

Some reminders of what its all about

Welcome! For this issue of our CSW newsletter, we thought we'd start with some powerful Circle reflections, reminding us all of the astonishing power and value of the work we do together...

Reflections on a Wiltshire Circle: January 2015-August 2016

The Core Member's view...

"I don't know where I would have been without my Circle.... I would never have achieved the milestones I did. Although it was only once a week the Circle was on my mind every day.... Thank you for everything you have done for me"

The Probation Officer's view....

When I referred K to Circles, I remember saying in our first meeting that he was an extremely complex and challenging young man. I also felt he was an individual who had the potential to

...continued over

Help us find more volunteers to prevent sexual abuse

"I think I began learning long ago that those who are happiest are those who do the most for others"
Booker T. Washington

We are now actively recruiting new volunteers across the region, for our community circles for adults convicted of sexual offences, and for our new pilot projects for young people, adults with intellectual disabilities, and prison circles.

Please spread the word within your networks

Core training is scheduled for January and March 2017.



Other news on later pages

New team members



Jackie Citron:
Young People's
Service
Co-ordinator pg 4



David Harley: Circles
Co-ordinator
(Intellectual
Disabilities) pg 4



Tim Johnson: Dorset
Co-ordinator pg 4-5



Dr Kieran McCartan-
new trustee pg 5

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the USA: page 3

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greetings: page 6

turn things around and make something of his life. I was highly concerned by his level of isolation and lack of support he had and, although I had not previously worked with a Circle, I had heard enough that I thought it would be really helpful for him. However, I am not sure that I ever expected it would be as valuable as it has been. The fact that he is now heading to University, has been working, reports less problematic fantasy and presents as far more motivated is I believe testament to the work that the volunteers have done. It has been so valuable for him to have people supporting him who were there because they chose to. It is clear from my discussions with him that he has built a relationship with them that he has found profoundly helpful.

From my point of view, this has been so helpful in terms of managing and reducing his risk. I am struck by the level of dedication the volunteers have shown, particularly as K can be extremely frustrating to try to work with! (I think he would say this himself). The minutes I received were always clear, concise and showed that they were focusing on important issues. I was really surprised on a number of occasions at how much they had managed to get K to open up and talk to them.

I do not feel that I can speak highly enough of Circles in general and these volunteers in particular. I do the work I do because I love it, and because I find it fascinating. But ultimately, it is a job for which I get paid. To have people that are willing to give up their own time, for free, to help support people like K is something I find really powerful, given that society generally has such a negative view of people convicted of crimes like his. It cannot have been easy for them at times

but they have shown such dedication. I always felt that whatever was going on for K, he would have that space where he would be supported, but also held to account by people who were genuinely interested in helping him. I hope they understand how valuable this is for practitioners.

I would not hesitate to recommend CoSA to colleagues (and often do!) and I will certainly be referring to you in the future with cases I am working with. Thanks for all you have done for K.

Probation Officer, Wiltshire

And a new volunteer's learning curve...

✓ ... Pre-training Interview completed - informative and pleasant experience.

✓ ... Two day Training Course successfully undertaken, including the 'role play'! Ah, the 'role play' - we never forget the dreaded 'role play'! In my case, the feedback was thoughtful, compelling and entirely useful. Whatever was I letting myself in for?

✓ ... Three months later and the evening came for me to meet my Circle colleagues and of course, our mysterious 'Core Member'. Damn - how young he seemed to be. Could he really have been capable of ...? But of course... he had already "served time" for committing a serious sexual offence. As a newly formed Circle we already knew that. Our very informative Co-ordinator and CM's Probation Officer had given us bucket loads of extremely useful information. *So come on, let's get on with it. Let's tell the CM where he's gone wrong, to pull himself together and start behaving like a normal human being.*

And then we can all go home!

But, of course, this is not what happened. My own personal, prolonged, positive learning curve was just beginning ... The first few weeks were not plain sailing. I soon learned this wasn't just about trying to understand the complexities, the characteristics and the idiosyncratic nature of the CM. It was also about learning to work effectively with my fellow Circle colleagues - (what's the plan folks, whose gonna ask the questions, why are we reporting stuff, I don't understand where we're going?). These were somewhat painful times for me.....

✓ ... And then the mist began to clear. Several months in, and the Circle and CM begin to "click" with one another - debate regarding values and moral dilemmas gives us all opportunities to discover where we're coming from. Trust develops, and the CM finally stumbles upon a goal which we can all help him achieve... At our very last scheduled Circles meeting, the CM announces he has been offered a university place to study Journalism - with all the relevant safeguards in place, of course. I remember shaking his hand and telling him in no uncertain terms that.....bleep, bleep, bleep! But he knew what I was getting at.

✓ ... My first Circle came to a natural end. I had learned about processes; I had learned about relevant legal procedures. I had even learned that Belbin had got it right - again! But most of all, I had learned a lot more about myself.thanks for listening...

Julian, Wiltshire Volunteer

A Circle of Change: a view from Somerset

An introduction from Kate Hothersall

One of the most challenging Somerset Core Members in recent years came to us via his Police Offender Manager. He had a history of committing serious exhibitionist type offences with both adult female and child victims and had recently been released from custody. His Offender Manager was extremely concerned about him re-offending and was worried that his lack of any real place in society would make him difficult to help; that he would not have enough of a reason to change his behaviour.

Like many Core Members, he was extremely isolated with no support. In addition it became very evident on first meeting him that he took no care of himself or his surroundings. He also believed everyone hated him, giving him a very defensive countenance. He was misusing alcohol, not taking his prescribed medication and had a pronounced disability which made engaging with him extremely difficult.

As a coordinator I knew that a Circle was exactly what he needed but given how many problems he was facing I wondered how our volunteers would cope with a man so much on the periphery of society...

One of the volunteers recounts the story—first, the challenging start...

"Eighteen months ago, four new Circle members sat in a room and prepared to meet our first Core Member. In shuffled this man, unwashed,

unshaven, dirty clothes with body odour and, when he spoke, terrible halitosis.

Our own doubts

“As a group we doubted what we could ever do to help this man. Our lives seemed a million miles away from his. I personally had never even been in such close contact with someone who was not only an ex-prisoner, but had been homeless and an alcoholic. He expected nothing of society, and that is what he got – nothing. What could I/we do to help him not re-offend? With much help and advice from the professionals at Circles, we felt that making him be accountable for his crime was only a part of our task. He needed to take ownership of himself, not shrink every time he heard police sirens, and be a part of society, not on the perimeters.

Eighteen months of generous giving

“Over time, we worked with him to build his confidence. We went with him to the barber and the dentist; he bought new clothes from the charity shops and new furniture for his home. He confided that previously it had just been ‘somewhere to sleep’, but he was now making it into a home. He told us: “when you have slept winter nights on a park bench, having a roof over your head is all you need” His benefits had always given him the money to do this but it had never even crossed his mind. All he had done was survive, not really live.

And now...

“Our circle has finished. We leave a man who is much more capable to live in society. He has learned to be sociable and even asks if we can have an occasional coffee with him.

He has not re-offended. We watch him go into a coffee bar and the seats around him are no longer empty. He is welcomed in places and not asked to leave as he previously has been. He still takes care of himself physically and he has developed an interest in news and local affairs.

And we helped do this. We are immensely proud – of ourselves and him - and all for just one hour a week of our time. We have given him back some dignity.”

A life transformed

The Circle took 18 months to complete, longer than the 12 month average, because of the Core Member’s many presenting issues. Other Core Members may be in denial about needing a Circle but with this man that wasn’t the case. He wanted to change his behaviour but didn’t know how and his self-worth was so low that he didn’t feel that he warranted help.

Little by little, step by step, he began to trust the volunteers and let them reach him. He began to open up about his past and how that had shaped his present. He let them challenge him about his beliefs, attitudes and behaviour and he began to talk about his feelings. He began to want to change and then, he began to change.

Care was taken to ensure that he was learning from and engaging in this process, not just being happy to let someone else sort him out. He stopped coming to regular Police attention and in Reviews he expressed his gratitude for the support and help he was receiving. He truly believed it was changing his life for the better.

He became more confident and less socially isolated attending a community group and looking into volunteering opportunities. Gradually, frequency of meetings were

reduced and the Circle began to meet from time to time at a local café. He enjoyed this and plucked up the courage to start going alone.

Whenever I attended a Review meeting I left feeling a huge amount of pride in the evident benefit of Circles as a whole and this Circle in par-

ticular. Now that the Circle has ended, to see the human interactions that have made such a positive difference and to have witnessed the changes this has produced has been a privilege: well done to him, and well done to the volunteers! 18 months on, no more victims.

Kate, Senior Coordinator

Prevention Proof of Concept: Circles South West in the USA!



As a result of funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation’s ‘Ideas and Pioneers’ grant Sara Radford (Circles Co-ordinator Avon/Wilts) has led a period of research and development into a ‘proof of concept’ service to un-convicted wo/men with a self-identified sexual attraction to children. Funding enabled Sara to travel to the USA in November to attend the ATSA (Association of Treatment of Sexual Abusers) annual conference. Sara says

“Offering provision of early intervention services is a relatively new concept both nationally and internationally, so the opportunity to attend the 2016 ATSA conference was very exciting. The Conference was held in Florida over 4 days with an impressively comprehensive programme aimed at all those working in the field of sexual offending. (Felt like a space of sanity in the midst of US election fever.) Much of the scientific research around paedophilia/hebephilia seems to be conducted in North America and I was able to hear from academics and clinicians, learning about current and recent research and share ideas about how best to promote child sexual abuse as a public health issue. The ATSA conference was an invaluable opportunity to connect with the growing movement committed to improving understanding and management of the complexities of paedophilia and child sexual abuse. I have been invited to participate (long distance!) in the ATSA Prevention Committee whose focus is primary and secondary prevention and this will undoubtedly help shape CSW’s cutting edge ‘proof of concept’ in the UK.”

And so we diversify... update on new pilot projects supported by the Big Lottery Fund

We are delighted to have been awarded a new grant by the Big Lottery Fund for 3 new pilot projects for 3 years from April 2016. Here's a quick up on how things are going:

Young People's Service:

providing services for young people (14-20 yrs), in partnership with Be Safe (Bristol) and Glebe House Therapeutic Community. We have three young people's Circles running, two in Devon and one in Somerset, and plan to start another three in the New Year.

Circles for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities

(Avon and surrounding areas), in partnership with Avon Forensic Community Learning Disabilities Team. Referrals are forthcoming and assessments in process. We plan to start two Circles early in the New Year.

Prison Circles for adults convicted of sexual offences, commencing a few months pre-release and then for twelve months in the community, in partnership with HMP Dartmoor and HMP Channings Wood. Prison training and vetting is underway. First referral received and being assessed. We plan to start four Circles in the next few months.

This growth and diversification has meant the appointment of a couple of new staff, plus existing staff taking on new roles- so our staff and volunteer team is growing...



"Hello, I'm **Jackie Citron** and in September I took up the new post of **Young People's Service Coordinator**. I qualified as a Probation Officer in 2004 and since this time have mainly worked for South Gloucestershire Youth Offending Team. Whilst there I developed an interest in working with young people with Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) and soon became the YOT's specialist in this field.

"In 2013 I joined the Bristol Be Safe Service for young people with problematic and harmful sexual behaviour as a seconded worker one day per week. In this role, I helped to set up and deliver a pilot project for younger children (aged 8-12) displaying problematic and harmful sexual behaviour. This project was the Be Safe Stay Safe Children's Programme and comprised of an 18 week rolling programme for children and their parents and carers. This involvement with Be Safe led to further part time work as a caseworker, assessing and providing therapeutic interventions.

"In February 2016, I took up a post with North Somerset Council as their Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Coordinator. In this role I was required to manage the local multi-agency response to CSE. The role was diverse and interest-

ing but being strategic I found myself missing direct work with young people and their families. As such, when a former colleague sent me the job advert for the Young People's Service Coordinator's post for Circles South West, I jumped at the opportunity! I am delighted to have joined an organisation whose ethos and values echo my own and am excited to be involved in setting up Circles of Support and Accountability for young people.



"Hello, I'm **David Harley**. I took up the new post of **Circles Coordinator (Intellectual Disabilities)** in August, bringing over 20 years experience of working in the fields of criminal justice and social care, both in the voluntary and statutory sectors. After completing a degree in psychology I spent 6 years working with children and adults with intellectual disabilities and/or autistic spectrum conditions. The latter half of this time was as an assistant psychologist for the National Autistic Society in a secure forensic treatment unit, developing risk assessments and tailoring therapeutic interventions for residents at the unit.

"For the past 16 years I've worked in Bristol for the National Probation Service, including in the Court Assessment Team and the Drug

Management Team. I became a Programmes Facilitator in 2005 with a particular interest in inter-partner violence and sexual offending and since specialised in assessment/ treatment relating to these areas, including with those with intellectual disabilities.

"My part-time role with Circles South West means I also work part time as a Probation Officer for Bristol Youth Offending Team.

"I am excited to now be involved professionally with an organisation that I have admired for a number of years, particularly at a time when new services are being developed. The work of Circles of Support and Accountability fits perfectly with my personal and professional values.



"Hi, I'm **Tim Johnson** and I took over the (part-time) role of **Dorset Coordinator** in September from Joe Ennis. In an arrangement that is unique to Circles South West, I am seconded from the National Probation Service and the post is jointly funded by Probation and the Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner. I work for Circles South West for half time and for Probation half time. Prior to taking up this role I was employed full time as a Probation Officer within the Offender Management Team

in Bournemouth, which is where I continue to work part time.

"I've been involved with Circles for over 5 years, having worked closely with a number of core members in my capacity as their probation officer. I have always been encouraged by the good work undertaken by Circles and I have seen some very positive outcomes for core members engaged with the service. I have to say that I had my eye on the role of Coordinator for Dorset for some time. I was pleased for both Joe Ennis and myself when he was successful in

achieving a career progression within Probation! I have worked for Probation since 2005 so I felt ready for a new challenge. I am starting to get to know the volunteers in Dorset and it has been inspiring to see their commitment and the different skills and experience they offer. I am looking forward to supporting them as we move into 2017."

We are also pleased to welcome back **Hilary Gunn** on a part-time basis, working with Jamie to provide Devon Circles. Hilary is coordinating 2 Plymouth Circles.

A Word From The Chair

Another busy year for Circles South West draws to a close with some fantastic achievements by our volunteers and staff.

New projects being developed for young people, Circles to help those with intellectual disabilities and we are well on the way to starting Circles with core members who are close to release from custody then continuing to support them in the community. We have even gone international with Sara Radford being invited to Germany and Florida making some excellent contacts for the prevention project.

Government finance in Criminal Justice area remains very limited with constant pressures to cut costs and show value for money and, as a board of Trustees, ensuring we have the finances available to continue to deliver our service is our main priority. Currently we are in a sound financial position and we have good levels of secured funding, however we are now entering that time of year where bids are being submitted for additional funding so lots of hard work and chewed nails as we await the results! Much of the Board's work this year has been around expanding our

systems and procedures to deal our growth as an organisation, with our Treasurer and Finance Officer working to modernise our accounting system, work undertaken to update our personnel policies and procedures and the introduction of staff pensions.

There have been a couple of recent changes to the Board with Andrew Conroy resigning due to his work commitments. Andrew has been with CSW from the start and has been a stalwart of the Board and he will be a great loss to CSW. A big thank you for all his work over the years in taking us to where we are today and I know he will remain a good friend of CSW in the future. Jane Barks has now taken over his duties as the Secretary of CSW.

I would also like to welcome a new member of the Board who was appointed at our September AGM, Dr Kieran McCartan. I am sure many of you will know Kieran from his research work and his inputs at our training events. He is the Associate Professor of

New trustee: Dr Kieran McCartan



Kieran was appointed as a new Trustee in September. Kieran is the leader of the Social Science Research Group (2014 onwards) and joint co-ordinator of the Sexual Violence Research Network at UWE (2012 onwards); previously, he has been the Criminology Program leader (2010 - 2014) and the Associate Head of Department for Sociology & Criminology (2015 - 2016).

He completed his first degree in Psychology at the Queens University of Belfast, before moving to Leicester to do an MSc in Criminology at the Scarman centre, and a PhD in the Department of Psychology. He has a track record of public, academic and professional engagement on criminological issues, including the origins and causes of sex offending, and societal responses to sex offenders.

He has developed a wide ranging, multi-disciplinary network around sex offender management and reintegration. He has experience of qualitative, quantitative and mixed method research from funders including Ministry of Justice, Cabinet Office, Public Health England, ESRC, The Leverhulme Trust, Bristol City Council & Wiltshire probation. He has previously co-lead an ESRC a nationally based ESRC funded Knowledge Exchange Network on the limited disclosure of sex offender information (2012) and is currently co-leading an international network on sex offender reintegration funded by the Leverhulme Trust (2014-16).

Kieran has over 30 academic publications (incl., Journal Articles, Books, Book Chapters & External Research Reports) and over 45 non-academic ones (incl., blogs, forum pieces and practitioner articles); generated approximately 1/2 million pounds in external research funding; and has given over 80 external presentations (incl., Conference Papers & invited Keynotes).

Dr McCartan is currently on the editorial board of Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research & Treatment; on the Executive Board of ATSA (2017 - 2020); lead Blogger on the SAJRT BLOG; part of the team on the NOTA Blog; a member of the ATSA Prevention committee, the NOTA Prevention committee and the NOTA Research committee. Dr McCartan been a visiting scholar at University of Minnesota (April 2014), at San Jose State University (November 2014) and Griffith University (Summer 2015); in addition, he has been appointed Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Huddersfield (2015 - 2020).

Criminology at the University of the West of England in Bristol and has vast research experience in field of sexual offending; he will be a major asset to the Board.

Again, it is always a pleasure to thank all the staff for their hard work this year and of course a massive thank you

to all the volunteers who make the whole Circles process work so effectively. All of you have a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous 2017.

Tim Price

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Annual General Meeting report

Our AGM was held in September at the Friends Meeting House in Taunton. A more low key affair than the last couple of years, 25 people attended, around a third each of volunteers, trustees and staff plus representation from Circles UK. As well as required business, there was an interesting programme including introductions to 3 new staff and presentations on new pilot projects. Dr Kieran McCartan also gave a presentation on the findings of his independent evaluation of Circles of Support and Accountability published earlier in 2016 which concluded that:

“Circles of Support & Accountability (CoSA) assists in the reintegration of sexual offenders back into the community by providing pro-social support, role modelling, a positive platform and grounded assistance. CoSA provides social and emotional support to the Core Members.... with the majority ...being in a stronger position to live offence free in the community than at the beginning of their circle”. Dr Kieran McCartan, 2016

The evaluation report is available on request.

Save the date!

Saturday 25th February is our Volunteers' Conference at Taunton Race Course. More info to follow soon.....

Can you help?

- Are you an experienced Circles Volunteer? Would be willing to share your experience with new volunteers? Do you have suggestions for development training?
- Are you a public protection professional? Do you have a suitable referral? Would you come along and give input to our volunteer training events?
- Are you part of a community group sympathetic to our aims? Can you promote our work? Can you help us recruit more volunteers in your area?
- Do you have access to a community venue suitable for a Circle?
- Can you display our advert for volunteers? Or circulate it via a mailing list or social media?

Upcoming events of interest

Core Training & Assessment for new volunteers:
21st & 22nd January

Circles South West Volunteers' Conference
Saturday 25th February

Core Training & Assessment for new volunteers
4th & 5th March

For further info, email us at info@circlessw.org.uk

Donating is easy

The easiest way to donate to Circles South West is via the charitable giving website 'The Big Give' www.thebiggive.org.uk. Simply go onto the website, and in the big search box where it says "By Keyword" type in *Circles South West* and hit Enter. This will take you straight to the entry for Circles South West, and you can then choose to "Donate Online". There is an option to GiftAid your donation if you wish.

Get in touch

email us at info@circlessw.org.uk

phone us on (volunteering) 07738 947988 or (general) 07717 442413

fill in the contact form at www.circles-uk.org.uk

follow us @CirclesSW

And last but far from least...
from all the team and
trustees:

Thank you!

and

HAPPY

CHRISTMAS!

All good wishes to you for 2017. We are hugely grateful to all volunteers, funders, statutory partners and other supporters. It's because of you that our charity continues to develop.