

MEMBER CASE STUDY

Together Women Project

The needs the woman presented with when she arrived at Together Women Project

Accommodation

Health

Mental wellbeing

Attitudes, thinking and
behaviour

Education, employment
and training

Finance, benefits and
debt

Drugs and alcohol

Children and families

Domestic violence

Prostitution

About the Womens Centre

Together Women is an independent charity working across Yorkshire and Humberside. Together Women aims to make a difference to the lives of women offenders and women at risk of offending by helping them tackle the reasons they commit crimes through working with key workers in community and custody based women's centres. Women can access advice on health, education and training, housing, substance misuse, finance and family issues.

The circumstances the woman was in before being in contact with Together Women Project

This woman was serving her first custodial sentence for a violent offence. She was an ex-boxer and MMA fighter and was referred to the service following her participation on a prison programme which was aimed at reducing offending. During her sentence she began to self-harm and experienced episodes of anxiety and depression. This resulted in her being subject to continuous ACCTs which she became dependent on. She was preparing for release to an approved premises away from her home area once the programme was complete. This woman was resistant to mental health support, due to the stigma attached to it and did not comply well with her medication because of a fear of dependency and negative side effects. She was angry at the hold which was placed on her HDC date and the idea of residing in an approved premises away from home. She was assessed by our service of requiring support on release with access to benefits and employment, integration into society, motivation to engage with agencies, move-on/resettlement, coming to terms with her sentence, managing her emotions and mental wellbeing, building trust and hope and achieving positive change and resettlement support.

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The impact that Together Women Project had on the woman's circumstances

This woman was provided with emotional and practical support as well as advocacy through a well developed mentor/mentee relationship. The relationship began in custody and was provided through the gate. Despite initial resistance to engage and refusal to meet in the allocated centre, this woman went on to build a positive and trusting relationship with her mentor who, was there throughout her transitions. This was from the start of her prison programme group sessions, to leaving custody and resettling in the community. Her mentor supported her to build relationships with the group facilitators and other participants. She was met by her mentor on the day of release and shown around the unfamiliar city. This included her routes to and from landmarks and external agencies including the job centre. She was given support to access a grant to help with clothing and her mentor promoted pro-social behaviour. The signposting and partnership working between her mentor and those within her support network was very valuable. The women felt she had someone who was invested independently in her best interests. Through regular contact this woman was able to receive containment of her anxieties and engage with her mentor to develop adaptive coping strategies. Her mentor was trained in the content of what was delivered on the prison programme (CARE) and so she was able to promote, prompt and reflect on the learning and course content with the woman.

The woman's circumstances now

This woman has re-settled in her home area, re-integrated back into her community and is accommodated with family. She is no longer taking medication for her mental health and acquired employment. She works three jobs, has re-established family ties, moved away from what she describes as violent sports and is currently a sponsored World Ranked Women's Snooker Champion. Recently she visited the establishment she served her custodial sentence in to speak with women in the prison about her experiences on the prison programme and life since release which was facilitated by TWP.

Those involved helping her

Together Women's Mentoring and Advocacy Service, A Together Women's centre, Offender Supervisor, Offender Manager, Prison Programme Facilitator, Approved Premises Residential Officers, a local education, training and employment agency, DWP, grant agency, a local GP and community mental health.

This customer received support via Together Womens Mentoring and Advocacy Service - jointly commissioned by NHS England and NOMS to support women screened onto the Offender Personality Disorder Pathway in the North of England.

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The woman's personal account of what happened

"I hated prison and found it very difficult. I self-harmed a lot and spend loads of time on ACCT's. Since leaving I have started a fresh life and put my old life behind me. I am now working three jobs, have people in my life that I want around me and I am a lot more confident. I moved away from what i now realised was not good for me and love my new life. I was difficult to work with to start off but my mentor listened to me, understood me, made me feel safe and I trusted her. I feel she helped my confidence and I saw her in the end as a friend. I would not make it easy and refused to have appointments in certain parts of the prison, so my mentor would come and see me at work which made it easier to talk without everyone else around. I would recommend the service to anyone in my position."

Find our more



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Twitter: [@Womens_Breakout](https://twitter.com/Womens_Breakout)

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