours of counselling provided

Outcomes and feedback – Female estate

- **75%** of successfully completing clients showed a noticeable decrease in depression
- **69%** of successfully completing clients showed a noticeable decrease in anxiety

Outcomes and feedback – Male estate

- **67%** of successfully completing clients showed a noticeable decrease in depression
- **83%** of successfully completing clients showed a noticeable decrease in anxiety

"I have been able to process trauma through counselling and can now talk about my son being taken away without feeling as overwhelmed which is what I was hoping for. It has been so helpful and has made me know I never want to use again."

Counselling client

Talking Therapies

- **42%** of Talking Therapies clients (164) moving into 'reliable improvement'



Reconnect

- **96%** of Reconnect clients rated the service as excellent or good

Community appointments (on release from prison) made for:

- **33%** of clients with general health needs
- **33%** of clients with dental health needs
- **20%** of clients with substance misuse needs
- **19%** of clients with mental health needs

HIGHLIGHTS: **COMMUNITY**

INTEGRATED DRUG & ALCOHOL SERVICES

East Kent: Assertive Outreach Project (Dover)

From September 2025 to March 2026, Forward partnered with Dover District Council on a Public Health England-funded pilot supporting people experiencing chronic alcohol dependency, homelessness, trauma and long-term disengagement from services. Two Assertive Outreach Workers used a relationship-led 'Blue Light' approach, working alongside local partners across Dover town centre.

The team supported 34 people with complex needs, achieving significant results. Engagement in structured substance misuse treatment increased from 16.1% to 85%, exceeding the 30% target, with everyone engaged completing a personalised recovery plan. Recorded street-drinking anti-social behaviour fell from 39 incidents in September to seven in February, while police call-outs reduced to zero.

Alongside health interventions (e.g. blood-borne virus screenings), participants were supported to secure housing, reconnect with GPs and families, obtain vital ID, access food banks and explore employment support. Quality of Life scores increased from an average 5.2 to 9.25, demonstrating the wider impact of persistent, compassionate outreach.

East Kent: Raising awareness of ketamine harms

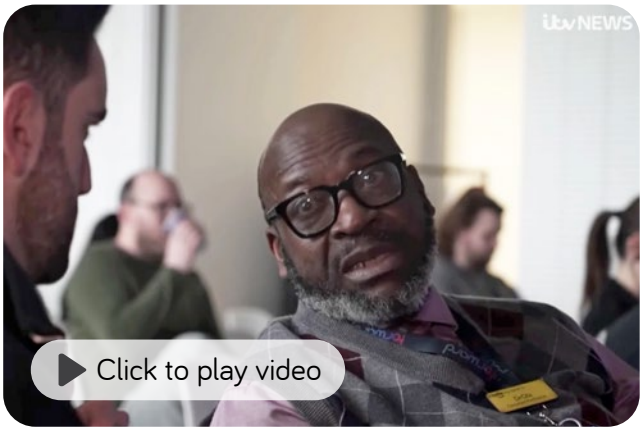
In March 2026, Forward hosted a Ketamine Awareness Day at the Turner Contemporary art gallery in Margate, bringing together more than 100 professionals from across East Kent, including police, probation, NHS, youth, education and social care services.

The event responded to growing concerns about ketamine use, particularly among younger people aged 16–24, raising awareness of its physical and mental health harms while promoting harm reduction, early intervention, specialist support and recovery pathways. Meridian ITV News also attended, helping bring wider attention to the issue (coverage pictured).

Lived experience was central to the day, with community member Amy sharing her personal journey from ketamine addiction into recovery.

"We're really amazed to have gathered so many people that share the same purpose of reducing ketamine harms in East Kent... That message really hit home: recovery is possible."

Darren Lacey, Inclusion Co-ordinator, Forward Trust



Medway: Creating accessible recovery spaces for women

As part of Forward's wider commitment to improving accessibility for service users, our Medway RIVER service developed a dedicated Women's Group in 2025/26, providing a safe, supportive, female-only recovery space, supported by Peer Supporter Kirsty.

Open to all women using the Medway service, the group established a committed core of participants who attended consistently, building strong relationships and a valuable network of mutual support. Those connections extended beyond the group, with participants going on to attend other activities together, including evening workshops.

The group also supported progression in recovery. One woman moved into residential rehabilitation, while others committed to the next programme cycle and to continuing their recovery journey together through our partner Open Road's aftercare service and the Forward Connect recovery community.

"A lovely group, I learnt a lot... Definitely recommend to all women in recovery."
Service User

Medway Treatment & Recovery Service
RIVER



Southend: making our services more accessible for neurodivergent people



Also aiming to enhance accessibility, our Southend service invited SUMMIT (Tendring Mental Health Support) to undertake an Autism and Neurodiversity Accessibility Audit of its premises.

The audit looked at the service through a neurodivergent lens, considering reception and one-to-one spaces, lighting and other sensory factors that can create barriers to engagement. It identified practical improvements to make the environment more welcoming and accessible for people with autism, ADHD, AuDHD and sensory differences.

New initiatives included developing visual pre-visit guides, providing sensory tools such as fidgets and ear defenders, introducing softer lighting and rolling out Neurodivergent Communication Passports.

"It brought a fresh set of eyes through a different lens to look at how the service may feel to those with neurodiversity." Lea Tate, Southend Service Manager

Thurrock: taking recovery support into the community

As a relatively new Forward service, 2025/26 provided an opportunity for our Thurrock team to work with service users, families, staff, volunteers and local partners to re-shape provision rooted in the community. By taking support into settings including the Salvation Army Drop-In and working closely with homelessness services, the team built trusted relationships with people who might otherwise remain disconnected from treatment. This proactive approach helped 18 people who had previously disengaged to reconnect with support.

Lived experience has been central to the service's development. Former service users have progressed into volunteering, peer mentoring and employed roles, while service user forums have directly informed new activities.

These include Art Space, which offers a safe, creative environment where people can express themselves, develop coping strategies and build confidence, while reducing stress and anxiety. The Health and Wellbeing Group supports older adults to maintain their independence through practical sessions on home safety, budgeting, healthy cooking, NHS health checks and accessing local services. Walk-and-talk activities also encourage physical activity and social connection. Women's Space provides a safe, women-only route into treatment for women affected by substance use, domestic abuse, trauma and isolation. This includes women supported by refuge services and those needing to avoid contact with perpetrators. Across different stages of recovery, participants have built confidence, reduced isolation, strengthened peer connections and, as they progress, become visible recovery role models for others.



WHAT OUR SERVICE USERS SAY

"I feel the work Forward Trust are doing is amazing! It's not judgemental, very supportive and the group work was fantastic and opened my eyes to the problem and provided me the support to address it my talking with like-minded people. Keep up the great work." Dover client (East Kent)

"Thank you for the care, guidance, and support you provided during my treatment. Your patience, encouragement, and commitment made a real difference in my journey toward recovery. I'm deeply grateful for the compassion and understanding you showed, and for helping me see hope and possibility again." Ashford client (East Kent)

"I have gone through some tough times and the support I received really helped me to get through, especially over the past year or so where I experienced a bereavement. I've worked with many of the staff at Margate and they have all been really great, I would recommend Forward Trust to anyone that needs support with substance misuse. Thank you." Margate client (East Kent)

"I genuinely believe with the support of my keyworker my life has been saved... Thank you so much for helping me, and really mean it you have been such a great help in my life. Now my health is improving, and my drinking is down to safer levels. I am not out of it all yet, but I am so much better than I was when I first came in." Thurrock client

"I loved that my keyworker understood my mental health and gave me facts on how that works and how that can make me relapse. She also gave me really good coping techniques for the future with hope and made me realise that I am strong and I do not need to be in an abusive relationship to be loved. I can bring my baby up clean and sober and be happy." Thurrock client

"I am so thankful, I'm very far from healed but I am so excited for my future. I am not the man I was when I walked through the door the first day and that's because of my recovery worker." Medway client



"Chris (Nurse) very easy to talk to. Has helped me more in a few days, than if I had had to go through the doctors. Knew exactly what I needed and explained everything fully. Can't rate highly enough." Medway client

"If it wasn't for STARS I would not be here today. The support from my recovery worker and Forward Connect has helped drive me forward. I feel this has given me a chance to move onwards and upwards. I am now sober and my life is going forward. I am pleased this has helped me reconnect with my family again." Southend client

"The anxiety group, counselling and 1-2-1 structured sessions has given me a better understanding of what I can and can't control, how to reduce my substance use safely and how to support my ongoing goal to abstinence and I now have the ability to slow down and analyse the situation to support it long-term." Southend client

RECOVERY PROGRAMMES

SHARP enters an exciting new chapter in Essex and Liverpool

This year marked an exciting new chapter for our Self-Help Addiction Recovery Programme (SHARP), relaunched as part of newly commissioned services in Essex and Liverpool.

In Essex, our new Community Rehabilitation Service expanded the county's recovery offer through SHARP structured day programmes in Braintree and Wickford. These are complemented by 'Brink of Change' preparatory groups, M-PACT family support, individual counselling and post-rehabilitation pathways, providing intensive therapeutic and practical help for people affected by addiction, trauma and complex family or health needs. The service is already creating life-changing opportunities, with SHARP graduates progressing into employment, volunteering and peer mentoring roles.

In Liverpool, SHARP's relaunch builds on more than two decades of life-changing support in the city. Delivered as part of a new partnership service with Change Grow Live and linked closely with The Brink Café, the programme combines one-to-one counselling, group therapy, life skills and personal development. A celebration at The Brink (pictured) brought together around 70 guests, including former clients who shared powerful stories representing living proof of sustained recovery.



Across both communities, SHARP continues to demonstrate the power of structured treatment, lived experience and lasting recovery.

Residential programmes – increased integration

This year, Clouds House, The Bridges and Recovery Online worked more closely than ever to create an integrated recovery pathway tailored to individual needs. Clients were able to move seamlessly between detoxification, residential treatment and online support, ensuring continuity of care at every stage of recovery.



CQC commended The Bridges for high standards of care and recovery

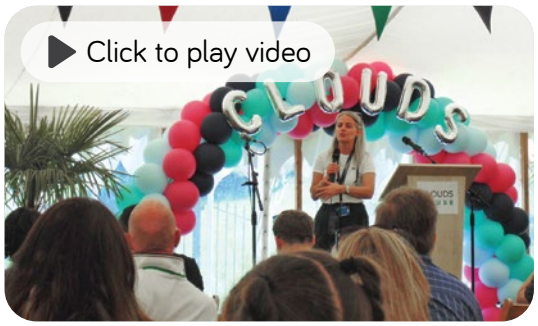
The Bridges was rated ***'Good'*** by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in its inspection in June 2025, where clients described staff as ***"amazing"***, ***"really approachable"*** and ***"empowering"***, praising the quality and consistency of therapy sessions and the calm, supportive atmosphere. The CQC further highlighted the exceptional standards of safety, care and partnership working at The Bridges. Inspectors noted that the service works closely with clients and healthcare partners to maintain robust systems that ensure continuity of care, including when people move between different services. External partners also praised the service, with probation services describing the partnership as ***"positive, with operational issues swiftly resolved,"*** adding: ***"The work they do with clients is amazing."***



Inspected and rated
Good
CareQuality Commission

Celebrating recovery at Clouds House

This year we celebrated 42 years of recovery with our annual reunion, welcoming back over 300 people to Clouds House to share their recovery stories with family and friends. The reunion stands as a powerful testament to the lasting impact of our work, bringing together generations of clients, families, and staff to mark not only individual journeys of recovery but the enduring strength of the Clouds House community as a whole.





WHAT OUR PROGRAMME GRADUATES SAY

"SHARP has been life changing... I have felt nothing but love and care." SHARP graduate

"My life was turned upside down, but I didn't give up. I learnt to manage anxiety, face problems without drinking, and found hope through the support of staff and peers. Wherever you are in addiction, SHARP showed me recovery is possible – and opened the door to a wonderful new chapter." Julie, Essex client

"Going through detox and Cloud House and then starting the online programme gave me the opportunity to properly address my addiction rather than continuing the same cycle. It wasn't an overnight change. Recovery has been a journey, and I've had to put the work in. But the programme gave me the support, structure and tools I needed to start rebuilding my life." Clouds House and Recovery Online

"I first stayed at Clouds House a year ago for 3 months, and it was the most rewarding and fundamentally life-changing experience for me. I came into treatment a very damaged, ill woman dealing with a lot of past and ongoing trauma. I left having learned so much about myself and my illness." Clouds House graduate

"Thanks to The Bridges, I have rediscovered how to live life fully. They not only showed me how to recover but also supported me in developing my skills and self-esteem through volunteering and sharing my journey with others who need hope. Without this support, I honestly don't think I would be here today. I am eternally grateful." The Bridges graduate



REACH AND ACTIVITY: **COMMUNITY**

4,472
male clients

2,231
female clients

- **4,472** male clients and **2,231** female clients supported
- **2,958** clients starting Engage group programmes (e.g. alcohol detox groups)
- **1,276** clients accessing brief interventions
- **343** clients starting structured day programmes (⏩Develop)
- **262** clients accessing structured programmes at Clouds House (Wiltshire) or The Bridges (Hull)
- **84** clients accessing residential rehabilitation in other centres (⏩Develop)
- **16** clients accessing Recovery Online (⏩Develop)



CLIENT OUTCOMES AND FEEDBACK

Integrated drug and alcohol services

- **2,400** clients completing treatment drug/alcohol free

Percentage of service users rating the service good or excellent in 2025-26:

- **98%** Medway
- **98%** Southend
- **95%** Thurrock
- **89%** East Kent

Day Programmes

- **67%** average completion rate across all structured day programmes
- **76%** of SHARP participants improved their personal psychological, physical and social resources to support their recovery from addiction
- **For ReNew (Hull)**
  - **62%** of participants in the introductory 'Stepping Stones' programme at ReNew felt more confident in their ability to abstain from alcohol;
  - **86%** gained confidence in staying drug-free; and
  - **56%** built recovery resources (through improvements to emotional and physical wellbeing, social connection and relationships)

Residential Programmes

- **74%** completion rate for Clouds House and **59%** for The Bridges
- **83%** of all people leaving Clouds House of The Bridges are drug or alcohol free
- **83%** of people who took part in a residential programme at Clouds House improved their personal psychological, physical and social resources to support their recovery from addiction

Recovery Online

- Overall, participants' anxiety and depression reduced
- More than half of participants improved resilience, trust and relationships with loved ones, and wellbeing
- Overall, participants' personal psychological, physical and social resources to support their recovery from addiction increased
- **100%** of Recovery Online participants who gave their feedback said their overall experience had been 'good' or 'excellent'



2,400

clients completing treatment drug/alcohol free

Community Day Programmes – Long-term Impact Study

The Forward Trust's community rehabilitation programmes (or 'community day programmes') are essential elements of our substance misuse service delivery and one of the main pathways to recovery that we offer to our clients. In March 2026, we published a mixed methods 'pre- and post-comparison' evaluation of three of these programmes (Hull, Dover and Medway) by Forward's research team. The data from this research shows positive and statistically significant results in terms of key recovery behaviours, as well as a range of personal and social indicators of recovery.

Key findings:

Interviews with 18 clients conducted between 6 and 9 months after completing the programme showed:

- Strong capability, opportunity, and motivation across four assessed recovery behaviours (as measured by the 'COM-B' tool), with scores ranging from 82- 95% for 'asking for help', 'admitting mistakes', 'being on time', and 'undertaking peer support roles' – which are all established as evidence-based predictors of sustained, long-term recovery. These high scores demonstrate that the programme has a 'medium to strong' effect in terms of attributable significance.
- Positive changes in widely recognised personal and social recovery indicators - all 18 participants (100% at follow up) reported improved physical and mental health, and better personal relationships. All 18 reported being abstinent from drugs and alcohol at time of interview. Meanwhile, a third were engaged in education or training, and half were involved in volunteering or peer support; just under half (8 people) were in independent secure housing with the remainder (10) in temporary or secured supported housing.

82-95%
positive scores across four evidence-based recovery behaviours

Six to nine months after graduating, **100%** of programme participants reported:

- Improved mental and physical health
- Better personal relationships
- Abstinence from drugs and alcohol

Criminal Justice

Service Overview

Forward Trust's Criminal Justice division works with individuals, prisons, probation units, and communities to strengthen relationships and build personal, social, and community capital-creating safer, healthier, crime-free futures.

In 2025/26 we delivered **Commissioned Rehabilitative Services** (CRS) for people on probation in 14 contract areas and 69 probation delivery units, comprising:

- **Personal Wellbeing** helping men on probation to access mental health support, improve family relationships and make new positive social networks, working in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk, Surrey and Sussex as well as Kent and Cheshire (in partnership with Seetec) and Lincolnshire (in partnership with Lincolnshire Action Trust).
- **Dependency and Recovery** supporting men with complex substance misuse needs, bridging probation and recovery services to improve outcomes, working in London (in partnership with Catch 22) and Yorkshire & Humber.
- **Accommodation** in Wales (the 'Camau' service) preventing homelessness and improving housing options across Dyfed, Powys, Gwent, and South Wales.

At **HMP Millsike**, we delivered our innovative Connections Service which included a desistance-focused package 'More Than My Past', the drug strategy, and families and relationships support.



Personal reflections on the year

Emma Stuart, Executive Director for Criminal Justice Services



Looking back on 2025/26, I am proud of the progress and expansion of Forward's Criminal Justice services. We have welcomed more volunteers and mentors, increased the diversity of our workforce and seen a notable reduction in staff turnover. Together, these developments reflect the growing strength and stability of our teams. Across our Commissioned Rehabilitative Services and HMP Millsike, we have reached more people, delivered more interventions and coaching, expanded peer-led activity and, most importantly, helped people build the positive connections that support lasting change.

Our Dependency and Recovery services in London and Yorkshire and the Humber have continued to lead the way nationally, providing high-quality and timely support to large numbers of people on probation. As these contracts enter their final year, we are building on the insight and good practice they have generated. In particular, their success in engaging people with complex needs through motivational coaching and harm reduction is helping to shape our approach to future Community Support services.

Our Personal Wellbeing services have also performed exceptionally well in Ministry of Justice quality audits, reflecting the commitment and care shown by our teams. Their combination of coaching and assertive outreach helps men reconnect with family and other important people in their lives, while building links with community services and wider sources of support. This approach is increasingly informing Forward's developing model of desistance, recognising that strong relationships and community connections can help people move away from crime.

The year has also brought significant challenges. Record referral levels to our Accommodation services demonstrate the scale of homelessness among men involved in the justice system. High levels of recall following successive early-release schemes have disrupted hard-won progress towards stable housing, while sentencing changes and rising demand have affected all 14 of our CRS teams. I am extremely proud of our practitioners and managers, who have continued to provide high-quality, person-centred support in very difficult circumstances.

At HMP Millsike, our Connections Services moved from mobilisation to established delivery during their first full year. Opening a new prison has been a demanding but enormously valuable experience, creating opportunities to develop new approaches to desistance, family relationships, visits and drug strategy. At the heart of this work is our belief that positive connections can provide a route away from crime. By supporting individual journeys while strengthening relationships across the prison community, we are helping to create an environment that is safer, more connected and more supportive of change. Collaboration between the Millsike team and Forward's Programmes, Interventions and Evidence team has also led to the development of a new More Than My Past programme, which we look forward to introducing in the coming year.

The justice landscape will continue to change during 2026/27, but we approach the year ahead from a position of confidence and strong delivery. This year has shown the power of connections between practitioners and service users, between services, and between people and their communities. We will continue to build on those connections, helping more people leave crime behind and create safer, more positive futures.

SERVICE HIGHLIGHTS

COMMISSIONED REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

Dependency and Recovery (D&R)

Building connection through peer-led activities

In 2025–26 the D&R service expanded its programme of peer-led social activities for men on probation across London and Yorkshire & The Humber. More than 140 men took part in a diverse range of activities designed to improve wellbeing, reduce isolation, build positive social connections and strengthen recovery communities that support a drug- and alcohol-free lifestyle.

In Yorkshire & The Humber, the D&R service brought together 40 people from Forward Trust services in Hull, including D&R, ReNew and The Bridges, for a **football tournament**. Clients, volunteers and staff took part alongside one another, competing for team medals and the tournament trophy, providing an enjoyable opportunity to connect and build confidence.

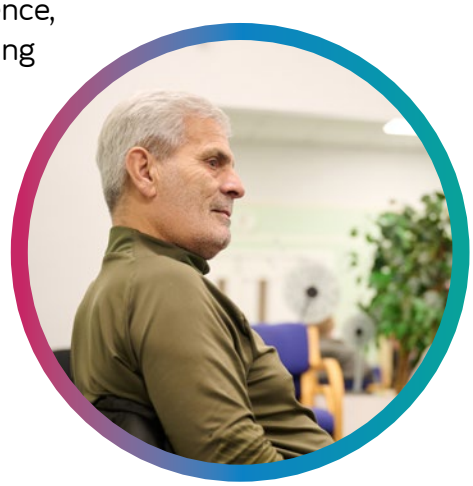
Eight men on probation enjoyed a festive trip to Hyde Park's **Winter Wonderland**. For everyone attending, it was a completely new experience and an opportunity to enjoy the food, shops, games and atmosphere, experiencing a positive social experience.

"I'd seen Winter Wonderland on TV for many years and never imagined I would ever get to experience it myself. It was on my bucket list!"

Men's Mental Health Workshop

Forward worked in partnership with HMPPS to pilot a **Men's Mental Health Workshop** across our D&R services in London and Yorkshire & The Humber, exploring the important relationship between mental health and substance use.

Participants were encouraged to reflect on their own resilience, coping strategies and problem-solving skills, while identifying and challenging behaviours and habits that could undermine their progress. The sessions also provided practical tools to help participants manage their wellbeing and make positive, lasting changes.



The pilot demonstrated the wider, holistic support that D&R can offer alongside its core substance misuse work, using psychosocial interventions to help men better understand the factors affecting their wellbeing and strengthen the skills needed to sustain recovery.

Accommodation

Housing surgeries



As part of our services in Wales and the 'Connections Cymru' initiative, we delivered housing surgeries at Approved Premises in Cardiff and Swansea, supporting men leaving prison on licence to access suitable move-on accommodation.

Alongside practical housing support, we introduced creative social activities that encourage residents to come together in a relaxed and welcoming environment. Activities including arts and crafts (pictured) provide opportunities to learn new skills, express creativity and build positive connections with others.

Digital innovation

Working with HMPPS Communications colleagues, we have also used digital media to make housing information more accessible and engaging. We filmed a housing Q&A podcast in which two prison peers interviewed our Senior Operations Manager, helping to raise awareness of the housing support available, challenge common myths and give hope to men in custody who may not realise that help with homelessness is available.

Personal Wellbeing

Building confidence and connection

Our weekly social groups continue to play an important role in improving wellbeing, building confidence and reducing isolation for men accessing our services. Providing safe and welcoming spaces, the groups enable participants to develop positive relationships, explore new interests and build the confidence to engage more fully with their communities.

Activities are deliberately varied, including arts and crafts, walking and pool groups, board games, guest speakers, educational sessions and visits to places of cultural and historical interest. This year we also launched the **Cuppa Club**, providing an informal space to socialise, share experiences and develop supportive peer networks.

A highlight of 2025–26 was a joint visit to the **Tower of London**, bringing together participants from Personal Wellbeing services across our contracts. For many, it was their first visit to a major cultural landmark. The experience broadened horizons, built confidence in accessing community spaces and created positive shared memories, while the Tower's commemorative poppy display prompted conversations around remembrance and personal reflection.

Participant feedback consistently highlights increased confidence, reduced isolation and improved wellbeing, demonstrating how social connection can support rehabilitation and sustained positive change.

HMP Millsike

2025/26 was the first year of Forward's Connections Services at HMP Millsike. Following the arrival of the first prisoners in April 2025, our services developed alongside the growing prison population. Working closely with other providers, we began putting our central principle into practice: strong relationships and positive connections are essential to rehabilitation.

Welcoming and supporting families

The Visitors Centre and Visits Cafés were among the first parts of the service to open. Recognising that families can feel overlooked when someone they care about enters prison, our team created a warm and welcoming environment where visitors feel supported and valued as part of the wider Millsike community. The response has been extremely positive, with the Visits Reception team receiving numerous compliments and even a bunch of flowers from visitors.

"Without the smiley faces of all the friendly staff, I know that my anxiety would be off the scale."

Throughout the year, our Family and Relationships Children's Specialists organised a range of family-focused, culturally inclusive and enjoyable events. Family and Relationship Practitioners also worked directly with men and their families to build, repair and maintain important relationships through Parenting and Relationships Matter interventions.

"Visits remains one of the best bits of this prison."

"They help you to identify problems and find new ways of looking at issues and repairing relationships. Staff take their time to learn about and speak to everyone."



More Than My Past

Forward's More Than My Past campaign celebrates people who have moved beyond addiction or crime to build positive and fulfilling lives. At HMP Millsike, we have drawn on the insight from these personal journeys and combined it with a narrative approach that helps people examine the stories they tell about themselves and begin writing a different future.

Our More Than My Past practitioners work across the prison, providing opportunities for men to reflect on their experiences, recognise their strengths and make positive changes. The approach was formally launched at an event attended by prisoners, families, lived experience ambassadors, members of the Forward community and Chair of Trustees Tony Adams MBE.

The courses have been particularly well received by participants:

"They are fantastic. The courses are informative and helpful, and all the content is relatable and well delivered. The facilitators are friendly, knowledgeable and empathetic towards every participant."

"I've completed several of their courses and have had the same great experience every time. I constantly recommend them to other prisoners."



Together, this work shows how positive relationships with families, peers and trusted practitioners can strengthen wellbeing, encourage rehabilitation and help people begin building lives away from crime.

Building trusted connections

Strong, trusted relationships are central to recovery and rehabilitation. By helping people build personal, social and community connections, we strengthen the support, opportunities and sense of belonging that enable lasting change.

This includes relationships with family and friends, peer support and involvement in trusted community networks. These connections provide practical and emotional support, while helping people develop resilience, motivation and a more positive sense of identity.

They also benefit wider communities by building trust, encouraging cooperation and creating environments in which people feel valued and included. This can support successful reintegration, strengthen recovery and reduce the likelihood of further offending.



Whether it is a supportive relationship with a practitioner, a group session that helps someone 're-write' their personal story, encouragement from a peer or a visit from a family member, every positive connection can help someone build a different future.

WHAT OUR SERVICE USERS SAY

Personal Wellbeing (PWB)



"I was urged and helped to develop an action checklist to focus on effort and monitor progress towards my five most important goals. I made the checklist into a small plaque, which I still refer to.



In the past year I've seen advances in my 'artist life', society and friendships, peace and optimism. Family repair is still early stage, but there's a plan and some daylight. Self-understanding is building. All these measurable improvements, some modest but others huge, have been made with the good counsel and encouragement from my extraordinarily gifted young practitioner."

"After 6 years in prison, my head was not in a good place. Feeling stressed out. PWB has given me the space to get stuff off my chest, which made a big impact. Thank you. I now describe myself as 'old me' / 'new me' with a purpose in life."

"It was good to be able to discuss mental health concerns with someone who knows about the probation service and what this involves. Don't get this with external provision. Found the exercises and having worksheets to look at outside the sessions helpful."



Dependency & Recovery

"I have never worked with a service that is so diverse and with people from my country. It was so nice to speak in my native language, I was able to say exactly what I wanted to say. I felt heard."

"Every person I have met at Forward Trust was nothing short of brilliant. I felt welcomed at every session, learned lots and they facilitated the groups effortlessly, making sure it was a relaxed, open and safe space for all."

"Forward Trust was a key part of achieving my goals. I was able to reflect on my alcohol use and how it affects me and my family. I've evolved a lot and reduced my drinking since."

"Forward Trust have helped me achieve 16 weeks sober."

Accommodation

"I have been assisted amazingly, and without this support and being treated respectfully I don't think I would have achieved what I have. I am sure my mental health would have been impacted negatively without the assistance. My sister has also been treated respectfully which she appreciated also."

"[The service] has been great helping me get back in touch with housing and mental health services. I was sleeping in my car and had no chance of seeing my children and it was making me ill. I am now working with the mental health team and seeing my kids again."



"I usually get let down when I get out of prison but this time the council helped me and I got a place in a hostel and support to move on to a place of my own."

What Probation Practitioners say

"Forward Trust is an excellent, professional service. My client was highly complementary of his learning through 1-2-1 and groups. His caseworker signposted him to other agencies and always maintained comms with me, so I knew what progress was being made."

"Forward Trust staff always bring a positive, people-focused approach, making sure those on probation feel respected, encouraged and genuinely supported to move forward."

REACH AND ACTIVITY

COMMISSIONED REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

Forward supported **13,341** clients of our commissioned rehabilitative services in 2025-26. These comprised:

Personal Wellbeing

- **4,201** clients supported
- **12,041** interventions delivered

Accommodation

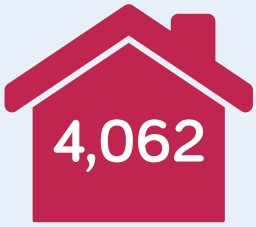
- **4,062** clients supported (plus an additional 800 clients on remand)
- **4,424** interventions delivered

Dependency & Recovery

- **5,078** clients supported
- **10,061** interventions delivered



4,201
personal wellbeing clients supported



Accommodation clients supported

CLIENT OUTCOMES AND FEEDBACK

Personal Wellbeing

- **2,144** clients achieved or partially achieved their action plan goals
- **82%** of clients made progress towards their personal goals
- **98%** of clients rated their experience of the service as excellent or good

Accommodation

- **1,879** clients achieved or partly achieved their action plan goals
- **98%** of clients made progress towards their housing goals

Dependency & Recovery

- **2,117** clients achieved or partially achieved their action plan goals
- **85%** of clients progressed in their goals



of clients made progress towards their housing goals

Measuring progress in our rehabilitative services

During 2025/26, we introduced HMPPS' Intermediate Outcomes Measurement Instrument (IOMI) across our Commissioned Rehabilitative Services, helping us better understand the difference our support makes to people's lives.

IOMI measures changes across seven areas associated with longer-term desistance and recovery, including hope, wellbeing, resilience, self-efficacy, motivation and interpersonal trust. Comparing scores at the beginning and end of support provides a clear picture of where people are making progress and where further support may be needed.

Our 2025/26 results showed positive change across all **seven measures**:

IOMI measure	Percentage change in scores (pre and post)
Agency/self-efficacy	+16%
Hope	+28%
Impulsivity / problem-solving*	-9%
Motivation to change	+7%
Resilience	+19%
Interpersonal trust	+14%
Wellbeing	+22%

*A reduction in the impulsivity/problem-solving score represents positive change.

The strongest improvements were in hope and wellbeing, indicating increased belief in the possibility of a different future alongside improvements in emotional and psychological wellbeing, positive self-regard and confidence.

Although motivation to change showed the smallest percentage movement, people typically began our services with already high levels of motivation. The average score increased from 4 out of 5 at the start of support to 4.25 at the end.

Together, these results provide encouraging evidence of the positive changes people are making during their engagement with our services, particularly in developing the hope, confidence, resilience and wellbeing that can support longer-term recovery and desistance.

HMP MILLSIKE - REACH AND ACTIVITY

- **14,333** visitors welcomed at our visit centre to meet their loved ones
- **2,111** prisoners connected to family and friends through video calls (reaching people in Poland, Republic of Ireland, USA, Germany, Italy, Malawi, Lithuania, Spain, Switzerland and Israel)
- **1,146** prisoner applications, helping them access relevant interventions and facilitating visits
- **506** prisoners directly supported through More Than My Past and Families and Relationships workshops and interventions

Employment

Service Overview

In 2025/26, we delivered a range of services that develop the employability skills of marginalised groups. These included job coaching and placement, vocational training and qualifications, and support for people who run their own business or want to start one.

As well as ex-offenders and people in recovery from addiction, we also supported young people not currently in education, employment, or training (NEET), individuals claiming Universal Credit, and those from other disadvantaged backgrounds. We worked with a broad range of employers and partners to support people looking for work to secure a sustainable job placement.

We also offered employment opportunities through our own social enterprises: Blue Sky Services (grounds maintenance), and The Brink recovery café, part of our Liverpool service.



Personal reflections on the year

Asi Panditharatna MBE, Executive Director for Employment



In 2025/26, we continued to strengthen and embed supported employment approaches across our services, with a particular focus on vocational profiling, tailored job search, closer employer engagement, and enhanced in-work support for service users. This approach has enabled us to provide more personalised pathways into sustainable employment and better outcomes for those we support.

Our Individual Placement and Support (IPS) service has gone from strength to strength, achieving its targets and delivering excellent outcomes. Notably, 63% of service users who secured employment remained in work after 26 weeks, demonstrating the effectiveness of our support model. The service was also self-assessed as **Good** against the IPS Grow Fidelity Framework, reflecting the quality and maturity of our delivery.

Our **Restart Service**, funded by the Department for Work and Pensions and delivered in partnership with Reed in Partnership, has continued to achieve positive job outcomes, helping people facing barriers to employment move into and sustain work.

As a prime contractor delivering **Adult Skills programmes across London and Kent**, we have continued to expand our reach and impact. More than 90% of learners achieved their qualifications, with over 50% progressing to job interviews, demonstrating the strong link between skills development and employment opportunities.

Blue Sky has also continued to grow, delivering important services for Saba while providing employment opportunities at the Real Living Wage for people with lived experience of the criminal justice system, recovery, and unemployment. Our valued partnership with the **Financial Times** has continued, supporting our annual Dragons' Den event for aspiring entrepreneurs. During 2025/26, our **Enterprise Bootcamp Programme**, funded by Porticus and City Bridge Foundation, focused on supporting people with criminal justice lived experience to develop and grow their businesses. We were also pleased to deliver an Enterprise Programme for young adults with funding from **Brent Council**.

None of this would be possible without the commitment, passion, and expertise of our staff and volunteer colleagues, partners, funders and employers. We are particularly grateful to the individuals who place their trust in us and work tirelessly to achieve their goals. Together, we continue to create opportunities, transform lives, and support people to build brighter futures through employment, skills, enterprise, and sustainable careers.

Thank you for your continued support.

HIGHLIGHTS

ERSA Awards 2025



We were delighted to see Employment Adviser Abby recognised as a finalist in the **ERSA Employability Awards 2025**, celebrating her outstanding contribution to employer engagement at The Forward Trust. Through her commitment and creativity, Abby has strengthened relationships with employers, enhanced work-readiness opportunities and helped create more pathways into employment for the people we support.

Now in their 13th year, the Employability Awards celebrate some of the very best people, teams and partnerships across the employability and labour market sector. Being shortlisted from more than 250 applications was a fantastic achievement and recognition of Abby's dedication and impact.

Adult Skills: Supporting learners beyond the classroom

Our Adult Skills programmes are about more than gaining a qualification. We continue supporting learners after their course ends, helping them turn new skills and confidence into real employment opportunities.

Recognising that some learners needed additional help to take that next step, we introduced an intensive three-day programme combining personalised support with practical experience. Learners received one-to-one help to strengthen CVs and applications, complete live job applications and prepare for interviews. Mock interviews built confidence before learners had the opportunity to meet employers (such as Thames Water and Home Instead) and interview for real vacancies.



The results demonstrated the value of this practical, hands-on approach: 95% said their job application and interview skills had improved, 60% secured interviews following the workshops, and 30% were offered a job or work trial on the same day they applied.

Employability Day Roundtable 2025: Kent & Medway

Our Employability Day Roundtable brought together partners from across the employment and skills sector, including Medway Council, Social Enterprise Kent, Education People and Kent Teach. We were also delighted to welcome Lauren Edwards MP, Forward Trustee Ivor McKay and Elizabeth Taylor, Chief Executive of ERSA, creating a valuable opportunity to share learning and explore how we can work together to help more people into meaningful employment.



Our IPS (Individual Placement and Support) team, funded by Medway Council and the Department for Health and Social Care, shared the service's achievements and the difference that personalised support, alongside strong employer engagement, can make for people seeking work.

At the heart of the event was Rebecca, a former IPS participant who shared her own experience of recovery and her journey into full-time employment with The Forward Trust. Her story brought the impact of the service to life, demonstrating how the right support and employment opportunity can help people move forward and build a more positive future.

Restart partnership with Arc Hospitality

Our growing partnership with Arc Hospitality created a fantastic opportunity for Restart participants in East Kent this year, demonstrating what can be achieved when employers and employment services work closely together.

When Arc organised an induction and interview session, our Restart team quickly mobilised, personally contacting participants and supporting them to take part. Team Leader Kirsty Langley coordinated the response and was there on the day to welcome participants, build confidence and provide practical support throughout the session.

More than 25 participants attended, with those ready for employment moving rapidly through e-learning, documentation and onboarding. With just four days before roles were due to start, close collaboration between our team, participants and Arc proved crucial. Eleven participants successfully started work that weekend.

The partnership shows the difference that responsive employer engagement and practical, personalised support can make in turning opportunities into real jobs.

HIGHLIGHTS

Restart Scheme – ESOL course: Partnership with East Kent College



Working in partnership with East Kent College, our Restart team supported eight participants to overcome language barriers and take positive steps towards employment. The six-week 'English for the Workplace' course combined English language development with practical employability support, including CV preparation and interview skills.

Participants (who came originally from Iraq, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka) brought a wide range of experiences and a shared determination to work and build their futures in the UK. Peer learning provided a supportive environment in which they could practise English, recognise their skills and qualities, and grow in confidence.

Four participants successfully secured employment in warehouse positions, which was a huge turning point in their lives, helping them take another step toward independence and stability.

"I enjoyed the course - it taught me more about job interviews." Participant

Now in employment, the participants are looking forward to improving their English further, gaining UK work experience to progress into more skilled roles, supporting their families, and fully integrating into the community.

"I want to learn more English and work towards becoming a supervisor one day." Participant



EKC East Kent Colleges Group

Leigh's story: Employment as a pathway to recovery

When Leigh joined our Individual Placement and Support (IPS) service in Medway, she was already in work, but her job did not reflect her ambitions. She wanted a more fulfilling career supporting people with Special Educational Needs, while also navigating significant challenges with her alcohol use, mental health and living situation.

Working closely with Leigh, our IPS Employment Specialist provided personalised support to help her identify opportunities that matched her aspirations. This included developing her CV, targeted job searching, interview preparation, employer engagement, benefits advice and ongoing wellbeing and recovery support.

Despite setbacks along the way, Leigh remained determined to build a more stable and positive future. In mid-2025, that determination paid off when she secured a role with LDC Care. The job has given Leigh the professional satisfaction and sense of purpose she was looking for, and she has already been trusted to help induct new recruits.

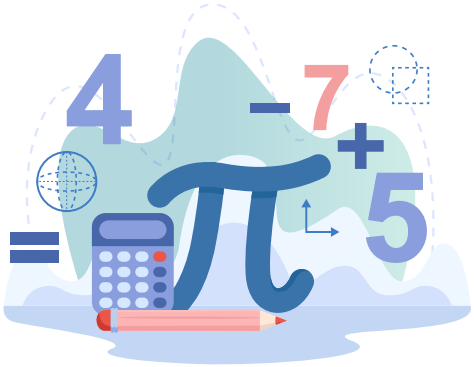
The changes have extended well beyond employment. Leigh has moved out of supported housing into her own home, is financially stable and is no longer alcohol dependent. Stable employment, greater independence and a safer living environment have also contributed to improvements in her overall wellbeing. In Leigh's own words:

"I can't thank you enough for all of your support. You really helped me to believe in myself to find work that I wanted to do. The appointments were so helpful and felt like therapy and I always left feeling upbeat and positive."



HIGHLIGHTS

Cameron's story: Building confidence for the future



After leaving education, Cameron struggled to find sustainable employment. Although he secured some work, its irregular and unpredictable nature affected his wellbeing, and after six months without a job he was referred to the Restart Scheme.

Cameron was keen to work and initially felt optimistic about his prospects. His Forward Employment Advisor helped him secure agency work in warehousing, giving him an opportunity to build his experience and strengthen his CV. However, he found the physical demands overwhelming and stepped back from the programme for a period.

When Cameron returned, his advisor worked with him to explore alternatives, including a less physically demanding factory role. When this also proved challenging, it became clear that Cameron would benefit from additional support to build his confidence and wellbeing before moving into longer-term employment.

Cameron was referred to Forward's accredited 15-day Employability and Wellbeing programme and Multiply course. In a supportive, relaxed environment, he developed practical techniques for managing stress and responding to the demands of the workplace, while strengthening essential employability skills including CV writing and seeking feedback from employers.



Cameron is now motivated and looking for sustainable, long-term employment, with greater confidence in his abilities and a stronger foundation from which to take his next steps.

REACH AND ACTIVITY

- **1,021** clients receiving community-based job support or training
- **56** clients supported with their ideas for enterprise
- **14** staff employed through Blue Sky Services



clients supported with their ideas for enterprise

CLIENT OUTCOMES

- **437** clients progressed into jobs or apprenticeships
- **280** sustained their jobs for more than 18 weeks
- **97%** of adult learners were satisfied/very satisfied with our services
- **53%** of enterprise clients trading, applying for growth funding or employing staff after 3 months



ADULT SKILLS SPOTLIGHT

- **221** learners and 98% achievement rate
- **95%** of learners stated that lessons met their learning needs
- **91%** said classes helped build on existing knowledge
- **94%** reported being able to participate in lessons
- **70%** felt more confident using IT and technology
- **82%** reported that attendance had improved their confidence and wellbeing
- **83%** were confident about their next career steps after receiving information, advice and guidance



221

learners and 98% achievement rate

Recovery and Belonging

Service overview

Our Recovery and Belonging services provide clients with the extra support they need to sustain progress and achieve lasting transformation. In 2025/26 these services comprised:

- **Recovery Support** — additional one-to-one support and groups for those exiting drug and alcohol treatment and who are pursuing abstinence or other recovery goals, delivered by staff and peers who are themselves in recovery.
- **Housing Support** — preventing homelessness and securing stable accommodation, through supported housing schemes where people live together and support each other, and independent housing where we match clients with properties and provide ongoing support and mentoring to sustain their tenancy.
- **Family Support** — working with clients and their families in nine prisons, supporting them to develop, maintain and strengthen relationships. A UK wide online programme for adults affected by family addiction, as well as the provision of specialist training and the development of existing and new programmes, including M-PACT, which supports children aged 8 and over and their adult family members impacted by addiction.
- **Forward Connect** — our peer-led network of over 7,000 people making good progress in their recovery and rehabilitation, who meet nationally and locally to support each other, celebrate personal achievements and progress, while also giving back to local communities through volunteering.





Personal reflections on the year

Julie Muir, Executive Director of Recovery & Belonging



Looking back over the past year, what makes me most proud is seeing how much stronger the connections between our services have become. Recovery isn't something that happens in just one place, and increasingly people are able to move between treatment, housing, family support and recovery communities, finding the support that's right for them at different points in their journey.

For me, recovery has always been about much more than addressing an immediate problem. It's about having a safe place to live, reconnecting with family and friends, building confidence, finding purpose, and feeling that you belong. It's about knowing there are people around you who understand and support you. I'm proud to see these values reflected more and more in everything we do.

Over the last year we've continued to grow and develop our services. We've expanded our housing provision, increased support for families affected by addiction, and continued to grow our recovery communities across England and Wales. Most importantly, we've kept listening to the people we support and adapting our services around what really matters to them.

One of the things I've found most inspiring is seeing lived experience play an even bigger role across Forward. Through Forward Connect, volunteering and our Ambassador programme, people who once came to us for support are now helping others, influencing services and showing that recovery is possible. Seeing people go from receiving support to giving back is a powerful reminder of what recovery can achieve.

I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved together this year and grateful to everyone who has played a part. Thank you.





HIGHLIGHTS: **HOUSING**

Supported Housing Schemes

This year we have seen a significant increase in referrals across England and Wales due to need, from people leaving rehab and detox centres, as well as custodial settings, maintaining their recovery through access to programmes in the community or online, alongside their supported housing placement with us. Our property portfolio includes seven properties offering 29 bed spaces, carefully focussed on the individual support needs of those clients, who are also carefully placed to establish group peer support within the household. Over the year we have reviewed our supported housing model and expanded the remit beyond just supporting people in recovery, and now deliver two non-abstinence based housing schemes, allowing for more flexibility.



'Desistance housing' pilot

This year we co-designed and launched a new innovative pilot in partnership with Kent, Surrey and Sussex Probation to accommodate people on probation, as part of an Integrated Offender Management (IOM) scheme. Working proactively and taking direct referrals from Probation, we supported people identified as previously having the most complex offending histories, including where substance misuse is linked to their offending. We have seen people engage in structured substance misuse treatment for the first time, and collectively seen desistance from crime for the duration of clients staying in the scheme. This provision has subsequently been extended due to its success.

"The Forward Trust has been a highly valued partner in delivering the IOM contract pilot, demonstrating strong engagement with service users and a responsive, person-centred approach. Their collaborative working has strengthened pathways not just into accommodation but into broader resettlement support for individuals under probation supervision."

Mark Smith Service Manager KSS HMPS
on IOM Supported Housing



Housing Access and Sustainment Service (HASS, formerly 'Vision Housing')

In 2025/26, Forward's Housing Access and Sustainment Service delivered significant growth, helping more people secure and sustain safe, stable homes across London, Surrey and the Southeast. Building on strong partnerships with local authorities, probation services and landlords, the service expanded its reach and achieved excellent outcomes for individuals facing homelessness, leaving custody, or moving on from temporary accommodation.

A key achievement was the continued success of Accommodation for Ex-Offenders (AFEO) funded services. In Richmond and Wandsworth alone, 99 people were referred and 70 successfully housed. In Surrey, a partnership with Surrey PCC and Surrey Probation supported people leaving Community Accommodation Service Tier 3 (CAS-3), with demand exceeding expectations. More than 45 referrals were received in the first seven months, resulting in 17 people successfully moving on into independent housing and an impressive 95% tenancy sustainment rate. The year also saw Forward successfully secure Croydon Council's Private Rented Sector contract, strengthening established partnerships and creating new opportunities to support rough sleepers and vulnerable residents into long-term accommodation.

Alongside direct service delivery, we continued to influence sector development through participation in the London Private Rented Sector Forum with Homeless Link, local authorities and partner organisations, helping shape responses to legislative changes, including the Renters' Rights Act.



70
people housed in Richmond and Wandsworth

East Kent Homeless Prevention Service – NEW SERVICE

Building on the work of our East Kent drug and alcohol service, we were commissioned by Kent County Council to provide additional support to people at risk of homelessness with substance misuse support needs. For 2025/26 a total of 454 referrals were made to the service and of the 339 subsequently supported, 84% achieved positive outcomes: homelessness prevented; tenancies sustained or retained; suitable accommodation sourced; or the removal of any barriers preventing someone from having or putting at risk suitable accommodation, such as support with rent arrears.



HIGHLIGHTS: **FAMILY SUPPORT**

Recovering Families UK

This year saw the delivery of our innovative Recovering Families UK (RFUK) online pilot programme, designed to support family members affected by a loved one's addiction.

Around 40% of referrals came directly from people, finding the service through search engines, social media, peer-support platforms and AI tools, while the remainder were referred by professionals including GPs and partner agencies. Those seeking support were most commonly the children (45%) or partners (31%) of someone experiencing addiction, followed by parents (15%) and siblings (6%). Alcohol remained the most frequently cited substance, although concerns relating to ketamine use, particularly among young people, are becoming increasingly evident.

Following initial feedback, RFUK has expanded into a comprehensive programme comprising 14 online group sessions, six one-to-one support sessions, a dedicated online hub containing more than 50 resources, an ongoing peer-support community and a post-completion support package.

The programme exceeded its target of supporting 72 people, reaching 101 participants. Participant feedback highlights the transformational impact of the programme, helping people feel less isolated, more empowered and better equipped to set healthy boundaries and cope with the challenges of addiction within their family.

"I was so desperate when I contacted The Forward Trust...I do not feel like that anymore. The skills I have learnt will help me in all areas of life."

"It has given me the tools to deal with the situations as they arise. It has enabled me to voice how I am feeling without stigma and shame. I am empowered."

"It's given me myself again. It's been a journey. It's had a positive impact on me and that there is light at the end of the tunnel."





HIGHLIGHTS: **RECOVERY SUPPORT & FORWARD CONNECT**

Growth, reach, diversity

Forward Connect has continued to grow and strengthen its reach across England and Wales. By April 2026, membership had increased to 7,362 people, with increasingly strong local branches across areas including East Kent, Southend and Medway, alongside a growing network in Wales.

The programme now welcomes an average of 500 new referrals each quarter from an increasingly diverse range of services. Growth has been particularly strong among people on probation through our Community Rehabilitation Services (CRS), as well as those accessing housing support.

This year, Forward Connect members attended a wide range of recovery, wellbeing and community activities, and also exchanged messages and motivational material on the Forward app. Increasingly, events are designed, developed and promoted by members and volunteers themselves, giving peers greater ownership over the opportunities available and ensuring activities reflect the needs and interests of the community.

Alongside events, Forward Connect continues to offer a range of peer support meetings in both face-to-face and online formats, helping to remove barriers to participation and enabling people to stay connected, including those in prison settings.

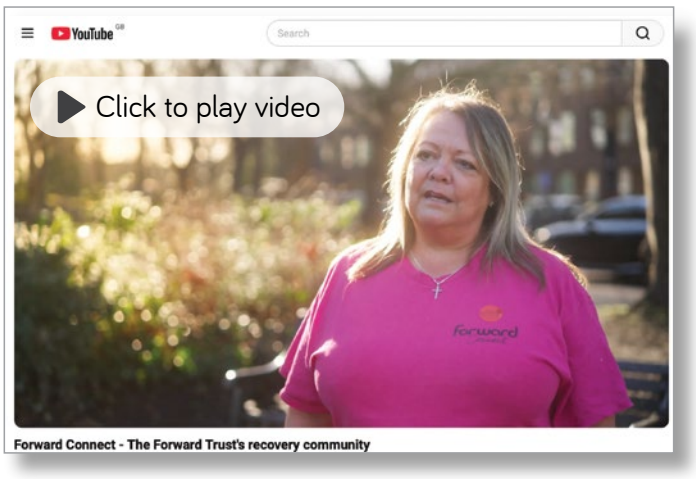
"It is very good to have so we can still have a connection with people. For me, this is what I need for my recovery and journey."

Promotional video

To help promote Forward Connect and the benefits of belonging to the network, members developed a promotional video (pictured opposite and accessible by clicking the button).

"Community is important to me because that's where I go to be understood. It's like my community understands when I talk about how I'm feeling, or addiction, or how my head works; the guys I go to in my community understand me. That's the most important thing, is for me not to feel judged. It's my tribe. People get me."

Forward Connect member and volunteer



National Reunion 2026

On Saturday 24 January 2026, Forward Connect members, friends, families and staff came together from across the country to celebrate recovery and the progress made during the past year. Nearly 300 members of the community gathered at St John's Church in Hackney to hear inspiring recovery shares, take part in arts and crafts, and connect with peers.



The event was also streamed to one of our prison services via a live link-up. The day provided a vital opportunity for community connection, creating a powerful sense of belonging and highlighting the resilience of our members.

"We might be an addict, but we can work on this, you know, but if we keep working at it, those addictions won't rise and therefore we can lead good, healthy, successful lives."

Forward Trust member at the National Reunion









Northern Reunion – The Magic of Recovery



In a parallel celebration, more than 150 members of The Forward Trust's recovery community came together in Hull for the annual Northern Reunion, celebrating recovery, connection and hope. A highlight of the day was a series of powerful personal testimonies from individuals in recovery and family members who had supported loved ones through addiction. Their stories demonstrated both the challenges of addiction and the transformative impact of recovery support. The event also included naloxone training and the distribution of free overdose-reversal kits, reinforcing Forward's commitment to harm reduction. The day concluded with music and the Serenity Prayer, leaving attendees inspired by the strength and resilience of the recovery community.

Volunteers



Our Forward Connect members have completed approximately 1,456 volunteering hours since April 2025. They support Forward Connect activities by facilitating meetings, completing recovery shares in community and prison units, and sharing their stories for case studies. Members also take part in external volunteering activities. This year, some members had the opportunity to feature as actors in a recovery support group in a short film about addiction, This Bed I Made, for musician Guvna B, also attending the premiere. (pictured)

Ambassadors programme

We continue to empower members to share their stories through events, media and outreach. Our Ambassadors have access to LEAFS, the Lived Experience Accredited Facilitator & Speaker programme, designed for people with lived experience who want to develop public-speaking and group-facilitation skills. It is delivered across three workshops and provides the confidence, structure and practical tools to share stories safely and effectively. In March, around 12 lived experience ambassadors took part in an oracy training workshop at the Financial Times, our strategic partner.

Reach Out and Recover (ROAR)

Forward Connect continues to work closely with ROAR, the Lived Experience Recovery Organisation in Kent that Forward helped establish with funding from Kent County Council.

ROAR has gone from strength to strength since its inception in 2023 and is now a self-sustaining Community Interest Company offering range of support, events and activities for people across the county.

Members of Forward Connect and ROAR often collaborate, including an annual football match in memory of former service user Emma Urqhart, which last year featured the legendary Tony Adams (former England captain and Chair of Forward Trust).

Earlier this year, they also teamed up to lead a group of 90 people who took to the streets of Canterbury for a six-mile recovery walk aimed at raising awareness for recovery and mental health.





Rupert's Story - From Forward Connect member to Lived Experience Ambassador

"Since being introduced to The Forward Trust and Forward Connect, I've been offered lots of opportunities to connect with others in recovery from addiction and I have become a lived experience ambassador.

I had an invitation to take part in a film project about addiction awareness, titled 'This Bed I Made', that The Forward Trust was making with its new ambassador Guvna B, a rapper and author in recovery. It was a chance to get involved in helping others who experience substance abuse to get the help they need. Attending the film premiere, being connected with everyone and seeing the finished film was amazing. It felt good to be in the film and be part of helping others as I was helped.

I took part in Oracy training run by The Forward Trust and the Financial Times. It was designed to build self-confidence among people who had experienced addiction or left prison and were rebuilding their lives. As someone who lives with ADHD, the workshop taught me a lot about building my own self-confidence when speaking to people about my experience.

It means a lot to me to be part of a community so dedicated to helping people who experience addiction and substance misuse. A community dedicated to rebuilding and supporting the lives of so many.

It is the essence of recovery to be able to give back what has been given to you. In no uncertain terms, my life has been saved by the help of others who understand what it is like to have engaged with recovery themselves."



WHAT OUR SERVICE USERS SAY

HOUSING

IOM Housing pilot

"I moved into the IOM house a few months ago and, although I was initially unsure about the move, I knew it would be a positive step for me. Since then, the experience has been really supportive and encouraging. Forward Trust has supported me through various meetings, and whenever I need help or guidance, I know they are only a text away and always respond quickly."

"Being in the house for the past few months has been a positive step for me. Although I miss my family in the Medway area, I have received consistent support from Clair through regular 1-2-1s and check-ins, which has helped me settle in well. I also feel reassured knowing that I can always reach out to Forward Trust for additional support whenever needed."

HASS

"Without your help when I came out of prison I would have been completely lost. You lot have been unbelievable, if people come out of prison like I did with nowhere to live they have got no chance. No one else seems to care. If Forward hadn't been there, I know my mental health would have been affected. They worked with my probation to explain what was happening, they took away the stress of landlords asking too many questions. I'm not trying to be funny, I don't know what would have happened to me. It's also like someone cares, if my Forward worker isn't around someone else calls me to make sure I am OK. You don't feel forgotten."

"Being housed somewhere decent has literally changed my life - before I lived in a dump with some bad characters, but this has been completely different. I now feel like I am my own man with my own responsibilities and that's what I've always wanted. People respect me now that I am living properly. My mentor had done so much for me - she has talked me through all my court appearances and offered support every month on top of probation appointments. She also helped get me a supermarket voucher £150 and I'll never forget that."



Homelessness Prevention Service

"When I started working with Forward I was drinking every day and street homeless. I'm now sober, have a full-time job and a room in a house... thank you for all your help."

"I feel like I have been given another chance now I have housing... thank you."

Family

"M-PACT is a very valuable programme! The only regret I have is that we did not take part in it earlier! The positive effects on my family have been considerable. Things are not so stressed at home. We now talk more and have fun together." Participant (Parent)

"I thought everything was my fault until I went to M-PACT." Participant (Young Person)



Drawings by participants in the M-PACT programme, which supports families affected by addiction to explore and share their experiences.

Recovery Support

"Being only a couple of weeks into my sobriety, listening to people's experiences of recovery gave me hope. I felt less alien by being surrounded by people going through or been through a similar experience. I was only going to go for an hour but I enjoyed it so much I stayed for the full session."

"Recovery Support and Forward Connect helps more than I thought it would, really really good... made me feel a lot more accountable and has massively helped me improve my mental health and life circumstances."

HOUSING SUPPORT

Reach and activity

HASS (independent living)

- **444** referrals received
- **297** assessments undertaken
- Housed clients in properties across **30** boroughs in London, Surrey and Kent

Supported accommodation (shared living)

- **7** houses, **29** bed spaces situated across Kent and Essex (male, female and mixed schemes)
- **215** new referrals

Homelessness Prevention Service (East Kent)

- **454** referrals

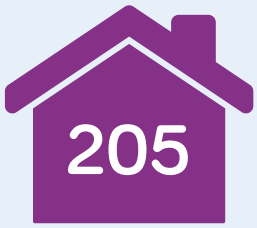
Client outcomes & feedback

HASS

- **205** people housed
- **90%** have sustained for over 6 months
- **79%** sustained over 12 months

Supported accommodation

- **25** people housed
- **11** planned positive move ons into independent accommodation
- **84%** success rate



people housed

FAMILY SUPPORT

Reach and activity

- **162** clients attending Relationships Matter structured programme
- **142** families supported through M-PACT structured programme
  - o 53 adults
  - o 211 young people aged 8-17
- **101** families supported through Recovering Families UK Online



243 families supported

Client outcomes & feedback

Recovering Families participants

- **78%** of participants reported improvements in emotional wellbeing
- **82%** of participants reported improvements across their personal and social lives and impact of addiction on family life
- **79%** of participants reported improvements in their knowledge and understanding of addiction, recovery, boundary setting and coping

RECOVERY SUPPORT

Reach and activity

- **715** clients supported
- **88** health and wellbeing workshops delivered, reaching 393 clients
- **978** one-to-one support sessions
- **61** clients attending intensive Recovery Coaching
- **48** lived experience workshops delivered by peers (reaching 1,577 people)
- **95** 'Meet and Greets' undertaken by staff or volunteers, ensuring safe travel to and from custody, rehabilitation settings and housing

Client outcomes & feedback

- **95%** who gave feedback between April 2025 and April 2026 rated their overall experience as 'good' or 'excellent'
- **20%** improvement in average 'IOMI' scores (pre/post support measures of agency/self-efficacy, hope, impulsivity, motivation to change, resilience, interpersonal trust, and wellbeing)



95%
rated their overall experience as 'good' or 'excellent'

FORWARD CONNECT

Reach and activity

7,362 members nationwide:

- **2,378** attendances at a range of in-person events
- **1,456** hours of volunteering activity
- Over **2.500** messages of online peer support via our Forward Trust Community app
- **369** Peer Supporters and Mentors
- **99** Lived Experience Ambassadors



1,456
hours of volunteering activity

Client outcomes & feedback

Of Forward Connect members surveyed:

- **98%** feel more hopeful about the future
- **97%** have felt improvements to their relationships
- **63%** report greater happiness
- **54%** report improvements in lifestyle, including health, exercise and nutrition



98%
feel more hopeful about the future

Campaigns and Influencing

During 25/26 The Forward Trust continued to campaign, raise awareness and provide 'thought leadership' across our service areas.

"Addiction is not a choice, or a personal failing, but a complex mental health condition that should be met with empathy and support. But still, even now in 2025, people's experience of addiction is shaped by fear, shame and judgement. This needs to change. The stigma surrounding those who face addiction allows it to thrive behind closed doors, impacting families and communities, and ultimately ruining lives. Many of us will know someone who is struggling with an addiction. Now is the moment to show our compassion and love to help them, or their friends and family, to reach out to organisations like The Forward Trust for support.

By talking about it in the open, together we can bring addiction and the harm it causes out of the shadows. We can reframe this issue with kindness and understanding, and we can help individuals and families coping with addiction know they are not alone."

HRH The Princess of Wales



Photo credit: Kensington Palace/Josh Shinner

Taking Action on Addiction

In its fifth year, the **Taking Action on Addiction** campaign continued to challenge stigma, improve public understanding of addiction and encourage more people to seek support.

Addiction Awareness Week 2025 was the centrepiece of the campaign, running 23-28 November. Under the theme The Conversation That Changed Everything, Tony Adams MBE, Chair of Trustees, launched the week with a video message that reached more than 850,000 viewers, encouraging people to talk openly about addiction and recovery. Other contributors included Alastair Campbell, Bryony Gordon, Josh Connolly and Karl Considine, alongside members of the Forward community sharing their own experiences.

Our Patron, **The Princess of Wales**, also shared a powerful message highlighting that addiction is not a choice or personal failing and calling for greater compassion, understanding and support for individuals and families affected by it.

New polling commissioned with **Ipsos MORI** reinforced why this work matters. More than half of UK adults reported having been personally touched by addiction, yet nearly a third believed that people experiencing addiction had only themselves to blame, demonstrating the stigma that remains. The campaign secured coverage across **BBC News, Channel 5 News and Sky News**, and was highlighted on The Rest is Politics podcast. Mike Trace also wrote an opinion piece for The Telegraph responding directly to continuing misconceptions about addiction.

Alongside national campaigning, Forward services and partners held local pop-up events, creating spaces for conversation, connection and access to support. **Recovery's Got Talent** brought 12 acts together, including MOBO award winner Guvna B, showcasing music, storytelling and performance as part of recovery. Importantly, enquiries for support increased during the week, turning greater awareness into opportunities for people to seek help.







TAKING ACTION ADDICTION
A FORWARD TRUST CAMPAIGN

Taking Action on Addiction 2026

Year 6 of the campaign kicked off with Addiction Awareness Week, running 19-25 September, and the launch of The Big Addiction Conversation, featuring a visit by our Royal Patron, HRH The Princess of Wales, to our Southend service (pictured below). The campaign will feature a range of exciting events and publications running into 2027, which we will report on fully in next year's report.



Image Credit: Laura Lewis



Image Credit: Laura Lewis

Media breakfasts

Generously hosted by the Financial Times, The Forward Trust also ran a series of media breakfasts, designed to bring together key policy experts and journalists. Subjects and experts included:

- **Addiction's growing prevalence and levels of drug-related deaths** - featuring Dame Carol Black (government special adviser on the drug strategy) and Dr Caroline Copeland (Director of the National Centre on Substance Misuse Mortality), chaired by Tina Daheley from the BBC.
- **The prison crisis, overcrowding and poor regime challenges** – featuring the Rt Hon David Gauke, (who chaired the government's Independent Review of Sentencing Policy), Pia Sinha (Director of the Prison Reform Trust), Natasha Porter (Founder and CEO of Unlocked Graduates), and Forward ambassador Lindsey Harrison and Trustee Ivor McKay.
- **The experience of women in the criminal justice system** – featuring Rachel Sylvester (Political Editor of The Observer/chair of), Paula Harriott (CEO of the criminal justice charity Unlock), Lucie Russell (CEO of User Voice), Mandy Ogunmokun (Founder, Treasures Foundation), Muna Hassan (Project Manager, User Voice) and Julie Muir (Executive Director for Recovery, The Forward Trust).



'Leading Forward' podcasts

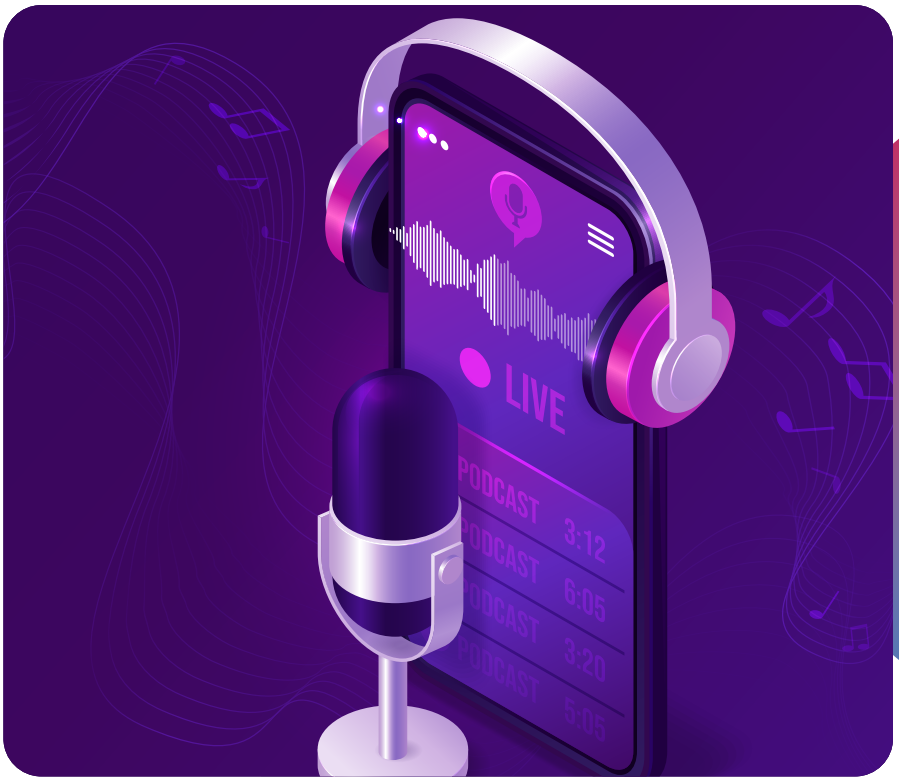


Forward also launched a series of podcasts to stimulate debate and discussion, informed by CEO Mike Trace's decades of experience. These included:

'Drug Consumption Rooms: Helpful or Harmful?' - fresh from a recent visit to the UK's first legal drug consumption centre in Glasgow., Mike's reflective podcast explores the complexity of this new approach - outlining the pros and cons of how these might evolve across the UK.

Residential Rehabilitation for Addiction: A Glorious Struggle: Mike looks back on half a century of drug/alcohol residential rehabilitation history, celebrates the tens of thousands of people whose lives have been transformed, and bemoans the continued problems with funding and referral systems that undermine their important work.

Our CEO, **Mike Trace, was also called as an expert Witness for a government Justice Select Committee hearing (10 June)**, 'Rehabilitation and resettlement: ending the cycle of reoffending'. As a subject expert with over 40-years experience in the field, Mike was able to provide a series of important points that highlighted the need for improved access and provision of substance use recovery programmes across the prison estate – or see ongoing rises in illegal drug activity in the prisons.



Our Partners

In 2025/26, we were proud to collaborate with the following partners:

Delivery Partners

- Adfam
- Atrium Clinic
- Better Lives
- BGPS
- Breakeven
- Catch 22
- Central & North West London Trust NHS Trust
- Change Grow Live
- Combat 2 Coffee
- Crisis
- Digital Kent
- DrPA Secure
- ERSA and AELP
- Evolve Housing & Support
- Groundwork East
- HCRG Care Group
- Homeless Link
- Intuitive Thinking skills
- Lincolnshire Action Trust
- Magistra
- Mercator Digital
- Nacro Community Accommodation Services
- New Futures Network
- Open Road Visions
- Peabody Trust
- People Plus
- Practice Plus Group (Health in Justice)
- Prisoners Abroad
- Reed in Partnership
- Rehabit
- Riverside
- RFEA
- Social Enterprise Kent
- South London & Maudsley NHS Trust
- Spark Inside
- Streetlight
- Sussex Pathways
- Thames Reach
- Thanet Citizens Advice
- The Medway Street Angels
- Threehands Insight
- Voluntary Action Islington

Funding partners

Statutory

- Croydon Council
- Department for Education
- Essex County Council
- Greater London Authority
- HMPPS
- Kent County Council
- Kent, Surrey and Sussex Probation (Surrey Police Crime Commissioners(
- London Boroughs: Greenwich, Islington, Kensington & Chelsea, Wandsworth, Lewisham, Newham, Merton & Richmond
- Medway Council
- NHS England
- Southend-on-Sea City Council
- Surrey County Council (including Epsom & Ewell, Guildford, Mole Valley, Reigate & Banstead, Spelthorne, Tandridge, and Waverley District housing teams)
- Thurrock Council

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- The Caerlow Trust
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- The National Lottery Community Fund
- The Patrick and Helena Frost Foundation
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- The RKT Charitable Trust
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We'd also like to thank all of our Trust and Foundation funders who gave anonymously and those who gave smaller, but no less important, grants. We couldn't do our work without you.

Corporate Funders

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We'd also like to give heartfelt thanks to all of our individual donors and those who've put on and taken part in events for Forward Trust. Your support means we have been able to help more people than ever before.



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