

## **Community Awards 2017**

### **Shortlisted nominees**

#### **Criminal Justice Champion category**

##### **CJ Burge - The SOS+ Project, St. Giles Trust**

The SOS+ Project started 8 years ago, developed after persistent requests of an earlier level of intervention from parents and schools. SOS+ uses professionals with lived experience of being involved in gang and group offending to go into YOTS, PRUs, schools, colleges and other community settings to talk directly with young people about the realities of getting involved in gangs, youth violence and crime; being exploited; and the impact all this has on communities. SOS+ is not a 'scared straight' programme; it educates young people about the serious, life-long impacts the consequences of crime, youth violence and exploitation has and challenges the negative behaviours and attitudes of young people. SOS+ is about breaking down misconceptions, engaging young people with scenarios they can identify with and imparting real tools that they can utilise to avoid, and get themselves out of, such situations.

Over the past year, the SOS+ project delivered 295 sessions reaching 16,035 young people. These are young people who are at risk and potentially the next generation of those behind bars. CJ and her team have helped save them from a future of prison and the devastating effects this would have had on them, their families and local communities.

##### **Nosheen Qamer, Bradford College**

Police Camps are a multi-agency initiative to engage 9-15 year olds from the Bradford district in a week long programme of activities to promote positive behaviour in communities. Attached to this is a volunteer programme for 16 year olds and over to support the development of employability skills amongst, in particular, 16- 24 year olds. Key partners include Bradford College, West Yorkshire Police, Bradford Council, West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service, Incommunities and the British Army. All contribute towards the programme; this may be staffing, funding or resources.

300 youngsters attend per week, during school holidays, where they engage in activities that are based on key issues that impact the age groups. Topics covered include personal safety, road safety, community safety, crime prevention, sports, health & wellbeing and citizenship and communities. Between 2008 and 2017, we

have run 23 weeks of camp with over 5000 places offered to Bradford's 9- 15 year olds. We have the capacity to work with 1500 youngsters a year now and accommodate up to 100 volunteers annually. A long term study on Police Camps has evidenced that there is, amongst attendees, a reduction in Anti-Social Behaviour and crime that lasts 5 months.

### **Michael Corrigan – Prosper 4 Group**

Prosper 4 Group (“Prosper”) is a Peckham-based social enterprise delivering training and employment to serving prisoners, ex-offenders and other marginalised people across the country. Prosper has now developed a ground breaking new programme – Europe's first ever digital jobs board for ex-offenders.

The company was founded by Michael in 2014. He was a serving prisoner in HMP Brixton and had started a resettlement project for day-release prisoners. On his own release, Michael established P4G to overcome the sub-standard quality of training available both inside and outside prison, and then ensure that there was a real outcome at the end of the process – a job.

From inauspicious origins in a prison cell in Brixton, Michael (and his company) has achieved the following:

- Developed a project in HMP Brixton to find genuine employment for over 160 prisoners. The significance of this should not be underestimated. Faced with obvious constraints to his liberty - and a terrible lack of resources (no computers or internet etc.) - Michael still managed to transform the lives of many inmates, finding them jobs, building careers and re-establishing self-respect.
- Manufactured a range of cosmetics bags made by inmates at HMP Lowdham Grange. The bags - over 1,000 made with great skill and attention to detail - were the product of collaboration between P4G and the Peckham-based charity, Pecan.
- Appointed by the Northern Ireland Prison Service to help find employment and self-employment opportunities for ex-offenders.
- Secured funding from the Teesside Reform Prisons to bring a professional focus to jobs, industry and enterprise.
- Working with prisons in Leeds and Yorkshire to find employment for people on leaving prison.
- Developed the UK's first Digital Jobs Board for ex-offenders – [www.prosper4jobs.co.uk](http://www.prosper4jobs.co.uk)

Finally, he has built up relationships with over 50 employers who support ex-offenders (including such foresighted organisations as Halfords, Hilton Hotels, Land Securities, Morgan Sindall and Barclays), and established a far better mechanism for

placing ex-offenders into work than either the authorities or other competitor agencies.

## **Victoria Carroll – Khulisa**

Our Milestones Mentoring project is a through-the-gate mentoring programme which acts as a link between custody and the community for those leaving the prison system.

The period of time immediately after release is often referred to as a 'second sentence'; a time where 3 in 10 young people are left homeless and 1 in 5 are excluded from recruitment processes due to their conviction. Khulisa intervenes at this crucial transition period, using one of the most effective methods to support the rehabilitation of ex-prisoners; mentoring.

Mentor matching begins during the last few months of a prisoner's sentence and lasts for up to 12 months afterwards. This type of mentoring programme is unique to the Bolton area, and is proven to not only reduce re-offending, but also helps ex-prisoners learn new skills which help them to cope with stress or conflict in their lives; find secure and stable housing; find suitable employment and reconnect with family members and other social support networks.

Over the last 12 months, 50% of our mentee cohort has secured their own permanent accommodation, 70% secured and retained employment and more than 75% have not reoffended whilst on the programme. Additionally, 79% reported increased motivation, 47% felt more self-confident and 26% were able to reconnect with their families with mediation support.

## **Detective Sergeant Peter Fernandez**

- Support for young people already in the criminal justice system:

Peter identified young people from the London Borough of Islington were failing to receive support once they went to prison. He developed a multi-agency plan to reduce re-offending and divert young people away from the criminal justice system by building an end to end partnership coordination plan to rehabilitate them. Peter designed and implemented a protocol where young gang offenders, are always visited on arrest by a specialist gangs support worker, to initiate behavioural change and offer diversion and support. Since the implementation of Peter's initiative, the Islington Gangs Matrix (which tracks and manages active gang members) has reduced by over 30% with 40 fewer gang members - a huge impact.

- Parent call ins:

He developed the concept of a parent call-in; having identified it was the parents of who may hold the key to behavioural change. The first call-in was attended by around 60 parents, as well as support from the local councillor, key support agencies from across the statutory partnership and third sector representatives who he persuaded to attend and explain what could be offered to young people.

- Somali community work:

Peter identified the Somali community as having particularly low confidence in the police and disproportionately high likelihood of young males being drawn into gang crime and the criminal justice system. He developed a community forum called 'All young people matter', aimed at promoting the accessibility of the police to the community, as well as educating parents to better understand the dynamic and appeal of gangs, the signs and symptoms and most importantly, the diversionary support that is offered.

### **Rose Mahon – The Nelson Trust**

Rose has had a significant impact on the development of The Nelson Trust service's response to women caught up in the criminal justice system and those at risk of the same. She has designed, developed and delivered award winning services that divert individuals away from the criminal justice system. Her knowledge and expertise helps define best practice such as trauma informed; her innovative thinking is used by others as resource to influence policy. She is dynamic to the extent that she ensures services continuously evolve to take service user need into account, as she strives to ensure that criminality is not added to the significant challenges people with multiple vulnerabilities face.

Rose is passionate when it comes to advocating for the disadvantaged in the criminal justice system, she works tirelessly to make sure those without a voice are heard.

Rose makes a big impression on all who come into contact with her; she has the ability to engage the most entrenched hard to reach complex women away from the criminal justice system and into a life of independence.