ANNUAL REPORT
2014

The Fourth emergency service for the people of Salford
# ANNUAL REPORT 2014

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1. **Foreword**

I’d like to welcome comrades to the 2014 AGM.

First of all, can I say thank you to the staff and volunteers of the Centre for the fantastic work they continue to do to support some of Salford’s most vulnerable people in very difficult circumstances – and also to the members of the management committee who give up their own time to support the Centre.

The last 12 months have seen a continuation of austere times for the people our Centre supports. Reductions in government funding to local authorities and reductions in welfare provision have increasingly meant the voluntary sector picking up the significant demand for proper advice, support and guidance. The projects the Centre runs are a credit to the hard work that goes into them. Those services change – and in some cases save lives and keep families together.

I’m proud that as well as reacting to distress, we have been able to work with partners to challenge the causes of the problems faced by the people we help. I’m sure both that challenge and that support will continue to be hallmarks of what we do for the next 12 months and I wish you all the best for the year ahead.

Steve North
Chair
2. Introduction

The working class of Salford City and the UK have experienced one of the worst years ever, in particular the unemployed & vulnerable, disabled people and in work poor.

The level of state social security payments has not kept pace with inflation and the costs of living, whilst the coalition Conservative/Lib Dem government has imposed benefit sanctions at a record rate in the history of Britain with over 1,282,497 people having their state benefits sanctioned, up to March 2014.

Benefit sanction is government shorthand for 'the withdrawal of state benefits', leaving citizens of our country and their dependent families with no income and putting many if not all into economic poverty.

The Centre needs to be judged by our response to the circumstances that those unemployed vulnerable citizens of Salford find themselves in, in the 21st century.

The staff and management committee have responded in a very forthright and forceful manner. First, we advise our clients on their rights to challenge benefit sanctions, that we represent them in all appeals. However, in May 2014 our Centre, together with PCS activists in the DWP produced a leaflet with step by step advice on how to challenge the state imposed benefit sanctions.

This leaflet has now been copied and reproduced across the length and breadth of the UK in the interest of unemployed people. Countless people are now safer thanks to the Salford UCRC leaflet. In fact, all of the work carried out in our Centre protects and makes the lives of the people of Salford safer and with a better quality of life.

The work that the Centre does includes:

- Debt counselling and advice by John Howard
- Welfare benefit advice and representation by Barbara Bentham and the volunteers
- Employment law advice and representation by Abdul-Karim Al-Malahi
- Salford Prison Project by Stuart Green and Lee Wakeham
- Wellbeing project by Gaynor Whittaker
- Education and training by Stefan Cholewka

The work that the Centre does is supported by the Administrators Jane Preece and Hayley Hinchy and Centre Manager Alec McFadden, helping to advice, protect and represent the vulnerable people of Salford.

The number of clients supported, advised and represented by the Centre in the past 12 months is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Closing the Gap (Inc. Credit Union referrals, education and training plus CV’s, job search and ESOL)</td>
<td>4,761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare benefits advice</td>
<td>2,856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment law</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt advise</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellbeing</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison Project</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIP &amp; DLA</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,001</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is the latest Annual Report for the Salford Unemployed & Community Resource Centre.
3. Greater Manchester OFFA

3.1 The 2013 AGM agreed recommendations but little progress has been made on these targets although Greater Manchester OFFA has been discussed at the April, January and June Management Committee meetings. The recommendations were:

- Target Salford BBC staff and unions with support from NW TUC Regional Secretary. The NW TUC Regional Secretary, Lynn Collins, wrote to all unions within the BBC and a donation of £1,500 was made by the NW TUC. The only union that responded positively was Equity, no progress was made with BECTU, NUJ or UCU who are now involved as the Salford University media department is now based at the BBC.

- Targeting industrial unions within Salford; Unite, GMB. Unite have agreed that Centre staff can attend every education course taking place in Salford Quays. GMB have not replied.

- The strategy of mailshots and leafleting workplaces has stopped.

- Targeting branch secretaries of large workplaces. Agreed in principle but data protection has been a problem. However, we now have the contact details of GMB, Unite and Unison within Salford City Council.

- That the Management Committee consider an investment. No decision or progress.

3.2 No current funding is in place to employ an OFFA worker. However, thousands of good quality OFFA leaflets are still at the Centre, ready for use.

3.3 The former OFFA worker is no long an employee and is working full time with Unite the Union.

3.4 The only recommendations would be:

a) Re-launch OFFA following the publication of Salford City Council’s benefit sanctions report due out on 23rd October 2014.

b) Continue to target union education shop steward courses but with trained volunteers.

c) Revisit Salford BBC staff unions.

3.5 The Salford Unite Community branch is now meeting on a monthly basis at the Centre and first discussions have taken place to try and involve their members in OFFA work.
4.0  Salford Prison Project

4.1  The third evaluation of the Salford Prison Project is included with this annual report. The evaluation makes for very positive reading whilst also providing recommendations to further improve the project. These include:

- Clear communication. Regular meetings between SPP staff and management should take place, where the project's strategy, resourcing and job related duties can be discussed. This way greater transparency can be achieved and everyone involved can contribute and feel included in decision making.

- Systematic recording and monitoring of information. This will facilitate the creation of personalised plans for the service users. Also, it will allow staff members a more effective case management from assessment to disengagement. Moreover, it will assist in maintaining contact with former service users for a follow-up on their current state. Lastly, it will facilitate future evaluation of the projects’ outcomes and impact.

- Redesign and frequent update of the website. The website should be redesigned to reflect professional standards and include detailed information regarding the project. This will help potential funding organisations or organisations interested in going into partnership with SPP, acquire information on its aim, activities and outcomes.

- Counselling. More counselling opportunities should be provided to services users, when possible with the participation of their families, as mental health issues in offenders is a common phenomenon and in-prison and post-release periods are highly stressful. Furthermore, due to difficulties they face in communicating feelings and 'opening up', alternative methods of support, such as art therapy can be offered. Also, counselling can form part of training courses discussed further below, to help service users with emotional development and criminal attitudes.

- Peer mentoring. Support and guidance through peer mentoring could be introduced to maintain engagement of the service users with the project and further expand their interpersonal skills. Also, peer mentoring could be useful in reaching people at risk of offending that are difficult to locate and help prior to their engagement with the CJS.

- Training courses. SPP should seek to collaborate with specialised organisations/practitioners to organise vocational training, seminars and activities to increase the employability of the service users, and the social and communication skills needed for a successful reintegration. Furthermore, SPP should expand and improve the partnership with agencies, such as Employment and Health Services, and actively seek to connect service users with local employers and community.

- Transportation expenses. SPP should ensure that all service users who are actively engaged with the project have their transportation expenses (e.g. bus/ tram fare) covered, especially for activities they are invited to participate, such as Healthy Eating. This way all service users have equal opportunities in participating in services/activities offered.
4.2 Executive summary from evaluation: Short-sentence adult offenders serving sentences of 12 months or less, have the highest re-offending rates. They do not receive statutory supervision after release and, while in prison, do not engage with rehabilitation programmes because of their short sentence. Salford Prison Project (SPP) is designed to provide advice and support to short-sentence offenders released in the area of Salford and is based on the seven intervention pathways identified in the Reducing Re-offending National Action Plan (Home Office, 2004): Accommodation; Education, Training and Employment; Health; Drugs and Alcohol; Finance, Benefit and Debt; Children and Families; Attitudes.

The purpose of this report is to examine the effectiveness of the services offered to service users of SPP, however, organisational issues were also examined. The study focused on the main resettlement needs of offenders and how they are addressed by SPP. A range of methods were used to generate information on the subject which formed the basis of the analysis and evaluation of the services.

The findings of the study suggest the basic resettlement needs of the service users who were actively engaged with the project were met. Its beneficial components were:

- Provision of immediate accommodation and assistance offered in securing permanent accommodation according to the service users' needs.
- Advice and legal support regarding benefits and debt in collaboration with partner organisations.
- Mentoring, especially on practical aspects of abstaining from crime, and psychological support.
- Trustful environment and rapport built by the project officers.

However, there are still issues that need to be addressed, especially in terms of training and employment, mental health and substance misuse. Based on the findings we can suggest the following:

For effective organisation and delivery:

- Clear communication between SPP staff and management for greater transparency and contribution in decision making.
- Systematic recording and monitoring of information to facilitate creation of personalised plans, effective case management, contact with former service users and future evaluations. Redesign and frequent update of the website to include detailed information on SPP's aim, activities and outcomes.

For improvement and expansion of services:

- Counselling and alternative methods of support to address mental health issues, emotional development and criminal attitudes.
• Peer mentoring to maintain engagement of the service users, further expand their skills and reach people at risk of offending.

• Training courses and improved partnerships to increase interpersonal and communication skills, and employability of the service users.

• Transportation expenses (e.g. bus/ tram fare) covered when service users are invited to participate in activities, to ensure equal opportunities

4.3 The project has seen a number of challenges and improvement. The double garage has been converted into a club house for the former offenders on our project. The number of clients obtaining employment in the past 15 months is excellent, with 15 having found paid employment of volunteering positions. However, not all led to increased stability. There are currently 21 service users in ‘stage 1’, 11 service users in ‘stage 2’ and 5 upcoming releases.

4.4 Three clients have started apprenticeships with City West which could lead to permanent employment.

4.5 The project is now in its seventh year and over 2 ½ year through Big Lottery funding. The next funding application to Big Lottery will be submitted before March 2015 and given the continued progress of the project, a successful funding application can be expected.

4.6 Clinical supervision has now been added to the support of the two Prison Project Officers. This is provided by MIND and both staff have benefited. Following an away day in August to internally examine the strengths and weaknesses of the project, it was agreed to extend the special MIND facility to some of the project service users on a voluntary trial basis, once per month at healthy eating sessions which are held on a Wednesday.
5.0 Welfare benefits and sanctions

5.1 The biggest change in the work of the centre and the life of the people within our community in the past 12 months has been the escalation of benefit sanctions by the DWP across the UK. 1,282,497 families have been directly affected benefit sanctions. If we assume that the average working class family size is 4, that means that over 5,129,988 adults and children were driven into economic poverty as a result of the governments use of benefit sanctions against people on state benefits.

5.2 In Salford, the number of people sanctioned was 5,848; 23,392 people and children directly affected. The Centre welfare benefits officer assisted in many appeals and challenges throughout the year. They key was to encourage people who were sanctioned to challenge it. Too many people were afraid and accepted the loss of their benefits.

5.3 Salford City Council established a special working committee with benefit agencies to look at the effects of benefit sanctions on the people and the community. The Centre played a positive role as did the local Trade Union and other advice agencies. The report made a number of recommendations.

5.4 In May 2014 the Centre produced a model anti-benefit sanctions leaflet with the active help and assistance of some members of the PCS union. This leaflet has increased the number of successful challenges to benefit sanctions in Salford and has now been copied by advice agencies and union branches across the UK, many of which have thanked our centre for our active role in producing the leaflet.
5.5 Two national daily papers, the Mirror and the Morning Star, have been highlighting the serious effects of sanctions which is leading to economic poverty and in some cases claimants taking their own lives. The August 2014 Management Committee meeting decided to support the editorial line of the Mirror to demand ‘that all benefit sanctions should be suspended until an independent inquiry is set up to review the benefit sanction strategy of the government and its economic and social consequences’. No reply has been made by the government, only a hardening of the policy at the September 2014 Conservative Party conference.

5.6 The record of positive work of the welfare benefits officer includes the following statistics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount of cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PIP (DLA)</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child DLA</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Benefit</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESA</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTC/CTC</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Assistance (Social Fund)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSA</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedroom Tax</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial advice (others)</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients signposted to specialist debt advisor</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients signposted to specialist tutor</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients signposted to Salford Credit Union</td>
<td>483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients signposted to wellbeing project</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social fund</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency assistance</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,356.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plus people made aware of Salford Credit Union weekly surgery in Eccles Gateway, less than 1/2 mile from SUCRC.</td>
<td>1,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall total</td>
<td>2,856.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of 238 clients per month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Number of Tribunal cases was 21; 16 won and 5 lost.  
Disability Living Allowance claims completed – 45 new claims.  
Personal Independence Claims completed – 23 new claims.  
The total amount won for clients from 1st October 2013 to September 2014 was £650,587.

5.7 Thanks needs to be recorded to the volunteer benefit advisors assisting clients with cases throughout the year and working under the supervision of Barbara Bentham.  
The welfare benefits work is currently funded by Lloyds TSB Foundation and one day per week is funded by the Big Lottery through the Salford Prison Project.
6.0 Employment Law

6.1 In July 2013 the government introduced the criteria for employment tribunal cases plus the high cost of taking a case to a tribunal is now a minimum of £390.

6.2 In the year 2013, Abdo and John did 53 employment law cases and won £250,143 for clients. However in the past 12 months the number of cases has increased by 63% to 84 as employers take advantage of the new employment legislation. Only £73,970 was won for clients; 14 good cases were dropped by our clients, due to no funding.

6.3 Only one case that went to tribunal was lost.

6.4 The new trend is persuading clients to fight to retain their jobs and 12 cases were actually won and clients remained at work and stayed in the union.

6.5 There is plenty of work and we are getting referrals and an excellent reputation plus recruiting people into unions.

6.6 Not one funding bid even slightly related to employment law has been successful and this side of the general election, no change is expected. The Labour shadow minister did agree at the TUC Congress that, if Labour was elected, a system similar to Legal Aid would be introduced for employment law cases and tribunal fees would be reduced.

6.7 Since the introduction of employment tribunal fees, there has been an increase in cases of unlawful deduction. Employers know that employees will not go to tribunal for a £250 wage claim and pay £390 fees. Clients also drop their claims or do not pursue them when tribunal fees are mentioned to them. Some may be eligible for remission but the fact that they have to show original and very recent evidence complicates the issue for them so they refrain from lodging the claim. It is believed that this is the motive for introducing the fee by the government; it is basically denying people justice.

6.8 Employment law work is a vital need for working class people and it is vital that we continue to carry this work out using the same flexible funding strategy. However, we will try to establish a local union agreement.

6.9 Listed below is an overview of the employment law cases worked on during the period October 2013 – September 2014:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Description</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Amount Won</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dismissals</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>£33,585.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlawful deduction</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dismissal &amp; unlawful deduction</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>£5,612.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disciplinary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>£3,805.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUPE</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Termination for ill health</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>£2,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capability review</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>£2,163.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accident at work – client dismissed for being off sick</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redundancy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>£1,134.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal from workplace</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>£6,700.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breach of contract</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying at work</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquidation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>£11,471.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminating employment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>£7,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demotion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total clients</strong></td>
<td><strong>84</strong></td>
<td><strong>£73,970</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Number of jobs saved - 12
- Cases dropped because of the Tribunal’s fee - 14
- Cases dropped because of the 2 years roles - 9
- Cases Lodged at the Employment Tribunals - 5
- Cases lost at the Tribunal - 1
- Cases settled after lodging the Claim - 2
- Cases still running at the Employment Tribunals - 4
- Other cases still running - 5
7.0 Closing the Gap

7.1 The project continues to move smoothly achieving all the designated targets, covering every area:
- peer mentoring
- community learning including ESOL
- Debt management, benefit information, welfare advice, producing CVs and job search
- Development and promoting of the Credit Union.

7.2 The work with Salford Credit Union has been so positive both in terms of recruiting new members and combating loan sharks. Salford Credit Union is now operating from two offices and from 4 different geographical Salford City Council hubs, thereby reaching a far greater spread of Salford residents. The involvement of Salford City Council against loan Sharks has been so positive and brought in every advice agency. The Centre Manager remains the Company Treasure of Salford Credit Union.

7.3 The ESOL courses are increasing to three venues, Walkden hub, Eccles Youth Centre for Muslim women and the Salford Centre. The Eastern European organization Europia has agreed to refer all their members to use the Centres ESOL service.

7.4 The first partner working conference took place recently facilitated by Dr Bob Jefferies Sheffield Hallam University. The new unforeseen outcomes of the first two years included, the effects our clients and suffering from benefit sanctions, and the increase in the number of clients suffering from mental health issues. The establishment of Salford Unite Community Branch is also a new positive.

7.5 The new issues to take forward into the third year of Closing the Gap include:
- To link case studies and practical experiences to research linking to both Sheffield Hallam University and Salford University
- Look to provide food parcels / vouchers for our poverty stricken/ vulnerable clients.
- Try to develop an alternative welfare benefit system linking with PCS, universities, Salford City Council and Salford Unity Community Branch.
- Examine the link between poverty and gambling.
- Examine the link between sanctions, poverty and crime.
- Link the re-launch of OFFA to the launch of Salford City Council sanctions survey report.
- Link with Salford City Medical Committee to operate a welfare benefit and debt referral service.
- Contact CPAG to consider a Judicial Review case in terms of Human Rights and Benefit Sanctions.
- Continue growth of ESOL for all immigrant communities in Salford.
8.0 Salford Wellbeing Project

8.1 Salford Wellbeing Project is now nearly 18 months old and has become one of the most successful projects within the Centre.

8.2 The Big Life Group approached the Centre Manager in June 2012 to become part of a Salford wide community partnership to provide a new unique service to help change and improve the lives of up to 6000 people in Salford by tackling issues such as obesity, smoking, low mood and alcoholism. A joint bid for £2 ¼ million was successful.

8.3 Gaynor Whittaker became the Well Being coach based at the Centre full time, after a 6 months Salford University specialist coaching course. The project has been a major success and many of our clients have been referred to Gaynor particularly from:

- Salford Prison Project
- Clients with disabilities
- Mental health clients
- Employment law clients

8.4 The total number of clients now stands at 88, many have become volunteers after benefiting from the coaching sessions and some have gone on to find employment.

8.5 The project has created a new quality of life and experience for many of our long term clients and those within the local community. Most of the work undertaken by the Centre staff obtains income maximization, defend our clients rights and provide representation, debt advice, employment representation and in the case of the prison project deals with all the basic needs of a recently released former offender including benefits, housing, dealing with addiction and prepared them for the world of work.

The wellbeing project takes our work to a new dimension.

The Well Being Coaches work with clients on a one-to-one basis or in a group and will help them decide what is most important for them to tackle - cutting back on smoking or drinking, changing what they eat, being more active, meeting other people or all of those things.

The clients will decide what changes they need to make and then find out what can make them stick. Being Well Salford helps clients take more control and create solutions for their daily life.

The Well Being Coach will help make practical changes and set realistic targets for the client. The coaches are trained in behavior change and will help the clients learn different techniques and tools that they can take away and help keep them motivated.

The client decides, with their coach, if they would like to meet on a one to one basis, take part in groups and activities or a combination of both. The coaches can also help find the clients find other people, activities and services that can support and motivate them along the way,

The clients can see their coaches for up to 12 months but the tools and techniques will stay with them forever, helping them on their way to wellbeing.
8.6 Although the work is done all around Eccles, all interviews take place in the Centre and this is the choice of the clients who find the Centre the perfect location and easy to access.

8.7 The links that the Centre staff have with local and regional trade unions has been a direct benefit with the Wellbeing project. Meetings have taken place with the National Union of Teachers (NUT), which has taken the project into schools and links with health service unions have also taken place. The local authority Unison branch is hosting a meeting with its elected stewards to hear of the potential work. This will be followed up with a meeting with Unite the union stewards in the future.

8.8 The Centre Manager is a member of the Wellbeing board and is Chair of the operational committee which deals with all operational matters and has just agreed to move the focus of this work and publicity away from Salford wide to local Eccles level.

8.9 The Centre receives £5,000 per annum for the supervision of the Wellbeing Coach.
9.0 Press, publication and funding

9.1 The continual production of good quality leaflets has continued across the year and below is a sample of some of the 40,000 leaflets that have been produced.
**Watch out for loan sharks**

**they could cost you an arm and a leg**

0300 555 2222
to report a loan shark in confidence
Call now for confidential help and advice

**Have you or anyone you know:**
- Been offered a cash loan without paperwork?
- Been threatened when you couldn't pay?
- Had your benefit or bank card taken from you?
- Had a loan which keeps growing even though you are making payments?

**If yes, then you may have been bitten by a loan shark**

Find out more @loansharknews or @stoploansharksproject
www.salford.gov.uk/salfordagainstloansharks

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**There is a friendly, fair and faithful alternative...**

**Need financial help?**

You don't need to risk getting bitten by a loan shark. There are plenty of legal and low cost ways to get financial help and advice.

**Affordable credit and free advice are available...**

These friendly organisations are here to help you find affordable credit or give you money advice.

**Advice**
- Free, confidential and independent advice on your welfare benefits, tax, insurance or debt problems.
- Salford Unemployed and Community Resources Centre
  0161 789 2999
  www.salfordunemp.org.uk
- Salford Welfare Rights and Debt Advice Service
  0161 793 3933
  salford.gov.uk/welfarerights
- Citizens Advice Bureau, Salford
  0161 793 1912
  www.salfordcab.org.uk

**Affordable Credit**
- Salford Credit Union
  0161 460 5880
  www.salfordcreditunion.com
- Moneyline
  0845 443 1853
  www.moneyline-uk.com

**Don’t risk losing an arm and leg, call one of these numbers today!**

---

**GET OUT, STAY OUT!**

**Make this time the last time!**

If you want to make a new start, Salford Prison Project are here to help you.

For further information call for a confidential chat today!
0161 789 2999

Salford, Manchester
City Centre
Trafford North
Manchester

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**About the Project**

We are a non-statutory organisation, and registered charity, run democratically by our members through elected management committees. The Centres have both paid and volunteer workers, including a team of voluntary advice workers. The aim of the Project is to support offenders and ex-offenders who do not normally receive statutory assistance from the probation service but have high rates of re-offending.

**Contact Details**
Salford Unemployed Resources Centre
64-66 Liverpool Road, Eccles, M30 0WZ
Tel: 0161 789 2999 Web: www.salfordunemp.co.uk/prison.php

**Project Officers**
Lee Wakeham
mobile: 07925989329 email: lee.stuc@hotmail.co.uk
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*When criteria is met. Please ask for details.*
9.2 The website has had 1,704 visits in the last 6 months and the Facebook and Twitter accounts are active.

9.3 The amount of coverage by the Salford Advertiser has reduced ever since the dispute over the coverage of the Big Lottery open day but the Manchester evening News, Morning star and radio stations still cover the Centre’s activities and campaigns.

9.4 At present, the Centre Manager is involved with work with the BBC, Channel 4 and the Daily Mirror.

9.5 Funding applications are taking up far too much of the Centre Manager’s time and since 1st June 2014 only two have been successful; WEA for £13,500 and Salford City College for £18,500, totaling £32,000 and both for Training and education. Every other bid has been rejected. These funds help keep the activities of the Centre that are not financed by the Big Lottery Closing the Gap and Prison Project, which fund John, Jane, Stefan, Hayley, Stuart, Lee and Alec plus one day per week for welfare benefits.

9.6 One funding application for £60,000 which would have taken both John and Abdo to full time hours was rejected because an email request for further information that neither the Centre or the Chair of the Management Committee ever received. A review is being requested.

9.7 Salford Third Sector consortium is a new organisation for all the voluntary sector and community organisations in Salford. At present, it has over 50 organisations as members. The idea and strategy is to put in joint funding applications and not compete with other similar organisations in Salford. A recent bid for education and training was successful for over £410,000. This is to carry out work previously undertaken by Salford City Council.

At the last board meeting it was decided to become a company; the Centre Manager was elected Company Secretary and Mike Thorpe from the Broughton Trust the Company Chair. This development is fully supported by Salford City Council and Salford CVS.
10.0 Centre staff and volunteers

Management Committee members, staff and volunteers currently with the Centre are:

**Management Committee**

Steven North  
Councillor Bill Hinds  
Jack Youd  
Gerry Phillips  
Maggie Smith  
Rachel Hart  
Allison Taylor  
Tony Moore  
Councillor John Ferguson  
Councillor Howard Balkind  
Hanif Belim

**Staff**

Alec McFadden  
Jane Preece  
Hayley Hinchy  
John Howard  
Abdul-Karim Al-Malahi  
Barbara Bentham  
Stefan Cholewka  
Gaynor Whittaker  
Lee Wakeham  
Stuart Green

Centre Manager  
Centre Administrator  
Centre Administrator  
Debt & Closing the Gap  
Employment Law  
Welfare Benefits  
Tutor & Closing the Gap  
Well Being Coach  
Salford Prison Project Officer  
Salford Prison Project Officer

**Volunteers**

Ron Howard  
Dave Duncan  
Councillor Howard Balkind  
Jack Youd  
George Tapp
11.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

This is the 34th AGM of the Salford Unemployed & Community Resource Centre.

The Centre was first established in 1980, built from the community and industrial struggles. Over the 34 years of the Salford Unemployed & Community Resource Centre, over 240 TUC Centres were established. Today, only 32 TUC Centres are in operation.

The recent voluntary liquidation of Knowsley Unemployed Centre in August, with debts of £168,000 leaves our Salford centre as the largest centre in Britain.

The Centre has remained in the community and supports the community. The tasks and projects carried out by our workers are essential to the safety and protection of that community.

The key projects are all well-funded until 2016 – the Salford Prison Project, Closing the Gap Mark II and the wellbeing project – that covers eight out of 10 staff.

The two areas not funded happens to be two vital areas; welfare benefits and employment law. It is a fact that funding for these two essential areas has not been available under the present government.

The recommendation agreed that this AGM therefore needs to take this into consideration and the following recommendations are proposed:

- Obtain funding for the two full-time staff; one welfare benefit officer and one employment law officer.
- The whole of 7.5 Closing the Gap report –
  - To link case studies and practical experiences to research linking to both Sheffield Hallam University and Salford University
  - Look to provide food parcels / vouchers for our poverty stricken/ vulnerable clients.
  - Try to develop an alternative welfare benefit system linking with PCS, universities, Salford City Council and Salford Unity Community Branch.
  - Examine the link between poverty and gambling.
  - Examine the link between sanctions, poverty and crime.
  - Link the re-launch of OFFA to the launch of Salford City Council sanctions survey report.
  - Link with Salford City Medical Committee to operate a welfare benefit and debt referral service.
  - Contact CPAG to consider a Judicial Review case in terms of Human Rights and Benefit Sanctions.
  - Continue growth of ESOL for all immigrant communities in Salford.
- Look to increaser the size of the management committee further and invite the eastern European organisation to nominate a member on a trial basis.

On behalf of all staff and volunteers, I commend this Annual report to the A.G.M

Alec McFadden
Centre Manager
October 2014