# **Top Up Training**

***Our First Newsletter***by Jessica Beaumont and Sarah Blackener

April 2016  
  
SLF Volunteer’s Quarterly

# A word from our Coordinators We wondered what to write here that would explain why we do this job. We recently received a letter from a current CM describing his thoughts about being on a Circle. We can think of no better explanation, so here it is……………

*In the past I got out of prison with no support. This has led me sooner or later back to prison. Everyone needs support, whether its family and friends. We do all need it.*

*I have a future because I’ve now got a group of people I trust in place, who are there to support me. To this aim it’s important to put total trust in them. Being completely honest with my Circle gives them the best opportunity to prevent me creating anymore victims.*

*I have 3 volunteers who help and support me and I will do everything in my power to have a future full of hope and usefulness. My aim is to be a useful member of society*

“**If you get a chance to do circles, grab it with both hands**” Core Member

As the Safer Living Foundation (SLF) Circles of Support and Accountability project grows, we wanted to share some of the fantastic things that our volunteers and Core Members are doing. So we have created this place for your news

Our first course was 'Co-working and Working with Difficult Core Members'. The course was well received by those who attended. They found it to be informative and enjoyable. This training will be offered again on 1st

Ongoing training is offered to current volunteers. This is a great opportunity to learn new skills, brush up on the old skills and meet new people

to be shared with the wider SLF community.

Please share your good work with us so we can all learn from each other's experiences and share in your accomplishments!   
E-mail us at: [**slf.n**ewsletter@outlook.com](mailto:slf.newsletter@outlook.com)

September, so don't fret if you weren't able to make it this time round. We will also be offering a course in working with Core Members who have a Personality Disorder or Suicidal Tendencies. Around 1 in 20 people in

Britain suffer from a personality disorder

(mentalhealth.org, 2015).

According to the Howard League for Penal Reform (2015), 82 prisoners took their own lives in 2014; indicating that both of these subjects may be very relevant when working with Core Members.

**Top Up Training**

* **2 June**: Personality Disorders/Suicide
* **1 Sept**.: Co-Working & Working with Difficult CMs
* **1 Dec**.: Personality Disorders/Suicidal Tendencies

# **Volunteer’s Forum**

Back in November we had our first annual volunteer conference, (advertised as the volunteer forum). There were many fabulous speakers including; the SLF's first Core Member, Natalie Snell from MAPPA, Howard Sandall from OMU and Serena Goddard from Lincolnshire Action Trust. All of whom were kind enough to attend, sharing information about their organisations and how they may be of assistance to volunteers and Core Members.

We also had volunteers share their experiences and knowledge, including Sarah Blackener who is involved in the first SLF Circle, and Stuart Roderick who shared his experiences of supporting a Core Member with dire financial problems. Volunteers attending said that the forum was 'interesting and informative, and a great chance to meet people from other organisations who may be involved with the Circle'.

Due to the success of this conference the SLF is excited to announce the launch of our Volunteer Forum.   
 The forum will be an opportunity to meet fellow volunteers, discuss potential difficulties and exchange information to make your experience the best possible. Dates for the next forum can be found in *Dates for Your Dairy*.

Should you require any further information please feel free to contact Sarah Blackener or Jess Beaumont via email: [slf.newsletter@outlook.com](mailto:slf.newsletter@outlook.com)

# **Case Study – A**

‘A’ is an elderly man who recently suffered a stroke that affected his speech and physical coordination. The Circle began meeting within the prison prior to his release. Due to his disability and rumours from other inmates regarding the SLF, ‘A’ was apprehensive and reserved.

However, by the third meeting the volunteers had started to develop a rapport with ‘A’ and he told them he was looking forward to a fry up breakfast when he was released.

‘A’s nervousness had a direct effect on his speech, meaning that he had to rely on his wife to speak for him. This made it difficult for the volunteers to gauge how he was coping with his life in the community. However, it was at this point that the volunteers ascertained that the extent of ‘A's debt.

The volunteers supported ‘A’ by helping him to go through a large pile of unopened mail – ultimately finding approximately £30,000 of debt across more than ten different loan companies. Karin, one of the volunteer coordinators, suggested that the volunteers contact Christians Against Poverty (CAP). CAP are an organisation that help anyone, regardless of faith to resolve their debts. CAP visited ‘A’ at his home and worked out his incomings and outgoings. They suggested a solution which ‘A’ was happy with. ‘A’ agreed to pay CAP a monthly sum that went solely toward his debts.

Once ‘A's financial situation was improved, the volunteers then supported him in working with his landlord to improve his living conditions. This involved liaising with the local council and resulted in the electrics being rewired, new plumbing and the installation of smoke detectors, to name but a few of the issues that were resolved. ‘A’ was very anxious and stressed due to the difficulties with the landlord as well as having strangers in his home to complete the work necessary.

‘A’ became very depressed. The volunteers were obviously very concerned for ‘A's wellbeing, but felt entirely unprepared for such a situation. They worked with Karin to address the situation. Together, the team helped ‘A’ face his problems and are delighted to report that, as the Circle comes to an end ‘A’ is now much happier and ready to face his future.

***Guardian University  
 Awards 2016  
 The SLF and NTU   
 win another Award*** Lynn Saunders and   
 Belinda Winder   
 receiving the award   
 Sexual crime impacts upon everyone in society: Through direct victimisation, through friends and family, or through the sensation-seeking media reporting that can heighten fears regarding the safety of ourselves or those around us.



There are two primary ways in which we can address this societal challenge: the prevention of new offences and the reduction of reoffending by existing offenders.   
 HMP Whatton is one of the largest sex offender prisons in Europe. The Sexual Offences, Crime and Misconduct Research Unit (SOCAMRU) at Nottingham Trent University (NTU) uses academic expertise to tackle challenges faced by the prison.

In setting out to address the societal problem of sexual crime, the two organisations, drawing on different skillsets, developed an ambitious new initiative: The Safer Living Foundation (SLF).   
 SLF is modelled on Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) and provides high risk sex offenders with a ‘Circle’ of trained volunteers to support and monitor sex offenders on release from prison, helping to prevent re-offending

**Dates for Your  
DIARY**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **MAY** | |
| Volunteer’s Forum | 2nd May |
| **JUNE** | |
| Training   * PD / Suicide | 2nd June |
| **AUGUST** | |
| Volunteer’s Forum | 15th Aug |
| **SEPTEMBER** | |
| Training   * Co-Volunteers / Difficult CM | 1st Sept |
| **NOVEMBER** | |
| Volunteer’s Forum | 14th Nov |
| **DECEMBER** | |
| Training   * PD / Suicide | 1st Dec |

***Ask Anne***Q: I am confused about the expenses forms, can you help?

***New Faces***

**Claire Good** has recently been appointed to scope the possibility of developing a young person's circle.  
[claire.good@hmps.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:claire.good@hmps.gsi.gov.uk)

**Gemma Lister** volunteers one day a week (Wednesday). Her main role is to help with vetting. If you are having trouble filling in your vetting pack or have any questions regarding any aspect of your vetting, please get in touch  
[gemma.lister@hmps.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:gemma.lister@hmps.gsi.gov.uk)

***Old Faces***

Karin Spenser [karinspenser@hmps.gsi.go.uk](mailto:karinspenser@hmps.gsi.go.uk)

Dave Potter [david.potter@hmps.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:david.potter@hmps.gsi.gov.uk)  
Anne McMeekin anne.mcmeekin@hmps.gsi.gov.uk

A: A new expenses claim form has been introduced, which has been e-mailed to you all individually. By using this spreadsheet version your expenses are automatically calculated, reducing the need for amendments. Claims should be   
submitted within 2 months of the date of the claim ☺

***Volunteer Recruitment***

**We are always recruiting for volunteers. If you feel you would like to do more, ask about a second Circle. If you know anyone who might be interested, please give them this newsletter so they can get in touch. We particularly interested, please share the  
welcome men and non-students, who are currently under-represented.**



**Reports for the next Newsletter?  
Contact  
Jess Beaumont (Volunteer) and Sarah Blackener (Volunteer)  
slf.newsletter@outlook.com**

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