

LandWorks Evaluation

1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023

A Safe Supportive Haven

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

LandWorks was established in 2013 and became an independent registered charity in 2016. It works with people either on licence following release from local prisons or serving community sentences to support their rehabilitation and resettlement back into the community. At the heart of the project is a vision to provide a holistic service based on a 'theory of change' (see Diagram 1) which combines real work experience with comprehensive resettlement support in a safe, non-judgemental environment where trainees can gain the employability and social skills that will enable them to develop a crime free identity and to rebuild their lives. This vision is backed up by research on desistance (the term used by criminologists to describe and explain the challenges that offenders face and the processes that they navigate as they make the decision to cease offending- see Farrall, 2021).

The delivery model of LandWorks uses the structure of a 'working day' to develop the social and job-related skills of people on placement (referred to as trainees), to support change and find employment. While on placement trainees participate in three enterprises – a sustainably operated market garden, a wood workshop and pottery. They are also involved in site maintenance and small building projects. Eating and cooking together at lunchtime using homegrown produce provide further opportunities for trainees to feel a sense of belonging and fine tune their social skills. Alongside this core working day, LandWorks provides counselling and a range of practical resettlement support with finances, housing, seeking employment and general well-being. Trainees may also be referred to external agencies for more specialist support with, for example, substance misuse. After placements end LandWorks provides on-going, tapered support, tailored to the individual needs of its graduates, in recognition that desistance from offending can be a long and uneven journey.



The core aims of LandWorks are:

Reduce reoffending

Improve individual wellbeing

Change attitudes towards offenders in wider community



LandWorks

An oasis of hope

1.2 Focus of this report

This report provides an evaluation of the processes, impacts and outcomes of the LandWorks project between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023. Last year's evaluation report focussed on how the 'theory of change' model guides the LandWorks programme. It shared how the voices of trainees and graduates informed the development of the 'theory of change' and evaluated their lived experiences of it in action (Gray, Grose and Parsons, 2022). Over the last year the resettlement services provided by HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) have faced considerable criticisms in a series of research reports, with one report into 'government's effectiveness in resettling prison leavers' finding a 'decline in the quality of resettlement services in recent years' (National Audit Office, 2023: 9) and another commenting that 'probation resettlement work was disappointing' (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2023: 8), leading to a Public Accounts Committee inquiry into how the situation could be reversed (**Improving resettlement support for prison leavers – Committees – UK Parliament – <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/7701/>**). Therefore, in this year's evaluation report we have decided to highlight two key aspects of the 'theory of change', that is the 'mechanisms of change' and 'practical resettlement support' which illustrate what it is about the programme at LandWorks that makes it so successful and differentiates it from the resettlement provision offered by HMPPS.

While chapter 2 outlines the 'mechanisms of change' through the eyes of trainees and graduates, chapter 3 discusses the thoughts of both groups on how 'resettlement support' is delivered. This latter chapter also incorporates the insights from RECONNECT, who are one of LandWorks partners in the provision of resettlement services.

Chapter 4 turns to the views and training of the staff team and how research provides the backbone to the development of the LandWorks project.

Chapter 5 concludes the report and turns the spotlight on LandWorks' plans for the next year.

1.3 Highlights of 2022/23

Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, forty trainee placements were delivered comprising 1787 training days (compared with 36 trainees and 1360 training days in 2021/22). A further one hundred and twenty-eight graduates remained in regular contact, up from one hundred and twelve in 2021/22. See the Headline Statistics in Table 1 and the detailed discussion of this data in chapters 2 and 3.

LandWorks continues to have an exemplary record of reducing reoffending. Currently the rate of reoffending within one year of graduates finishing their placement at LandWorks is only 5.2%. This compares with Ministry of Justice statistics (27 July 2023) that indicate a reoffending rate of 37.4% for adult offenders released from custody. These statistics also show an even more stark reoffending rate of 55.1 % for those offenders who had served less than 12 months in custody, while even offenders on a court order (community order or suspended order) had a reoffending rate of 30.6%. (See https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1173906/PRSQ_Bulletin_July_to_September_2021.pdf).

Desistance research show that having a job is a key to successful resettlement outcomes and reduced reoffending. The success of the LandWorks training programme is evidenced by their employment rate for economically active graduates which in 2022/3 was 94 %. In comparison six weeks after leaving prison fewer



than one in five people (19%) are in employment. Even after six months, the figure has only risen to one in three (30%) (Prison Reform Trust, 2023).

There have been two key changes at LandWorks this year relating to the routes to referral and the way in which resettlement support is delivered. First, most trainees are now referred by probation services either serving community sentences or released on licence from prison. ROTL (released on temporary licence from prison) placements, which were originally suspended due to restrictions imposed during the pandemic, continue to be put on hold. Second, with the appointment of the new Resettlement Manager in June 2022 most of the resettlement support is now provided in house, with referral to external agencies only when there is a need for specialist services. See chapters 2 and 3 for more detailed discussion of the above two changes.

**Table 1: Headline Statistics
2022/23**

TRAINEES

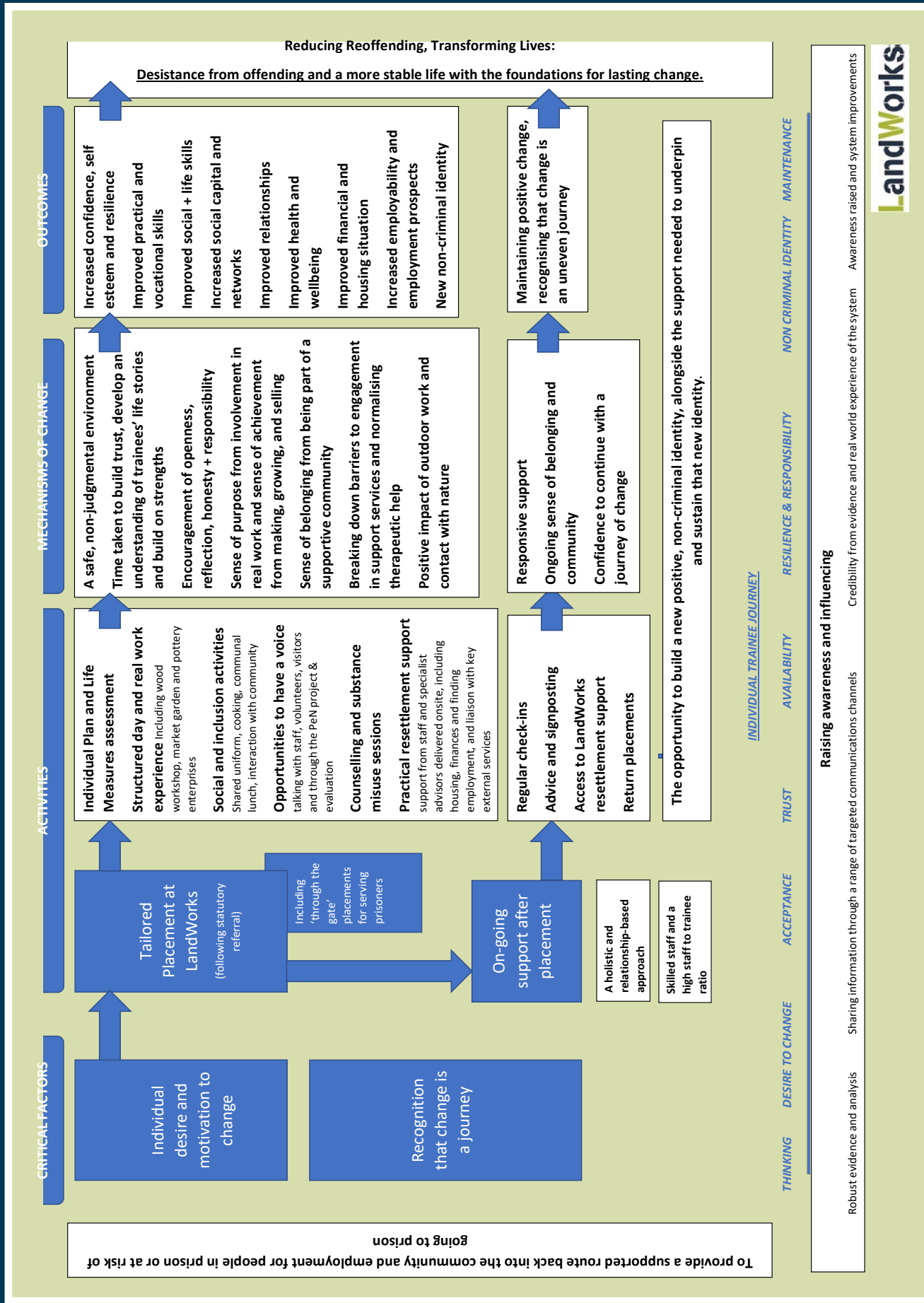
Overall number of placements provided	40
On licence	22
Community Sentence	18
New Trainees	30
Training Days	1787
Total Number 2013–2023	194
ROTL placements	42
Community placements	152
Women	11
LGBTQ+	7
BAME	10



GRADUATES

Number of current graduates	175
In contact	128
Deaths	7
In prison	2
Not in contact	38
Reoffending rate one year after graduation	5.2%
Employment rate (economically active)	94%

Diagram 1: Theory of Change



Chapter 2

The Mechanisms of Change

2.1 Introduction

Last year's report used the 'theory of change'(ToC) model to evaluate the resettlement journeys of trainees and graduates at LandWorks (Gray, Grose, and Parsons, 2022). The 'ToC' model was developed at LandWorks based on feedback from trainees and graduates and previous evaluations since the project began in 2013. The model is supported by research on desistance (see Farrall, 2021; Kemshall and McCartan, 2022). The ToC identifies the overall aim of LandWorks as being 'to provide a supported route back into the community and employment' for its trainees (see Diagram 1). The 'mechanisms of change' are a key component of the ToC model, and this chapter specifically focuses on how they are experienced by trainees and graduates. LandWorks has its own unique way of operationalising the 'mechanisms of change' that differentiate it from resettlement programmes run by statutory criminal justice agencies such as the prison and probation services, which have recently been subject to significant criticism (National Audit Office, 2023; HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2023a). Therefore, in this chapter we try to point out the key differences between LandWorks and statutory criminal justice agencies through the eyes of trainees and graduates.

The chapter makes use of the following main data sources to evaluate the experiences of trainees and graduates at LandWorks in 2022/23:

- a. Quantitative statistics about the programme, trainees and graduates which draw on monitoring data recorded by the Project Director.
- b. As in previous years the PeN (Photographic Electronic Narrative) and Finishing Time interviews with trainees and graduates are key data sources for the qualitative

component of the evaluation. See chapter 4 for further details of these projects. Ten interviews from the former and three from the latter offer a powerful insight into the life experiences of trainees and graduates and how they experience the LandWorks' programme.

- c. This year we have supplemented the PeN and Finishing Time interviews with a focus group interview with four trainees and one graduate. The focus group interview specifically addressed how participants evaluated the LandWorks programme and how it differed from their wider experiences of prisons and probation.
- d. The Project Director and Resettlement Manager were also interviewed for background information about how the programme was delivered in this evaluation year.
- e. On 25 January In-Form went live at LandWorks. This is a bespoke electronic case management and reporting tool which comprehensively monitors each trainee's progress through LandWorks. Given that the tool has only recently been operationalised, it was decided not to use it in this year's evaluation. However, next year the tool will be used to provide a more comprehensive evaluation of trainees' journeys through LandWork's and their outcomes.

2.2 The trainees and graduates in this year's evaluation cohort

In the current evaluation year LandWorks has provided 40 (36)¹ placements and 1787 (1360) training days with 30 (24) of the former being new trainees. There have been slight changes in the referral routes to LandWorks. This year 22

¹ Figures in brackets refer to the numbers in the 2021/22 evaluation year.



(4) trainees were on licence after release from prison. As a continuation of a trend which began at the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, there have been no ROTL (released on temporary licence from prison) people placed at LandWorks this year. There has also been a significant fall in the number of trainees on community sentences, dropping to 18 in 2022/23 compared to 32 in 2021/22. Overall, since 2013 LandWorks has provided 194 trainee placements, of which 11 were women, 7 LGBTQ+, 10 BAME and 11 ex-services.

Currently LandWorks has 175 (152) graduates² and 128 (112) remain in active contact.

As pointed out above most trainees are on licence from prison. Therefore, much work has been done this year in 'building a bigger presence' in local prisons, particularly HMPs Dartmoor and Exeter. This has involved staff attending open days and giving talks about the LandWorks programme.

2.3 The 'mechanisms of change' through the eyes of trainees and graduates

Research clearly indicates that the key to successful outcomes in the resettlement process (for example reductions in reoffending) is the quality of the relationship between service providers and trainees (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2023b and 2023c). Such relationships must be based on trust and respect. Consistency is also crucial in allowing time for stable trusting relationships to develop. In interviews with trainees and graduates this year, 5 key 'mechanisms of change' were identified and in the following quotes they discuss why they found these to be so important in motivating them to engage in change. In agreement with

the above research findings, all the mechanisms highlighted by trainees and graduates confirm the fundamental importance that they attach to having trusting and consistent relationships within a stable and secure environment. All of which they found at LandWorks.

2.3.1 Culture and atmosphere: a 'safe haven'

The first main 'mechanism of change' raised by trainees and graduates was the culture and atmosphere at LandWorks which they felt provided a non-judgmental 'safe haven' (Tony – graduate) and gave them the confidence and strength to continue with their resettlement journey. Many of the trainees and graduates had had adverse and traumatic life experiences which left them with deep emotional scars. Here Mark, Tyler and Eric talk about some of this trauma and adversity:

“ My nan was an ex-smackhead and a heroin dealer and one of the biggest drug dealers in Kent... I was eight years old, and I witnessed my dad's head get smashed open with a claw-hammer due to my nan, due to drugs. Mark – PeN

“ I've been on and off homeless since I was about 18 really, yeah, obviously from being a little bugger really, yeah, from when I was younger... You're just like sofa-surfing and I've slept outside a couple of times. It's mainly just sofa-surfing. Tyler – PeN

² A graduate is a trainee who has completed their placement at LandWorks.



“...I’ve been through quite a bit in my life I must say, a lot of crap. Both parents, they passed away when I was 15, yeah... I’ve had a lot of death in life, but it’s part of life. Not everybody lives, but everybody dies. My dad, he was murdered. I don’t mind talking about it. I’ve spoken about it a lot and I find it helps. I’m dealing with the situation head on when I talk about it. So, I’ve got no quarrels about talking about it. So yeah, my dad was murdered when I was 15. The two people that done it, they got off with manslaughter, which was more frustrating, but anyway. My dad was in prison at the time. So, my mum, while he was in prison, got off with someone else, my stepdad. They got married. My mum still loved my dad deep down, he died, she couldn’t take it, so she committed suicide. She had a hernia operation, allergic reaction to that, had to pump the poison out of her stomach, taking a lot of pharmaceutical drugs, drinking a bottle of vodka a day, it’s going to kill you. She got told if you don’t stop drinking, you’re going to die. She wanted to die so she carried on drinking. So, she committed suicide. That was when I was 16. So, me and my siblings, we entered the care system. Yeah, the brilliant care system.
Eric – PeN

Substance misuse was often mixed up in the chaos and trauma as Tyler and Eric describe:

“... I was just drinking non-stop every day... I’d just wake up and drink every day. I wake up like nine o’clock in the morning and drink every day... vodka, beers, anything really, wine, I’d just drink anything... I used to do that on a regular basis when I wasn’t working anyway, in between jobs. Even when I finished work, I’d get drunk... It was really bad. I’ve been like it for years though. I started drinking heavily when I was like 18. I don’t really know why to be honest... I liked the feeling of being drunk. I couldn’t go anywhere and be sober... you are actually technically an alcoholic when you’re like that, but I didn’t feel like I needed it, I just wanted it. I don’t know. It’s weird. It doesn’t make sense does it. I was always absolutely wrecked until I’d go to sleep... Obviously, a couple of times it started getting me (into trouble)... I was getting sent to prison for alcohol related stuff and I was thinking this is just stupid ...I’ve been arrested like 17 times, they’ve all been alcohol related, yeah, every single one. I’ve never been arrested sober... every time I’ve been arrested it’s been alcohol related.
Tyler – PeN

“... I’m 28. I went into prison when I was 26 and I started using drugs from the age of 16 onwards. So, for a solid 10 years, an assortment of drink and drugs throughout that history of time... A bit of everything. If it was there, if it was available, I thought why not. I was curious



to see what it would do to you. You know, other people do it, I'll try it. Some things I liked, some things I didn't and obviously throughout the years the things I liked, I carried on taking such as diazepam, alcohol, cannabis, cocaine, ketamine... ecstasy, stuff like that. It depends on what you're doing... Eric – PeN

However, LandWorks brought peace and calm into their lives in a safe and non-judgemental environment. Below Cassandra, Ben, Eric, Joshua, and Tony talk about the culture at LandWorks:

“ I would've never thought I would say this because I've got real bad social anxiety, but honestly the people have been the best thing... Everybody's just so nice and welcoming and encouraging. I love that... I guess LandWorks almost has its own entity... It's got its own character. The first words that come to mind are calm and serene and peaceful. It's comforting. It has a comforting presence...

Cassandra – PeN

“ ... like everyone here is just happy and chilled. Do you get what I kinda mean? It's just a really relaxed environment. You don't feel on edge and the time flies here... I reckon a big thing is the non-judgement. Like everyone's the same. The uniform, this and that, like it puts everyone on that same bracket and then when you're talking to someone like on the same level, like it's a lot easier, but when you've got someone trying to talk down to you like you're a moron, an

idiot, an imbecile, dah-de-dah... why did you ever do this and get yourself into this mess? Ben – PeN

“ ... you're not being judged; nobody gives a judgement... we're safe here.

Eric – Focus Group

“ ... Yeah, it's always been an opportunity for me just to come and just to grow in the areas that I needed to, to get some stability and a foundation to keep going and to find a life with myself. I was always sabotaging my life, self-sabotaging, just to kind of numb all the pain of what I felt life can be about, if you let it. But also, you've got to try and make it into something else. Sort of almost like push the demons away as well or at least keep them at bay for a while so you have enough time to get things together and get your head together. Equip yourself for when they come attacking again... It's all down to... the staff... because they're all of a particular personality type, which helps. There's a lot of patience there, a lot of empathy, a lot of understanding.

Joshua – Finishing Time

“ ... Yeah, I suppose being accepted is nice. Yeah, I felt like I was, and everybody heard my story, and they didn't judge... Oh yeah, so obviously they trusted me to come out here and do what needed to be done, not take advantage of anything or break any rules. It's all about trust. Trust is a big word... Tony – Finishing Time



2.3.2 Supportive community

The second core 'mechanism of change' identified by trainees and graduates was the sense of belonging and being part of a supportive community. For many, like the respondents below, this was a sharp contrast to their shattered childhoods, disjointed family relationships and immersion in corrosive drug and alcohol subcultures.

“ All the people I associated with, other than family prior to prison, I don't speak to no more. So, that's why it's nice coming out here to have social networking. A new line of friends you could call it, just people you can communicate with that isn't solely based around drugs, which unfortunately is a massive culture in Britain. I was a part of it, but I'm not no more. Eric – PeN

“ It's the support everyone gives you... I think that's a big part of it. It's like come on, let's all go and do this, let's go and do that. It's not like a slave labour camp because everyone supports you, I think...In the workshop you work together making a bench or feed the chickens. It's not a single task. It's teamwork. I like that. You don't want to be in a room by yourself ... you want to be together, don't you? That's a big part of it... you're altogether. It's very social. It's not anti-social. I like that. I've had too much anti-social in my life, so it's quite nice to be around people...Probably a very good thing about this place, very supportive. Well, it's the biggest thing I would say. Dave – PeN

“ It's just like a big family... It's just a friendly place to be. You don't get judged here... It's a better place to be than being sat bored, depressed, sad, miserable, no food. It's a better place to be. Greg – PeN

“ Good atmosphere, trying new things, learning new skills. Yeah, just really positive environment. It's nice. It's lovely. Yeah, and you feel like you're part of a team, good team building skills... Yeah, you're made to feel part of the community, yeah. They make you feel part of something. JimBob – PeN

2.3.3 Relationships

The quality of the relationships developed at LandWorks was the third important mechanism remarked upon by trainees and graduates. Unlike their experiences in prison and in the community, relationships at LandWorks were open, honest, non-judgemental, empathetic, and respectful. Mark sums up the core components of positive relationships:

“ [LandWorks] teaches you respect as well, more than anything, an appreciation, because obviously you respect the people you're with because they respect you. Before they even get to know you, they give you their respect, which out in society is not the easiest thing to learn. It's not easy to earn someone's respect, is it? They greet you. They talk to you. Everybody here, all the guys, they all treat you with respect and they speak to you nicely. They speak to you and make you



feel wanted. They make you feel like you can improve yourself and do something with your life, whereas normal community service doesn't... They treat you more like an adult and not like an animal. They treat you like a human-being. Yeah, you've done wrong, but they don't carry on the punishment... you get spoken to like an adult here and not like a toddler that's thrown their beaker across the front room and stained the carpet. They don't tell you; they don't dictate to you... you're treated like a human-being, you're treated like someone that's worthy of something. Mark – PeN

2.3.4 Sense of achievement

Articulated below by Eric and Ishmael, the work ethos at LandWorks which gave trainees and graduates a sense of self-worth and achievement was the fourth 'mechanism of change' that trainees and graduates identified.

“ [What did you enjoy at LandWorks?] It's routine, it's structure. It is a little place away. A little haven you could call it. Obviously, your first week, you're nervous. You don't know anyone, but over time you gradually mould into it and yeah, you do get on with it. It is nice. It is a nice structure. The people and the activities, it's rewarding. I must say it's definitely helped me 110%. Yeah. I'm focussing on the gardening side of it... I thought I could make my own stamp, if that makes sense, get a sense of pride and achievement from what I'm doing, and I can do that in there...you're not getting paid, well you are, but not in the sense of currency as in money, you're getting

paid with self-achievement, self-esteem, self-satisfaction, confidence. That is your reward from this place. Yeah. Eric – PeN

“ Most of the time it's just chopping boards, but I do enjoy getting them right because the satisfaction and pride when something comes out looking nice, you think ooh, nice and smooth. Sometimes you think that's going to sell quite quick, someone's going to want that. It's just getting it right and the satisfaction because people are paying money for this stuff, and it wouldn't be right if it's untidy... So, like starting and finishing, that's my achievement... my achievement is getting left in that workshop in the morning and then at the end of the day with something to show for it. Do you know what I mean? Ishmael – PeN

2.3.5 Structure and practical work

However, work was not just a source of achievement, it also provided the opportunity to develop a range of skills and try out different types of activities such as woodwork, pottery, market gardening and more general site maintenance. The practical nature of this work and the structure and stability that it brought to their lives was particularly stressed and appreciated.

“ I like working in the workshop, just being practical. That's what I love the most. I like doing things... I've sanded down some chopping-boards, oiled some chopping-boards, varnished them. Made some benches, putting the nuts and bolts in, sanded them down. Oiled



a plant-bed... I've done some painting here. Painted the wood-burner in there... Picked some tomatoes... I've helped with the dugouts, with the nail-gun. What else have I done? I've used the cutter machine. I think that's it. Greg – PeN

“ Like you come out here, there's something different to do every day, even if it is a bit of harvesting or a bit of this, whatever like, you always mix and match it... I had a go on the potter's wheel. I never had a potter's wheel in my life, never had a go on one of them. I made a little bowl and then I tried making a bigger one, nearly had it, and then part of it went a bit wonky so I tried to press the thing to slow down, but I pressed it the wrong way, whichever way it is, and I sped it up and it just went err-ack! That was funny... At least it's new skills... You just gain more being here than not even being here, if that kinda makes sense. Like you go to prison and what would you gain from that really?... Ben – PeN

“ ... routine, you get a good routine in this place. Like you can build a good routine. That can be like getting up routine to give you motivation... It don't feel like work... You don't realise you're doing it. It's fun like. Yeah, don't never feel like a day's work. It's never felt like a day's work here for me, I enjoy doing the stuff I'm doing. I don't class it as work for me, so I enjoy doing it... I think this place is good for like building you a good routine, sort of build you up for that day if you want to go into employment... yeah,

I feel like this place has got me in the right routine, right frame of mind... the willpower (to apply for a job)... JimBob – Focus Group

2.4 What makes the 'mechanisms of change' different at LandWorks?

Research shows that high quality probation supervision that is underpinned by secure, consistent, and trusting relationships between practitioners and the people they are supervising does reduce reoffending (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2023b and 2023c). However, research also shows that people on release from prison or on community sentences are not experiencing these types of relationships from statutory agencies (National Audit Office, 2023; HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2023a). Instead contact with probation services is poor and inconsistent with frequent changes of supervisors. Severe staff shortages and high caseloads are cited as the main causative factors.

Reiterating these criticisms, in the eyes of trainees and graduates the main difference between LandWorks and statutory criminal justice agencies was the quality of their relationships, and this had a significant impact on their motivation to change. All 40 of this year's cohort of trainees have had contact with probation services as they are either on licence from prison or on a community sentence. Most graduates have also had similar contact with probation. Both groups were very critical of their relationships with probation officers (there were some exceptions as Jarvis points out below). The main problem was that they felt their encounters with them were bureaucratic, dehumanised, and short-lived. They no sooner started to build a relationship than the probation officer was changed.



The key concerns expressed by trainees and graduates about their contact with probation is summed up by Jarvis and JimBob below:

“ What it is, is people are fed-up of repeating themselves. I know that from past experience. So, every time you get out of jail it starts all over again ... I had a probation officer, I had 16 probation officers in one sentence and every time I've got to tell 'em my story and then you tell 'em your story, right, and then what happens, they go yeah, but there isn't much feeling about it and you think well I've told you 50 times, yeah. In the end it becomes monotonous. So that's what happens with probation, unless you're lucky. I had a really good probation officer. I was really, really lucky. But yeah, it is really hard work. Jarvis – Finishing Time

“ Obviously, probation has always been there, but I've never found probation very helpful, quite stressful really... Even the day before my appointment I was stressing about it, finding excuses not to turn up, phoning the doctor to get a sick note. It's just a big headache really. Yeah. It's a cold atmosphere and I just get a cold feeling when I got into the probation building... [Supportive] No, definitely not... it's broken...

When I was at the young offenders with the old probation service, I had one... (PO) and he was really good. He was really helpful and then I just found they're not very helpful anymore. Yeah. They just haven't got the time and what used to

do my head in, you'd get your probation officer and then you'd go in there one week for your appointment and it'll be a new probation officer and then they expect you to speak through all your crimes again. It was like I've done this already like. I'm meant to be moving on, not living with the past...

I think they should ease up the money for probation and try something completely new, like here with a good success rate because I don't even know what the success rate is for probation, but I imagine it's really low. So, something needs to change there because it's not working out for the last 10 years or maybe even longer... The whole time I've been going to probation, I can honestly say I've not had one helpful experience out of it. JimBob – PeN

Here Musafa, JimBob, Cassandra and Jarvis highlight the key differences between LandWorks and probation practitioners:

“ I've had three probation officers in one month, they keep changing them... when they're uncomfortable with something they just change your probation worker... so you go to probation, you meet a woman, you tell her your whole life story, you get comfortable with her, and you come in the next week and it's a different probation officer, then what. Do you know what I mean? I just got to the point where I said I'm not fucking telling you what's going on in my life because next week it's gonna be someone else I've got to tell... You know when you come in to



see XXX (the Resettlement Manager at LandWorks)... you know you're gonna see her every week. Musafa – Focus Group

“ I feel like I've never had to wait... She's always there. Like I feel like she is there. Like if I needed her there now, I feel like she'll be there for me. I've never had to wait. JimBob – Focus Group

“ I'd been through the court, and I'd been to the probation officers, and it all felt very artificial and claustrophobic and then I got here and felt none of that. It was literally a breath of fresh air. Cassandra – PeN

“ [Why is LandWorks successful and probation a failure] Well one because LandWorks is smaller, and they've got the time to work with individuals. Probation have got probably 60 clients each, yeah, and they only work 37 hours. Well, if you're supposed to have an appointment once a week, I don't even know how they do it. So that's very, very difficult. The atmosphere and it's really real here and also people will share their stuff with you, they'll talk to you openly. If you're with a probation officer or a key worker or somebody, you know, outside of thingamabob, they won't share their own personal stuff, you know, which they're told not to anyway. In the end... and I know it's about the person who's sitting there, but in the end, it feels like

the person is just like a textbook person... Here's different innit. Here it's about being real and being honest and being open and you know, they do support you properly and they do have the right contacts if you want... Jarvis-Finishing Time

2.5 Outcomes: Discovering a new non-criminal identity

So, what impact have the 'mechanisms of change' had on trainees and graduates. LandWorks has an exceptionally low rate of reoffending, in the current evaluation year it stands at 5.2% one year after graduation from the project. The comparable figures for imprisonment and community sentences are 37.4% and 30.6% respectively (Ministry of Justice, 2023). Prison Reform Trust (PRT,2023) statistics paint an even bleaker picture with a reoffending rate of 63% for short prison sentences of less than 12 months and 56% for community sentences.³

But a much more insightful understanding of the impact of LandWorks and why it has a low rate of reoffending is evoked in the words of Mark, Joshua and JimBob below:

“ It's helped me control my anger a little bit more really and have patience. Doing stuff in the workshop, you can't just quickly push it together and job done. You've got to take time. It teaches you to slow down a bit and just breathe and think about your actions, think about what's going to happen if you do it rushed and stuff like that... Yeah, since I've been coming here... I just think more

³ The difference in reoffending rates between the Ministry of Justice and the PRT relate to how the rate has been calculated. PRT data match offenders with similar offending histories and compare their rate of reoffending based on the impact of different types of sentences. This calculation gives a more accurate picture of the true rate of reoffending.

before I act. I think before I speak instead of getting wound up and touchy about things. I realise life's too short, coming here. There's more to life than just getting wound up all the time. There's no need to get wound up all the time. When you come to places like here where people treat you like people, treat you like a human-being... you've got to learn that. You work with nice people, you end up becoming a nice person, so to speak, don't you?... You sort of embrace how they treat people and speak to people, so you embrace it. Mark – PeN

“ Without LandWorks there are so many other avenues I could've gone down. It really kind of solidified my choices in what I wanted to do. My whole view on people, just with humans in general ... very lacking in faith with kind of humanity really. I'm very cynical when it comes to people and peoples' intentions. I think I lost a lot of trust a long time ago ... early teens, I lost a lot of trust with people, and I've always struggled to kind of develop relationships and a confidence with people over the years. That's always been a struggle and that's caused a ripple effect on my lifestyle and my life. Other people might have felt that way when they were young too and might have gone a different path, but for me, that's how it affected me, the path I took obviously. Yeah, I lost a lot of faith and a lot of confidence...This journey at the moment it's not just about my recovery and with abstinence, but it's also about my recovery into society to kind of find


some faith and confidence in society and a confidence in myself, and that I'm able to do it to become a part of it.

Joshua – Finishing Time

“ LandWorks put me on the right path. My confidence has got more. Yeah, and like routine, my routine's better like. Before I would make excuses, I can't go today, this and that. I've done none of that like... If people had that opportunity, like LandWorks has given me, then the community and people would be paid off in the long run 'cos they'd get stuff back and at the minute they don't give you that chance. JimBob – PeN



LAND WORKS
UN-FUCK
THE SYSTEM



Chapter 3

Resettlement Support

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on how 'practical resettlement support', which is a key component of the 'theory of change' model in action (see 'activities' in Diagram 1), is delivered at LandWorks. It makes use of the same four sets of data outlined in the previous chapter to evaluate how trainees and graduates experience such support during their resettlement journey. In addition, one extra set of data has been included in this chapter, that is two interviews with members of the RECONNECT care after custody service.

3.2 Restructuring the resettlement centre

As stated in last year's report (Gray, Grose, and Parsons, 2022), the appointment of the first Resettlement Manager in October 2021 was unsuccessful which set back plans to develop resettlement work. However, a new Resettlement Manager was appointed in June 2022, and this has led to significant changes in the way resettlement support is delivered at LandWorks. In previous years resettlement support was provided in collaboration with specialist mental health, social welfare, benefits, housing, employment and drug and alcohol agencies. These agencies delivered support services through regular 'surgeries' on site which supplemented the in-house offer to create a holistic 'wraparound' resettlement centre. However, with the appointment of the new Resettlement Manager this mode of delivery has changed, and this can be evidenced by the statistics in Table 2. The bulk of resettlement support is now provided by the Resettlement Manager in house with referrals to external agencies phased out and only taking place where specialist expertise is called for.

The main reason why the delivery of resettlement support was changed related to the fact that many of the difficulties faced by trainees and graduates had to be dealt with immediately at a time of crisis, and weekly or fortnightly surgeries by external agencies could often not respond quickly enough. Having the Resettlement Manager permanently on site allows for a more pro-active, immediate response, particularly in crisis situations. Also, according to the Resettlement Manager, post pandemic many agencies are still working under pressure. They are underfunded,

overstretched, and understaffed with huge backlogs and long waiting lists. This placed considerable pressure on LandWorks to fill gaps in resettlement provision.

However, many of the trainees and graduates are suffering from the effects of complex trauma, so LandWorks still provides individual counselling on-site delivered by a qualified psychotherapist. Currently this is even more important because many LandWorks trainees have interconnected mental health and substance misuse difficulties and mental health agencies will not work with dual diagnosis clients. This is a significant gap in provision which the independent psychotherapist at LandWorks can partially alleviate.

3.3 The role of the Resettlement Manager with trainees

Many LandWorks’ trainees have chaotic lives and can face numerous psycho-social difficulties. Housing, benefits, mental health, and substance misuse are prominent issues. The Resettlement Manager ‘orchestrates’ and ‘co-ordinates’ multi-agency support for trainees and ‘holds agencies accountable’ if they don’t meet requirements. Much of this involves helping them to ‘navigate’ statutory agencies such as the council or housing departments by engaging in practical tasks such as getting documents together, filling out forms, claiming benefits, sorting out debt, registering with GPs, and procuring an ID to set up a bank account. All the above may seem everyday tasks, but for trainees they are often frustrating, stressful, and confusing activities which they can find overwhelming and difficult to carry out. The Resettlement Manager at times can use basic counselling skills to enhance the emotional wellbeing of trainees as many continue to experience mental stress and ‘hard times’, such as deaths, family breakdowns, and drug and alcohol relapses while working

at LandWorks. An in-house psychotherapist remains available, as pointed out earlier, one day per week and the Resettlement Manager will also refer to external agencies for more specialist support and to deal with crisis situations, particularly with regards to safeguarding issues.

The Resettlement Manager stated that about 90% of trainees need practical and/or emotional support at some point in their placement. Table 2 shows the shift in the last year in how resettlement support is delivered with a significant reduction in ‘surgeries’ run by external agencies and a corresponding increase in in-house provision.

TABLE 2: TRAINEE COUNSELLING AND RESETTLEMENT SUPPORT

	2021/22	2022/23
In-house Resettlement Sessions (one-to-one)	198	310
Counselling sessions with in-house psychotherapist (one-to-one)	87	122
Surgeries (provided on-site by external agencies)		
Housing	18	4
Citizens Advice Bureau	12	6
Job Centre	14	9
Drugs and alcohol	27	8

3.4 Graduates and the traffic light system

Desistance research shows that stopping offending can be a long and uneven journey (Farrall, 2021; Kemshall and McCartan, 2022). Therefore, LandWorks stresses the importance of remaining in contact with its trainees after placement by providing on-going tapered support. This is tailored to individual needs and can range from checking-in and being a listening ear, through to providing advice and signposting, accessing resettlement support and, at points of crisis, can even lead to return placements. Hence graduates, like trainees, can access help with housing, mental health, employment, and benefits as well as being able to drop in and talk to staff. This includes an average of 8 individual counselling sessions with the in-house psychotherapist. A key goal of LandWorks is to find employment for its graduates as research shows that having a job is a crucial factor in successful resettlement. In 2022/23 the employment rate for economically active graduates (i.e., those seeking and available for employment) was 94% (the same figure as last year). For adults leaving prison only 30% are in employment within six months of release (Prison Reform Trust, 2023).

There have now been 175 graduates since the LandWorks project began in 2013. The 'traffic light system' is a key feature of ongoing support. After check-in by phone, text or email, the graduate is assessed as 'green', 'amber' or 'red'. 'Green' signifies that the graduate is doing well and just needs low level, regular contact. Of the 128 graduates in regular contact with LandWorks, 117 (91.4%) were in this situation. An 'amber' alert means that the graduate has some issues and could do with a medium level of support. 7 (5.5%) were classified as such. A 'red' alert indicates serious concerns and that the Graduate needs a high level of support. 4 (3.1%) were assessed like this.

In the current evaluation year an increasing number of graduates have been assessed as 'green' (rising from 83% to 91.4%). This relates to an 'easing off' of crisis situations arising from Covid restrictions.

The Resettlement Manager has a particularly significant role in working with graduates assessed as 'red' who are usually in a crisis or emergency situation. The case of Charlie below provides an example of the 'traffic light system' in action.

Charlie is a LandWorks Graduate who attended the project regularly in 2015. Charlie has remained in contact since he left and occasionally dropped by to share how he was doing.

In June 2022, Charlie contacted the Project Director to express that he was homeless and struggling with his mental health. Charlie was expressing suicidal thoughts and had contacted LandWorks as a last resort to get help. He was invited out to lunch to talk things through. The Project Director recorded Charlie as 'red' on the traffic light system that represents graduate wellbeing.

When he arrived, the new Resettlement Manager spoke with him at length about his situation. An application was made to his local authority for housing, but they argued that Charlie was non-priority need and therefore not eligible for emergency accommodation. Charlie also had 2 dogs which made it increasingly more difficult to acquire accommodation.

While waiting for a response from the council, Charlie was supported with his mental health by providing emotional support and facilitating referrals to external agencies. Free veterinary care was also procured for his sick dog. The fact that he was being supported and allowed space to talk about things seemed to really help with his overall mental health.

Over the course of this work, it became clear that Charlie was unsafe in the Devon area and needed to approach a different local authority in a different county as he was fleeing threats of violence and harassment. Sheffield council was approached and an argument was made that even though Charlie did not have a local connection, he needed to be moved out of area for his own safety. Initially they refused to support Charlie as they needed proof that he was fleeing the area for safety reasons.

After extensive liaising between police services, Charlie's Offender Manager, Devon and Sheffield council and housing associations, Sheffield Council accepted a duty of care to him, and they offered him an accommodation placement. They did however, stipulate that Charlie would have to rehome the dogs as they could not be in accommodation with him. On behalf of Charlie, LandWorks argued that as part of the Homeless Code of Guidance and in the legislation within The Housing Act, dogs are considered property of the homeless individual and therefore, the council have a duty to provide safe and secure storage of an individual's property if the individual is unable to source this themselves. In Charlie's case, this meant that if Sheffield council could not house Charlie with his dogs, then they would have to fund a kennel for the dogs to be cared for until Charlie was able to have them back. After extensive back and forth, this was eventually agreed by Sheffield Council and they offered him a placement where he could have his dogs.

Since receiving the support, Charlie is now back in full time employment and has procured his own accommodation with his partner. Charlie reports that he is no longer experiencing any suicidal thoughts. Charlie still visits LandWorks regularly to say hello!



3.5 Resettlement support through the eyes of trainees and graduates

As pointed out in previous chapters, resettlement support delivered by statutory prison and probation services has come under severe criticism in the current evaluation year. In the last chapter we focused on the failure of statutory agencies to engage in positive, trusting, respectful relationships with trainees (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2023b and 2023c). In this chapter we concentrate on the criticisms made of the type of practical resettlement work that they do. The main criticisms here are that the quality of this support has declined and that there is a lack of communication and coordination between service providers in the third sector and practitioners from statutory agencies (National Audit Office, 2023; HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2023a). A further criticism is that resettlement support is not tailored or responsive enough to meet individual needs and tends to be 'done to' rather than 'done with' trainees (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2023a).

The PeN, Finishing Time and focus group interviews with LandWorks' trainees and graduates reiterate these criticisms which they perceive as 'just false promises and fake information' (Clark – Focus Group) because the resettlement support on offer from statutory agencies never comes through and a lot of the time they are just referred on 'back and forward, back and forward' (Eric – Focus Group) to other agencies. Below trainees and graduates voice their negative experiences of statutory resettlement support:

“ I've been out of prison since the 1st of April... Now excuse my language here, but they're (probation) fucking

useless. I've been out for that long, and they've done nothing for me, absolutely diddly-squat. They ring me up... have you found anywhere? I said that's your job, that's what you're gonna help me with... nothing. Outside services, they say they help but it's very long-winded, if they do at all, you know, but with XXX (the Resettlement Manager) you go to her with an issue... as quick as possible it will get sorted, but with them it's like yeah, well we'll let you know... That's what it feels like with probation, the outside services and the councils, but with XXX, she'll try her utmost best to get it sorted that day, if possible... If she can click her fingers and get it done, she will, whereas outside they haven't got that mentality.
Eric – Focus Group

“ I think a lot of it is communication though...the last time I was in jail, I started psychiatry work in there and basically because it was during lockdown and I started it, they said to me I had to do it over the phone because there wasn't no face-to-face because of lockdown, because of Covid, so I started it. I had about 12 sessions and when I was getting out, they said we're gonna carry on this out in the community. So, when I got out, I spoke to my GP about it and my GP was like I'll look into it. I spoke to my GP about it again and my GP said there was nothing on the system about it. So, like I did all this work in the 12 sessions in jail, and I wanted to carry on when I got out and there was just nothing even there on the system, but I just don't see how it can't be on the system because surely,

it's still NHS in the jail. Surely, it's got to be somewhere on the system...

Jim Bob – Focus Group

“ In prison there was a ZZZ course. It was supposed to be helping you out with housing and jobs... that never ever come about... They promised you lap-tops and this, that and the other... they never even contacted me. Yeah, every single thing that the prison promised would be ready for you when you get out wasn't there... When you get out it's nothing like what they've said... Probation are so lazy, so lax, they just sit there, pretend they're listening, push a pen around and then fob you off out the door. Clark – Focus Group

What do trainees and graduates say about the resettlement support on offer at LandWorks? They felt that it was practical, responsive, and coordinated. Basically 'orchestrated' to meet their individual needs while recognising how confusing they find 'red tape' so alleviating much of the pressure and anxiety surrounding their resettlement journey. All in all, totally different to their experience with statutory criminal justice agencies. Below Ben shares the significance of having a 'tailored support network' and Eric of having an in-house psychotherapist:

“ ... if you need a hand with anything, you can ask... there's always someone that can help with anything. Do you get what I mean?... Like look, they've helped me do my ID. Like I wouldn't even know where to begin if I've only got that form... I bet some people coming out of prison wouldn't even know where to begin with some of that. Do you know what I mean? Like I say, someone taking five minutes to do something small, but can have a great impact on someone's life. Like me getting that ID, it took YYY five minutes to fill that thing out, it didn't take long for you to sign it, dah-de-dah, but that's going to make a big difference for me, I can go and open a bank. Do you know what I mean? I tried to do the provisional thing, but I filled out something wrong, this and that, and then I got it sent to my old address because I'd moved and oh yeah, so I never received one and then... oh, it's just aggro. It winds me up big time. I hate paperwork. I hate it. It's like my kryptonite, literally. Give me manual labour any day. Ben – PeN

“ [Talking about one-on-one counselling] I've done it in the past, I've tried it, different types, but I wasn't ready. I'm ready now. I'm more than ready, so it's good that XXX's (the in-house psychotherapist) here and she's got her own unique style that she's developed over the years with people like myself, so that's perfect for me... not some generic knob that's come out of university that's never lost a parent, no-one has died in his life, but he's doing bereavement



counselling... I needed someone who understood me and unfortunately at that time, no-one understood me... I don't want XXX for the bereavement side of it as much. Maybe a little bit, but I just want her to help me piece everything that's gone on and put it together. It may be a bit harder than it sounds, but I'm willing to give it a try. She sounds like she's willing to help me as well, so I'll take it. I'm used to talking about horrible stuff as you can see. Yeah. I think it gives people an insight as well... really brilliant support ... really helped me work through it a lot... You've got experienced people that are supporting you here with the mental health, have knowledge and experience behind it, they know what they're talking about. Out there, I've got some 19-year-old girl reading from a textbook telling me about pressure and anxiety and I'm thinking wow. It's not her fault, you know, she's trying but she doesn't know.

Eric –PeN

3.6 Some third sector agencies get it right

3.6.1 RECONNECT

While trainees were critical of the support they received from statutory criminal justice agencies, there were some third sector resettlement agencies that they held in high regard. One such agency is RECONNECT which is a care after custody service which 'seeks to improve the continuity of care of people leaving prison' and 'to support their transition to community-based services'. There are a variety of referral routes into RECONNECT, including self-referral, prisons, probation and mental health teams (www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/health-just/reconnect/).

3.6.2 ROLE OF SUPPORT WORKERS

Two RECONNECT support workers who had referred prison leavers to LandWorks were interviewed for this evaluation. Like the LandWorks Resettlement Manager they offer practical help to enhance trainees mental and physical well-being by providing 'liaison, advocacy, signposting, and support to facilitate engagement with community-based health and support services'.

The RECONNECT workers meet people at the prison gates upon release and support them through their return to the community for up to 6 months. When asked the difference between LandWorks and RECONNECT, the workers from the latter agency replied 'we work side by side... we get the ball rolling then it is taken over by the Resettlement Manager at LandWorks'.

3.6.3 WHY DO LANDWORKS' TRAINEES FIND IT USEFUL?

Many trainees and graduates had had contact with RECONNECT and praised their support. What they liked most was having someone to symbolically hold their hands, as Mustafa (Focus Group) commented 'like a little bit of parenting', to help them navigate their way through various 'red tape' journeys, such as registering for a doctor, opening a bank account, going to the job centre, contacting their probation officer. Another factor was that some RECONNECT workers had shared experiences of being in prison. JimBob points out below why this was important:

“ I met them in prison. I actually met them in prison at a job fair. They meet you on the day of your release. So, they meet you and what did it for me, my worker was honest with me, he told me that basically



he's been in jail, he's been in a bad situation, you can turn it around, and just that honesty there did it for me. That built a bit of trust up from that day on with him. I got to know him a bit more and that and he introduced me to this place. Yeah. But I wouldn't have listened to him if he didn't be honest with me from day one... That's what did it for me to tell you the truth, ... meeting me on the day of my release and telling me that he'd been to jail and that because I thought I'd mucked my life up, so seeing people like matey said, success stories, makes you realise that you can turn your life around. JimBob – Focus Group

time is rushed... I think everybody that I've ever sent to LandWorks has come away saying that they just think it's an amazing place...It's helped them immensely.

RECONNECT Worker

3.6.4 WHAT DID RECONNECT WORKERS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT LANDWORKS?

RECONNECT workers were equally appreciative of LandWorks as its style of interaction with trainees and supportive environment fitted in well with their own way of working. As one support worker commented:

“ So of all the ones I've worked with, LandWorks is on top by far... I find LandWorks very approachable... it's not like an agency that judge or anything... you can go in and you're treated exactly the same as everybody else...everyone wears the same T shirt...I think that the location is perfect... I feel what they offer is really good... so they could do outside work on the gardens... they could learn a trade with the woodwork... there's a choice of things to do... I just think it's an amazing place... I think that where it's set is amazing for your mental health... it's like fields and woodland and it's so peaceful... It's just so peaceful... no one's



Chapter 4

The Staff Team, Research and Influencing

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on 3 key developments this year in the LandWorks programme that provide the foundation to its work. These relate to:

- **Changes to and development of the staff team**
- **LandWorks' Assets through the eyes of its team**
- **Research, raising awareness and influencing.**

4.2 The staff team

4.2.1 RESTRUCTURING OF THE TEAM

The Charity Manager has been on long term leave since June 2022. The Project Director has taken steps to maintain the charity management and to enable the organisation to run effectively and safely. Most of the Charity Manager's role has now been successfully redistributed to other members of the team and any gaps filled by ad hoc paid specialists.

As explained in chapter 3, a new Resettlement Manager was appointed in June 2022 which has changed the way in which resettlement support is delivered. The use of external specialist agencies has been phased out with the Resettlement Manager increasingly taking over the bulk of resettlement in-house with referral to external agencies only when specialist expertise is called for.

A chef was appointed in January 2023 to engage trainees constructively in delivering kitchen skills and to use produce from the garden to encourage healthy eating. This is still at a pilot stage and may need adjustment later in how it is used.

4.2.2 TEAM DEVELOPMENT

As well as providing individual counselling to trainees and graduates, the in-house part time counsellor has been involved in two types of staff development at an individual and group level. There have been thirty-five individual supervision sessions with some members of the team in relation to equality, diversity, and inclusion issues. Sixteen group sessions for the whole team were also conducted where staff have been provided with training in general counselling skills.

4.3 LandWorks' 'assets' through the eyes of the team

As part of this year's evaluation, the evaluators adopted a new research tool called the Asset Based Framework to investigate how staff viewed the benefits to trainees of having a placement at LandWorks. Two focus groups were conducted, one with 'senior management' which comprised four people from the LandWorks team and one from an external organisation. The other group comprised of four 'core' members of the LandWorks team who managed the enterprises and provided general support. The question that guided discussion in both groups was 'what are the "assets" or "benefits" that trainees gain from having a placement at LandWorks?'. This research tool begins by getting participants to explore the 'positives' of a placement and when this list is exhausted moves on to the 'negatives' and 'interesting features' of the project. The group then prioritises the top five 'assets'/'benefits'.

The 'management' focus group adopted a person-centred view of the primary benefits of a placement at LandWorks, prioritising how it built trainees' self-esteem, self-worth, and confidence in a climate of trust. This then was the basis of a further three benefits which centred on how the activities at LandWorks (for example, woodwork,



pottery, and growing vegetables) were purposeful and while challenging gave trainees a sense of achievement. The final benefit identified by this group was ‘giving a voice’ to trainees by making them feel that they had something to contribute to the project and offering them an opportunity to tell their stories particularly through the PeN project, to an empathetic and appreciative audience.

The ‘core staff’ focus group had more diverse viewpoints although all agreed that ‘trust’ was the most important ‘asset’ for trainees. This was closely followed by a culture that nurtured well-being, self-worth and ‘active hope’ whereby trainees were given the hope that things would get better. The social interaction and sense of belonging between staff and trainees in a non-judgemental, communal environment, for example eating and working together, were also seen to be valuable benefits for trainees. Importance was also attached to the purposeful, structured nature of the working day which facilitated the development of practical skills and so enhanced the prospects for employability in the future.

The key differences between the two groups were that the ‘management’ group tended to look at the benefits ‘from the balcony or above’ while the ‘core staff’ group, as they interact more directly with trainees on a day-by-day basis, viewed the benefits ‘from ground level’. However, both groups agreed with the views of trainees and graduates, as described in chapters 2 and 3, in highlighting LandWorks’ person-centred approach which values non-judgemental relationships in a shared, communal culture of trust and confidence building as being its primary ‘asset’ and ‘mechanism of change’. This was supported by the purposeful, structured nature of the working environment which offered tangible, practical skills, and support.

4.4 Research, raising awareness and influencing

LandWorks places much emphasis on ‘raising awareness and influencing’. This is achieved through the collation of ‘robust evidence and analysis’ and ‘sharing information through a range of targeted communications’ with the aim of improving resettlement and criminal justice processes and systems (see Diagram 1). LandWorks has set in place several channels to achieve this:

- i. The PeN (Photographic Electronic Narrative) project was established at LandWorks in 2016 with funding from the Independent Social Research Foundation (ISRF). The aim of the PeN project is to give trainees the opportunity to share their journeys with supporters and the wider community. This is achieved through an anonymous, yet accessible format of blog posts co-created from individual interviews conducted on site with trainees. These interviews are transcribed, and sections taken from them to form a blog post. The blog posts are then shared alongside photographs, following explicit agreement from the trainees, and published here <https://penprojectlandworks.org/>. Trainees also give permission for the full interview transcripts to be used for evaluation purposes.

The PeN project features in a film made over the summer of 2021, entitled: ‘Finishing Time and Moving On: Life after punishment’, made by Fotonow CIC, with funding from the University of Plymouth. The film seeks to raise awareness of the difficulties people with criminal convictions face once released into the community. It highlights the benefits for those attending LandWorks. While this film was produced outwith the current evaluation period it continues



to give a powerful insight into the lived experience of trainees and graduates and their evaluation of LandWorks. The film is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ALEj2qYaxo> and at the LandWorks website: www.landworks.org.uk/research/.

There were twelve blog posts published on the PeN project website from 1st April 2022 to March 31st 2023, this includes ten from trainees and two from graduates. The increase in posts has been made possible by a small grant from the *Aurum Trust* awarded in November 2022. This covers time spent conducting the interviews, travel costs and transcription charges. This means the PeN project can continue, with the aim of publishing approximately two blogs per month. The LandWorks Project Coordinator has been very active across the range of LandWorks' social media platforms by publicising the blogs and getting them read more widely. This has resulted in new people signing up to receive the blogs. There are currently 197 registered subscribers to the blog. These people are automatically sent the post on publication. Views of the site reached a peak in February 2023 when there were 756 views (there were just 211 in November 2022).

Overall, the PeN project continues to be a valuable means of capturing the journeys of the trainees at LandWorks. It feeds into the evaluation but more importantly they are proud of their stories and are keen to share them, not least with their families.

- ii. The 'Finishing Time' project was established in 2018, with a small discretionary grant from the ISRF. This project follows people who have 'graduated' or finished their time at LandWorks. Here is a link to a 'zine' produced in 2021 in which graduates shared the benefits of long-term support once they have

completed their placement at LandWorks: https://issuu.com/fotonowpublishing/docs/pen_project_issuu

There were two posts on the PeN project website from LandWorks graduates as part of the Finishing Time project, one from Joshua and the other from Tony. Again, as above these have been made possible due to a small grant from the *Aurum Trust*, it is covering the costs of four finishing time interviews over 12 months from November 2022.

- iii. The Director of LandWorks produces fortnightly blogs which discuss the issues faced by trainees and graduates and what is happening in the project. The blogs have over 1000 subscribers and can be accessed here: www.landworks.org.uk/category/news/chris-parsons-blog/.
- iv. LandWorks encourages visitors to attend lunches with staff, trainees and graduates. In 2022/23 this worked out at approximately 3 visitors a week. Partners, external agencies, magistrates, and influential members of the community are particularly welcome as an exercise in raising awareness and creating social networks for trainees.
- v. Outreach and conferences (April 2022 – March 2023)

18th April 2022 – The Sociology Show (Podcast) Interview with Dr Julie Parsons (and James).

In this episode, Matthew talks to Dr Julie Parsons and James. Julie is an Associate Professor in Sociology and Criminology at the University of Plymouth. Since completing her PhD on the sociology of food in 2014,

funded research projects with LandWorks (<https://landworks.org.uk>). This includes an Independent Social Research Foundation (ISRF) funded project that documents the desistance journeys of people on placement at LandWorks through a series of interviews and co-created blog posts <https://penprojectlandworks.org>. James is currently on placement at LandWorks and in this interview he talks candidly about his route into the criminal justice system, as well as how he is progressing at LandWorks www.spreaker.com/user/thesociologyshow/julieparsons.

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Parsons, J.M. Roaming in the realms of creative possibilities – making poetry and song, International Conference of Autoethnography, A Right to Roam, 18th-19th July 2022, Waterside, Bristol, UK. (Online).

Parsons, J.M. Re-imagining re-entry after punishment: distilling the LandWorks 'x' factor following cris(es). Howard League for Penal Reform, Crime, Justice, and the Human Condition: Beyond the cris(es) – reframing and reimagining justice, 13-14th September 2022, Keble College, Oxford, UK (Online).

Parsons, J.M. Virtual and physical narratives of relational connection: lessons for successful re-entry after punishment. European Society of Criminology (ESC) Conference 2022, Challenges and Opportunities in a Virtually and Physically Connected Europe: the need for Criminology, 21-24th September 2022, Malaga, Spain.

10
YEAR

LANDWORKS

10 years of LandWorks

Acceptance



LandWorks

Reducing Reoffending, Transforming Lives

A 10-year celebration

"Without LandWorks, I'd be back in prison"

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This chapter outlines the key findings from this year's evaluation and LandWorks' plans for next year.

5.1 The key principles of effective resettlement practice

Drawing on research evidence, HM Inspectorate of Probation has recently published a guide to the 'six key principles of effective resettlement practice' (see Cracknell, 2023). Below is a summary of these principles:

- i. Early identification of needs and through-the-gate support.**
The resettlement needs of individuals should be assessed and a realistic plan set in place at the start of their sentence. An assigned community probation practitioner should support individuals to realise their plan.
- ii. Plans produced co-productively and not solely risk focused.**
Resettlement plans should be produced collaboratively between practitioners and those released from prison or serving community sentences. Plans should address welfare needs not just compliance, enforcement, and risk management.
- iii. Emphasis on continuity of support and the relational aspects of supervision.**
A trusting, stable and caring relationship between individuals and their probation practitioner is crucial to successful resettlement.
- iv. Bonding and bridging to sources of social capital.**
Practitioners should become 'community connectors' and 'advocates' to practically support people to access appropriate welfare, treatment, and community resources.

- v. Responsive to the needs of different groups.**

Practitioners should recognise that specific groups and communities, relating to for example race, class, age, and gender, may face additional barriers in the resettlement process.

- vi. Strength-based and restorative approaches.**

Effective resettlement practice should adopt a strength-based approach by 'treating the person as an individual with talents and abilities who can make a positive contribution to society' and includes 'providing opportunities for the individual... to give something back' in pursuit of 'a new identity beyond "the offender" label'. (p8)

5.2 The 'mechanisms of change' and 'practical resettlement support'

This report has highlighted how in the eyes of trainees, graduates, and staff, LandWorks implements the six principles of effective resettlement practice. In chapter 2 trainees and graduates discussed the importance that they attach to having trusting, non-judgemental, caring, and stable relationships with LandWorks staff rooted in a culture of mutual respect and communal support. Such relationships gave them the self-confidence and motivation to engage in change. Trainees and graduates also enjoyed the structured working environment at LandWorks, centred on market gardening, pottery, and woodwork, which provided opportunities to develop practical skills and strengthen their sense of self-worth and achievement.

Chapter 3 highlighted how trainees and graduates assessed the practical resettlement support that they received at LandWorks. Principle (iv) of effective resettlement practice



states that practitioners should be ‘community connectors’ and ‘advocates’ (Cracknell, 2023: 7). In chapter 3 trainees and graduates were full of praise for the individualised, responsive and co-ordinated resettlement support that they received at LandWorks. In their eyes LandWorks staff were truly ‘community connectors’ and ‘advocates’ who ‘orchestrated’ support in such a way to help them navigate the bureaucratic red tape that they often found so stressful and destructive in their resettlement journey.

It is therefore not surprising that in the current evaluation year LandWorks continues to have a commendably low graduate reoffending rate (5.2%) and a correspondingly high rate of employment post placement (94%) in comparison to statutory criminal justice agencies (see section 2.5 for a detailed breakdown of these statistics).

5.3 Looking forward

Three areas have been earmarked by LandWorks as a focus for their plans in the next evaluation year:

i. Expanding the range of activities for trainees and graduates.

There are plans under consideration to broaden the range of creative ‘art’ workshops beyond pottery. This might include employing an ‘art’ lead to co-ordinate different forms of art such as jewellery making, T-shirts and cards. The idea of family law support surgeries has also been mooted.

Influencing and outreach

On 14th July 2023 LandWorks celebrated its 10th anniversary and this will be reported upon in next year’s evaluation. However, this anniversary was seen as a significant landmark in the development of LandWorks with attention increasingly focused on

the need to engage more assertively with outreach and influencing policy.

As pointed out earlier, over the current evaluation period statutory resettlement services run by HMPPS have been faced with scathing criticism (National Audit Office, 2023; HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2023). In response to these criticisms the Public Accounts Committee set up an inquiry into ‘Improving Resettlement Support for Prison Leavers’ (which can be accessed here <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/7701/improving-resettlement-support-for-prison-leavers/publications/written-evidence/>). This inquiry provided LandWorks with a golden opportunity to realise its ambition to outreach and influence policy, and in May 2023 it made a submission to the inquiry which is still ongoing.

LandWorks believes that it has much expertise to offer based on its ‘theory of change’ model in considering how to improve resettlement services. As evidenced in this report, the core elements of this model – holistic, person-centred, relationship-based, sustained practical resettlement support – appear to be working in motivating trainees and graduates to turn their lives around and prepare them for employment.

Over the last few years, LandWorks has put together a proposal, based on its ‘theory of change’ model, for ‘Prison Leaver Centres’ (working title). These would combine work experience and skills development with a range of other practical and personal support, all on one site. LandWorks intends to share this proposal with the Public Accounts Committee inquiry into ‘improving resettlement support’ and to work with HMPPS in considering how ‘Prison Leaver

Centres' might help to realise its 'clear' vision for the delivery of resettlement services which address the criticisms and recommendations set out in the National Audit (2023: 44-45) report.

ii. Resettlement Support Worker

As pointed out in chapter 3, this year the delivery of resettlement support has been significantly restructured in such a way that the role of the Resettlement Manager has been expanded. These changes will be monitored over the next year with a view to considering whether there is a need for a new part-time post to support the work of the resettlement team.





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