

THROUGH-THE-GATE AND WARM HANDOVERS TO THE COMMUNITY	CFO ACTIVITY HUB AND WIDER COMMUNITY DELIVERY	VETERANS', WOMEN'S SERVICES AND NEURODIVERSITY UPDATES
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Contents

Welcome to the first CFO Quarterly Newsletter of 2025!

As the CFO Evolution programme continues to grow, we hope you enjoy reading about the impactful support available to participants both in custody and the community.

If you want to learn more about CFO delivery, or want to make a referral, please visit our website: [CreatingFutureOpportunities.gov.uk](https://www.creatingfutureopportunities.gov.uk)

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Through-the-Gate



The CFO Evolution programme consists of 7 stages, with important through-the-gate elements included.

As the participant leaves custody there is an expectation that they will be able to move effectively into the community and that support required will have been identified, with a warm handover taking place.



Bill Spiby – HMPPS CFO Lead Commissioning Manager – played a large part in the development of the CFO Evolution programme, including these through-the-gate elements.

Speaking about the importance of this stage for participants, Bill said: “It’s key to the model’s success. This is an opportunity for a much more cohesive experience for participants and connecting individuals to community support for life after prison.”

“Participants can very much see that there’s a service that can transfer details of progress in custody through to the community and that there’s a physical place for them to go and actively continue with their personal progression.”

As part of the programme, community CFO Evolution Support Workers will contact participants engaging with CFO prior to release, so that there is already an established relationship when it is time for their release, regardless of the stage in which a participant engaged with CFO.

The process has been designed to be completed efficiently and CFO will assist pre-release teams and probation by providing further information around completed provisions, identified next steps and bespoke progression routes. This also helps to ensure that there is no duplication of services in the community.

A pre-release inventory is one of the key elements in ensuring a warm handover through-the-gate. Continue reading for more information about the impact of these inventories.

“I can’t wait to give life in the community another go. With the help I have received I feel more ready to tackle life outside and I’m determined to stay substance free and not come back.” – Yuri*, CFO Participant at HMP High Down

What is included in a Participants’ Pre-Release Inventory?



When working with participants through-the-gate, CFO staff produce a pre-release inventory (PRI). This is a digital profile which is securely visible to a designated Support Worker prior to transitioning into the community.

Each PRI will include a thematic objective around the participant’s actions completed, progress achieved, goals and outstanding support required.

The PRI process is available to all participants engaging with CFO through-the-gate and can be completed even if the participant is moving out of the region.

Impactful Handover

Ideally, the pre-release inventory should be completed four weeks prior to release, giving all parties time to build rapport, ensuring a smooth transition from a custody Support Worker to a community Support Worker. Introductory meetings are essential in this part of the process.

Completing a PRI has benefits for a participant’s rehabilitative journey, including:

- Preventing participants from falling through gaps of support
- Ensuring continuous delivery and progress
- Participants don’t need to continually re-tell their story
- Start from an advanced position in the community
- Relationship already built between participant and community Support Worker, increasing familiarity and trust in CFO programme
- Meaningful time spent and routine immediately established
- Focussed delivery tailored to each individual, including what they need and also what they want



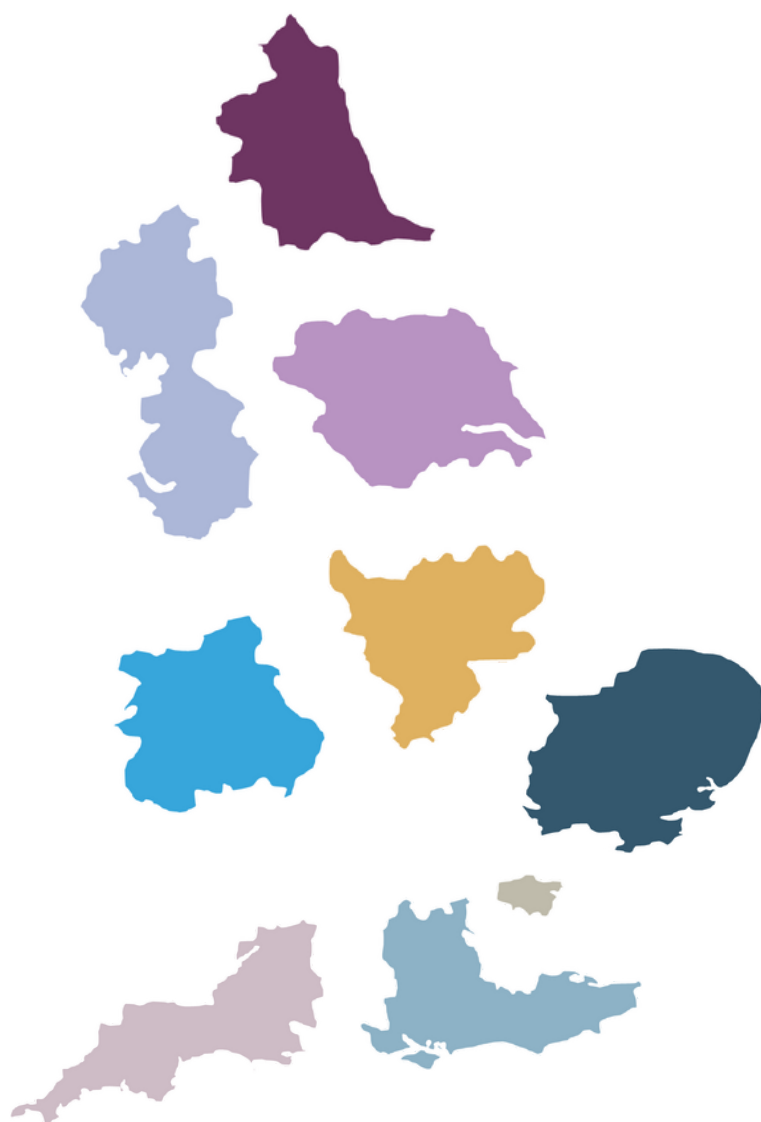
Nationwide CFO Activity Hubs

All CFO Activity Hubs are now Open

As part of the launch of CFO Evolution, effort has been made by everyone involved to get CFO Activity Hubs running as quickly as possible. Some of these spaces have only required a lick of paint, however many are brand-new spaces and are in locations that CFO Activity Hubs have never been before.

Locating these buildings and transforming them into the warm and welcoming, non-authoritarian spaces that make CFO Activity Hubs unique has been a task but everyone involved is pleased to say that all CFO Activity Hubs are now open and delivering to participants.

All CFO Activity Hubs represent a safe space where participants can, and importantly want to engage in a range of activities. Support Workers offer a consistent contact point for participants throughout engagements, helping to build trust and encourage involvement. Participants are not rushed into engaging with activity before they are ready.



Where are the CFO Activity Hubs Near Me?

There are 33 CFO Activity Hubs across nine regions. Each Hub is accessible via public transport. To learn more about delivery at your local CFO Activity Hub, please visit:

CreatingFutureOpportunities.gov.uk/Regional-Delivery



Wider Community Delivery

What is this Delivery?

Whilst CFO Activity Hubs are available in 33 community locations, some participants will be released to areas where it is not practical to attend. Support is available for participants in these circumstances via wider community delivery. This support is delivered from flexible locations designed to be convenient to access via public transport. CFO Evolution Support Workers use a person-centred approach to tailor sessions to the individual, encouraging engagement with mainstream services and linking in with probation practitioners regularly to monitor risk.

Support Available

Activities and support available via wider community delivery is similar to that provided at CFO Activity Hubs, with practical and employability activities that can include:

- Job search, applications and disclosure advice
- Education access
- Training courses in specific industries
- Independent living skills
- Personal skills such as confidence building and thinking skills
- Financial support
- Motivational support
- Signposting to other specialist organisations

Wider community delivery can support individuals in a 1-2-1 setting, or small groups where location allows.

Please note that delivery is not limited to the above and can vary from region-to-region, so please get in touch with the provider in your region for more information.

[CreatingFutureOpportunities.gov.uk/Contact](https://www.creatingfutureopportunities.gov.uk/Contact)



Impactful Community Delivery

Mansoor* was feeling low and hopeless about returning to employment following his sentence. When first engaging with CFO, Mansoor* wanted to work in a warehouse, and gain qualifications to support that.

His Support Worker immediately helped Mansoor* to create an action plan to inspire hope in him and improve motivation. Disclosure was addressed, and Mansoor* was enrolled on a forklift counterbalance course, gaining a qualification and was grateful to be moving closer to employment. Together they also worked on creating a CV to a high standard.

At this point Mansoor* was able to start applying for job roles and secured full-time employment in a warehouse as a forklift truck driver, making the most of his qualification. He was very thankful for the support, saying: "I appreciate all of your help so much – thank you for helping me get my forklift license."

Finally, his Support Worker delivered a good tenant session, which covered housing options, deposits, legislation and applications, agreements, applying for housing and rights. This was to support Mansoor's* aspirations of achieving his own tenancy.

"You will never know how much of a change you have enabled me to make just by giving me a chance." – Harry*, CFO Participant in the North East

How to Refer

Referrals for wider community delivery can be made via:
CreatingFutureOpportunities.gov.uk/CFO-Evolution-Referrals.

You can also scan this QR code to go straight to the referral form.

After selecting your community region in the form, use the 'Other' option to type in the location which you would like to refer a participant to.

To learn more about this delivery, please get in touch with the CFO provider in your region.



CFO in Numbers

Click the link below to learn how CFO supported 124,375 participants on the CFO3 and CFO Activity Hub programmes, including information around regional delivery, participant achievements, programme demographics and more, including:

10,463
progressed
into work
after CFO3

36,489
Worked with CFO
through-the-
gate

£3.84
Return on every
£1 invested
into CFO

52%
Helped
with job
searches

[CreatingFutureOpportunities.gov.uk/](https://CreatingFutureOpportunities.gov.uk/CFO-In-Numbers)
[CFO-In-Numbers](https://CreatingFutureOpportunities.gov.uk/CFO-In-Numbers)

Community ViCSOs



In 2021 HMPPS' Director General gave approval for CFO to lead on all HMPPS veteran strategic strands.

As a result, CFO committed to this by creating a HMPPS CFO Veteran Policy Lead. The landscape of the veteran agenda has progressed and support for veterans in custody is now being co-ordinated and mapped to assist with identifying gaps as well as help to collaborate closer between and with veteran charities.

Carrie Rogers is the HMPPS CFO Veteran Policy Lead, to get in touch with Carrie, please email: CFO-mod@justice.gov.uk



Supporting Veterans Through-the-Gate

For many years, Veterans in Custody Support Officers (ViCSOs) have been offering additional support for veterans in a variety of ways, on top of their day-to-day roles. This includes one-to-one support sessions, group forums, co-ordinating wraparound support from external charities and working to complete 'smooth' handovers for veterans moving prison. This handover is particularly important as veterans do not need to keep re-telling their information, can see support is genuine and ensures the seamless continuation of support.

Similar disruptions can occur when a participant is moving from custody to the community following their sentence, and given the amount of work and effort that staff across prison and probation have invested in working with veterans, the focus for HMPPS is to bring the consistency through-the-gate to reduce reoffence.

Prison and Probation Leads are launching a joint approach to veterans in the Criminal Justice System. In prison, staff are already known as Veterans in Custody Support Officers and now the staff in probation regions will have the opportunity be known as Veterans in Community Support Officers (also ViCSOs), delivering continuous support into the community. We understand that not all ex-forces identify as being a veteran, however upskilling staff and using the same terminology as the MoD will support the agenda.

Community Impact

Community ViCSOs are able to provide continued support through the gate and assist with referrals to specialist veteran support, with information being shared appropriately to ensure that veterans are not starting from scratch upon release. They will also help veterans engaging with other HMPPS contracts (eg. CRS), to complete their rehabilitation journey in the community. Wraparound support from veteran charities and the NHS mental health service, Op Courage, will be signposted too. This additional support will keep veterans engaged and have a positive impact on their families, helping to build key relationships and skills.

Neurodiversity and Emojis



For those with neurodifferences such as dyslexia, understanding emojis can be very challenging, not least for participants, who maybe also have a lower reading age than average.

Here are some tips on emoji usage to make your communications as effective as possible for neurodiverse individuals.

1. Don't overuse your emojis

Although emojis are fun to use and can make materials stand out, you should be wary of using too many emojis. Emojis can make materials difficult to read for everyone, but in particular, for screen reader users who hear the short description (also known as alternative/alt text) for every emoji used. Emojis can 'modify' the perception and understanding of a sentence too, and different interpretations should be thought about prior to use. For example, the fire emoji could have positive and negative connotations.

2. Use but don't replace

Try not to use emojis as a replacement for a word. For example, if you are substituting the word "Christmas" for a Santa hat. Some neurodiverse people will be able to understand the meaning, but for a screen reader user a sentence may read "I had such a good – Santa hat symbol – this year". Avoid clutter and confusion when using emojis too, as this can reduce understanding. Emojis are good when used at the end of a sentence, as to avoid breaking the flow of writing.

3. Test emoji visibility in dark and light modes (and in print)

Most often emojis look great in light mode on your digital device, however it is important to check how the emoji you want to use displays in dark mode as well. The higher the level of contrast the more accessible the emoji will be. Printing sheets with emojis on can also affect visibility, especially if printing in black and white.

4. Steer clear of emoticons

Emoticons are punctuation marks, letters, and numbers used to create something that generally resembles an emotion. The most common emoticon is the smiley face. For example, if you write 'y' screen reader users may just hear "semicolon parentheses." It's best to avoid emoticons and use emojis instead as they have better alt text for readers.

To help support neurodiverse participants, CFO are currently working on 'emoji sheets.' These will allow for better self-expression as participants will be able to clearly select which emoji fits their mood, rather than having to put their thoughts into words. This should make responding and giving feedback more accessible, breaking down barriers to engagement.

More information on this will be available in our next Quarterly Newsletter.

Women's Support

Women-only Sessions at CFO Activity Hubs

Women-only services are important to better engage women in their rehabilitation journey. Many women in the justice system have experienced trauma, abuse, or neglect, which can make it harder for them to trust others or seek help in mixed-gender environments.

It means our services can be tailored to the unique needs of women, considering factors like parenting responsibilities, mental health issues, or the impact of gender-based violence. Creating a space where women feel respected and understood can be a key factor in helping them make positive changes and reintegrate successfully into society.

Alongside women-only sessions (which are available nationwide), CFO services make sure women have access to support in a safe space to help staff identify and tackle significant barriers. The women also help choose and create the activities. CFO have a consistent staff group so that women can build trusting relationships to support their rehabilitation.

Services vary from region to region, and women can engage at a pace which suits them, either in these women-only sessions or within the wider CFO Activity Hub schedule.

To see what gender-informed support is available at your nearest Hub, please get in contact with them via:

[CreatingFutureOpportunities.gov.uk/Contact](https://www.creatingfutureopportunities.gov.uk/Contact)

Custodial Support

Margot* was concerned about losing her housing, which would impact her Release on Temporary Licence status at HMP East Sutton Park. She also had significant debt troubles.

Her Support Worker helped in gaining a credit report for Margot*, and contacted HMRC to prevent further debts building up whilst in custody. A referral was also made to PACT for family support, with the family engagement worker attending court with Margot* in order to support her during an eviction case. The judge decided against eviction and Margot* now has an address for ROTL, and an address for her release.

As a result Margot*'s mental health and judgment have significantly improved, which has been noted by prison staff as she has engaged better with the wider prison regime too. Speaking about her experience, Margot* said: "Thank you so much for the referral, PACT's support was invaluable and I wouldn't have known about it without seeing you."



Court Pilot

As part of CFO Evolution delivery, CFO Activity Hubs are working to operate a direct-from-court referral programme so that participants have an additional pathway of support within the court process.

One of these CFO Activity Hubs engaging with courts is in Birmingham. The Hub Manager was invited to speak to the Children's Policy Team who spent the day reviewing the Birmingham Problem Solving Court. The benefits of the CFO Activity Hub were discussed as an integral part of supporting women receiving support from the with Intensive Supervision Courts (ISC) partnership.

A review of the ISC pilot has been favourable with a likely renewal of the service for at least another year, with participants experiencing the benefits.

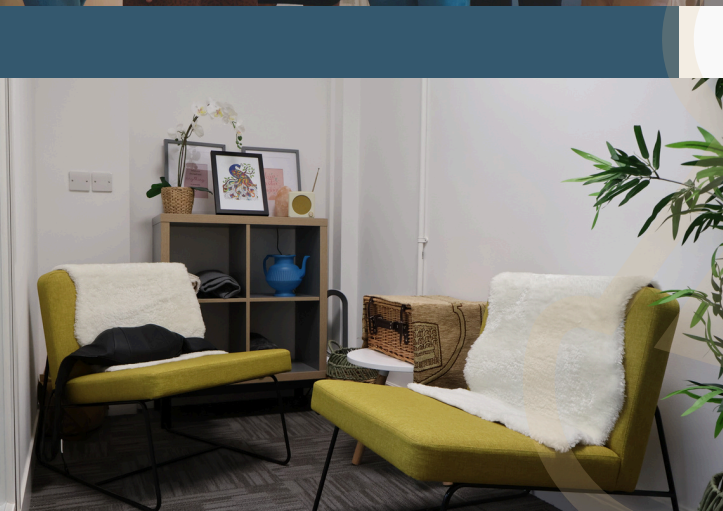
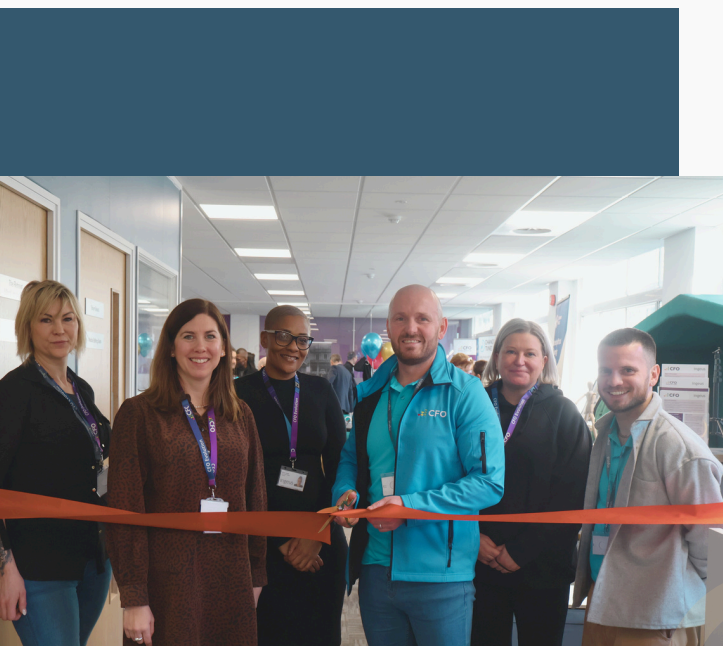
Visits by Lord Timpson and MPs to review the service were highly successful and planned rollouts for other courts (such as youth services) are being considered following the format of the women's provision.

An event was also held at the Birmingham CFO Activity Hub to allow staff involved in the ISC pilot to experience what is available for participants, such as women-only sessions, arts and crafts, cooking, sports, and wellbeing walks.

Attendees included judges, court staff, probation practitioners and women currently navigating the criminal justice system. One participant, Kadie*, was working on obtaining formal identification to secure employment having overcome addiction challenges, whilst Annette* (Peer Mentor) was making sure the Hub was welcoming for attendees. She said: "I love the way the Hub makes me feel."

The Hub's sessions are designed with the intense schedules of women under close supervision in mind, providing a range of activities and support. It is envisaged strong relationships such as these will be mutually beneficial for the CFO Activity Hubs, courts and participants, allowing more people to access the benefits of CFO services.

Sadie Tutton is CFO's Court Thematic Lead. If you would like to get in touch about the work CFO do with courts, get in touch with Sadie via:
CFO-ContractManagement@justice.gov.uk





Contributing to the Wider Prison Community

The CLU Herb Garden has been created by Lifers residing on the CFO Community Living Unit (CLU) at HMP High Down. Participants had missed gardening, and the project is packed with sustainable credentials.

Participants weeded and organised the space before planting a variety of plant-species, which are now available for the whole community to use. The project has achieved a biodiversity gain with 6 different herbs and 12 vegetable plants being present within the garden. The group also planted 5 species of flowers to add to the aesthetic of the space, which provide pollinators to the space too.

The project has been worked on in different sessions, with up to 10 participants taking part at once (alongside the support of Specialist Officers Mandy and Marc who ensure good practice in delivery of the activity). The 'Repair Squad' have also been involved in the project, upcycling materials to be used in the garden, and everything grown in the garden has been donated as surplus to requirement elsewhere, minimising wastage across at the prison.

Matheus*, who led on the project commented: "Setting up the Herb Garden has been a true community effort with input from different areas of the prison." Whilst Peter* added: "I am so grateful for the CLU Herb Garden. I have found it to be a place of reflection, calm and peace. I've been allowed to use it for meetings with my keyworker, and for meetings of my Twelve Steps group. It's a perfect place to escape the noise of the wing, and to breathe fresh air, smell the herbs and plants. Thank you to all who started and look after the CLU Herb Garden. It's made a positive difference in my life and I'm grateful."



Sustainable Development



Elsewhere, participants living at the CFO Hamlet at HMP Drake Hall have been involved a project of collecting, cleaning and recycling old crisp packets to make blankets. They are then donated to charities in the local area.

More than eight billion packets of crisps are sold every year in the UK, the majority of which end up in landfill. By reducing this waste, the participants have been part of a project with both environmental and community benefits.



Custody Highlights



CFO Evolution delivery is available in over 90 prison estates, here are just some of the highlights from custody.

Dedicated CFO Wings are available in 13 prisons throughout the country. They are welcoming spaces where individuals feel supported, understood, cared for. Different phases are engaged with by participants with each working towards a successful release.

Participants at the CFO Summit at HMP Lancaster Farms took part in a rowing challenge, raising money in aid of Northwest Air Ambulance to give back to the community.

At The Willow at HMP The Mount, participants have been actively engaging in the community spirit with a garden taking shape with planters made by the group in woodwork. Just like at the CLU (on the previous page), this space aims to create a sanctuary on the wing.



Sam*, who engaged with CFO at HMP Rochester said: "I think CFO Evolution is a great support network for inside the prison to help meet your goals and achievements whilst in custody. I feel you can offer great opportunities when you are released. I am grateful for the opportunity to work alongside the Wing Facilitators as Redband. I will never forget their support; it really does mean a lot to me." This positive experience was echoed by Richmond* at HMP Highpoint, who said: "Thank you for taking your time and helping me create a CV and giving me information on Disclosure. I feel like I have everything I need now to apply for a job and 100% more confident in myself than I did when arriving at the prison thank you."

For more information on CFO Wings and custodial delivery, please visit: [CreatingFutureOpportunities.gov.uk/Custody-Delivery](https://www.creatingfutureopportunities.gov.uk/Custody-Delivery)

Community Highlights

CFO Evolution delivery is available in all regions, and here are just some of the highlights from the community.

Participants can engage in more holistic activities that help to build confidence, peer relationships and allow for the tackling of significant barriers to reducing reoffending.

Marcus* has a passion for gardening, being part of outdoor sessions at the Leeds CFO Activity Hub. Speaking about his experience he said: "Coming to the Hub has helped me to be active rather than just sitting in my bedroom. I socialise more and it's helped with my alcohol problem – it's pulled me out of that bottomless pit."

Elsewhere, in Manchester, Gavin* has been taking part in group art sessions, and said about his experience:

"The Hub has helped keep me busy and off the street, I like coming in and working with my Support Worker, and they have a lot of great activities. They have helped me with keeping busy and my accommodation. They've helped me to fill out forms and to learn cooking."

Peer Mentors at Sheffield CFO Activity Hub have been helping others along their rehabilitative journey, and sharing how the CFO programme has impacted on their lives. One of these Peer Mentors, Justin*, said: "The biggest thing the Hub has given me is a reason to get out of bed and get out of the house. This has given me a lot of purpose and reason to change."

To learn more about CFO delivery in the community, or see what is available in your region, please visit: [CreatingFutureOpportunities.gov.uk/Community-Delivery](https://www.creatingfutureopportunities.gov.uk/Community-Delivery)



Make a referral

Referrals can be made to CFO Evolution via:
CreatingFutureOpportunities.gov.uk/CFO-Evolution-Referrals
or by scanning the QR code!



CreatingFutureOpportunities.gov.uk

*Names changed to avoid disclosure of identity