

**North Staffordshire  
Community Chaplaincy Project**

**Independent Evaluation  
September 2006**

**Consultant's Statement**

**Wider Impact Consultancy** is pleased to commend the North Staffordshire Community Chaplaincy Project. The project is on course to achieve objectives and is achieving 'Value for Money'. It is professionally delivered and demonstrates an innovation and caring approach to the rehabilitation of offenders. The project has potential for further development across the West Midlands Region.

**Edwin Lewis**, Wider Impact Consultancy  
September 2006

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**An Independent Evaluation of  
The North Staffordshire Community Chaplaincy Project**

**Commissioned by  
The North Staffordshire Chaplaincy Partnership**



**Photo: HMP Shrewsbury**

***'WE JUST WANT TO BE NORMAL LIKE YOU'***

**Evaluation by Wider Impact Consultancy  
Innovators in Regeneration and Community Well Being**

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Community Chaplaincy must not be seen as a new initiative, or something which should be allowed to 'go away'. Established internationally, the concept is proving a success throughout England and Wales.

Chaplaincy in prison environments is also not new and is replicated in areas such as hospitals, the armed forces and police service. What is innovative is the facility of experienced and committed Chaplain(s) supporting offenders during their precarious journey from prison back into the communities where they came from.

Wider Impact Consultancy has felt privileged to evaluate the North Staffordshire pilot, because it has opened new doors on how we can rehabilitate offenders and help **them** break **their** cycle of re-offending. Whilst researchers may take years attempting to understand why the project works, the answer appears simple **someone with faith and belief has been given time to support vulnerable people turn their lives around.**

Since the launch of the North Staffordshire Chaplaincy Project during June 2004, two dedicated Community Chaplains, supported by dedicated volunteers and an innovative Multi Agency Steering Group have worked tirelessly to link with nearly **one hundred** ex-offenders (clients), to reduce re-offending from the national 'norm' of **58%** to under **20%**, during the first eighteen months of the project.

This represents a potential saving of **£1.9m** and annual savings of **£1m** – against a project cost of **£1,500** for each of the **eighty-three** clients who have received more extensive support.

There clearly must be caution in accrediting such impressive outcomes to one project or initiative. Those involved in delivery of the project are at pains to recognise the role played by a whole host of agencies and individuals involved in rehabilitating ex-offenders. Tracking of clients is not precise and as a mid term evaluation, outcomes could clearly move either way. However the evidence noted by Wider Impact Consultancy indicates the project is playing a **significant role** in rehabilitating clients and is proving **value for money.**

Interviews with clients provide the clearest insight into why the project is working. Whilst they may be ex-criminals, they are not fools. None are critical of agencies such as the Probation Service and Drug Rehabilitation agencies - just the opposite. They recognise the strains and pressures such hard working staff are under, as they attempt to cope with problems associated with drug abuse and ever increasing prison populations.

Significantly, they value the support the Community Chaplains are providing, as they add value to the statutory roles of such agencies, providing something almost unique in their lives – **'someone who has TIME for us, can get things done and will never purposely let us down.'**

## **2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Wider Impact Consultancy would like to thank the following for their contributions in making this report possible:

**Tony, Harry, Ryan** and **Amanda** (names changed), prisoner HMP Shrewsbury/ ex-offenders/ clients;

**Major David Emery**, MBE, Salvation Army and Community Chaplain, HMP Swansea;

**Ken Mainey**, Volunteer Mentor;

**David Taylor**, Diocesan Secretary, Diocese of Lichfield;

**Gerry Hendry**, Governor, HMP Shrewsbury;

**Chris Jones**, Head of Resettlement, HMP Shrewsbury;

**Mike Jolley**, Staffordshire Probation Service;

**Paul Giannasi**, Chief Inspector, Staffordshire Police;

**John Tate**, Director, Youth Offending Services, Stoke on Trent;

**Mike Thorley**, Reconstruction Project Coordinator;

**Revd David Farley**; Chaplain, HMP Shrewsbury;

**Revd Prebendary Bob Payne**, Sessional Chaplain HMP & RC Foston Hall, HMP & YOI Swinfen Hall, and formerly Assistant Chaplain General of H.M. Prisons;

**Steve Vincent**, Community Chaplain;

**Roger Howarth**, Community Chaplain;

**Rt Revd Gordon Mursell**, Bishop of Stafford.

Contributions have included data, information, time and most importantly honest feedback on how the North Staffordshire Community Chaplaincy project is making a real difference to the lives of ex-offenders and people living in local communities.

### **3. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

To report on the achievement of key aims and outcomes, outlined within the North Staffordshire Community Chaplaincy Project three year business plan i.e. over the three year life cycle the North Staffordshire Community Chaplaincy Project will work with **one hundred** adult ex-offenders, reduce costs to the criminal justice system and:

#### **Project Aims**

- Reduce the number of victims of crime;
- Draw the many faith communities in North Staffordshire together;
- Add to community cohesion;
- Provide an additional community resource;
- Multiply the impact of existing community resources;
- Improve the engagement of the faith communities;
- Lead to a reduction in conviction rates;
- Begin with a focus on male adult prisoners;
- Have the support of criminal justice and community agencies;
- Be professionally evaluated.

#### **Beneficiaries**

**Local communities** – through active involvement in a local initiative, designed to divert people from returning to offending behaviour. Reductions in crime and the fear of crime;

**Victims of crime** – by reductions in the number of victims and a reduction in repeat victimisation;

**Adult ex-offenders** – by offering support and assistance to those who have received a custodial sentence under twelve months;

**Young people** – who have offended and including those subject to Detention and Training Orders;

**Families of ex-offenders, including parents and carers** – who will receive support as they adjust to having the young person or adult back at home;

**Volunteers** – who will be involved in challenging and rewarding work in their local community, which will include training that will enhance and develop their personal skills.



#### **4. METHODOLOGY**

Methods used for this independent evaluation have included:

- Desk research, including reference to 2004 evaluation carried out by Dr Joanne Portwood of the Swansea Community Chaplaincy project;
- Analysis and review of data and information kindly provided by the Community Chaplains;
- Case studies and interviews with individuals who represent four key distinct groups:
  - Prisoner/ ex-offenders;
  - Community Chaplains;
  - Volunteer Mentor;
  - Partner agency members.
- One to one meeting with a Volunteer/ Mentor
- One to one meetings with key agency members:
  - Mercian Trust (Diocese of Lichfield)
  - Governor HMP Shrewsbury
  - Head of Resettlement HMP Shrewsbury
  - Probation Service
  - Police Service
  - Manager Stoke on Trent Youth Offending Team
  - Chaplain HMP Shrewsbury
  - Revd Prebendary Bob Payne, Sessional Chaplain HMP & RC Foston Hall, HMP & YOI Swinfen Hall, and formerly Assistant Chaplain General of H.M. Prisons;
  - The Community Chaplains
  - Bishop of Stafford
- Observational analysis, involving 'shadowing' Community Chaplains as they carried out their day to day business;
- Site visits to HMP Shrewsbury;
- Site visit to HMP Swansea.

## **5. HISTORY OF COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCY**

### **Background**

Community Chaplaincy was initiated some twenty years ago in Canada, to engage the Church in the offenders' return to society. It has spread throughout Canada, where it provides a professional focus for the Churches' work with ex-prisoners and their families.

From Autumn 1999, the Correctional Service of Canada accepted invitations to visit the United Kingdom and deliver presentations at a number of seminars held in Birmingham, Blackburn, Cardiff, Devon, Durham, Gloucester, Nottingham, Sheppey and Stoke on Trent. Considerable interest was expressed from attendees, which included representatives from the Police, Probation, CPS, the Judiciary, Church and Community Leaders.

It was generally agreed that the concept of Community Chaplaincy is a realistic response to issues important to professionals and policy makers:

- How to reduce and challenge offending behaviour;
- The emphasis on resettlement of ex-offenders back into the community; and
- The need to challenge the fear of crime in local communities;
- The importance of developing collaborative approaches with the voluntary sector.

The Canadian experience opened up opportunities to:

- Build on open and accepting relationships between prisoners and Prison Chaplains inside prisons to enable positive community contacts on release;
- To complement and work with agencies involved in reintegration;
- To provide practical assistance to all who request such help;
- To provide spiritual assistance to those who ask for help on their journey.

Benefits within England and Wales included an improved response from the churches to the challenge of reintegrating offenders through the provision of:

- A sharper professional focus for Faith Communities;
- A more effective link between Prison Chaplains and the wider faith and local communities;
- Improved support for clergy and congregations in local communities;
- An improved partnership with existing voluntary agencies;
- An improvement in liaison with the Police and Probation Service;
- An improvement in the expertise of the faith community as it addresses justice issues.

A number of policy documents reinforce the role Community Chaplains can play in contributing to a reduction in re-offending, which include Patrick Carter's Correctional Services Review of December 2003, **Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime** and the subsequent Government response published in January 2004 entitled, **Reducing Crime, Changing Lives**.

Both of these documents led to the development of the **National Offender Management Service (NOMS)**, which acknowledges:

*'We need to enable ex-offenders (often socially excluded) to access better mainstream services that are provided outside the criminal justice system, and Regional Offender Managers (ROMS) are key to developing these pathways through co-commissioning arrangements. We are incorporating three strong alliances – the Corporate Alliance, the Civic Society Alliance and the Faith and Voluntary Sector Alliance – to promote and encourage greater involvement from employers, local authorities, and voluntary and faith organisations in reducing re-offending'.*

A number of Community Chaplaincy projects are in process of being developed/ delivered in areas including, Cardiff, Dorchester, Durham, Feltham, Gloucester, Leeds, Liverpool, Low Newton, **North Staffordshire**, Nottingham, Manchester, Preston, Swansea and West Yorkshire.

In general, projects assist with ex-offenders in all areas of resettlement from housing, employment, debt and substance dependency, to a more holistic view of integrating individuals back into his or her community. This goal is achieved in a number of ways, which include a combination of mentoring and support, working on a one to one basis with the client.

### **Outcomes**

Results of the effectiveness of the project are so far encouraging. Whilst it is too early to access long term outcomes throughout England and Wales, initial outcomes from the Swansea project are encouraging. For example, between November 2001 and March 2004, two hundred and two prisoners were assisted and only forty-eight returned to prison; a reconviction rate of **22%**, compared to the national reconviction rate of **58%**.

## **6. NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCY**

### **Background**

Launched during **June 2004**, the North Staffordshire Community Chaplaincy Project covers the City of Stoke on Trent, Newcastle under Lyme and Staffordshire Moorland areas, with a population of nearly 500,000. Each year, some **nine hundred and thirty** adults and **one hundred and thirty** young offenders are released back into local communities, with a national **57%** rate of re-offending within two years.

In the year to August 2002, **eight hundred and seventy-three** Staffordshire based adults committed **seven thousand, nine hundred and ten** offences and the area was the **third highest** non metropolitan area in the Country for re-offending and re-conviction.

Potential faith communities in the area include **two hundred and twenty** Christian Churches, **seven** Muslim Mosques, **two** Sikh Gurdwaras, with small Bahail, Buddhist, Hindu and Jewish communities. (**Source:** North Staffordshire Community Chaplain Business Plan 2004).

### **About the Programme**

The **Mercian Trust**, a registered charity, acts as the Accountable Body and key individuals/ partner agencies supporting the launch of the project included:

- The Bishop of Stafford
- Governor, HMP Shrewsbury (now Governor, HMP Featherstone)
- Chaplains, Dovegate, Stafford, Stoke Heath and Shrewsbury Prisons
- Staffordshire Police
- Staffordshire Probation
- Church Urban Fund

## Project Costs

Projected project costs of **£259,558** have been gratefully sourced (and applied for) from funding agencies such as:

- Awards for All
- Beatrice Laing Foundation
- Bishop of Lichfield's Lent Appeal
- Britannia Building Society Foundation
- Chester and Stoke on Trent Methodist District
- Diocese of Lichfield
- Give it Sum
- HMP Shrewsbury
- Kathleen Hannay Memorial Charity
- Lankelly Foundation
- Lichfield Church Urban Fund
- National Church Urban Fund
- Noel Buxton Trust
- The Mercers' Company
- Staffordshire Coalfields Community Chest
- Stasser Foundation
- Sir Hailey Stewart Trust
- Stoke on Trent Mayor's Charity
- Tudor Trust
- Worshipful Company of Weavers

## Project Aims and Objectives

- **Reduce the number of victims of crime**, by supporting people who are serving, or who have served a custodial sentence, to be successfully resettled in the North Staffordshire communities from which they came;
- **Will draw together the many faith communities in North Staffordshire**, to support those being released from prison to improve their chances of successful resettlement and break the cycle of re-offending;
- **Add to community cohesion**, by using mentors from across the various faith groups, thereby improving the quality of life for young people and adults who have offended and the communities in which they live;
- **Provide an additional community resource**, working with and drawing from a range of faith communities to reduce crime and the number of victims of crime and therefore support community development;
- **Multiply the impact of existing community resources**, through improving access to health, education and housing facilities;

- **Improve the engagement of the various faith groups**, as active partners in local communities in conjunction with the statutory and voluntary sectors to mobilise and improve resources to support individuals;
- **Lead to a reduction in conviction rates**, from the national figure of 58% to 20%; a figure that is in keeping with the outcomes of a similar project in Swansea, during the first eighteen months of that project;
- **Begin with a focus on male adult prisoners**, being discharged from HM Prison Shrewsbury, but extend to include **women** and **young people**, as soon as resources become available;
- **Have the support of criminal justice and community agencies**, through His Honour Judge Simon Tonking; the Chief Constable of Staffordshire; Mr David Walton, Chief Probation Officer; the Right Reverend Christopher Hill, Bishop of Stafford and many other community leaders;
- **Be professionally evaluated**, by the Centre for Criminal Justice Policy and Research at the University of Central England, under the direction of Professor David Wilson.

As outlined, the North Staffordshire Community Chaplaincy Project aims to reduce the number of victims of crime by supporting people who are serving, or who have served, a custodial sentence, to be successfully resettled back into North Staffordshire communities.

Objectives include benefiting those released from prison, their families, local communities, victims of crime and volunteers. Initially, the project aims included working with adult males being discharged from HMP Shrewsbury, who had received a custodial sentence of less than twelve months. Subsequent aims included extension of the service to benefit young adults aged 18 – 21, followed by female offenders and finally young people under eighteen years, living in the North Staffordshire communities, who are subject to Detention and Training Orders.

HMP Shrewsbury was selected as **70%** of prisoners held at the prison are from the North Staffordshire area

## **Partnership Working**

The project aims to work in partnership with:

- The Prison Service
- Staffordshire Probation Area
- Staffordshire Police
- Staffordshire Youth Offending Service
- Stoke on Trent Youth Offending Service
- YMCA Stoke

The project also aims to work in consultation with:

- Statutory and voluntary agencies providing education, training, employment, information and advice services;
- Drug and alcohol advice and treatment agencies;
- Victim Support;
- Local faith communities.

## **Policies and Procedures**

Wider Impact Consultancy is impressed with project policies and procedures, which includes the following documents:

- Adult Protection Policy
- Allegation of Abuse Report Forms
- Confidentiality Policy
- Community Working Policy
- Counselling Guidelines and Information to Clients
- Equal Opportunities and Anti-Discrimination Practice Policy
- Health & Safety/ Risk Assessment Policies
- Volunteer Agreement
- Volunteer Policy

## **North Staffordshire Community Chaplaincy Team**

At the time of evaluation (August/ September 2006), the Community Chaplaincy team comprises of:

One full time Community Chaplain, **Steve Vincent**, based in Stoke on Trent (YMCA);

One part time Community Chaplain, **Roger Howarth**, based at HMP Shrewsbury and in Stoke on Trent (YMCA).

Original administrative support has been withdrawn, due to a lack of need. Financial savings in this area have enabled a useful increase of hours for the part time Community Chaplain.

## **Community Chaplains**

**Steve Vincent** (full time Community Chaplain)

Qualifications includes – BSc. (Joint Honours), Pharmacology & Physiology; PG Diploma, Community and Youth Studies (JNC).

Work Experience include – Prison Based Youth Worker (HMYOI Werrington); Housing Manager (Inward House Projects, North Lanc); Substance Abuse Tutor (Lancaster College); Group Worker (Inward House Residential Rehabilitation Unit); Team Leader (Juice Youth Centre, Northern Ireland).

**Roger Howarth** (part time Community Chaplain)

Qualifications include – Post Graduate Diploma in Counselling Psychology; Mathematics Honours Graduate; Minor Subjects, Operational Research, Economics and Computer Science; Graduate, Reader and Local Ministry Training, Diocese of Lichfield.

Work Experience includes – Chaplain, HMP Featherstone; Independent Counselor; Client Project Manager, Interface Developments Limited (National Strategy Police Systems (NSPIS)); Owner, The Acton Partnership; Managing Director, Apricot Computers plc; Sales and Marketing Director, Comart Computers (Kode plc).

## **Volunteer Mentors**

While **twelve** Volunteer Mentors have been recruited and trained, to date, **seven** currently provide valued one to one support for ex-offenders in the community.

Wider Impact Consultancy has taken time to explore the role of Volunteer Mentors, meeting with Volunteer Mentor **Ken Mainey**.

Ken is keen to point out his faith and his belief that everyone deserves chances when they have made mistakes. To date, he has supported three clients and has clearly taken his role very seriously. *‘One is a nice lad and is still finding his way in life. I met him in prison and got to know him quite well after his release.*

*I also made links with his grandmother and he seemed to appreciate that. It became clear he was having problems breaking away from those who were a bad influence and we lost contact when he moved to another part of Stoke to get away from them.*

*Unfortunately he is back in prison, but I have not given up on him. I will be approaching Steve (Steve Vincent, Community Chaplain), with a view to meeting him again in prison to discuss the way forward. I have since been in contact with his grandmother and I understand he is impressed I have taken the trouble to check she is OK while he is away’.*



Asked if there are any issues regarding the role of Volunteer Mentors, Ken is concerned about the process of meeting prisoners in Shrewsbury Prison. *'Time is a big issue, as we only get around an hour and a half with them, because we are not allowed in until ten in the morning and it can take fifteen minutes or more to book in. They have to be away by lunch time and may be called away to other meetings.'*

*I have to leave home at eight to get to Shrewsbury for ten in the morning and it is a difficult journey at times, negotiating rural roads. I am aware some mentors have turned up to be told their client has been transferred to another prison at short notice.*

*It has also become apparent I can only mentor one client at a time. Whilst I am retired, I have other responsibilities and am normally limited to meeting clients once a week'.*

Ken points out anticipated frustrations, attempting to support complex clients. Without being critical, he suggests value in more regular group meetings with fellow Volunteer Mentors and the Community Chaplains; when the opportunity can be taken to share frustrations and ensure mutual support.

**Comment** – Wider Impact Consultancy has discussed issues raised by Ken Mainey with the Community Chaplains and it has become apparent the capacity of Volunteer Mentors to support clients is not as high as originally anticipated. Reasons include the logistics of travelling to and from HMP Shrewsbury, access to clients within the prison and their flexibility in relation to responding to client needs following release.

Community Chaplains have therefore been required to provide greater than anticipated time for clients.

The Community Chaplains are however keen to point out the valued role of Volunteer Mentors, without whom their role would become much more difficult.

## 7. OBSERVATIONAL ANALYSIS

Wider Impact Consultancy took the opportunity to 'shadow' both Community Chaplains as they carried out their day to day work, with particular emphasis on face to face interaction with clients.

Whilst the Community Chaplains primarily focus efforts within HMP Shrewsbury, they also offer support to prisoners based within other prisons (see table 2), which also house prisoners due to be released into the North Staffordshire area.

Both are keen to ensure that prisoners 'choose' to take advantage of their services, rather than being 'selected' in any form.

**Within the prison environment**, prisoners are either met by a Community Chaplain on a one to one basis, or as part of groups. Wider Impact Consultancy took time to join one of the Community Chaplains at a group presentation within HMP Shrewsbury and was impressed with the frankness of delivery, when in addition to providing a clear outline of what is (and what is not) on offer; it was made clear it was up to the individual to make, what could be a life changing choice to take control of his own life.

Wider Impact Consultancy noted positive interaction between the Community Chaplain and the group. Questions were answered utilising 'real' case study examples, which served to prove to the group he knew what he was talking about and was able to support them. A group discussion developed and the Community Chaplain adopted the role of a facilitator, while individuals opened up about their experiences and what sort of support they were looking for on release.

**The group quickly identified the Community Chaplain could only offer support to those returning to North Staffordshire. A number, who were not from the area, seemed puzzled, questioning why they were being excluded.**

The only promise made by the Community Chaplain was the offer of support to those who were ready to make real changes in their lives. No pressure was put on the group or individuals to contact the Community Chaplain after the meeting, although the Community Chaplain made it clear how he could be contacted.

Wider Impact Consultancy also took time to join the Community Chaplains as they met clients **following release**. Support is delivered on a one to one basis and is tailored to meet individual requirements. This can include being met at the prison gate on release, the individual 'dropping in' at the YMCA following release, meetings at home, or informal discussions at 'neutral' venues such as local cafes.

What quickly became clear was a 'bond' between clients and the Community Chaplains. First names are used on both sides and the Community Chaplains demonstrated extensive knowledge about clients, which was used to good effect. For example, family names are remembered, note is made of appointments that need to be kept, claims that need to be made and interest is maintained in domestic issues such as purchasing domestic items for homes.

The Community Chaplains demonstrated an innovative and imaginative, 'problem solving' approach to their work, making best use of opportunities as they arise. For example, a client, who is desperate to find meaningful work, has been 'set on' decorating and renovating properties being managed on behalf of Green Pastures Housing and a commercial private landlord.

Wider Impact Consultancy was present when a client 'dropped in' at the YMCA building where the Community Chaplains are based. The client was clearly affected by recent drug abuse, rambling and spilling tea provided by the Community Chaplains. Rather than condemn him, they worked as team, reassuring him and looking after his well being. Maintaining client confidentiality, Wider Impact Consultancy is aware agencies were appropriately alerted regarding the client's condition and his sudden access to a Class A drug.

Any illusion that they are a 'soft touch' was dispelled by observations of dealings with a client who had let them down, by failing to pay rent on a property the Community Chaplains had arranged on his behalf. After repeated warnings, the client was asked to leave the property by the Community Chaplains, which he did. This clearly 'shocked the client into action' and Wider Impact was present when he returned to the YMCA the next day and successfully renegotiated a new 'contract' with the Community Chaplains.

Wider Impact Consultancy is impressed by the Community Chaplain's determination '*to never let a client down*' and develop, '*two way trust and understanding*'. For example, if a promise to meet is made, the meeting takes place – or the reasons for not making the appointment are honestly explained in advance.

There is no doubt clients find this an important factor in building their relationship with the Community Chaplains. As one client outlined to Wider Impact Consultancy, '*for the first time in my life, I can trust someone who will be there for me and will never deliberately let me down*'.

The importance of developing client independence was noted by Wider Impact Consultancy. For example, clients are encouraged to make appointments on their own whenever possible, following informative and esteem/ confidence building sessions with the Community Chaplains. As a client pointed out to Wider Impact Consultancy, '*sometimes I don't see Roger and Steve (Community Chaplains) for a number of weeks. That's good, because it shows I am standing on my own feet, but it helps to know they are there if I ever need them – just as a good friend is*'.

## 8. OUTCOMES

Both quantitative and qualitative data and information has been researched, taking advantage of numerical data/ information and the opinions and experiences of those closely involved in the project, which includes prisoners and ex-prisoners (clients), Community Chaplains and key partner agency members.

The research has taken the opportunity to:

- Analyse data and statistics kindly provided by the Community Chaplains;
- Carry out case studies with clients currently receiving support from the Community Chaplains;
- Carry out informal interviews with the Community Chaplains;
- ‘Shadow’ the Community Chaplains as they carried out their day to day work;
- Carry out informal interviews with key partner agency members;
- Carry out site visits to HMP Shrewsbury;
- Carry out a site visit to HMP Swansea, taking opportunity to carry out an informal interview with the Community Chaplain of the Swansea project, which was the first project of its kind in England and Wales.

### Statistics

Table 1 provides a summary of help offered and requested by prisoners located at HMP Shrewsbury.

**Table 1**

<b>HMP SHREWSBURY</b>	<b>YEAR 1 June 04 - June 05</b>	<b>YEAR 2 June 05 - June 06</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Number of initial interviews conducted*	110	202	312
Number of prisoners not wishing assistance	58	122	180
Number of prisoners for whom help was not suitable (e.g. leaving area, drug rehab, planning to continue drug misuse)	22	17	39
Prisoners interested in help	30	63	93
Prisoners interested in help - % total	27%	31%	30%

**Source:** North Staffordshire Community Chaplaincy Project (August 2006)

(\* Contact/ interviews with prisoners commenced January 2005)

**Comment** – it is significant that Community Chaplains have been able to access large numbers of prisoners within HMP Shrewsbury. It is also significant that in the region of a third of prisoners indicated an interest in the service.

A test of the service will always be how many clients engage with the Community Chaplains on release.

Table 2 provides a summary of help provided to clients after release from HMP Shrewsbury, other prisons and by referrals as indicated.

**Table 2**

<b>SOURCE</b>	<b>YEAR 1 June 04 - June 05</b>	<b>YEAR 2 June 05 - June 06</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
HMP Shrewsbury	20	54	74
HMP Stoke Heath	5	-	5
HMP Featherstone	-	2	2
HMP Drake Hall	1	-	1
HMP Featherstone 'Reconstruction' project	-	7	7
Other prisons outside the area	5	1	6
Police Clients	2	-	2
Partners and family assistance	4	-	4
Clients given help	37	64	101
Clients given help - % of total interviewed in prisons	29%	30%	30%

**Source:** North Staffordshire Community Chaplaincy Project (August 2006)

**Comment** – an assumption has been made that targeted support is provided to prisoners housed in prisons other than HMP Shrewsbury.

It is significant that a consistent third of ex-prisoners (clients) have engaged with the Community Chaplains in some form on release.

Wider Impact Consultancy has taken opportunity to examine the help/support provided to clients on release.

Table 3 provides a summary of help provided to clients.

**Table 3**

<b>TYPE OF HELP PROVIDED</b>	<b>YEAR 1</b>	<b>YEAR 2</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Accommodation</b>			
Direct housing provision	0	10	10
Hostel accommodation	6	11	17
<b>Support</b>			
Residential drug rehabilitation	2	-	2
First day help	11	26	37
Mentoring	23	22	45
Substance abuse assistance	15	2	17
Alcohol abuse assistance	7	4	11
Family support	9	7	16
Employment assistance	13	7	20
Counselling	-	1	1
'Reconstruction' project	-	7	7
Mental health issues	4	2	6

**Source:** North Staffordshire Community Chaplaincy Project (August 2006)

**Comment** – whilst support is varied and in line with expectations, it is significant that **ten** clients have benefited from direct housing during the second year of the project, clearly as a result of the innovative partnership with Green Pastures Housing. Without doubt the acid test of the success of the project will be a reduction in returns to prison.

Table 4 provides a summary of returns to HMP Shrewsbury and HMP Featherstone during year two of the project.

**Table 4**

<b>RETURNS TO PRISON</b>	<b>CLIENT NUMBERS</b>
Less than 1 month	3
Less than 3 months	5
3 months to 6 months	4
6 months to 9 months	1
9 months to 1 year	1
Over 1 year	2
Total	16
Total number of clients supported on release	83
% returned to prison	19.3%
Average length of release as at July 06	355 days

**Source:** North Staffordshire Community Chaplaincy Project (August 2006)

**Comment** – there is no doubt that results are encouraging, taking into account clients are most at risk of re-offending during early stages of release. Understanding national figures are based on the first two years of release and it is likely a number of clients will re-offend; should current returns double to circ. 40%, North Staffordshire outcomes will still compare favourably with a national return rate of **58%**.

## Comparisons with Swansea Community Chaplaincy Project

Whilst independent research of the Swansea Community Chaplaincy Project, carried out by Dr Joanne Portwood (April 2004), acknowledges such short term evaluation does not paint the full picture, it is encouraging to note outcomes of both projects appear similar.

For example, the Swansea evaluation of the project from November 2001 to December 2003, highlighted on average **22%** of offenders who participated in the project had re-offended, which is also less than half the national rate of reconvictions for adult males, which estimates suggest is 58% for adult males (Prison Population, Home Office 2001).

### Cost Benefit Analysis

As Dr Portwood points out in her research, estimating the financial costs and benefits of any resettlement programme or project, is notoriously difficult, due to the many different agencies involved in the criminal process and the difficulty associated with quantifying inputs and resources.

### Costs to Individuals and Households

Table 5 provides an insight into the cost of crime against individuals and households. Clearly such costs do not take into account the emotional costs faced by victims and the wider community.

**Table 5**

<b>CRIME</b>	<b>AVERAGE COST (PER CRIME)</b>
Murder	£1,458,975
Wounding	£21,422
Sexual Offences	£31,438
Robbery	£7,282
Burglary Dwelling	£3,268
Theft of Vehicles	£4,138
Criminal Damage	£866

**Source:** Home Office, June 2005



## **Prison Costs**

Estimates by the Social Exclusion Unit (2002) suggest that the cost of keeping an individual offender in prison can equate to **£65,000** at the point of imprisonment and **£37,500** thereafter. Estimates provided by the Swansea Community Chaplaincy Project (2004), suggest that the weekly cost of keeping a prisoner in prison is circ **£670** per week.

## **Benefits** (North Staffordshire)

Taking into account the reconviction data for the North Staffordshire Project to June 2006, there were circ. **Thirty** fewer reconvictions than the 'expected' level (compared to the national average of 58%).

**Comment** - as Dr Portwood points out, it would be unwise to attribute such 'success', solely to the Community Chaplains significant contribution. Indeed the North Staffordshire Community Chaplains are the first to point out that a whole host of agencies are supporting prisoners and clients on release; which includes, most importantly, the individuals themselves, who are probably contributing the majority of effort and energy.

## **Potential Savings**

This collaborative 'effort' represents a 'potential' saving of over **£1.9m** in terms of the money saved from the **thirty** clients getting to the point of imprisonment and a further saving of **£1m** per year of keeping the same number of clients within a prison.

Such figures should of course be added to costs of crime to individuals and households **prior** to conviction and imprisonment (see table 5).

## **Unit Costs**

Estimating projects costs up to June 2006 of **£130,000**, it is a fair assumption that the cost of the Community Chaplains supporting each of the **eighty-three** clients up to June 2006 is circ **£1,500**, representing a '*considerable return on investment*'.

## Case Studies

Wider Impact Consultancy found it extremely useful to have direct contact with clients. Meetings were in private, without the Community Chaplains being present.

Clients consented to the meetings, agreed notes could be taken and were promised anonymity. Whilst Wider Impact asked prepared questions, such as age, marital status and past history, clients were encouraged to talk openly about their lives and their opinions about Community Chaplaincy. Feedback notes, outlined within **Appendix A**, are honest accounts of meetings. No subjects or views have been edited out of the notes.

Whilst Wider Impact Consultancy had a free choice of clients to meet, useful access to one client proved impractical due to the client failing to be available, despite a number of appointments being made. In this case, the client was a young man, who had recently been released from prison.

During a brief introductory meeting with the client, Wider Impact Consultancy noted his lack of confidence and 'grip on real life'. For example he saw the purchase of Lottery Scratch Cards' as a useful way to raise income. Domestic tasks such as replacing cushion covers in his home environment appeared too much to handle. He was also missing key appointments arranged on his behalf by the Community Chaplains.

Feedback from the Community Chaplains inferred he was having difficulty adjusting to life outside prison. He has re-offended at least once since release (shoplifting) and has missed at least one meeting with his Probation Officer. At the time of writing this report, it seems likely he will be returning to prison. The Community Chaplains have made it clear they will continue to seek to support him.

Four clients have assisted Wider Impact (names have been changed):

- **Tony** – who was being supported by the Community Chaplains, whilst still a prisoner within HMP Shrewsbury;
- **Harry** – recently released from Prison and a beneficiary of the **'Reconstruction'** project;
- **Ryan and Amanda** – a 'couple' who are heroin addicts, ex offenders and receiving intensive support from the Community Chaplain project.

## Over View

Wider Impact Consultancy was impressed with the honesty of all clients, both in terms of their past history and their well thought out opinions of the 'system' which is in place to support them.

Without question, all were appreciative of the Community Chaplains. Key reasons included, **trust, understanding, credibility, access, reliability, honesty** and **time to listen**.

**Trust** – to deliver what was promised;

**Understanding** – how they feel and what their needs at any given time are;

**Credibility** – with other agencies, to help make a real difference to their lives, such as a stable home, and/ or employment;

**Access** – at times of crisis, even if, *‘it is only a chat on the phone’*;

**Reliability** – to turn up at meetings, or make something happen when others have been unable to deliver;

**Honesty** – saying *‘how it is’*, not promising to do the impossible;

**Time to listen** – the most common comment.

Without question, all clients were understanding of the apparent limitations of other agencies, such as Probation and Drugs Rehabilitation Services. They accepted how busy they are and understood only so much time could be given to individual clients.

All clients recognised they needed more support than is currently available from agencies other than Community Chaplaincy.

All clients were happy with the support they were receiving from Community Chaplaincy; and clients receiving support after release, were clearly benefiting from their contact.

No clients indicated ‘faith’ was a prerequisite of support from Community Chaplains, but clearly felt comfortable being in the company of individuals who are *‘good people and really care about us’*.

In one case (see Case Study Ryan and Amanda), clients were looking forward to attending a Church barbecue. As they pointed out, *‘we can’t wait to meet nice people who won’t judge us for what we have been’*.

## 9. DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS

The Community Chaplaincy project has always been committed to developing partnerships that include two innovative partnerships, which are having positive impacts on project delivery:

**'Reconstruction'** (Staffordshire) is a pilot multi-agency project, targeting the needs of the North Staffordshire and Birmingham areas, initially, addressing skills shortages in the construction industry, through rehabilitation and resettlement of prisoners housed in HMP Featherstone.

The project is designed to embrace education, training, employment, housing and to support the needs of ex offenders, informal partnership with key agencies such as:

- Stoke on Trent College
- Beth Johnson Housing Association
- Probation Service
- Staffordshire Police
- Jobcentre Plus
- Learning & Skills Council
- HMP Featherstone
- Community Chaplaincy

Key to delivery of the project is the recruitment and training of prisoners within HMP Featherstone and the provision of training, employment and housing on release.

Central to success, is support provided to individuals, who are facing life changing opportunities, which rely on their own personal commitment, such as being drug free, punctuality and a willingness to take responsibility for the challenges of training, employment and management of their own home.

Wider Impact Consultancy took time to meet an ex-offender, who is part of the 'Reconstruction' project, the 'Reconstruction' Programme Manager and a Community Chaplain, to discuss delivery of the project (see **Appendix A** – 'Harry').

Wider Impact Consultancy is impressed with the collaborative approach being demonstrated by all parties. Each is demonstrating encouraging an open interdependence on other parties' roles and responsibilities. For example, the 'Reconstruction' Programme Manager makes links with prospective employers, the client attends interviews on time and properly prepared and the Community Chaplain plays an essential 'behind the scenes' role, helping the client prepare and address understandable fears and anxieties.

**'Green Pastures Housing'** is a faith based organisation based in Southport, which purchases homes for occupancy by people who would normally be homeless. The North Staffordshire Community Chaplaincy project has embraced the concept and acts as an 'agent' for Green Pastures Housing in the North Staffordshire area. At the time of the evaluation, clients, who would normally be homeless, have access to three homes, with the likelihood of three further purchases in the near future.

Building on such experience in the housing market, the Community Chaplaincy project has developed a strong link with a **commercial private landlord**, which has enabled access to three homes in the area; again opening up opportunities to clients who would normally be homeless.

An innovative development is utilisation of the skills of a 'Reconstruction' client, who is currently contracted to renovate and repair the properties; providing the client with essential work experience, employment references and of course, regular and meaningful income.

As the Community Chaplains point out, *'The ability to house our clients, when no-one else can and the developing links with the 'Reconstruction' project, have really enhanced our esteem with our clients; as we now have the tools in our tool box to deliver what is so important to re building their lives – a secure home and a job'*.

## 10. KEY AGENCY SUPPORT

Wider Impact Consultancy took the opportunity to discuss the North Staffordshire Community Chaplaincy Project with key agency members:

- Mercian Trust (Dioceses of Lichfield)
- Governor HMP Shrewsbury
- Head of Resettlement HMP Shrewsbury
- Probation Service
- Police Service
- Director Stoke on Trent Youth Offending Team
- Reconstruction Project Co-ordinator
- Chaplain HMP Shrewsbury
- Revd Prebendary Bob Payne
- The Community Chaplains
- Bishop of Stafford

### **Mercian Trust**

**David Taylor, Diocesan Secretary.** David's role includes overseeing project delivery and enabling financial, legal and management support.

He is pleased to point out, *'the Community Chaplaincy Project is one of our most successful projects. It remains on course in relation to budgets and milestones and is without doubt helping the Diocese deliver outcomes relating to enabling **social responsibility** and **tackling deprivation** within our **local communities**'.*

### **Governor HMP Shrewsbury**

Governor, Gerry Hendry is without doubt a supporter of the Community Chaplaincy Project and is *'keen to see the project extended to other areas and supported by wider faith communities'*. As he points out, *'we need to get into local communities and extend our support to prisoners beyond the prison gates'*.

*'The North Staffordshire project is without doubt, proving **value for money** and helping to **keep persistent offenders out of prison**. We need to develop a multi agency approach and involve local people in the rehabilitation process. The traditionalists have to let go and accept there are better ways of delivering front line services, with more reliance on projects like Community Chaplaincy and support for volunteers based in local communities'*.

### **Head of Resettlement HMP Shrewsbury**

Head of Resettlement Chris Jones, believes ex-offenders must be, *'encouraged to maximise their own chances. It must be up to ex-offenders to engage with those who are there to support them such as the Community Chaplains; which is preferable to agencies attempting to 'push them into rehabilitation'*.

He believes, *'relationship building with ex-offenders should be based on two way trust, which should be commenced prior to release as part of the prison resettlement agenda – which HMP Shrewsbury actively promotes'*.

He has confidence in the Community Chaplaincy project delivering objectives, and would like to see, *'closer links with the wider faith community'*. He points out, *"thirteen per cent of our inmates are from minority communities and it is important we provide them with the same support"*.

He is encouraged by links with Green Pastures Housing, understanding, *'how important a secure, safe home is to someone who is looking to re build their lives'*.

He is confident the project is delivering **value for money**, particularly when *'adding up the real costs of crime to the victim and resultant costs related to detection, conviction and detention'*.

### **Probation Service**

Whilst general support for the programme was noted from a senior manager within the Probation Service, concern was expressed about structure of delivery and protection offered to Community Chaplains'.

Structure related to the requirement to establish and maintain essential links with Probation Service **Offender Managers**, who supervise offenders on Community Orders or Post Release Licences. Offender Managers are obliged to maintain detailed records on the offender's progress (e.g. in relation to education, training and employment), including interventions by third parties such as Community Chaplains. NB. Offenders released from custody and not subject to a Licence operate in a framework which is not monitored or controlled by the Probation Service.

Concern related to dangers of becoming 'too close' to clients, who are both vulnerable and difficult to predict. The risk framework needs to consist of a detailed risk assessment and risk management strategy.

There was acceptance that increasing workloads, result in the Probation Service not always being able to deliver the intensive one to one support many clients require either in prison, or on release.

**Comment** – Wider Impact Consultancy noted some concern from the Community Chaplains that the Probation Service can be *'reluctant at times to share information about specific individuals, due to data protection concerns'* – there being a need to agree a protocol with the Probation Service.

## **Police Service**

Wider Impact Consultancy met with a senior Police Officer (Chief Inspector, Public Protection, Stoke on Trent Division), who was supportive of the Community Chaplains and agreed the project had *'an important and integral role to play in the rehabilitation of ex-offenders and reducing crime in the area'*.

Wider Impact Consultancy noted the officer was not fully aware of the role of the Community Chaplains and expressed concern about a possible lack of coordination regarding *'who is working with who'* in relation to targeted support for ex offenders.

The officer suggested that the Community Chaplain Project develops closer links with Government supported intelligence led, local multi-agency partnerships, which successfully enable targeted support for persistent offenders, such as the North Staffordshire Prolific Offender Initiative.

**Comment** - Due to the importance of the above observations relating to the Probation Service and the Police, Wider Impact Consultancy has taken time out with the Community Chaplains, to explore options to overcome such issues.

Wider Impact Consultancy is encouraged to note the willingness of the Community Chaplains to meet with counter-parts from the Probation Service and Police, when opportunity will be taken to rejuvenate efforts to ensure collaborative approaches/ protocols with key partner agency members.

## **Director, Stoke on Trent Youth Offending Services**

John Tate sits on the Community Chaplain Steering Group and supports the concept of Community Chaplaincy. He welcomes the outcomes, acknowledging a wide range of multi-agency support will have contributed to such welcome results.

He is keen to understand the 'niche' Community Chaplaincy hold in relation to the rehabilitation of offenders. *'It must be more than mentoring, as there are plenty of agencies delivering such services. Are spiritual links and religion playing a part? Something is different about the Community Chaplains, which is clearly working'*.

He wonders if the reasons lie with the personal attributes of the Community Chaplains themselves and the role they are required to do. *'As practitioners, the Community Chaplains are clearly able to relate with ex-offenders and are certainly putting themselves out. Whilst agencies such as the Probation Service are discouraged from getting too close, the Community Chaplains are certainly befriending ex offenders to good effect'*.

He is looking for the project to confirm clear objectives, its vision, target groups and what it aims to achieve for the benefit of clients, partner agencies, sponsors and supporters.



He feels the Community Chaplain Project needs to ensure delivery of the service is viewed by external bodies as being *'professionally delivered, value for money and supporting local multi-agency strategies, aims and objectives'*.

He is keen to avoid the Community Chaplains being diverted from what they are extremely good at - **supporting people**; and feels they need closer management support in areas such as, developing partnership links with partner agencies in areas linked to intelligence led prolific offender management and support systems.

He also feels the Community Chaplaincy Project should forge closer links with wider faith communities.

### **Reconstruction Project Coordinator**

The Reconstruction Project Coordinator is extremely complimentary of the Community Chaplaincy Project, believing, *'Both projects compliment the other. 'Reconstruction' provides training and employment opportunities and the Community Chaplains play a vital role in helping clients take advantage of what is on offer. I am not sure we could achieve what we are achieving without them.*

*The Community Chaplains are providing a unique and valued service to both our clients and prospective employers, who are looking for reliable employees to fill gaps in the construction industry. I am most impressed with their flexibility. They are able to adapt to client needs and situations as they arise. It is clear they are building trust and confidence and have the time to listen.*

*To date (September 2006), there are **twenty-nine** clients enrolled on the Reconstruction Project. **Five** of those are prolific offenders and **three** are working towards NVQ level 2. This is a real achievement, of which the Community Chaplaincy project is playing an integral and valued role'.*

### **Chaplain HMP Shrewsbury**

**Reverend David Farley** has no doubt the Community Chaplaincy Project is *'adding value to the role of Prison Chaplains. It is so useful to be confident that an individual's requirements are being followed through on release; particularly when that individual has **'turned the corner'** and is ready to make life changes decisions. We all need a lift in life at times – nobody more so than ex-offenders. It is so good to be in a position to say, 'someone **can** and **will** help when you are released'.*

### **Revd Prebendary Bob Payne**

Revd Prebendary Bob Payne is thrilled with the way Community Chaplaincy has developed in North Staffordshire. *'I am also thrilled with the way the concept has been working in a growing number of similar projects in England and Wales; and that NOMS have indicated their support through sponsoring the Community Chaplaincy Officer in CLINKS\*.*

*I want to highly commend Steve Vincent and Roger Howarth for their enthusiasm, professionalism, realism, perseverance and imagination in all they have done to successfully support many ex-offenders who, without their help may well have returned to prison.*

*It has been obvious to me for some time that we need a Project Manager to provide improved management support. We need to develop our marketing strategy, but at the beginning we only had ideas to market the project and nothing substantial. Now we have a proven record it is time to move from the entrepreneurial to the structural mode. We also need to develop an ongoing strategy for fund raising, both for continuity funding and for capacity building.*

*Although we are on course to meet our targets, there is one area in which we need more work and that is engagement with those of other faiths. We are committed to working with those of all faiths. To date we have not had much success in this area. One option is to use the experience of Moslem Community Chaplains in other projects.*

*We would stress the valid importance of the strong emphasis on the need for pre-release investment by those who will support them after release’.*

\* Membership body that supports and develops the work that voluntary organisations (NGOs) undertake within the Criminal Justice system in England and Wales.

### **The Community Chaplains**

The North Staffordshire Community Chaplains were invited to respond to the question asked by the Stoke on Trent Youth Offending Services Director:

***‘It must be more than mentoring, as there are plenty of agencies delivering such services. Are spiritual links and religion playing a part?’***

### **Steve Vincent**

*‘To some, supporting ex-offenders to resettle, helping them integrate back into society is something they don’t deserve. Even in so-called ‘professional’ organisations, the intent is to keep the service user at arm’s length, waiting until they are assessed as being ‘no risk’ until they can lose the label of ‘ex-offender’ and be accepted as a member of society.*

*But it is my complete conviction that unless we are willing to take necessary, but carefully measured risks, and make an investment in people otherwise discarded by society, the service users’ ability to integrate is seriously compromised. This investment is evidenced through our commitment, integrity and faithfulness in journeying with each service user as they attempt to restore a broken life.*

*As Chaplains our work is underpinned and motivated by our faith and a belief that everyone breaks the rules and fails at some point, but also that everyone deserves to be supported to correct their mistakes and put their life in order.*

*It is the understanding that the restoration of an individual is not the prize for successful rehabilitation but that restoration of an individual is an essential component part of any rehabilitation’.*

### **Roger Howarth**

*‘It is because it is a faith based project. Not that we are imposing our faith on anyone else, but because our faith drives us and everyone else on the project. We believe we are doing God’s work and we want to be the ‘Good Samaritan’ to go ‘the extra mile.*

*We hope and trust this faith transmits itself to our clients. We are trying to adopt a fundamental principle of Jesus’ teaching by trying to ‘overcome evil with good.*

*On the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 9/11, how we wish society and the world would retry one of our faith’s guiding principles’*

**‘You cannot overcome darkness with darkness, only with light’ – Martin Luther King**

### **Bishop of Stafford**

Bishop Gordon Mursell is pleased to Chair and lead the Community Chaplaincy Project and is keen to emphasise that, *‘no one agency or initiative can claim credit for such impressive outcomes’*. He believes in collaborative working and sees value in all agencies working together in partnership for the benefit of clients and local communities.

He believes the strength of the project, is *‘the link the Community Chaplains are able to make between life inside the prison environment and community life following release. The Community Chaplains are proving able to build trusting relationships with clients that focus on much needed care and support’*.

*‘They have an in depth understanding of what they are going through and can help to provide the tools they need to become effective citizens and good neighbours, as they focus on turning their lives around. Most importantly, they have **time** to listen and utilise their **skills** and **networks** to deliver what is really needed on an individual basis, such as **access to support services**, a **secure home** and **employment opportunities**’.*

He is a firm believer the project should be inclusive to all faiths and will be exploring how the service can be opened up further to wider faith communities.

## 11. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

**Wider Impact Consultancy is satisfied that the North Staffordshire Community Chaplaincy Project is on course and delivering ‘value for money’.**

### **Findings of note include:**

1. The Community Chaplains based at HMP Shrewsbury and at the YMCA Hanley are clearly focused in their efforts to deliver a high quality service to ‘clients’ and are reaching significant numbers, both inside and outside local prisons;
2. Service to clients is **high quality** and **professionally** delivered. Policies and procedures, designed to protect the health, well being and integrity of those connected with the project, which includes Community Chaplains, volunteers, clients and the wider community are well thought out, up to date and meet requirements of rules and regulations, such as Health & Safety and Discrimination Acts;
3. Clients appear to appreciate and understand the service provided by the Community Chaplains. Key reasons why clients value the Community Chaplaincy Project appear to include:
  - **Trust** – to deliver what was promised;
  - **Understanding** – how they feel and their needs at any given time;
  - **Credibility** – with other agencies;
  - **Access** – at times of crisis;
  - **Reliability** – to turn up at meetings;
  - **Honesty** – to say ‘how it is’;
  - **Time to Listen** – the most common comment.
4. Service to clients appears to **add value** to the roles and responsibilities of other agencies; and Wider Impact saw no evidence of duplication or replication of services;
5. The Community Chaplains are proving to be innovative and flexible in their approach to partnership working and are adaptive to new opportunities as they develop. Links with the Reconstruction project and Green Pastures Housing are inspirational and are making significant differences to delivery of the North Staffordshire Community Chaplaincy Project;
6. Early outcomes indicate that the service delivered by the Community Chaplains Project is contributing to making a significant difference to re-offending rates in North Staffordshire. Evidence indicates there are circ. **thirty** fewer reconvictions/ admissions to prison than the expected level, compared to the national average.

7. Cost benefit analysis indicate potential savings of:
  - o **£1.9m** per year in terms of preventing **thirty** clients getting to the point of imprisonment;
  - o **£1m** per year costs of keeping the same number within prison.
8. Early indicators reveal unit costs of circ. **£1,500** per client.

### **Areas for Attention**

#### **Business Plan Objectives**

Whilst Wider Impact Consultancy is satisfied that the Community Chaplaincy Project is on course, there appear to be areas requiring attention, if Business Plan objectives are to be achieved:

1. **Project Management** – whilst the Community Chaplains are ‘doing what they are good at’ i.e. supporting clients, there appears to be a need for additional ‘day to day’ management support, in terms of:
  - o Establishing and maintaining local multi-agency links/ protocols – particularly in relation to local crime prevention/ prolific offender partnerships;
  - o Reviewing support systems for Volunteer Mentors;
  - o Marketing – Wider Impact Consultancy noted a lack of local knowledge of the project by key agencies such as the Probation Service, Police and Youth Offending Team;
  - o Fund Raising – Wider Impact noted the Community Chaplains spending **valuable time** away from clients, exploring opportunities to fund the project.

Wider Impact Consultancy sees this as a priority, as it is essential that credibility with clients is not lost. The most important factor to clients, is clearly the **TIME** Community Chaplains are able to spend supporting their needs – which is currently almost a unique feature of the project, compared to other agencies clients come into contact with.

2. **Links with all world Wider Communities** – it is apparent that the Community Chaplains will value support in establishing effective links with local faith groups.
3. **Project Development** – particularly in relation to providing additional resources/ support for ‘new client groups’ i.e. young offenders, female prisoners and clients from wider faith communities;

## **Wider Roll Out**

Wider Impact Consultancy noted concerns from HMP Shrewsbury prisoners who were not returning to the Staffordshire area, that the service was not available to them. It was also noted, that the Governor, HMP Shrewsbury is keen to see the service rolled out to other areas.

**It is the view of Wider Impact Consultancy that the Community Chaplaincy Project is worthy of consideration by key agency members for roll out to other areas.**

## **12. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Strategic**

1. The Community Chaplaincy Project continues in its current format and receives support from key partner agencies;
2. Such is the value of the project, agreement should be reached with key agencies to extend delivery of the North Staffordshire project for a period beyond expiry of current funding;
3. Plans are agreed with key agencies to ensure continuation of funding to the North Staffordshire project;
4. Meetings take place with key agencies to explore providing additional resources/ support for 'new client groups' i.e. young offenders, female prisoners and clients from wider faith communities;
5. Steps are taken to develop closer links with wider faith groups;
6. Meetings take place with key agency members to explore roll out of the project beyond the North Staffordshire area.

### **Local**

1. Management support to the North Staffordshire Community Chaplains is reviewed, with a view to providing 'day to day' support in terms of tasks such as:
  - a. Establishing and maintaining local multi- agency links – particularly in relation to local crime prevention/ prolific offender partnerships;
  - b. Reviewing support systems for Mentor Volunteers;
  - c. Marketing - raising the profile of the project;
  - d. Fund Raising
2. The North Staffordshire Community Chaplains receive due recognition for their sterling efforts and commitment to the project.

### 13. CONCLUSIONS

Whilst the Community Chaplaincy Project cannot claim full credit for the manner in which it is helping to turn around the lives of the clients it is engaged with, there is no doubt that the project is playing a significant and worthy role.

Potential savings are evident and impressive and should not be ignored or dismissed. Although a pilot project in the region, it has a proven pedigree both nationally and internationally. Wider Impact Consultancy is satisfied 'it has travelled well' and has great potential to add value to the roles of agencies responsible for the rehabilitation of offenders.

Care needs to be taken with local delivery of the project. It is too tempting to leave it to the Community Chaplains to both **deliver** the project and be responsible for tasks linked to **project management**.

This is a common mistake and must be avoided; as it risks compromising what is clearly special and almost unique to clients – someone having the **TIME** to support their needs, at what is a turning point in their precarious lives. Mistakes made at this point will be expensive in term of human costs and cost to wider society.

Wider Impact Consultancy is impressed that the project has been evaluated during mid-term, as it enables those with influence to begin the process of securing mutli agency support and funding to secure the long term future of the project in the region.

Wider Impact Consultancy is delighted to commend the project and congratulate those who had the foresight to pilot the project in North Staffordshire.

Hopefully such foresight will continue long into the future, if we are to support clients such as Ryan and Amanda to achieve their wish:

***'WE JUST WANT TO BE NORMAL LIKE YOU'.***



## CASE STUDIES (Names changed)

## Case Study One - Tony

**Tony** 41 years

**Pre Release**

At the time of first interview, Tony was serving a short sentence at HMP Shrewsbury for assault whilst he was resident at a Stoke on Trent hostel. *'It was a stupid thing whilst I was drunk. Really stupid, as I was in the process of getting my life together'*.

Tony has abused drink and drugs, *'mostly amphetamines'* and does not describe himself as a habitual criminal. *'The hostel was the wrong place for me to be really. There are too many temptations there, to get back on drugs and drink. People wind you up when they are drunk, or drugged up and in my case, I just reacted to provocation.'*

*In some ways this sentence has given me the chance to think and get my head together. It has been good to meet Roger (Community Chaplain), because he has time to listen to me'.*

Asked what Roger brings, that others don't, Tony is clear, *'He never lets you down. If he says he will do something he does it. He has taken time to understand what I need. He keeps me smiling and on track to make a real difference to my life. It's good to have someone who you can trust. I know he is fighting my corner, trying to get me out as soon as possible'*.

Asked if he intends to meet Roger on release, Tony quickly answers, *'Yes, definitely, because it will be good to have someone you can trust on the outside. Someone who will stand by you, be there and tell you as it is'*.

**Post Release**

Wider Impact Consultancy noted Tony's demeanour has changed since his release. Prior to release he was cheerful and relaxed. He was looking forward to leaving prison. Interviewed in a terraced home he is sharing with another Community Chaplaincy client, Tony is anxious; and in his own words *'Scared'*.

*'I am scared of letting Roger and Graham ('employer', Stoke on Trent Furniture Mine) down. One mistake and I will be back in prison. I'm off amphetamines now and I feel I am in a twilight zone, having to cope with reality on the outside. I work voluntary at the Furniture Mine and apart from that I come home and live in my room. The difference from the past is people like Roger and Graham believe in me and have done a lot to get me out of prison and back into my job at the Furniture Mine. I feel I have had it easy since my last conviction - until now. I know there are going to be corners to turn and I really need Roger to look around them first and help me go around them'*.

Tony is reluctant to come right to the front door as he lets me out of his house. *'I have a tag and daren't get too far from the box in the back room in case I set it off'*.

## Case Study Two - Harry

**Harry** 35 years

Harry is single. He has a son, who he rarely sees at the moment. He is educated up to GCSE level in subjects such as Maths, English, Geography and Woodwork. He attended school regularly, although he did miss some subjects such as RE, if he did not see the point of attending.

Originally from the North West of the Country, he left school to enter a trade as glass cutter, leaving after one and a half years to enter the construction industry as a hod carrier.

*'Jobs came and went and I got into dealing cannabis to supplement my income. I could make a **couple of hundred pounds** a week'.*

After a while he met a partner and they had their child together. *'The pressure began to mount as work became harder to secure. We moved to another area to make a go of things, but things just did not work out. In short, we broke up; I became jobless and homeless and ended up in Stoke on Trent because there was a bed at the Salvation Army.'*

*I met a local girl, with kids and moved in with her. Trouble came when a guy in the street was put away for dealing drugs. I saw an opportunity and took over his business, selling hard drugs such as E's and amphetamines. On a good week, say at holiday times, when other dealers were away and demand was high, I could turn over **two thousand pounds** a week.*

*Then I got arrested and was put away for two and a half years. Whilst I was away I broke up with my partner, so on release I was going to be homeless and alone again'.*

A turning point in Harry's hopes came while he was in Featherstone Prison and was selected to join the **'Reconstruction'** initiative. *'It seemed alright. It was a chance to re educate myself, which I am always keen on. I enjoy learning. I finished the painting and decorating parts of the course before I was released. I've been out for eight months and have completed the first year at Stoke on Trent College – an ICA course in plastering. If I can find a job, I can go back next year and complete a full NVQ.'*

*I've also got a home to live in. Beth Johnson made it happen as part of the 'Reconstruction' project'.*

Harry is keen to mention the role the Community Chaplains have played. *'I met Roger (Community Chaplain) in Featherstone and he helped to make sure things happened for me. When I had doubts, he was there. Most important was having him waiting for me when I got out. I had no one to care for me and that is important. Someone who cares about me and will never let me down.'*

*I was offered a job interview with Moorlands Housing. Roger picked me up and helped me believe in myself. I didn't get it, but it wasn't a disaster, because Roger has found me some work decorating and renovating some properties he has purchased. Real work if you know what I mean'.*

Harry is clearly a supporter of Roger, *'He is a good bloke, straight and believes in what he does. He doesn't put you on a pedestal; he says it as it is. He is never judgemental and he knows what life is like'*.

Harry is positive about his immediate future, *'Roger is keeping me busy and I am picking up work myself. I am getting some business cards printed and perhaps I will move near to London to work on the Olympics. I've met someone, so who knows what will happen.'*

*I need to get a proper house, as my son has been to visit me for the first time in years and a one bedroom flat is not ideal for a youngster. I am looking for a front and back door with a garden. Roger will be helping me with this, so it won't be a problem'*.

Asked what the Community Chaplains have provided, against what other agencies have on offer, Harry is clear, *'time, my Probation Officer is a great person, but we were only ticking boxes. Their workload is too big, for them to spend quality time with me. For the first three months, I had one fifteen minute meeting a week, for a quick chat. They are doing their best, I know that'*.

In a quiet way, but deliberate way Harry becomes philosophical, *'I can't live on forty three pounds benefits a week. I like nice clothes and like to smell good. It's important I get real work, because if I don't there are **other ways of making real money** .....*'

The meeting ends on a more positive note, *'I have so much to thank Roger for. He is a professional, who you know won't let you down. I am going to make something of my life. My wish is having a good job, a home and a family who are proud of me'*.

### Case Study Three - Ryan and Amanda

**Ryan** 29 years

**Amanda** 32 years

As will be noted, it is difficult to separate Ryan and Amanda's case studies as they are currently bound together by circumstances and a joint objective to *'be normal'*.

**Ryan** was born in South Wales and arrived in North Staffordshire in company with his mother and step father. He completed mainstream schooling, achieving GCSE grades B in subjects such as Maths, English and Geography, moving onto further education achieving a City & Guilds certificate.

He accepts he was a *'bit of a rogue'* as a youngster, *'breaking into the odd shed'*; although up until he was seventeen, he avoided coming to the attention of the Police.

His life changed when he returned to South Wales for a while, due to a family illness. His criminal activities increased, due to coming into contact with *'the wrong sort'*, extending to car theft and low level drug misuse. He finally came to the attention of the Police and began to acquire a criminal record.

After a short while, he returned to North Staffordshire and continued his involvement in crime. He met a girl, but the relationship broke down when she became pregnant. This upset him and he *'quickly went off the rails'*, progressing to more serious crime and use of hard drugs such as, *'speed and heroin'*.

Between the ages of eighteen and twenty two, he spent **two** spells in a Young Offenders Institution and between the ages of twenty two and twenty eight years has been in prison on **twenty three** separate occasions. His longest spell **outside** prison during this period was **four months**. He is addicted to heroin and is currently prescribed methadone in an effort to break the addiction. Ryan has two children aged ten and nine years, who he does not see at this stage of his life.

**Amanda** grew up in Nottingham and *'lived in a kid's home from the age of nine years'*. She remembers her mother *'encouraging her to get drunk when she was nine years old'*. She hated the kid's home and was resentful of the home and her mother. She was sent to a Secure Unit when she was fourteen, due to her causing a fire at the home.

As a youngster she sniffed glue and Tippex, took soft drugs and accepts she was *'an extremely stressed out child'*. As she got older she moved onto hard drugs such as heroin, to which she is addicted. She is currently prescribed methadone in an effort to break the addiction. Amanda has two children who she loves, aged fifteen and five years. Until recently, she has lost contact with her children.

**Ryan** and **Amanda** met each other at a North Staffordshire Hostel following Ryan's last release from prison. The Hostel was the *'only place where they could find a warm bed to sleep in'*. Both had slept rough until this point. They quickly *'became a couple'* and were determined to *'make a go of the relationship'*.

Their plans quickly went wrong, when Ryan was 'kicked out of the Hostel for using drugs'. Amanda soon followed when she 'sneaked Ryan in one night'.

At this point they became homeless and 'slept in squats, skips and behind shops in Hanley'. They 'had no money and lived off Ryan's ability to graft (steal) and joint shoplifting'. "We were using heroin and at £20 for half a gram, needed to graft hard for food and the heroin'. Meaningful help during this period was in short supply. 'We asked my Probation Officer for £7, which would have paid for a bed for the night, but all he could give us was £2 for a burger'.

Just at 'their lowest point and probably just in time', they came into contact with the Community Chaplaincy team via an acquaintance who took them in for a night. 'He was being supported by the Community Chaplains and was living in one of their houses. He gave us a bed for the night and the next day we bumped into Steve and Roger (Community Chaplains). They listened to us and arranged for us to stay there. You can't understand what it meant to be off the streets and have somewhere to stay where we weren't being threatened with eviction before we had time to settle'.

The Community Chaplains have agreed to offer Ryan and Amanda a formal tenancy agreement to live in the house, which they now share with 'the Good Samaritan who took them in'. The Community Chaplains have provided much appreciated advice in relation to housing benefit support and 'for the first time in years we have a home address and somewhere to call our own'. Now living as couple, they 'are spending spare cash on things like an iron, cutlery and a duvet. We want this place to be nice, where our kids can visit'.

Asked what the Community Chaplains bring to them, which is different to other support agencies, both are clear, '**time** to listen to us and never let us down. People such as the Probation and Drugs Hab are too busy. Stoke is full of drugs, so they are bound to be too busy to spend quality time with the likes of us. They do their best and are smashing people, but they are too busy. The Drugs Hab training programme has been cut from an hour and a half to forty five minutes. We only have to pick a phone up and Steve and Roger are there. Steve and Roger are good people and really care about us'.

Given a 'wish', both do not hesitate with their answers, '**We just want to be to be normal like you.** We just want to shop for nice things, meet nice people and have a nice home to come to. I (Ryan) want to train as a Social Worker and help others, like Roger and Steve are helping us'.

**Amanda** is bubbling, 'My daughter is visiting at the moment. I hadn't seen her for years, as she had nowhere to meet me. She found out I was here a while ago and just turned up on our door step. We all hugged each other and cried. She comes here every day now and we are becoming a family. Steve is arranging for us to attend a barbecue. We can't wait to meet nice people who won't judge us for what we have been'.

**Ryan** is proud to point out, 'I've been out of Prison for **fourteen months** now. This is the longest spell out for a lot of years. I don't want to let people who care about me such as Roger, Steve, Amanda and her daughter down. Most of all I don't want to let myself down because, **enough is enough**'.

## 14. ABOUT WIDER IMPACT CONSULTANCY

**Wider Impact Consultancy** specialises in innovative approaches to regeneration and community well being and supports clients throughout the United Kingdom.

Services include:

- Feasibility studies
- Strategic partnerships
- Business Planning
- Fund raising
- Project management
- Risk management
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Succession strategies
- Marketing success

Further details about Wider Impact Consultancy can be found at [www.widerimpact.com](http://www.widerimpact.com).

**Wider Impact Consultancy** founder and lead consultant for the North Staffordshire Community Chaplaincy interim evaluation has been **Edwin Lewis** BA (Hons) Business Studies, cert CIH.

With a wide and varied background, Edwin has an impressive portfolio of skills and experience, on which he is proud to present this important research:

- **Senior Police Officer**, specialising in Crime Reduction and Community Safety;
- **Youth Works National Development Manager**, an innovative partnership between Groundwork UK, Crime Concern and Marks & Spencer (See [www.youth-works.com](http://www.youth-works.com));
- **Regeneration & Business Development Manager**, Beth Johnson Housing Association.



Work of note includes:

- **Author** of a book, *Truancy the Partnership Approach*, research and publication sponsored by the Home Office;
- **First Prize Winner** Ernst & Young National Award Ceremony, Guildhall London, for 'Contributions to community safety' (Prime Minister Tony Blair);
- Past **Research Fellow**, Staffordshire University;
- **Keynote Speaker**, sharing platforms with Government Ministers.