

JUNCTION⁴²

Issue
#20

Supporters' Newsletter

August 2019

Our Employability statistics for the first half of 2019 are amazing! Some 699 cups of tea poured in one-to-one mentoring sessions for our 134 men and women. 33 of these have moved into paid work so far, including a Restaurant Manager, Kitchen Porter at a top restaurant in Newcastle, Car Jockey for Nissan, Groundmen and Gallery Assistant. We are still actively supporting around 60 people, so we expect plenty more to follow.

Employability 2019 so far



39%
Warehousing, Driving
& Logistics



3%
Manufacturing &
Production



27%
Hospitality &
Retail



10%
Clerical



21%
Other



The success of our employability work is being recognised by our partner organisations; in particular, we received encouraging feedback from our local Jobcentre Plus who said “I really think between us we have got this one right and know that other Jobcentre Plus districts envy what is happening in Northumberland Tyne and Wear.” They really appreciate our support workers’ efforts and value the partnership support we

provide them. It is great to have built such a positive relationship with them.

Released from prison into a tent... Our staff share their sleep-out experience

To raise awareness for those leaving prison and only being given only a tent for accommodation, two of our staff members, Beverley & Lynne took it upon themselves to 'Sleep Out' in a tent (despite flood warnings!) for 2 days at the end of June. Here's some of Lynne's reflections on the experience.

The overwhelming things I have learned, are, that to have nothing purposeful or desirable to do in one's life is almost paralysing, that to be with friends or family and to have basic essentials are more precious than silver or gold, and that sleep deprivation combined with the need to find food and a safe place to sleep, leaves room for little else in one's life or mind.

The sun was out and I had been teased that I had chosen a summer weekend to do this sleep out! A social enterprise cafe where I'd heard that I could find Gluten Free food and pay by washing up beckoned...a 40 minute walk away. Not knowing where I was going and with a back pack weighing me down, the walk took an hour! Fine dining awaited with a great community atmosphere; I washed up (and paid, as I could). I doubt I would have gone there if I was really homeless as its too far from the city centre, I needed a map/phone to find it and it's quite hard joining a community place when you feel like you have nothing to offer.

I wasn't prepared for the torrential rain that greeted me upon leaving. It showed no sign of stopping before dark. A tiny umbrella kept part of me dry on my hours' walk back to bed...at least I was able to hang up my trousers and air my shoes without fear of someone stealing them overnight. Sleeping on cardboard is very hard on the body (even with a thin duvet underneath the sleeping bag). The outside sounds, people shouting, partying, foxes barking, mosquitos, leaves rustling, all keep one waking throughout the night. Groggy and tired on waking.

How does one tackle basic hygiene?...Toilet, hand washing, teeth cleaning, let alone cleaning contact lenses! Water has become precious and I need a bottle, but that's more to carry, pollutes the planet and can be expensive.

In praise of free public toilets, WIFI and public charging points. One becomes ingenious... sheltering from yet more rain in a department store cafe, (pretended an empty tray of food on a table was mine)... I even managed to watch some tennis...but it seemed pointless! All I could think about was where would dinner

be, when would the rain stop, and would I sleep safely?

Rain again...weather forecast couldn't keep up, so I got wet again. Broken, sitting chatting in the rain to a young teenager, out on the streets with a wet sleeping bag, dirty teeth and nails, who said her mum finally threw her out a week ago due to her constant anti-social behaviour. She denied it but was clearly "on something". She had another 3 nights to go until she had an appointment for housing. I went to find paper to write her other options as she had no phone to write in...she was gone when I came back. Did I take too long? Did someone offer her a real solution? Did someone decide I had paid too much interest in her welfare? I've looked since... but haven't found her.

Tired, so tired... I've walked 10 miles to get food and find toilets over the past 36 hours...in bed by 9pm too tired to move, but another broken night's sleep. It's Saturday night so the party animals are sporadically shouting throughout the night. Body numb, pins and needles. The sound of woodpecker as an alarm was beautiful and I have enjoyed the freshness of cool night air. Some more things to be grateful for.

Sunday feels like cheating as I went to church, passing a woman still asleep in a doorway. To be accepted and somewhere where I am known and loved and welcomed, even if I am not as fresh as usual, is precious. Church toilet facilities for a wash and to clean my teeth are also precious. Church even had a picnic so I had lunch with people I knew, instead of sadly eating on my own.

My instinct when my 48 hours finished was to go for a really long hot shower and put on some clean, pretty clothes! Now I understand more why those leaving prison often blow their sparse finances on clothes on release. That's all they have to re-present themselves to the world! I will try not to judge or despair when they next tell me why they have no money for food.

One effect that I hadn't expected over the following 2 nights sleeping safe in my bed...I kept waking at the slightest sound and then couldn't sleep, so had even more broken sleep. My head felt like I had partied for days! No wonder people tell me they hate the hostels as they can't sleep for the noise and its scary who they meet. I had an end in sight...to do this, with no hope of an end in sight, is tough to say the least.

It has been an educational, immersive, almost retreat like experience. I recommend it to anyone.



First job at thirty

Shaun* had never worked a day in his life. We first met him a few weeks before his thirtieth birthday. He had no relationship with his father and hadn't seen his mother in four years. His stepfather had physically abused him, and he had been homeless. Most of his adult life had been spent in and out of prison for drug related crimes, stealing and selling to survive.

He was desperate to work and put his life of crime behind him. He expressed an interest in catering even though he had no qualifications and no work experience. His CV was "a pack of lies" as he described it, so we began to pull together a skill-based CV that drew on his ability to buy, sell and network with his clients.

We found Shaun to be a very likable man with great people skills. Although he was suffering from depression and anxiety, he soon began to come out of his shell, particularly when we did his disclosure letter. We put him forward for one of the training courses at Crisis Café and he began to enjoy the routine of getting up in the morning to do a day's work. He said that he really felt good about himself

after working hard.

One of the Head Chefs at Crisis described Shaun as the best trainee they've ever had. A week after completing their training programme, Shaun started working as a Kitchen Porter and Trainee Chef at one of the top restaurants in Newcastle, an amazing transformation over 6 months for a thirty-year-old man who has never worked and led a life of crime.

Some statistics and a story from Teesside

We have some exciting statistics from the South of the region...

15

15 people have made brand new, first time commitments to Jesus in HMP Holme House between October and June.

6

6 people have become Christians through the 2018-19 Teesside Job Club.

9

On Sunday the 9th of June, 9 people were baptized by full-immersion in HMP Low Newton Chapel.

Peter*, one of our Job Club members recently got married to his girlfriend of 15 years. He has been a heroin addict for the whole time they have been together, and he promised her that they would get married when he was "sorted". He has now been free from addiction for 18 months and they have finally tied the knot. One of the ways we are also supporting Peter is to help him get his teeth fixed. He has an extreme phobia of the dentist, so we have been booking appointments for him and supporting him through the dental treatment. Currently he has no top teeth, but still has all the roots (ouch!!) and only a few teeth on the bottom row. It's been great to be able to help him build confidence and overcome the anxiety of the dentist, and, by the end of the year, after some complicated treatment, he should have a full set of false teeth.

Baptisms in prison

Christine Hardman, the Bishop of Newcastle, carried out nine baptisms in HMP Northumberland. One of the men who was baptized, Kevin*, is 26 and on a lengthy sentence. He told us that he really wants to change and sees God as the only way to do this. We prayed for him on Alpha and he was filled with the Holy Spirit. Since then we have seen him telling all the lads that they should go on Alpha because it had

totally changed his life!

Adam's Story

Adam* has been coming to Connect Edinburgh for over a year while struggling with addiction and illness. The week that guys from Newcastle Connect came, he wanted to leave early because of a sore gut. One of the Connect leaders offered to pray for him before he left. As he prayed the Holy Spirit came on him and he was miraculously healed of his pain and he received the gift of tongues. He stayed the whole evening praising God!

Since then, he has been a changed man! His support worker contacted us and asked, "What happened to Adam?" In June, he participated in the 42km Walk to Freedom despite suffering from a lung disease. He did not use his inhaler once and was running rings round the other supposedly fit people at the end!

David says "He has a hunger for God's word, loves to worship and is encouraging another guy who is struggling. It is wonderful to witness what God is doing in him and through him."

Welcoming a new member to the team

We're delighted to welcome Destiny on board at Junction 42 in her role as our emotional support dog.

Social anxiety can be a huge barrier to our clients when going somewhere new, meeting new people or being in a group situation. At Junction 42, we aim to create an environment that puts clients at ease. And that's why we have Destiny! She will be on hand to be a friendly face, accompany people in meetings and bring a therapeutic presence to the office.





Walk to Freedom

In June, a group of staff, volunteers, and guys from Connect walked 42km (the length of a marathon!) in 8 hours to raise money for the work of Junction 42 in Scotland. Starting at HMYOI Polmont and finishing at HMP Edinburgh, Walk to Freedom was more than just a sponsored walk, we believe it signified the path that people take as they transition out of prison and back into society. The guys had a great time, friendships grew, and they became a stronger community along the way. Well done to all who took part and a BIG THANK YOU to all who supported them.

Shop on Amazon? You can now donate to Junction 42 by shopping with Amazon Smile without any extra cost to you! Whenever you shop with Amazon, simply start at smile.amazon.co.uk. When you first follow this link, you'll be prompted to search for a charity. Select 'Junction 42' and a donation will be sent to us anytime you purchase through Amazon Smile.



Thank you so much for supporting the work of Junction 42 as we see lives

**visibly transformed by the hope of the gospel. We hope you are encouraged by reading
about the amazing things that God is doing!**

*Some names on this newsletter have been changed to protect confidentiality.
