



trailblazers
mentoring
inspiring new futures

NEWSLETTER
Volume 1



CEO'S WELCOME

I am delighted to introduce Trailblazer's first newsletter. This issue highlights the value and impact our partnership work makes to the young men who are engaged with the charity. It also focuses on a key challenge that so many people face on release from prison, not having somewhere to live and the lack of suitable, safe accommodation. I also want to say a big thank you to our amazing team of staff, volunteers and Trustees, as well as to our funders and partners. Without your ongoing support, none of this work would be possible.

Julia Alexander
CEO, Trailblazers



BRIDGE RECRUITMENT PARTNERSHIP

Find out how our partnership with Bridge Recruitment is inspiring new futures.

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NO FIXED ABODE

We all know homelessness exists, we see it every day. Learn more about the challenges our mentees face.

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THE COMEDY STORE FUNDRAISER

Our winter fundraiser this year took place on November 16th in London.

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INSPIRING

NEW FUTURES

Trailblazers have recently partnered up with Bridge Recruitment to support our mentees. Yemi Obiwumi, Project Manager for HMP Brixton describes the huge difference this has already made to one mentee in particular.

Bridge Recruitment specialise in facilities management recruitment, and have partnered with Trailblazers to support re-employment of ex-offenders.

In August, Leanne and Michelle visited HMP Brixton to meet our mentees. During these meetings, mentees spoke about their background, life experiences, and offences, but most of all their future goals and plans in employment. The Bridge Recruitment team were supportive from the start, and engaged with the individual the needs of the whole group to support them into employment. This included CV Writing, Interview Preparation, Self-Confidence, Tackling the Fear of Rejection, and Researching Job Opportunities. Mentees gave feedback that they really felt supported and listened to by the Bridge Recruitment team.

One mentee in particular benefited from the support given. Malik, who was due for release in September, showed an interest in waste management and spent time and effort working on his CV. Bridge Recruitment visited HMP Brixton for a second time and spent some time with Malik, going through his CV and building a relationship with him. Malik was already working as a wing-cleaner in the prison, and Leanne and Michelle started to look for suitable jobs for him whilst he was still in custody. During this time, myself, Bridge Recruitment and probation would keep in contact regarding his licence conditions, and housing situation. This helped find Malik a suitable job that allows him to meet his licence, and will also be based in an area which will be easy for him to commute.

Once Malik was released, he contacted Bridge Recruitment and met up with Leanne and Michelle for lunch, and they helped him prepare for his interview. Within a week after Malik's release he had two interviews, and Malik was soon offered a full-time job in a hotel in Paddington as a cleaner. Bridge Recruitment have been a great partner to work with and are continuing to support and encourage our mentees integrating back into the community. They are passionate, dedicated, and invested in our Trailblazers ethos of "inspiring new futures".

The Trailblazers effect

For almost 25 years, Trailblazers has offered young people in prison an opportunity to build a trusting relationship with a volunteer mentor to support them in pre-release planning, through the gate support and in their local community. Trailblazers aims to educate, encourage and inspire our mentees to change their future and make a positive impact on their communities.

Our mentee re-offending rate is just **9%** compared to the national average of **38%**.

70

Volunteer Mentors

132

Offenders Supported

5

Prison Projects

NO FIXED ABODE

We all know homelessness exists, we see it every day - but until it happens to us or we are faced with the challenge of helping someone with no fixed abode, we don't understand the challenges faced.

Steph Smith, Project Manager for HMP Oakwood and HMP Brinsford tells the inspiring story of one of our mentees.

The young man in question had been working with Trailblazers for a few weeks - he engaged really well with his mentor, and had recently found employment that week. He had been out of custody for 9 weeks - things were looking good!

During a routine conversation at the beginning of the week, he didn't seem his usual self. When probed, he told us that he needed help to obtain a GP appointment suitable to fit around his work schedule - he had sores on his ribs that were becoming unbearable. When asked how this had happened, he finally admitted that had been sleeping on benches in the local town centre for the last fortnight.

This young man had not mentioned his circumstances to our TB Community Support Worker, "because you guys have already done enough for me - more than anyone before".

Throughout, he had still been attending work, leaving his belongings in the same bush every day with hope they would still be there on return. Our Community Support Worker jumped straight into action. With help from other staff, our mentee was sourced emergency accommodation for two nights, given clean bedding, towels, hygiene items and enough food to see him through to pay day. A suitable GP appointment to fit around his work was made to help heal his injuries. During this time, several housing applications were made to different organisations, a lot of phone calls made and many frustrating challenges.

It was tight but, he is now housed in a safe secure environment and still going to work. Not once did he miss a shift, not once did this man attempt to reoffend to secure a safe place to sleep that night - this man is such an inspiration to us all!

The FM Comedy Night



We were delighted to be chosen by Bridge Recruitment for their FM Comedy Night at The Comedy Store, London. Featuring a fantastic line up of comedians, and with generous sponsorship providing a free bar and buffet, we were amazed to raise £10000 for Trailblazers – a brilliant night.

If you are interested in featuring Trailblazers at your event, please do get in touch.

Support our work

If you are interested in finding out more about a corporate partnership with Trailblazers or raising money towards our projects please email: donna.duffy@trailblazersmentoring.org.uk to discuss in more detail.

Volunteer with us

We are always looking for volunteer mentors, and to support our work in helping mentors change their lives. You can find out more, and apply on our website: www.trailblazersmentoring.org.uk/become-a-mentor

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