

2022 Annual Report



GUERNSEY

**CARING FOR
EX-OFFENDERS** LBG

Reintegrating individuals into the community

Vision & Mission

As a Christian charity Guernsey Caring for Ex-Offenders seeks to work across the local churches in facilitating the successful re-integration of ex-offenders (of any faith or none) into society.

Working collaboratively with other professional and third-sector agencies, Guernsey Caring for Ex-Offenders endeavours to support ex-offenders to live changed lives. We believe that by breaking the cycle of crime, individuals, families and neighbourhoods can be transformed.

Meet the Team

Guernsey Caring for Ex-Offenders (GCFO) is a Christian charity working out of our office at Holy Trinity Church and our workshop at The Caves, Upper Mansell Street. GCFO comprises a team of both employed and volunteer staff, spanning the various Christian churches and denominations. It is therefore an excellent example of local churches working together to support the vulnerable of our community.

Overseen by 3 directors and a treasurer, GCFO currently employs 4 staff - the Co-ordinator, Deputy Co-ordinator, Activities Manager and Activities Keyworker. They are supported by a dedicated team of volunteers who offer help and friendship, together with a loyal prayer team (email) providing very necessary spiritual sustenance, especially in times of particular need.



Mary Hervé
Co-ordinator



Michelle Stringer
Activities Manager



Tracy Wilson
Activities Keyworker

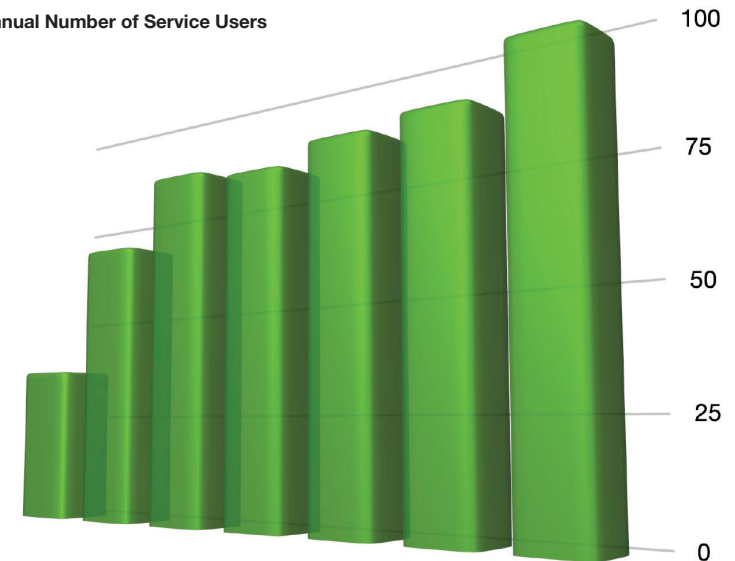


Andrew Kewell
Deputy co-ordinator and
Employment Keyworker

2022 High Level Overview

During 2022 GCFO supported a total of 94 ex-offenders, whilst working with 35 to 45 individuals at any one given time. Over the last 6 years there has been a significant increase, year on year, as more individuals recognise and ask for our support, either self-referring or referred through other agencies. In the past year alone, we have seen a 12% increase in numbers on the previous 12 months. This is shown clearly in the graph.

Annual Number of Service Users



2016 - 2022

Whilst endeavouring to provide an holistic and bespoke package of support for each person, GCFO focuses particularly on 3 main areas; accommodation, community/positive socialisation and employment, in order to help the individual reintegrate into society in a manner which works best for them, thereby reducing the risk of reoffending. GCFO continues to offer help to ex-offenders for as long as necessary following release from prison, working collaboratively with other professional and third-sector agencies.

One very significant role undertaken by both volunteers and paid staff, is that of being available outside of normal working hours. It is often at weekends, bank holidays, evenings or late at night, that ex-offenders need support that otherwise would not be available to them.

Community Activities Report / Caves

The workshops are overseen by our GCFCO Activities Manager, Michelle Stringer and GCFCO Activities Keyworker, Tracy Wilson (who started work in March 2022). During 2022, we had 28 people overall who attended sessions in the year.

We have enjoyed another great year in our workshop home at the Caves. Adding a new Keyworker has meant that we can offer more days for workshops and some one-to-one sessions. Tracy Wilson's background in teaching means she has been able to provide individualised support in literacy and numeracy. She has also worked alongside Healthy Minds to support someone who is participating in a Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Course.

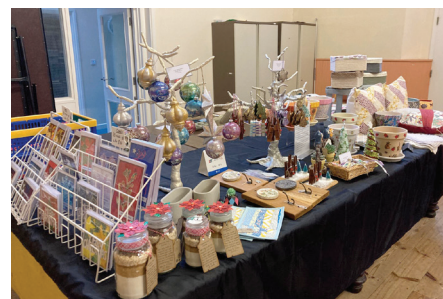
For those who are not so keen on craft, we have introduced a drop-in social session on Tuesdays, where we offer games, puzzles, jigsaws, a listening ear and a place to relax. This provides an opportunity to socialise for those who feel isolated or lonely. In a similar way, towards the end of the year, we started an evening session for those who used to enjoy our workshops, then gained employment (sometimes working on their own) so were no longer free to come in the daytime to enjoy the benefits of the socialisation the workshops provide. What seems to be valued and appreciated most by the people we support is the provision of companionship and a safe place in which to meet.

On Wednesdays, we either provide a light lunch at the Caves or accompany some people to the monthly community roast lunch at Trinity Church. Our light lunches sometimes give people the opportunity to prepare food, such as help with making soups, setting the table and cleaning up afterwards.

In our garden, we have had some success with tomatoes, courgettes, strawberries, figs and chillies. We had so many chillies that we strung some up to dry and then ground them to make chilli flakes.

Michelle Stringer and Tracy Wilson regularly visit the art sessions in the prison to start to build communication with people who may benefit from our services once they are released. Through our close links with probation and the prison, we have been able to provide a place for several people to carry out community service hours and receive people on day release from prison.

We continue to have great success with the sale of items we make, both at our annual week at the OSA Pop Up shop in Smith Street and Christmas sales in various churches. We have also been very grateful for personal donations too. These funds mean that we can continue to be self-financing for the provision of art and craft materials and the food for our weekly lunches.



Accommodation

When someone is released from prison they need stability and security to get their lives back on track. Stable accommodation is of key importance and can significantly reduce the risk of re-offending. People leaving prison are at high risk of homelessness, often having lost their accommodation when they entered custody. On release they can struggle to find somewhere safe and secure to live.

For this reason we have put much time and effort into building good relationships with a number of private landlord's who are interested in helping ex-offenders, as well as working closely with States Housing, Guernsey Housing Association and the Probation Service. Not only do we help individuals look for suitable housing, but when there are problems and difficulties, we will work with individuals and their landlords in helping them keep their accommodation.

In 2022, GCFCO supported 18 service users with sourcing and keeping their accommodation. GCFCO also works closely with other third sector charities, examples being Guernsey Welfare and GO charity, in providing furniture etc when the individual has very little of their own.

Employment Report

We had another positive year and managed to increase the number of targeted job enquiries we made on behalf of our service users to 140. These enquiries generated 21 full time employment posts being taken up across the year. We increased the amount of in-work support offered to ensure that we help our service users to stay in work once they have secured a position. During the second half of the year we conducted a couple of work trials with a local company providing fresh coffee beans. This will lead to a paid part-time work opportunity for an ex-offender early in 2023, washing and preparing reusable coffee tubs. We are always very pleased to work with any employers who are able provide employment opportunities for our service users.

General

Bailiwick of Guernsey Law Enforcement Award

In May 2022, we were thrilled to be invited to attend the Bailiwick of Guernsey Law Enforcement Awards evening at Les Cotils. GCFEO were presented with a Certificate of Recognition, citing: 'In recognition and appreciation for the excellent support provided to ex-offenders and thereby contributing to a reduction in re-offending leading to a safer community for all citizens.'

Pictured below is Deputy Rob Prow, President of the Home Department, States of Guernsey, GCFEO Staff: Mary Herve, Michelle Stringer, Tracy Wilson, Andrew Kewell and Ruari Hardy, Head of Law Enforcement.



Lloyds Bank Foundation 2022 Annual Seminar

In April 2022, GCFEO were invited to attend the Lloyds Bank Foundation 2022 Annual Seminar, 'Engaging with Lived Experience'. The keynote speaker was Paula Harriot, Head of Prisoner Engagement with the Prison Reform Trust. This was an informative and helpful day outside of our normal routine where we joined with other charities and third sector agencies to consider the lived experience of some of the most excluded people in our society. We were also privileged to have a couple of hours discussing the work of GCFEO one to one with Paula Harriot, herself an ex-offender. Paula is now a key influencer and campaigner at UK national level raising awareness of the issues faced by prisoners and campaigning to proactively deliver services which support both prisoners and ex-offenders to progress personally and strategically past the stigma of imprisonment and multiple exclusion.

GCFEO Walking Group 2022

Following on from our success with the guided walking groups, initially led by Climb LBG, we have continued running more groups ourselves in 2022. Each group has met for a six-week period throughout the year. We walk at various island locations for an hour and half and our service users have really enjoyed this regular activity, usually followed by a coffee at a coastal beach cafe. Up to 10 or more people have attended each week and we have seen this as a valuable way to get some fresh air/exercise, combat anxiety and build positive social experience within the community.

Social Activities 2022

In addition to our planned weekly activities, we also provided some one-off social activities which were greatly enjoyed by our service users. These included a number of barbeques and a Christmas Party complete with mandatory silly games and really bad Christmas jokes!

Banking Services

For rehabilitation to be effective, ex-offenders need access to modern day financial services. Finding employment and accommodation, without the necessary banking arrangements in place, can add a seemingly insurmountable problem to already difficult circumstances. To this end, GCFEO has helped many service users to open bank accounts, in particular working closely with Guernsey Community Savings. This enables the provision of financial services to those ex-offenders who are unable to access traditional banking services.

Website

We are delighted and very proud to be able to announce the launch of our new website, built, designed and maintained by one of our service users. We think it is really outstanding and believe that you will agree with us too. Why don't you follow this link and take a look for yourself: www.gcfeo.org

Funding

We are again grateful for some generous private donations which helped to fund our work in 2022. We are also grateful for the ongoing funding support from the States of Guernsey Department for Employment and Social Security, Sarnia Housing and other grant funding bodies.

Thank You

The Directors and staff would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who give of their time to enable GCCEO to continue its work. In particular:

- Our volunteers and prayer team
- Private donors
- All our grant funders
- Professional support and supervision from Probation Service, Guernsey Prison Offender Management Unit, Guernsey Police Public Protection Unit and Employment and Social Security

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