

2021 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.

2021 Highlights

Jan - March

Difficult start to the year as Guernsey entered second lockdown (January 2021) Despite not being able to run workshops in lockdown, we continued to work (online quizzes, essential food deliveries and telephone support)

July - Sept

New Kitchen Installed at the Caves. GCFOE pop-up shop in Smith Street for 6 days to sell goods made at the workshops (July 2021). New GCFOE walking group established to walk the whole of the south coast cliffs in 6 weekly sessions. Walks led by Climb LBG.

April - June

Partnership Agreement signed between GCFOE and Clean Sheet (May 2021)
First Crop of Beans and other vegetables from GCFOE Garden (enough to provide several meals at Trinity weekly Community lunches and one monthly roast lunch). GCFOE signed the lease to take exclusive use of the 1st floor of the Caves

Oct - Dec

Craft Fayre Stall at Les Cotils (November 2021) Town Church Christmas Tree Festival – another successful Coffee, Craft and Cake Sale (December 2021). New Grant Funding Application approved by Employment and Social Security (December 2021)

Who we support

The total number of ex-offenders supported in 2021 was 84. This includes all people GCFEO supports for any reason, including those seeking accommodation, attending workshops and those seeking employment.

In addition to supporting anyone referred to GCFEO from the Prison, Probation or as a self-referral, the Public Protection Unit asked us to help some people who were awaiting court appearances for conviction or sentencing. Some court appearances were considerably delayed by the Covid 19 pandemic and a number of people found themselves in the position of having been charged but not yet convicted. During this time, these new service users engaged with us at our workshops and Thursday Church.

Increased Grant Funding

We are delighted to confirm that in December 2021 the Board of Employment and Social Security approved an increased grant to GCFEO of £90K per annum. This fantastic provision will allow us to plan with confidence and further develop all the services we provide. In particular, it will allow us to increase the number of workshops offered from 3 to 5 days a week, Monday to Friday and enable us to fully utilise our workshop space at the Caves in Upper Mansell Street. We have begun a search for an additional Activities Key worker to support Michelle Stringer, our Community and Wellbeing Keyworker.

Improvements at the Caves

We have carried out a number of major improvements at the Caves including:

- Removal of ancient bar area and installation of new kitchen (including new kitchen flooring). Upgrading and improving the lighting (both thanks to a generous grant from the Lloyds Bank Foundation for the Channel Islands).
- Purchase of new tables, chairs and laptop (thanks to a grant from the Social Investment Fund).
- Purchase of new equipment and powertools (thanks to a generous legacy from the Guilbert family in memory of Colin Guilbert).
- Clearing the outside garden space, making it safe (our Landlord replaced safety rails, barriers and added stair rails) and building raised planters to grow fruit and vegetables.
- Introducing a women's only workshop on Wednesday mornings.



*Old Bar area
being removed
at the Caves*

*New GCFO
Kitchen installed*

*GCFO Garden
at the Caves*

Workshops

Our workshops are overseen by our GCFE0 Community and Wellbeing Keyworker, Michelle Stringer. During 2021, we had 22 people overall who attended sessions in the year.

Things progressed fast during 2021 and we were very pleased to have exclusive use of the first floor of the Caves by April. This meant that we could leave ongoing work out in the main room instead of having to clear everything away each day. We were also able to dismantle the inherited staging, so we now have unhindered access to our store-room. Our resourcefulness, and the expansion of our woodworking tools, meant that we made use of the timber from the staging and successfully made stools/tables to sell and planters/border boxing for our garden area. We are also still using some of the plywood for a project we started later in the year – making mosaics for the community garden at Wesley Methodist Church. We will be helping them by painting all their fencing and benches once the weather improves and then installing our mosaics.

We had a very successful week at the OSA Pop Up Shop in July, which greatly helped our funds. This was followed by 2 more sales opportunities – a Winter Fair at Les Cotils in November and our usual Cake and Craft sale at Town Church's Christmas Tree Festival in December. The standard of items for sale continues to be very high and we receive many positive comments. Due to successful funding applications, we were able to update the kitchen area in a corner of the room, making it far more user friendly, especially having a sink at a decent height.

We recently advertised for an Activities Keyworker, who will be starting in March 2022.

We currently run 4 x 2hr workshops on Mondays to Wednesdays and the plan is to cover the rest of the week also, once our new staff member is in place.



*GCFE0 Pop-up Shop,
Smith Street,
St Peter Port.*

Employment

With a second island lockdown at the beginning of the year it was a challenging time to support ex-offenders who were seeking employment. The number of available vacancies fell sharply as local business were largely working from home and paused most recruitment activity. Once lockdown restrictions eased, work could begin again and the following figures provide a snapshot of activity for the rest of 2021.

During the course of 2021, we were very pleased to be able to assist 22 people into work, in a wide variety of roles and industry sectors (including hospitality, finance, retail, publishing and construction). GCFEO signed a partnership agreement with UK charity Clean Sheet in order that we can add Guernsey employers to their national online database. Any employer added, agrees to consider ex-offenders for vacancies within their organisations. This gives confidences to job seekers that their applications will be treated fairly and given due consideration based on skills and suitability for a role. Signing up new employers to Clean Sheet will continue to be one of our priorities in 2022.

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Number of clients on work to benefit

Benefits are paid based on an agreed work contract with Employment and Social Security

128

Number of prospective job enquiries made

Engaging with Guernsey employers on behalf of or with ex-offenders

35

Number of clients actively supported

Agreed client case-list shared with Employment and Social Security

22

Number of successful job offers accepted

Ex-offenders accepting full and part-time paid employment

Accommodation

One particularly important area where we input a considerable amount of time and resources is in the sourcing and maintenance of suitable accommodation for ex-offenders.

Homelessness (sleeping rough/sofa-surfing etc...) or being forced to live in substandard or overcrowded accommodation, are factors that have been found to perpetuate levels of offending, re-offending, criminality and drug misuse, as well as exacerbate social problems such as poverty and marginalisation. Maintaining suitable accommodation is an essential factor in minimising offending and re-offending, particularly for those released from custody, who are more at risk in society.

During 2021, GCFEO has supported 14 individuals with finding and keeping their own accommodation. We provide a wide range of support such as help with finding accommodation, providing loans for deposits, liaising with landlords, advocacy in disputes with both landlords or other tenants, etc...

We give assistance to both ex-offenders and landlords alike. In order for some landlords to feel confident enough in accepting those with more serious and challenging criminal records, often all it takes is knowing that there is someone on the end of a phone who they can speak to and who will support them when things don't go quite as they had hoped and expected.

Without suitable accommodation it is particularly difficult to open bank accounts and to find employment. A place to call home not only provides security but a sense of worth and self-pride. Where we have been able to assist people into good quality accommodation, we have concrete proof that it considerably helps their rehabilitation journey and employment opportunities.



14

Number of clients finding
and keeping accommodation

Thursday Church

Thursday Church is an official congregation of Holy Trinity Church and meets on a Thursday evening in the church centre. It is an adults only group and provides a safe space for ex-offenders who wish to explore the Christian faith. A number of GCFO volunteers also attend each week.

Thursday Church usually starts with a social time over coffee and food followed by a short term of worship (either using Youtube worship songs or led by guitar). The evening continues with some simple Bible based teaching and prayer.

During 2021 we watched and discussed several films, including The Shack, A Street Cat Named Bob (based on the true story of a former drug addict) and The Blind Side (based on the true story of a homeless African-American student).

The group enjoys an interactive discussion style and generally takes a different Bible topic each week and develops it in an informal way (a little like the Alpha course in style).

Every so often, the Vicar of Holy Trinity will come and lead a simple communion service too.

We are thrilled that one of our Thursday Church members has asked to be baptised.

Thank You

The Directors and Staff of Guernsey Caring for Ex-Offenders would like to thank all those who make our work possible:

- Grant Award Bodies and private donations
- Volunteers at the Craft workshops
- Volunteers who help at Thursday Church
- Volunteers who mentor, visit and pray for ex-offenders
- Probation, Police, Prison, Social Security, Guernsey Community Savings and all other agencies who support us in so many ways
- Trinity Church for allowing us to join in various community activities



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