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JULY 2014

SPS VIRTUAL VISITS

With Aberdeen and Peterhead prisons closing their gates for the last time in 2013-2014, prisoners in the north east of Scotland were relocated to HMPs Barlinnie and Perth until the opening of the new HMP&YOI Grampian in March 2014.



From left to right: Gayle Kaufmann (Apex), Lauren McDonald (Apex), Audrey Mooney (SPS), Dan Gunn (SPS), Stuart Campbell (SPS), John Morrison (SPS), Helen Chamier-Tripp (Apex)

Recognising that during this time, families would find it very difficult to visit loved ones so far away, the Scottish Prison Service approached Apex Scotland in Aberdeen to set up a Virtual Visits hub.

Using a high spec video link, relatives can maintain that much-needed contact and retain strong family links, which is seen as a key factor in reducing reoffending. The videoconferencing facilities at Apex in Aberdeen have been linked up with **HMP&YOI Grampian ; HMP Barlinnie ; HMP Perth; and YOI Polmont.**

Colin McConnell, SPS Chief Executive stated, "Maintaining family contact is a key area in the rehabilitation of those in our care and the facility at APEX in Aberdeen has enhanced the support we provide. This initiative is an excellent example of agencies working together for the benefit of the community."

For more information
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Or contact us at:

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TO
WORK

BEST
WORKPLACES
SCOTLAND

2011

SPS VIRTUAL VISITS

Visitors have come from all over the north east, including the Shetland isles, with one visitor from Belgium being able to arrange a virtual visit to a friend in HMP Perth during a week's holiday in Aberdeen.



In the first 6 months of the Virtual Visits service, Apex Aberdeen has had nearly **800 visitors**, with more than **150 visits by children**. Scottish charity Families Outside said, "We are delighted to see Apex Scotland, the Scottish Prison Service and HMP Grampian leading the way with these and [we have] encouraged and supported a number of family members to take part. For young people in particular these provide a new and innovative way for them to keep in touch with parents in prison."

The success of the Virtual Visits project in Aberdeen could lead to the service being rolled out across Scotland.



THE APEX BOARD VISIT

March 2014 was an exciting time for the Aberdeen unit, as the Apex Board would be visiting for the first time since restructuring nearly three years ago.

Since the Board's last visit, the unit has undergone a dramatic transformation including a CCTV system, secure entry, painting and carpeting. But the greatest transformation has been due to new staff bringing positivity and innovation.

For some staff members, this was the first time they had met the whole Board. It was interesting to be able to spend some time with them during the buffet lunch we provided for their much-needed break from heavy decision-making!

Apex Aberdeen would like to thank the Board for making the Great Trek up north to visit us, and for offering their valuable time to help steer the organisation since its inception.



Left to right (standing): Joann Watt, Brian Cole, Lauren McDonald, Gayle Kaufmann, Gerard McEneaney, Bryan Rankin, Alan Staff, Gordon Samson, Helen Chamier-Tripp, Philip Dunion

Left to right (seated): Anne Pinkman, Brian Fearon, Beth Smith

NEW STAFF

After leaving school I decided to try getting a job in the retail sector but unfortunately I did not have much luck. I realised that this was not the route I wanted to go down therefore I decided that I would like a career in the police force. The problem was that I needed some life and work experience in this sector to help me achieve my goal.

When I saw that CJS (Community jobs Scotland) were looking for an admin assistant at Apex I jumped at the opportunity. My role includes general office and reception duties, administrative support for staff, and intakes for new clients. Recently I have started doing Virtual Visits which is a service that is open to the public who would like to visit loved ones in prison but might not be able to travel to the actual prison itself.

I have a six months contract with Apex and I am enjoying every second of working here. This opportunity gives me a very good insight to working and dealing with different situations and different people which is essential if you want a career in the police force. I am learning so much from working here and getting the relevant training I need to help me deal with the different situations that life can throw at you, especially when working within the criminal justice system.

During my first 4 months I have done several training courses: Child Protection Level 1 ; Heartstart Emergency Life Support ; Legal Highs Awareness ; Manual Handling ; Naloxone Administration and Overdose Training ; Rehab & Disclosure ; Borderline Personality Disorders ; Domestic Violence Awareness ; and Self Harm.

Hopefully by the end of the six months I will have learned and gained knowledge & understanding in this line of work which will be really beneficial in not only my future but also my future career path.



JOANN

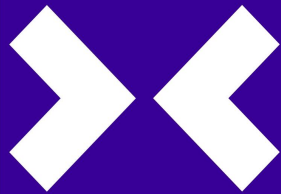


MICHELLE

Hi my name is Michelle and I am a Personal Development Mentor on the Criminal Justice Project at Apex Grampian. I have only worked here since April this year but am thoroughly enjoying it and finding the job very interesting and challenging. I am looking forward to getting my acupuncture training in order to run sessions myself and feel this specialist intervention is very worthwhile and engaged by a number of our clients.

Previously I worked as a midwife in Aberdeen Maternity Hospital for over 10 years and had a special interest in mothers with substance misuse issues. I occasionally still do a shift to 'keep my hand in' but I do not miss the 12hr night shifts!

The Apex team in Aberdeen are really friendly and have made me feel very welcome, so I already feel like a true member of the Clan!



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UNIVERSITY & COLLEGE

I joined Apex during my final year at Aberdeen University where I studied Psychology. I joined to gain some experience in working with 'challenging' individuals rather than just learning the theory behind it. I started off a few sessions here and there but quickly came to really enjoy the work, a group of ex-offenders in the sessions can be very challenging but is highly rewarding once a common ground is found and it usually ends up in fun discussions which not only helps the clients to broaden their horizons and learn new stuff but I can also find out a lot about the clients for my own development. I also work on the Virtual Visits project, helping people visit friends and family in prison.



LARISSA



STACY, NAOMI AND MARTA

The experiences that both College placements Stacy and Marta have had while being in placement at Apex have been really positive. Both of them have shown a keen interest in wanting to know more about how the criminal justice system operates and how it affects the clients. They have written such wonderful reflective accounts for their SVQ that when read by their assessors, they wished they had had the Apex experience too!

The people who use the service have been varied, from different backgrounds and

cultures, which in turn had led them both to put into practice the many things they have learned from their core college units. They both learned that you need to understand the history and background of the client, and that having a knowledge of psychology and sociology helped to put this into practice. They also found that using many of the things they had learned while attending college, like having a non-judgemental attitude and looking at action plans/assessments, helped them to give the right support at the right time to the individual and also to group sessional work. Organisational skills, good communication skills and planning have all played a part in their experience at Apex and they have really enjoyed their time with the team in Aberdeen.

The placement has been fantastic, the team received them in a friendly and professional manner and the whole of the Apex Scotland organisation have been brilliant.

DRUGS ACTION

Legal Highs Information Training Session

If you did not know much about legal highs before the session presented by Kenny Malcolm of Drugs Action (now re-branded as DA), you certainly did by the time he had finished.

A well presented and informative introduction to the supply and demand of legal highs, the legalities of these substances in Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and beyond, and also risk factors involved. Kenny is a brilliant trainer, with the ability to answer lots of questions from his fascinated audience.

Naloxone Training

Another fantastic training session from the team at DA, this one being run by Kirsty Moyes and Sandy Simpson. Naloxone is an injection used to reverse the effects of opioid overdose, and the training also covers CPR and the Recovery Position.

The training was given to Apex staff and clients, as well as two of the Order Supervisors from Criminal Justice Social Work. All who attended and completed the course obtained a certificate and are now able to go to their chosen pharmacy, present their certificate and collect a supply of Naloxone to administer if required.

A big thank you to Kenny, Sandy and Kirsty for their time and expertise in giving more people the benefit of their training skills and knowledge.



Lauren and Joann receive their certificates for Naloxone training. Also pictured: Kirsty Moyes (DA), Sandy Simpson (DA) and Gayle Kaufmann (Apex)

FAMILIES OUTSIDE

We know that having a family member in prison or caught up in the Criminal Justice System and perhaps facing a prison sentence can affect families in a number of different ways.

Families Outside is an independent organisation that provides **support to families and friends affected by imprisonment** in Scotland. For many families their focus is often on the person who is in prison but families need support in their own right.

Lindsay Jessiman has recently taken up post as a regional coordinator and family support worker with Families Outside. This is the first time that Families Outside have had a post based in Aberdeen and Lindsay covers the 7 local authorities within the Northern Community Justice Area which includes both Inverness and the new Grampian prison.

Lindsay works closely with the children and family strategy groups for each prison and brings the voice of prisoners families to these meetings ensuring that prisons are considering the impact of imprisonment and visiting prison on the family and especially children. Each prison also has family contact officers who are able to link in with Lindsay when either the person in prison or the prison staff identify an issue regarding a family in the community.

Positive relations have been forged recently with the APEX Aberdeen office through the introduction of Virtual Visits for families of prisoners. Families Outside are delighted to see Apex Scotland, the Scottish Prison Service and HMP Grampian leading the way with these and Lindsay has encouraged and supported a number of family members to take part. For young people in particular these provide a new and innovative way for them to keep in touch with parents in prison.

Lindsay also works alongside a number of public sector and voluntary sector agencies working across the Criminal Justice field in Northern Scotland. Most recently this has involved multi agency partnership working with Police Scotland, Social Work, Apex Scotland, Turning Point Scotland, SPAN project as well as Education and Health professionals. Lindsay also has a training role and has so far delivered training on the impact of imprisonment on families to a number of organisations including 70 final year teaching students at Aberdeen University.



LINDSAY JESSIMAN

Lindsay can provide direct support to pupils in schools affected by imprisonment or any family member or friend of someone in prison. Direct support is usually one to one and face to face but support can also be provided by telephone. In some cases support is provided to professionals already working with the children or through multi agency support.

Lindsay can take referrals directly but can also be contacted to provide support to professionals working with families affected by imprisonment. If you or your organisation would be interested in hearing more about the support service or would like to discuss available training courses please contact

Lindsay.jessiman@familiesoutside.org.uk

RELAXA-DOUGH

Aromatherapy has been used to heal the mind, body and soul since pre-historic times. When essential oils come into contact with the skin, such as through massage, they are absorbed into the bloodstream via the hair follicles. Therefore, by fortifying homemade play dough with essential oils, you can recreate the aromatherapy effect.



It has been recognised that sustained attention during the sessional work is challenging for the SAO/CPO client group. There is a wide range of reasons for this anomaly including: chaotic lifestyles; being in recovery for drugs and/or alcohol; mental health issues; housing issues; and any other issue which may heighten stress or anxiety within the individual. Consequently, essential oils which have a soothing effect, such as lavender, ylang ylang, and cedarwood, would be particularly useful for this client group.

At Apex, we want the clients to gain as much as possible from the sessions which we run; the use of relaxation dough was piloted at Apex during the SAO/CPO sessions.

The behaviour of the clients was observed during the session; a greater level of engagement and attentiveness was achieved, as well as, the body language of the clients indicated a relaxed and focused mood. Even those who did not handle the dough themselves, felt more relaxed by also being in the room with the vapour. And for those with no sense of smell, the benefits are still there as the oils are absorbed by the skin.

Cost

The ingredients are basic food items and the non-cook simple recipe means that producing the dough will incur little time and/or cost. There are no artificial preservatives, so the dough will last for at least a week at room temperature, providing it is kept in an air tight container whilst not in use. For hygiene reasons, the dough would not be used for more than client but due to the minimal cost involved this should not be an issue. Each batch will produce enough dough for 15-20 people.

We've seen some remarkably creative artwork!!



ACUPUNCTURE

Auricular acupuncture at the Aberdeen unit is increasingly becoming one of the most popular sessions. Currently, we run one session from 9:30am to 11am every Tuesday. Despite the early start, the clients flock to this session. Katrina Paton (PDM Shine Women's Mentoring Service) is the main acupuncturist at the present time but we are hoping to train more staff to become Detoxification Specialists to enable more session to run and to avoid starting a waiting list.

The increasing demand for acupuncture is due to word of mouth as many of the clients come for their induction to Apex expressing a clear desire to have acupuncture. This could be because clients are speaking favourably to their peers about their experience and/or that Criminal Justice Social Work in Aberdeen is advocating the experience to their clients. Either way the situation is beneficial for all.

Clients report that the positive effects of acupuncture include:

- Reduction in stress
- Reduction in cravings
- Improvement in sleep
- Improvement in mental health
- Improvement in general well-being



What to expect?

The session begins with an induction for people who have not had acupuncture before.

A model ear is used to illustrate the points and an overview of the process is given – clients have the opportunity to ask questions and they are given a leaflet.

The rest of the group is then invited into the room.

They all complete consent forms and use an antiseptic wipe to remove any excess oils from the skin.

Whilst they are waiting to be pinned, relaxation music is played and the conversation is kept to minimum.

The acupuncturist switches out the lights and talks the group through a *Qi-gong* meditation.

The group are encouraged to share their experience while the pins are removed and magnets are placed on the points. Many of the clients feel their *Qi* – which is their life force – and can see colours; the colours relate to Chakras and can indicate your emotional state. Some clients report feeling a tingling and/or warm sensation in their hands and their abdominal area.



Many people are sceptical of acupuncture before they try it; however, the majority enjoy the experience and continue coming to the sessions. Who are we to question thousands of years of Chinese knowledge and experience which has developed this procedure? All we ask of clients is that they come with an open mind and decide for themselves whether it is beneficial or not!

SCOTT'S STORY

Scott got in with the “wrong crowd” when he was at school. Throughout his adolescence, he was drinking, smoking and taking cannabis. He began drinking heavily as he got older and this impacted quite badly on his life.



SCOTT

Scott broke both of his legs in a moped accident and used cannabis to relieve the pain; however, after a year of self medicating, Scott found that he couldn't cope without it. When the police found him in possession of drugs, he was given a community disposal and an 18 month probation order.

As a consequence, Scott was referred to Apex in June 2013. He regularly attended auricular acupuncture and found that it helped him to not only quit smoking cannabis but also cigarettes. Scott says that acupuncture is “the best thing... I’ve tried, it really helped me to beat weed” and wishes that he could stay with Apex longer.



APEX BOAT CHALLENGE

Apex Grampian Services, based in Aberdeen, were donated a hand crafted 15 foot, unused fishing boat, by a member of the public who heard we were looking for a unique project to involve our service users in. The boat had sat for many years outdoors and had deteriorated into a completely unseaworthy state.



BEFORE



AFTER

We involved service users from a number of our programmes, including our **youth justice project, intensive support**, and our **criminal justice social** work projects. A wide range of age groups and both male and females were involved in the upgrading work required. We had small groups and also service users on a one to one basis involved in the work. Service users were able to reduce hours on their Community Payback Orders as well as gain new practical skills in the process.

The whole boat had to be stripped back, re-sanded, re-painted and water-proofed to make it fit to sail again. As well as working on the body of the boat, the engine had to be re-conditioned back into a serviceable state.



SOME OF THE HELPERS!

The boat has been upgraded to such a high standard that we will be able to sell it on and reinvest the money made into another project for our service users.

EAT WELL SCOTLAND

In January, Apex Grampian was very fortunate to be invited to take part in a consumer engagement event on healthy eating, cooking and food safety delivered by Eat Well Scotland as part of the Food Standards Agency's commitment to seeking the views of hard to reach groups.

Apex staff members were joined by several clients on Community Payback Orders, work placements from Aberdeen College, and a couple of Social Workers from Exchequer House. First, there was a chat to gain some insight into our views on healthy eating and to address any questions on food safety.



READY.....STEADY.....COOK!



This was followed by a cookery demonstration by their amazing chef Douglas, who had travelled up to Aberdeen all the way from the south west of Scotland. A buffet lunch was provided, which catered for vegetarians as well as carnivores, and included gluten-free options. Menu items included fish pie, chilli con carne, fajitas, lentil soup and a delicious dessert made from blended strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and apples.



Afterwards, clients received huge goody bags to take home which included some food items, cookery books, kitchen equipment such as scales and measuring spoons, and some handy Tupperware containers – handy because there was a lot of extra food to take home!

The Food Standards Agency finds these events very worthwhile as they allow the FSA to establish effective links with a range of organisations already engaging with vulnerable, disadvantaged or hard to reach groups. The views and concerns gathered from these events feed into wider Agency work so that the views of all consumers can be taken into account.