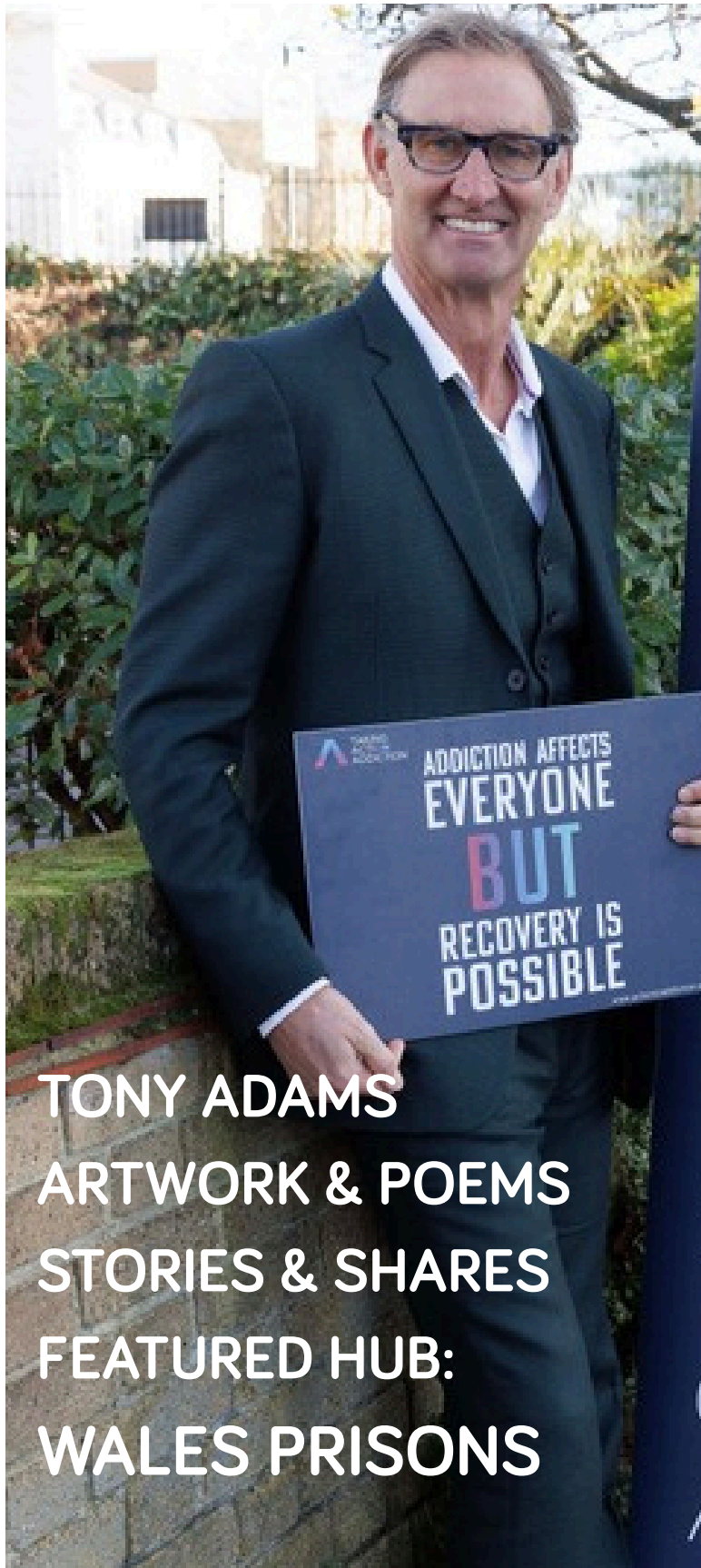


THE JOURNEY

Summer 2025

A Magazine From
The Forward Trust



THE
FORWARD
TRUST



BREAKING
THE CYCLES
OF CRIME AND
ADDICTION

TONY ADAMS
ARTWORK & POEMS
STORIES & SHARES
FEATURED HUB:
WALES PRISONS

forward

THE JOURNEY

A Magazine From The Forward Trust

Celebrating the experience and creative talents of our current and former clients in prisons and the community.

Welcome to the Summer 2025 edition of The Journey Magazine. A very big thank you to everyone who has contributed!

Want to submit an entry?

Your entries are what make The Journey magazine, so please send them in to us. Ideally, written contributions should be no longer than 500 words (one side of lined A4 paper) where possible.

Work may be edited by The Journey team to make sure it is suitable for publishing.

If you would like to contribute in any way, contact us at:

The Journey Magazine Freepost THE FORWARD TRUST

Alternatively, call freephone 0300 373 0204 or email forwardconnect@forwardtrust.org.uk

If you are submitting an article or artwork, you will need to complete a "Permission to print form" available from a member of Forward Trust staff, or the tear off section in the back of The Journey magazine (p.29).

We're looking for your

Stories

Poems

Artwork

Shares

Inspiration

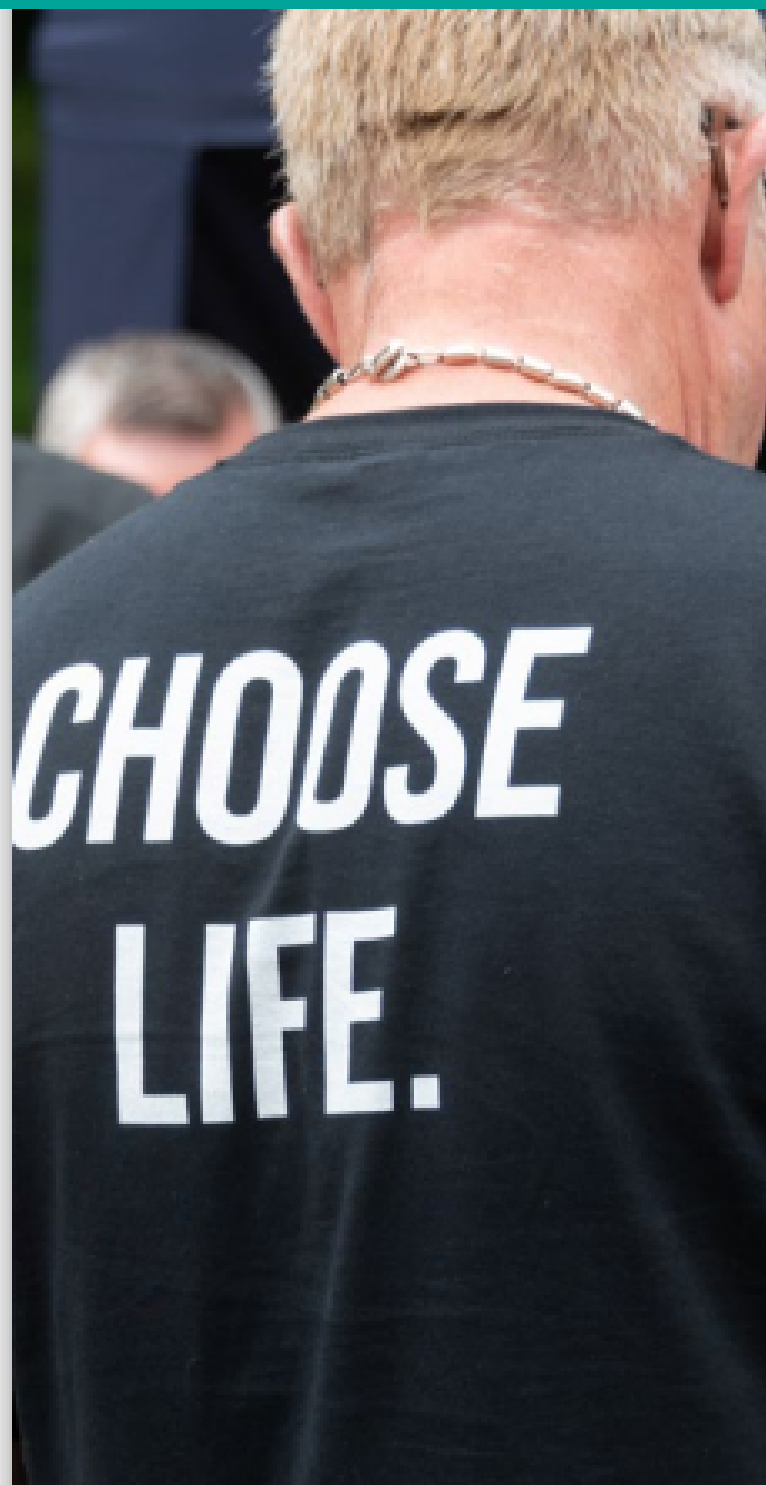
Ideas

You can also get in touch with us to share any positive experience with Forward Connect or if you'd like to be part of The Journey's Editorial Team.

THE JOURNEY

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Please be aware that some of the content in this magazine may be triggering, and might include mentions of substance abuse, domestic violence, suicide and homophobia.



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Tony Adams

Our New Chairman

Earlier this year, The Forward Trust was delighted to announce the appointment of Tony Adams MBE as our new chair of Trustees.

The Arsenal and England football legend has been in recovery from addiction for 29 years and has spoken openly about his dependency to alcohol, which blighted his career and led to a short prison sentence in HMP Chelmsford in 1990.

Tony is an ambassador for the Taking Action on Addiction and More Than My Past campaigns, which are led by The Forward Trust, aiming to tackle stigma around addiction and experience of the criminal justice system.

His first few months in the role have been busy, with a roadshow of visits around some of Forward's prison and community-based services with CEO Mike Trace.

Kicking things off, Tony and Mike spent the day at our Thanet Hub, meeting staff and gaining an insight into our substance use and employment support services. This was followed by a networking event, hosted by ROAR Kent, at Margate FC, with service users and partners from across the recovery community that have benefited from our services.



The next stop on the roadshow took Tony and Mike to Wales, where they spent a day visiting our abstinence based Y Bont programme in HMP Cardiff and Camau Probation and Accommodation service [see pages 10-15 for a special feature on our Welsh prisons and probation services].

Since then, Tony and Mike have visited HMP Downview, HMP Highpoint, The Brink recovery café and SHARP Day Treatment programme in Liverpool.



In August, Tony made a return visit to HMP Chelmsford, where he served his sentence - then spent the afternoon at our Southend Recovery Hub, opening our new Brink recovery café.

Later in the year, he'll be paying a visit to the new Milsike prison in York, ReNew service and The Bridges in Hull, along with lots of other prison and community services.

“I have more motivation than ever to support those experiencing addiction and the criminal justice system”

Tony Adams, chair of The Forward Trust



Photo credit: Tom Jenkins

T
“As an Ambassador of The Forward Trust for the last 20 years, I have seen at first-hand the amazing work they do and have always been a vocal supporter of the programmes and support they provide. Their work with ex-offenders and specifically the scourge of addiction is one particularly close to my heart as a recovering addict and ex-offender.

“I am proud, honoured and excited to have been given the role of Chair of Trustees. I know that, together with The Forward Trust’s board, we can continue the incredible work of the former formidable chair David Bernstein, and steer and lead this fantastic charity to an incredible future.

“For me, this isn’t just about leadership – it’s about using my experience to inspire and support those who feel lost, stuck, or written off. I truly believe that with the right help, anyone can turn their life around.

“I am delighted to visit the programmes around the country to see all the transformational work being done.”



Thank you David for your 12 years of unwavering dedication to the recovery community across the UK.



Through your service, The Forward Trust has continued to be a light on the hill for tens of thousands of people who may have given up hope. Thanks!

Playing For Recovery

Emma Urquhart Cup

Forward Trust v ROAR, Margate FC, 28th June

The last time football legend Tony showed off his knees in public was when he whipped off his trousers on Strictly!

It has been 20 years since he played professional, football but on 28th June, Tony took to the field at Margate FC, this time to challenge the stigma around addiction and to show that recovery is possible.



The charity match featured a team from The Forward Trust against a team from Reach Out And Recover (ROAR), a Kent based Community Interest Company set up and led by people in recovery from addiction.

This special event was held in memory of our dear friend Emma Urquhart, a much-loved Forward Trust staff member and dedicated ROAR volunteer who played a vital role in supporting a recovery football group. Though Emma is no longer with us, her impact lives on in the community she helped build and the lives she touched.



Anthony (Tony) Deaville, partner of Emma and match organiser, closed the event by paying thanks to everyone who attended. Tony said:

“The game meant so much to me. Emma was my partner, and we were together for a long time, and she was special. It was a brilliant day, so many people have come together and celebrated Emma and broke down stigma today, coming from all different backgrounds – workers and volunteers – it was just amazing. And of course to have an England legend Tony Adams as well, what an event! Thank you to everyone who attended.”



Match Report

forward v



June 28th 2025, Margate FC

This was the second ever Emma Urquhart Cup – the previous encounter saw ROAR win 13-0!

This time around, Forward played a much tighter game, which was no doubt helped by the footballing experience of Tony Adams, who proved he could still effortlessly deploy a perfectly timed slide tackle! His trademark mastery of organisation – as a Captain for most of his career – was also firmly on display in what was a jovial, good-willed and entertaining encounter by the two teams.



It was ROAR Kent who went ahead in the first half, but Forward pulled one back to equalise in the second. The game was initially called as a 'draw' but fans were treated to penalties to ensure trophies, courtesy of Ramsgate Trophies, could be allocated to both teams.



The two teams were battling the sweltering heat (27 degrees), and this only seemed to add to the sizzling atmosphere between these two sides.

ROAR emerged victorious in a highly competitive match against Forward by winning on penalties after a highly entertaining one-all draw (1-1) in 90 minutes.



Congratulations to ROAR!

Friendship in Recovery

Lindsey

I can so clearly remember the day that I decided to approach The Forward Trust for support when leaving HMP Send. It had taken weeks of contemplation before finally asking to go into treatment to help me overcome my addictions. I'd managed 10 months of complete abstinence whilst in custody but knew that the true challenge would be when I was released, and I wasn't entirely sure I could do it alone.

The fear of the unknown was so overwhelming it was all I could think about, I literally was not sleeping at all with worry over it.

The day my key-worker came to tell me I had been accepted; I literally fell to my knees with emotion and appreciation. Forward were offering me both accommodation and a place on the 12-week Structured Day Programme. This would mean being even further from my family in Leeds, yet near enough to London to see my daughters. I knew that this was something I had to do by myself, for myself, if I had any hope of maintaining my recovery.

I had doubts and felt troubled that I was stepping into the unknown, in a new area without any friends or family nearby to support me. I was petrified of being alone and isolated. However, within hours of release, all of those fears were put to rest, and I knew in my heart that I had been invited into a community that accepted me for who I was. I didn't have to lie or pretend to be someone I wasn't and for me this was refreshing.

I was extremely anxious about the type of accommodation I would be in and had images of it being like one of the horrific hostels I'd previously had to stay in. How wrong could I have been? I was collected from prison by a Forward Trust team member and brought to a clean, well-decorated and welcoming house which I knew straightaway could feel like 'home'. Initially, I was the only one living there which allowed me to settle in with no anxieties about the other housemates. After a week or so, I was told that another lady was moving in and again, I became apprehensive of who I would be sharing with.

I had no reason to worry however, as we get along just fine. It's nice to be sharing a space with someone who "gets me". We both have our own routines in the house and have regular house meetings to check that we are continually respecting each other. What I enjoy the most is that we can have a laugh at ourselves and the way we used to be. We have shared some hilarious stories! Despite our difference in age, we have a lot of similarities in our lives, and talk regularly about our children and families - sharing stories and memories to make each other smile.

They say in recovery that addiction is the opposite of connection. I can now truly say that in my recovery, I feel connected to so many like-minded people. It's a whole new way of life and one that is growing stronger every day.

I am proud to say that I am now 20 months clean and sober - and moved into my new home in June - my future looks bright, thanks Forward Trust!

I first heard about Forward Trust when I was in HMP Bronzefield. I went into prison with a Heroin and Pregabalin addiction. I was put on methadone and was getting detoxed in Bronzefield. I was then transferred to HMP Downview which is where I started to do a methadone detox and started having regular key working sessions with my Forward Trust key worker. My keyworker always supported me through my detox and through the hard days where my cravings got really bad. She even got me involved in doing courses and programmes to help me get a foundation in place for my sobriety to make it easier for me when I got released.



My Forward Trust key worker knew that I would need support when I got back out into the community, so she went through options with me. One of these options was to move to Kent and live in a recovery house. I was open to the idea because I knew I didn't want to go back to my hometown where all my using and crime took place, I wanted a fresh start where I would have no temptation. She told me that to be able to stay in the recovery house I would have to be enrolled in a 13 week day programme with Forward. This was brilliant news for me because I was willing to be doing anything to keep my sobriety and it would give me the routine and structure that is extremely helpful when in early recovery. I told her that I really wanted the help Forward was offering me, and that I was willing to do everything and anything to keep clean. After 11 years of using class A drugs, I was in a

desperate place, and I didn't want to go back to where I had been in active addiction. 6 days after I got released from HMP Downview, I moved into the Kent recovery house, and I can honestly say it was the best thing I have done in a very long time. The support and opportunities that have been given to me since being here is amazing not only from the forward trust staff but also my peers. I am attending regular CA meetings; Forward Connect meetings and am starting the 13 week day programme to give me the best start in my sobriety.

I will forever be grateful to my peers that I have met since being here especially to my house mate who was in this house a couple of weeks before I came. We have grown to have a wonderful relationship and have many similarities with our stories. We are both very fresh out of jail and both want our recovery more than anything. It can be very challenging living in a house with someone who you know nothing about, but we have grown to understand each other's boundaries and space but also know that we can go to one another for advice, guidance or just a good laugh. To have someone that has lived a life just like you which led to similar things makes it amazingly easy for us to talk about things without there being any judgement.

In my opinion, the peers I have met who are also under the support of Forward are just as important to me and my recovery as the staff that are involved. When you see people come out the other end of such a painful addiction it can give you hope and inspiration of what's possible. I know by working my 12-step programme and engaging in everything Forward has to offer I will 100% stay sober. I am now nearly 9 months sober which is the longest I have ever got in 11 years and that is all down to the brilliant things I have around me.

I will forever be in debt to Forward for showing me this new way of life and all the amazing things in it.



Featured Hub WELSH PRISONS

Mike Trace CEO of The Forward Trust

Over recent months, our chair Tony Adams and I have had the pleasure of visiting our Y Bont service in Wales.

Forward's intensive 12-step drug/alcohol recovery programme in HMP Swansea and HMP Cardiff aims to equip prisoners (whose offending is addiction-related), with the strength and skills to live a drug and crime-free life.

They are among seven prison-based addiction programmes that Forward Trust operates. Amazingly, the only Incentivised Drug Free Living (ISFL) that receive dedicated funding are in the Welsh prisons – funded by the Welsh office of HM Prisons and Probation.

“There is always hope if you have the desire to take the first step. Today I have hope in recovery”

Y Bont graduate

And it's not just The Forward Trust and the men on the programme saying how good it is - when asked for examples of well-functioning ISFL's, HM Inspector of Prisons Charlie Taylor highlighted the Y Bont programme as a model of good practice when he gave evidence to the Justice Select Committee.

All the men graduate abstinent from the programme, and this success can be attributed to their hard work, the dedication of all the staff involved in the delivery and the valuable support from the prison senior leadership.

Peer support mentors are recruited from the Y Bont programme graduates to utilise and develop their skills, alongside their lived experience to support staff in the design, production and delivery of the programme.

Y Bont means 'The Bridge' in Welsh and we are immensely proud that our services have been that bridge to recovery for those who are on our wings - and we can continue to offer the tools to maintain long-term abstinence.

We're also delighted that recently we have begun delivering some support to men in HMP Prescoed.

Y Bont Graduates

Featured Hub
WELSH PRISONS

“The thing is, I have told enough lies during my toxic love affair with alcohol and don't feel like telling lies today. So I finally decided instead to describe to you all why this sentence has had such a positive impact on me.

“All my life I've felt like a square peg, a misfit and outsider. I felt like I'd missed a very important and vital life lesson that would've enabled me to be part of the group, the community. The 12 step programme is the first time I've been around other people who share this disease called addiction, who are in the same boat as I am, who have had similar life experience.

“People who understand the struggle, who saw me and made room for me. I have been amazed and inspired by their battles and their shares, the amount of potential hidden away in this place is incredible- I know the staff feel that way also.

“G wing [ISFL wing] and the 12-step programme is a shining example of what can happen when prison is done right, when the focus is on rehabilitation rather than just punishment. Although I said I wouldn't make promises today, I can make one, I promise you all here and now, that my healing process won't end when I walk through those gates in a week. I will continue on this journey with the first destination being an AA meeting”.

DAN

“I like the ISFL wing, for me it's a safe environment, with no arguing, drugs, fighting. If anyone acts up, they are taken off the wing if they don't want to change, which makes it better for us boys that do want to change. This is my sixth jail sentence in the last 11 years, but this time I really believe I can succeed when I'm out. This wing has given me my life back. My family are proud of me for the first time.”

Thank you ISFL staff + The boys [Anonymous]

Megan Reynolds

Recovery Programme Trainee
HMP Cardiff

Featured Hub
WELSH PRISONS

“Working as a trainee recovery programme practitioner for Forward Trust has been a profoundly rewarding experience”

My role has given me the unique experience to make a meaningful impact on individuals lives through supporting them on their recovery journeys. I have cherished the chance to contribute to a cause that addresses such a critical issue in society.

Through working for Forward I have gained invaluable insights into the complexities of substance and alcohol misuse and have witnessed firsthand the importance of the charity's work in

developing a programme that has been an effective intervention for many.

Working for Forward has not only broadened my knowledge but has also strengthened my want to advocate for and support those affected by addiction. I am consistently inspired by those I work with and support. I have had an amazing time so far and can't wait for future development of Forward in Wales.

ISFL WING

“When I came to Swansea I hated it. I was almost ready to end it. But I got on the Incentivised Substance-free Living (ISFL) wing and now I am doing much better. I have got off the drugs, and the spice. No one here wants to do drugs. We help each other to stay clean. And the officers help us to get through the days. I love it here.”

RHYS

FACING BATTLES!

“Keep smiling, stay strong.
Remember to live, as well as forgive (yourself).
No one ever succeeded by standing still, stuck in anger.
You're amazing, you're special, a survivor.
Keep fighting, you'll rise, once again!”

JACK

Y Bont Graduates

Featured Hub WELSH PRISONS

“Just saying I was an addict was hard. Being on Y Bont has shown me life that there is life at the end of the tunnel and help is out there. I’ve taken back power over something that I have been powerless against. I’ve taken so much in over the past few weeks, I’ve never been so determined and driven to succeed.”

“It’s given me tools to live a clean and sober life. I found it hard to speak out but as the sessions kept getting better so did I. I don’t feel powerless anymore.”

“I never thought I’d be where I am today. I’ve always used drugs to cope, now I have the toolkit to keep going on my journey.”

“The course taught me many things and to be 100% honest with ourselves. I had a PhD in letting my kids down. Through treatment, I have the opportunity to get my life back.”

“12 weeks ago I didn’t realise how powerless I was. A weight has been lifted and I have the tools to move forward.”



It's A Community!

It's a community

So treatment and therapy is part of the deal

A safe space among friends

A place where you can heal

We've all had our trauma

We've all had enough pain

Spent all 9 lives

Death or recovery all that remain

The wing is built on trust

The officers really care

So the trauma you've kept hidden

You can finally share

I could go on all day

Coz its not hard to sell

All that's on offer

On the ISFL

Good luck and I hope you find your way here

Richard Bayford

Y Bont Graduate GEORGE

Featured Hub
WELSH PRISONS

“I know that feeling of coming to prison... maybe for the first time, or maybe it's a recall, even a new sentence. Whatever the case we all know that feeling of knowing you've messed up. Landing on B Wing not knowing what's to come or where you'll end up, which wing? Which jail? What sentence? Everything is out of your control & in the system's hands now. But amazingly, this time was better for me! I knew I needed to do things differently. To change my ways & stay out of prison to be a good daddy, and a good person.

“So, I put an application in for the ISFL wing & 12 Steps. Somehow a few weeks later I got the chance to move over! Since then, everything got better over time. The wing is smaller so everyone knows each other & we all help and support one another when we can.

“We're out a lot more & we feel trusted. For me it was the best move possible - I didn't get involved in the usual prison B.S... fighting, grafting etc... instead I made changes, got on 12 steps & involved in other stuff on the ISFL Wing. I felt in control for once & now am progressing well. I've got my 12-step graduation coming up and then my review not long after.

“For once I've got a good chance! After serving almost 9 years in prisons all over the UK my best advice is to make that change. Put that app in and take all the help that's on offer... Trust me! All the best with your bird. Moving over to ISFL wing was the best decision I made since coming to prison. It's more like a community than a prison wing. Being a heavy drug user for some time moving here was a big change for me and every negative drug test result is a boost to my confidence in not returning to my old lifestyle when I'm released. Being the best dad I can be to my son is my ultimate goal and I'm where I need to be to achieve that objective.”

CAMAU

HOUSING SUPPORT

Y Bont works in tandem with The Forward Trust's community based Camau probation support service which provides steps to safe and stable accommodation for male probation clients following release.

The Camau Support Team works closely with each client to determine and address their needs. Support includes a mix of group and one to one accommodation related interventions, delivered in selected locations.

How we can help you?

- Homelessness Prevention
- Support with housing applications – pre-release Applications For Assistance for people due to be leaving custody and Local Authority Housing Applications for people in the community
- Support with applying for Supported Housing appropriate to individual support needs
- Support with applying for rent deposit/ rent in advance applications for Private Rented housing
- Advice on housing rights, entitlements, changes in legislation, local services and support networks
- Affordability advice and support including Income and expenditure calculations / budgeting for a home
- Information on community resources to help settle into the community
- Referrals to specialist interventions, including Citizens Advice and Money Advice Service, Illegal Money Lending Team and local Credit Unions; emergency accommodation and DWP crisis payments

- Advice and support with Benefit eligibility – benefits checker, support with applications
- Housing training / workshops in Finding Accommodation, Tenancy Sustainment, Being a Good Tenant and Moving On and Preparing to return to the community from custody
- Peer Mentoring and volunteering
- Referrals into Forward Connect
- Regular themed social activities to develop social skills and build confidence

For further information or to access the Camau service, please speak to your probation officer or any Forward Trust staff member.

The service is also available to male probation clients from Wales serving their sentences elsewhere who wish to return to Wales post release – please speak to your probation officer.



We are immensely grateful to all of the Y Bont graduates who shared their poems and reflections with us. This feature on Wales is dedicated to Rebecca Osborn, Charge Nurse, HMP Swansea who made a huge difference to the lives of so many. Diolch Bec x

Arts & Sports Network

Celebrating the creative & sporting talents of our community

One of the most rewarding aspects of the work we do at The Forward Trust is seeing people use their new-found freedom and purpose to enjoy life and have a good time with like-minded friends.

One of the ways to do this is through sports, arts and cultural activities.

Across the country, people in our service projects, staff teams, and the Forward Connect network are regularly involved in sport and the creative arts – for example music, walking challenges, visual arts, five a side football matches, poetry or creative writing – all sorts of initiatives that show the wealth of artistic talent out there and bring our community together.

We have set up a Sports & Arts network for all this activity – sharing ideas, stimulating and funding new initiatives, giving recognition to achievements, and bringing different groups from different areas together to perform and share their creative work, and reach a wider audience – and we'd love you to be part of it!

How Can You Get Involved?

If you are already involved in a sporting, artistic or creative activity in your local area, let us know – we can help to publicise your efforts, and grow them if that is what you want.

If you have an idea for an event or activity, and want help to develop it, get in touch – we can give advice, contacts and practical support to get things going.

ARTS NETWORK



Celebrating artistic talent through music, visual arts, poetry or creative writing – and bringing our recovery community together.

- Workshops and masterclasses from professional artists
- Exhibitions and gigs to share creative work, and reach a wider audience
- Sharing ideas and funding new initiatives
- Giving recognition to achievements
- Having fun!

SPORTS NETWORK



Opportunities to improve physical and mental health and bring our recovery community together.

- Football tournaments
- Recovery Walks
- Fun runs
- Sponsored swims and skydives
- Gym visits
- Wild swimming
- Get Fit!



forward
RECOVERY'S GOT
TALENT

Contact: sportsandarts@forwardtrust.org.uk



RECOVERY'S GOT TALENT



Can you hold a tune?
Do you write and perform your own poetry?
Are you a musician, dancer, comedian or magician?

 Recovery's Got Talent Needs YOU! 

The Forward Trust has been working in the recovery sector for over 30 years - and we know that there are lots of talented people in our community. During Addiction Awareness Week in November, we'll be hosting Recovery's Got Talent - a special evening to showcase your creative abilities! You don't have to be polished performer - we want to celebrate those with emerging talent too!

Here's how to take part -

Record and send us a 1 minute long video clip of yourself performing.
Submit your video to us by Thursday 16th October

Email: communications@forwardtrust.org.uk

WhatsApp: 074 8531 5614

[Please include your name, location and telephone number when sending in your video clip]



Artwork

Deb Witshire

YOUR CREATIVE WORK



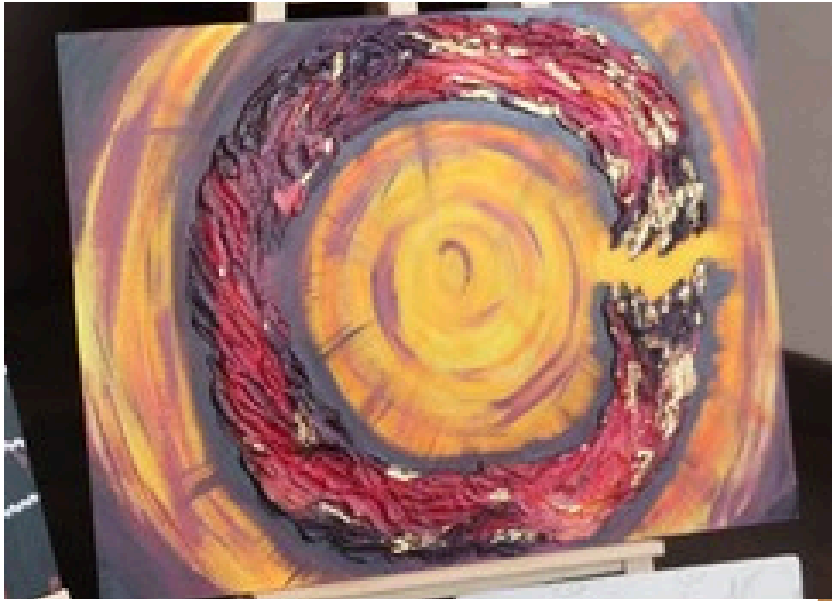
When The Tide Turns

Richard Bayford

When The Tide Turns

When it started it was all fun and games
Fitting in with the crowd
Finding pleasure in doing things
You know you weren't allowed
But fun turned to addiction
Somewhere along the way
You lose your job, turn to crime
Out robbing every day
Your health begins to suffer
Friends are soon all gone
Family all disowned you
You've done everyone wrong
The world becomes a lonely place
Addiction your only friend
Hope a distant memory
You want it all to end Jails and institutions
No bridges left to burn
Only death awaits you
Unless that tide you turn
But the future is not hopeless
If you accept you're finally through
When your ready to accept it
Recovery is there for you
I know this journey all too well
It took me a lifetime to learn
That a chance at life is possible
If the tide you're ready to turn
In prison I found the 12 steps
They showed me a better way
Who knows what the future holds
But I'm clean, JUST FOR TODAY.

YOUR CREATIVE WORK



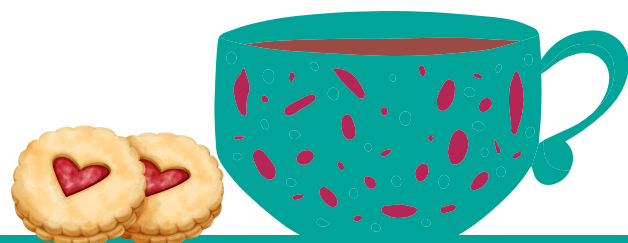
A selection of the artwork on display at this year's National Reunion in London. Thanks to everyone who donated a piece to show.

Tea Mary

YOUR CREATIVE WORK

Oh I love my cup of tea,
Anywhere, all the time,
It fills me with glee
There's something about it,
A cup of tea,
I like it anytime and down by the sea
I used to have cows milk,
Now I have goats,
Sometimes with soya,
sometimes with oats
I'm not really fussy,
I just want it now,
Hot Amber Nectar,
Holy cow!!
I love it so much it's getting out of hand,
The caffeine hits me,
I need it,
I frantically stand....
I go to the kettle and flick on the switch,
The water bubbles,
I'm just like a witch
I pour over the water still bubbling away,
The bag is split,
Throw that one away
I have two in the morning when I wake up,
So warm and comforting,
A hug in a cup
That 4pm slump,
I need perking up,
I know, a cuppa will really cheer me up
It goes down the hatch all smooth and warming,
McDonald's Drive Thru does a lovely cup,
After a swim in the sea,

It's lovely to sup
Mermaid Beach has a cafe too,
A swim in the sea,
And a cuppa to go
At 3am when I'm tossing and turning,
My old friend calls to me,
I have a yearning
I love a cuppa any time of day,
But it's too much caffeine,
And my body says nay
My eyes have started flickering,
The optician told me why,
It's time to cut back,
This makes me cry
Another thing I can't control,
It's only a cup of tea,
But too much caffeine is catching up with me
So now I'm doing all I can to keep it just to four,
Some days it's tough,
I've had enough,
I just can't keep the score
A cup of tea sorts everything out,
My mother told me so,
Being sensible is so grown up,
But I really just don't know....
How can I control it,
It's another blooming thing,
It's driving me crazy,
But I'll succeed on a prayer and a wing.



To quit your addiction has to come from your heart, only you can make that decision

The first steps of admitting you are an addict are the hardest.

While in Swansea prison, I was asked if I would like to go on G-Wing (ISFL Wing). It's a drug free wing which runs the 12 steps course. It's a 12-week course where I learned about addiction and coping mechanisms to stay free from drugs and lead a normal life. The wing is quiet, and the officers are there to help in any way they can.

You only get out what you put in. I have used for 40 years I am now 11 months clean that is thanks to the 12 steps programme and the officers on G-Wing Swansea. I will also get support on the outside when released.

My message? G.O.D - Get Off Drugs

DAVID

Moving over to the ISFL wing was the best decision I made since coming to prison.

It's more like a community than a prison wing.

Being a heavy drug user for some time, moving here was a big change for me and every negative drug test result is a boost to my confidence in not returning to my old lifestyle when I'm released.

Being the best dad I can be to my son is my ultimate goal and I'm where I need to be to achieve that objective.

JEFF



Cliff

20 years in recovery

September marked my 20th year in recovery. It's incredible really. I had been locked into a 20-year opiate and crack addiction from which I could never see a way out. This year also marks 10 years volunteering with The Forward Trust.

My recovery journey is slightly different from most. It began in 2004 when my brother came down to Bournemouth where I was street homeless and sofa surfing and offered me an olive branch. He said he would put me into rehab in Thailand where he lived at the time. He gave me a few days to decide, but it was a no brainer, I knew I had to do it.

I found myself in a tough spot. After finishing detox at a state hospital, I headed to a rehab centre in Malaysia, which was a Chinese Christian work commune. Being the first foreigner there wasn't easy. We took cold showers with a bucket, started bible studies at 6am, and sang songs between working on the organic chicken farm during the day and going to church on Sundays. Even though I'm not religious, I got used to the routine and made it through the next 8 months.

After leaving rehab I went back to Thailand to work with my brother. I ended up staying there for the next 9 years before returning to the UK in 2014.



Just before my mum passed away, I remember her saying to me "wouldn't it be good if you could help others". That resonated with me, and when I got back to the UK it wasn't long before I started doing some voluntary work.

Everything that was offered to me I did. All the courses, e-learning, group facilitation, assessments, one to one mentoring... you name it, I did it.

When we first started Forward Connect at Ashford five years ago, we started in the art room downstairs and for weeks it was a proper slog.

Cliff

Eventually we started to get a small core group which gradually got bigger and before we knew it, we had six or eight people coming every week. We soon started at other hubs and Forward Connect started to grow. To be part of that growth is very satisfying, even more so now it's gone national.

I've met some wonderful people; I've been to places I never would have dreamed. I've been to The Houses of Parliament (twice!), appeared in the 2023 Addiction Awareness Week film, and even won a volunteer award.

Most importantly, I've seen people come into the service, grow, and move forward with their lives. Some of those people have even gone on to become recovery workers themselves there. There are some people that didn't make it, and that will always weigh heavily with me, but I can honestly say that volunteering with Forward has rewarded me so much.

I have learnt the skills needed for me to maintain a healthy lifestyle, and last year I extended my voluntary work with the Lived Experience Recovery Organisation (LERO) which is another fantastic ongoing project I am proud to be involved with.

Here's to the next 20 years!

STORIES & SHARES



Photo credit: Nicky Hamilton

Taking Action on Addiction film 2023



Parliamentary Reception 2024



Thank you Cliff for sharing your inspirational journey with us and for your service to our community. If you would like to submit your story to the magazine, please fill in the form on p.29

Volunteer with us!

**MORE THAN
MY PAST** 
LED BY THE FORWARD TRUST

Ambassadors

The Forward Trust has a long and glorious history of creating opportunities for people with experience of addiction and recovery, mental health struggles, or imprisonment, to act as role models and share their experiences and wisdom with others.

As a volunteer ambassador, you will be sharing your stories with our audiences from all around the organisation at various events, so you can support us, inspire and empower others. Once registered and approved, you'll be on a mailing list - we'll inform you of training opportunities, invite you to events, and put out calls for speakers.

You can engage as much or as little as you like.

Speaking opportunities may take the form of shares to Forward Trust clients, appearing at one of our Lived Experience Workshops, speaking at fundraising or campaigning events, or even media appearances or interviews.

In all cases, we will advise you on the pros and cons and on how to protect yourself from unwanted attention before asking you to proceed. Rest assured, we will be there to support you as a volunteer Ambassador.

Enabling good people to act as role models for positive behaviour change is central to the Forward Trust mission, and the inspirational stories you can share will touch a lot of people. If you are in recovery and / or have experience of the criminal justice system and are interested in becoming a More Than My Past Ambassador, please get in touch.

Ask any Forward Trust staff member or contact;

recoverysupport@forwardtrust.org.uk





SUPPORT

Forward Connect is a peer-led mutual aid community of like-minded people who are making good progress in their own journey – this could be people in addiction recovery, family recovery, moving away from crime, overcoming mental health problems, or who are coming out of a period of unemployment or homelessness.

“It is very good to have so we can still have a connection with people. For me, this is what I need for my recovery and journey.”

Join Forward Connect and connect with others in the recovery community around the country in person and online! Our Forward Trust Community peer support app is now available to all Forward Connect members - download on the [Play Store](#) and [App Store](#)

To express an interest in joining Forward Connect or to find out more, please email us. If you are currently engaged in treatment at a Forward service, you can also speak to a keyworker who will be able to complete a referral.

forwardconnect@forwardtrust.org.uk

Are you in recovery and need accommodation?

Supported transitional accommodation for people exiting treatment

Forward Trust's Recovery Housing Service offers supported, semi-independent housing for individuals transitioning from structured treatment settings. This could include including custody, residential detox/rehab, or structured community daycare programmes. We are committed to providing appropriate support that aligns with each individuals own recovery and tenancy sustainment needs.

This service is for anyone in recovery from addiction and has been abstinent from substances and alcohol for a minimum of 30 days and has a connection to Kent, Medway or Southend or wants to live there.

forwardtrust.org.uk/service/recovery-housing



However you're feeling right now, you're not alone: help is out there!

SUPPORT

DRUG & ALCOHOL

We have over 30 years' experience supporting people to overcome drug and alcohol problems. We will work with you to achieve your goals, whether that's building a life completely free from substances or simply cutting down and staying safe.

Who we help

We can normally help if you are aged 18+ and live in one of the areas we provide community services. Currently, these are: East Kent, Hull, Liverpool, Essex, Wiltshire, Southend, and Medway.

Our residential rehabs, The Bridges and Clouds House, help anyone aged 18+ who wants to become totally substance-free and make positive changes in their lives.

Forward's online day rehab is an accessible intensive 12-week structured rehabilitation programme - bringing connection and hope to your home.

We also support people in a number of prisons across England and Wales that want help to address issues with drugs or alcohol.

FAMILY SUPPORT

Forward's family service supports people who are struggling with the impact of a friend or family member's substance misuse, even if the drug or alcohol user isn't ready to get help. We also support people receiving treatment for drug and alcohol issues to rebuild relationships with loved ones.

Who we help

We can normally help if you are:

- Aged 18 or over; and
- Live in one of the areas we provide community family support services: currently these are based in East Kent, Hull, Liverpool and Essex

We also support people in a number of prisons across England who are receiving help for drug and alcohol issues.

We cannot accept referrals for a client in prison from loved ones - if you have a family member in prison that needs this kind of support, they will need to put in an application to the drug and alcohol service themselves, or ask their Personal Officer to do so on their behalf.

Reach Out: www.forwardtrust.org.uk/find-support

ROAD TO RECOVERY



This September, we're launching the Road to Recovery – a new virtual space to celebrate our incredible recovery community and raise life-changing funds.

Click on a brick, share how many days you've been in recovery, and leave a message of hope or reflection. Every brick added becomes part of a powerful digital pathway showing that recovery is possible – and that each day is worth celebrating.

- Add your brick. Share your journey. Help someone find their Road to Recovery
- Optional donation
- Celebrate your recovery - Inspire others - Give hope

www.takingactiononaddiction.org.uk



THE JOURNEY PERMISSION TO PRINT

Please send this form alongside your Journey submission and/or your feedback form to;

The Journey Magazine
FREEPOST
The Forward Trust

Title of work (submission)

Please circle the most appropriate description.

- Personal Story
- Poetry
- Article
- Artwork
- Inspirational Message
- Other: _____

Please circle the most appropriate description.

- Full Name
- First Name
- No Name (anonymous)

You could win a prize for your submission!

- ✓ I grant The Forward Trust the right to use my submission, titled above, for the purpose of raising awareness and continuing support for people struggling with addiction or offending behaviour, and helping them to lead positive and fulfilling lives.
- ✓ I authorise The Forward Trust to use the submission for lawful purposes such as publicity, illustration, advertising and web content.
- ✓ I authorise The Forward Trust to copyright, use and publish the same submission in print and/or electronically.

Please state below if there is anywhere you do not want your submission displayed:

I have read and understood the above.

Name: -----

If appropriate

Signature: -----

HMP: -----

Date: -----

Prison No: -----

FEEDBACK



We would love to hear what you think of The Journey.

Please write your comments below, cut out this page and send to:

The Journey Magazine
FREEPOST
The Forward Trust

What was your favourite part of the magazine?

What did you find most useful or informative?

What would you like to see more of?

Any other comment?

THANK
YOU