

North Lanarkshire Council – Bridges and Beyond

[keywords: *resettlement*]

Overview

In Scotland, prisoners released from custody after a sentence of less than 4 years are not subject to statutory supervision, and are generally released with little support with their resettlement. The 'Bridges and Beyond' scheme run by N. Lanarkshire criminal justice social work (CJSW) aims to bridge that gap in support by providing an assertive outreach to such individuals. Originally focused on people with addictions in Addiewell prison, but expanded in 2022 to all prisoners being released back into the area from across the estate. The Scottish Prison Service provide the team with a list of relevant individuals. The CJSW offer to support each of them, from visiting them in prison prior to their release to build an initial relationship with them and assess their needs, to meeting them from the gate, assisting with housing, benefits, food parcels etc on release, signposting them to other services and accompanying them to meetings with other agencies if their first few weeks back in the community, etc. One full-time justice worker is employed on the scheme. It is a voluntary service, but take up is high and feedback from those involved is very positive.

Its impact

The scheme has led to a significant increase in engagement with CJSW, and feedback from both service users, and the prisons, has been very positive.

What's special about it

Rather than waiting for people to reach out to us we reach out to them, and we make contact while they're in prison rather than waiting until release.

Wider applicability

The scheme does require some funding, but subject to that could be of benefit across Scotland,

Further information

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