

The Well



Annual Review 2016



About us

The Well is a not-for-profit community interest company founded in 2012 by ex-offender and former drug addict, David Higham. With hubs in Barrow, Morecambe and Lancaster as well as sites in Kendal and Fleetwood, we provide support to people recovering from drug and alcohol addiction.

Our services include:

- structured day-hab (including therapeutic programmes like 12-step and SMART)
- mutual aid support
- Warrior Down emergency support for people who've relapsed
- recovery housing
- family support
- employment skills
- social enterprise opportunities
- sporting and team events
- a wide range of social activities.

Our free-to-use services are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Support is provided by full and part-time staff as well as local volunteers. The team also specialises in working with people with mental health issues, offending behaviour, childhood trauma, learning difficulties, domestic abuse and homelessness.

Our approach

We believe that recovery is infectious – that the visible recovery of one person acts as a powerful motivator for others. We recognise the therapeutic benefits of peer mentoring where one addict helps another. That's why we employ staff and volunteers who have either overcome addiction themselves or have experienced it through a family member. This 'lived experience' brings real value to our service; it means we can give high-quality support in a caring, non-judgemental setting.

Our ethos is all about building long-lasting relationships with individuals and local communities. We're able to provide support for as long as a person needs it. This gives members the opportunity to make lasting friendships and feel part of a supportive and vibrant community. We believe these are important ingredients for long-term recovery.

As part of their recovery, we also encourage members to get involved in their communities – whether that's through voluntary work or helping others access recovery services. This approach not only helps individuals establish a place in their communities but also gives them a sense of pride that they're able to 'give back' to society.

The design and delivery of our services are very much led by members and their families. This is important as it helps us to ensure our services are relevant, effective and inclusive. Over the last four years, we've become a well-known and highly respected service provider in Cumbria and north Lancashire. Our work is bringing cost savings to the NHS, police, courts, prisons, probation service, social services and local councils.

Our vision:
For people facing severe and complex social exclusion to have the opportunity to live healthy and fulfilling lives through involvement in a community that supports their recovery, encourages (stigma-free) social integration, builds their abstinence and wellbeing, and is led and organised by their peers and families.

Our mission:
To build a movement that supports sustainable recovery for people facing severe and complex social exclusion by valuing and harnessing the strengths, skills, partnerships and other assets present in every community.



The Well is a supportive community where people build long-lasting relationships.



We encourage members to 'give back' to their communities.

Foreword from the Chief Executive

Five years ago I had the vision of creating a 'sanctuary' where people with an addiction could get the type of support that traditional service providers could not offer. Having myself been a drug addict for 25 years and now 11 years in recovery, I knew that long-term abstinence was possible if it was practised within a supportive community.

My view is that recovery is contagious – you catch it like you catch addiction. The visible recovery of one person creates a domino effect within groups and communities. When someone manages to break free from addiction they inspire and motivate others to do the same. So I wanted to create a community where former drug addicts, alcoholics, offenders and even family members could offer support to each other.

I also knew it needed to be a place where anyone could 'knock on the door' and ask for help, without going through the usual healthcare or probation routes.

I had no blueprint to follow. There was nothing like this in my area or anywhere else in the country. With no money, but with a clear vision and the support of those around me, I set up The Well in 2012.

Fast forward to the present day and The Well is now a thriving community of 800 people. We have nine staff and 15 volunteers working out of five sites in north Lancashire and Cumbria. We're helping lots of people turn their lives around – including those who've been prolific offenders and addicted to drugs for more than 20 years. We've found that our passionate and unique way of working has helped people into recovery where other services have failed them.

Of those who've used our services for more than 12 months, 69% have remained abstinent for six months or more. This is a significant achievement and is testament to the hard work of staff and volunteers, and the unique recovery model we've created. The Well is a place where all recovery pathways can thrive, from the 12-step programme to person-centred support and faith-based recovery.

This is our first Annual Review. Highlights this year include:

- securing funding for a new hub in Barrow with additional supported housing places (we're currently the largest recovery housing provider in Barrow)
- delivering contracts for Cumbria Police and Crime Commissioner, Unity and CADAS
- the launch of our first social enterprise, Well Fed, with plans in place for more ventures like this
- the creation of a number of new initiatives, including a monthly church service, a specialist support group for families and a women's wellbeing group
- staff, volunteers and our work being recognised in a variety of awards, in the media and at events and open days.

Our aim is to become less dependent on grant funding. During the year we recruited a Business and Commercial Lead and we'll be looking at ways to generate income through our activities.

I'd like to thank staff, volunteers and Board members who often go the extra mile to support individuals and their families. And I would like to congratulate our members for taking the very brave step of coming to us for help. I am so proud of you all.

David Higham
CEO



The Board

Carolyn Woodcock MBE
Chairperson
(Non-executive)

David Higham
Assistant Chair

Polly Parker
Treasurer (Non-executive)

Kerrie Hudson
Secretary

The Board is supported by Geri Byrne-Thompson, The Well's Business and Commercial Lead, and David Egan who has worked for the national charity, Community Matters as well as a number of local Councils for Voluntary Service.

How we're doing

6648 people in Cumbria and Lancashire that we have helped over the last year

79% of service users said The Well had helped them in their recovery

81% of service users said they would recommend The Well's supported housing to a friend

93% of service users said their health and wellbeing have improved

90% of service users said their confidence has increased

98 people completed the 12-step programme

41 people accessed our supported housing

26 people involved in our social enterprises

200 attended our open days

100s of people got involved in fundraising events

1,457 followers on Facebook and Twitter

Funding

To continue providing services, we rely on grant funding from commissioning bodies and voluntary organisations. We regularly look for opportunities to bid for funding and this year has proved to be a successful one.

Public Health England

After submitting a bid to Public Health England, we were awarded a substantial grant to help us create a new hub and supported accommodation in Barrow. This involves the refurbishment of a four-storey building gifted to us by Barrow Borough Council and the purchase of a five-person recovery house. This will enable us to transfer some of our existing recovery places from a property which we currently rent. Once the transfer is complete, we'll have accommodation with 24-hour support for 19 people.

"The Well is an example of best practice for the most effective and efficient use of resources. It delivers the best outcomes for those seeking abstinence based recovery."

Mark Gilman, Public Health England.

Comic Relief

During the year we were invited to an IT event hosted by Comic Relief. This led to us teaming up with Reason Digital, a Manchester-based IT company. Together, we won a grant from Comic Relief

to trial an electronic 'app' version of Warrior Down – our emergency support service. The trial showed that support was offered to someone in need within 14 seconds of activating the app. We've been invited by Comic Relief to present our findings and we'll submit a larger bid to develop the app fully.

Sir John Fisher Foundation

We've received funding from the Sir John Fisher Foundation which helped us to support families in the community and paid for a new mini bus. Cumbria and Lancashire CRC paid for the bus to be branded. As well as using the bus to transport our own members, we can also rent it out to other organisations.

Banks Lion Memorial Trust

The Banks Lion Memorial Trust part-funded an outreach worker in Lancaster. This enabled us to provide vital services to people in their own homes.

Other contributions came from: The High Sheriff of Cumbria for our women's group; Cumbria Youth Service for a study into how we engage young people; the Cumbria Safety Partnership to cover the costs of a feasibility survey on our new Barrow hub; and CGL (Change Grow Live), which helped us to set up a temporary base in Fleetwood.

During the year we also held a number of fundraising events such as a Tesco bag pack and a sponsored run.



Donations have paid for a new mini bus for trips and sporting events.



Members took part in a Tesco bag back to raise money for The Well.

Contracts and partnerships

This year we managed three key contracts on behalf of local commissioners.

CADAS (Cumbria Alcohol and Drug Addiction Service)

CADAS has contracted us to provide one-to-one therapy programmes as well as training for volunteers. The service is provided in Barrow and the South Lakes and is being funded by the Big Lottery until 2018. Two members of staff have been partially funded through the contract.

Unity

We've been working in partnership with Unity to provide rehabilitation in Barrow and the South Lakes. Unity is currently delivering a drugs treatment contract for the whole of Cumbria. Our role in the contract includes providing support at Unity's group sessions, promoting abstinence-based recovery to those on the programme and helping individuals and communities build recovery capital.

Cumbria Police and Crime Commissioner

We've been commissioned by Cumbria Police and Crime Commissioner to provide a package of services in Barrow. It includes the provision of mutual aid services, the training of community recovery champions and developing a training programme to deal with addiction to psychoactive substances (previously known as 'legal highs'). As part of the contract, we're also providing support services to individuals coming through Barrow Police Station.

"By helping people break free from addiction and crime, The Well plays an important role in making our communities safer places to live and work."

Phil O'Donnell, Director, Cumbria and Lancashire Community Rehabilitation Company.

In order to deliver these contracts and provide a wide range of social activities, we rely on partnerships with a number of other agencies. These

include: Cumbria Youth Service, HMP Preston, HMP Haverigg, the probation service, Cumbria Police, People Plus, Love Barrow Families, Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner, WEA, Red Rose Recovery, Snap Gym, Lancashire Sports, More Music and the Lancashire User Forum. We also work closely with members' families and see them as key partners in the delivery of our services.

How you can support us

With your support, we can help more people overcome addiction and associated issues such as mental health problems, learning difficulties and homelessness. You can either make a donation or organise a fundraising event. To find out more, contact us on 01229 829832.



Health and fitness is an important part of recovery. Pictured is our five-a-side football team.



Through various contracts we're providing group therapy and discussion.



Some of our members underwent specialist training to become recovery coaches.

New services

During the year, we've seen a number of new services get off the ground.

Social enterprises

Our business plan includes the creation of social enterprises. The purpose of this is twofold: to generate some income for The Well and to offer members paid work where they can learn new skills. This year we set up a mobile catering business called Well Fed, which is trading locally. Plans are also in place to create Well Maintained, a repairs and maintenance business.

Regular activities

We believe that keeping active and socialising is important for both physical and emotional wellbeing. Through our social clubs, we give members and their families the opportunity to get involved in a variety of activities such as sport, keep fit and a music club. This year we introduced some new activities – classes in sewing, knitting and art as well as a 'stepping up' session where members can sing, recite poetry, play music or tell stories. We're also teaching NVQ Level 1 and 2 in Maths and English. These are accredited programmes which lead to GCSE equivalent qualifications.

The Well Connected Church

For many of our members, religious faith is an important part of their recovery. It can offer the strength, motivation and optimism needed to remain abstinent.

During the year we arranged for a monthly church service to be delivered by the Rev Carolyn Woodcock at our Morecame hub. The service, which often includes guest speakers, has proved to be very popular with members.

Family services

At The Well we know how important family members are to a person's recovery. We also know that families need support too so this year we set up a service just for families. Relatives have the opportunity to talk about the impact of addiction on the family and how to support their loved ones. We provide one-to-one support, group sessions and outreach support.

Women's wellbeing

This year we established a women's wellbeing group which offers activities such as walking, running, boxercise and badminton tournaments. This is part of our approach to provide services which are specific to women.

"The Well has made such a difference to my life. I've completely changed – both my physical and mental health have improved."

Mark Baker, service user.

Awards and media

During the year staff and volunteers were presented with a number of awards in recognition of their hard work. Manager, Kerrie Higham received a national award from the Marsh Trust for 'Most Inspirational Person'. Jane Wilkes was awarded 'Volunteer of the Year' and Eddie McVey got the 'Unsung Hero' award in the RIO volunteer thanksgiving awards.

Manager, Carl Molyneux was commended in the Diverse Cumbria Awards. Calum Marsden, Jack Parker and Polly Parker were shortlisted for other accolades. Jack and Polly also received a letter of commendation from the former Prime Minister, David Cameron. The High Sheriff of Cumbria also presented The Well with an award.

Our CEO, Dave Higham, was chosen as the 'Unsung Hero' at the No Offence awards, which are championed by Richard Branson. He also received an award from The High Sheriff of Lancashire in recognition of his work in the community. In addition, our work has featured on both ITV and BBC TV regional news programmes as well as BBC Radio Cumbria and in a number of regional newspapers.



Our Well Fed social enterprise got off the ground this year.



Our work has attracted media attention. Manager, Carl Molyneux (left) is pictured with an ITV crew.



Staff and volunteers won a number of awards this year.

Our focus for the year ahead

Over the next 12 months we'll continue to concentrate on our existing services while reaching out to more communities and looking at ways to maximise our income.

New developments for next year include:

New Hubs – we're moving to larger premises in Barrow and we'll have a permanent base in Fleetwood and Kendal. All our hubs are situated in communities where drug and alcohol misuse are higher than average for the local population.

Social enterprises – a lack of opportunities to work, learn or do training can be a significant barrier to long-term recovery. We'll create more social enterprise opportunities and we'll link with other organisations to provide jobs, training and work experience for our members.

Women's services – we recognise that women have different support needs to men especially if they are single parents. Over the coming year we plan to develop a comprehensive support service with accommodation specifically for women.

Extending our work into the community – next year we'll be providing services in two local prisons as well as support and advice on drugs at Furness Hospital and Furness College.

New website – we'll be launching a new website to better showcase our work. This will help us to attract new contracts and funding as well as members, volunteers and staff.

Corporate Social Responsibility – we plan to launch a CSR programme which will give organisations the opportunity to support our work, invest in their communities and generate funds for us.

"I've never worked anywhere that's quite like The Well. We're seeing people transform their lives on a daily basis and that's so exciting."

Ged Pickersgill, Volunteer.



Next year we'll launch a tailored service for women.



Our Lancaster hub – we'll be opening more hubs like this next year.

Ann's story

Ann Johnson had been a prolific drug and alcohol user for 27 years. She had been through detox nine times but had always relapsed.



Picture courtesy of North West Evening Mail

She says: "I started using cannabis at the age of 10 and then moved on to heroin. I became pregnant at the age of 17 and went on to have six children. I was in a violent relationship and my lifestyle prevented me from raising my children – some were brought up by relatives and two were adopted. I was also a drug dealer and I was shot during a pick-up. I was isolated from my family and had no friends."

With support from The Well, Ann has now been drug and alcohol-free for more than a year. "For the first time I believed that people wanted to help me and understood me. I began to work through the 12 steps and my key worker, Jane, was massively supportive. To me, The Well is a loving family which will carry you until you can do it yourself."

And to help improve her job prospects, Anne has been working for our Well Fed social enterprise business. "It's great to be working and learning new skills. I have also enrolled on a college course to be a nurse and I have booked my first ever holiday. I get to see my younger kids now too. These are the things I never thought I would have."

The Well



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