

# News story: New cash to help vulnerable women turn their backs on crime

Vulnerable women at risk of committing crime are to benefit from tailored, targeted support to break the cycle of reoffending and turn their lives around for good – backed by funding totalling over £800,000, Justice Minister Dr Phillip Lee has today (28 March 2017) announced.

Successful bidders in 6 regions across the country

- Lancashire
- Shropshire
- Norfolk
- Sussex
- Surrey
- Devon

will use the cash boost to increase the support on offer to female offenders both behind bars and in the community. This should improve life chances for vulnerable women and cut crime.

The money will be used to provide a more joined-up and tailored support for local women at risk of crime and in the justice system. It will bring together local agencies and services to provide wraparound care and support to women to turn their backs on crime for good.

Some areas will use the money to help generate better working relationships with counterparts in the NHS, courts and police, making sure that vulnerable women have access to the services they need.

One area which has already benefited from the funding has developed a successful early intervention pilot, identifying female offenders as soon as they come into contact with the police.

Almost half of women released from prison reoffend within a year. Yet many suffer from a range of complex issues including substance misuse, mental health problems and domestic violence. These require specialist support and intervention to improve lives and end the scourge of reoffending which costs the taxpayer £15 billion a year.

Justice Minister Dr Phillip Lee said:

I am delighted to announce this investment in support for female offenders, which will help local areas to support vulnerable women and get them out of the cycle of crime.

Many women who are at risk of offending or reoffending have a range

of complex circumstances. Our funding will help local areas provide the support women need to lead crime free lives, helping to reduce reoffending, cut crime and make our streets safer.

I am absolutely committed to improving support for women as part of our wider reforms and we will set out our strategy to improve outcomes for female offenders later in the year.

The money will be used in these communities to put structures in place to assess and address the needs of these women at an early stage and provide the kind of wraparound support that can make all the difference in diverting them from crime.

The areas will develop their own unique strategies which are best targeted to address the needs of women in their areas, working across local public and third sector organisations.

Today's announcement builds on the wholesale changes taking place across the criminal justice system following on from the publication of the Prison Safety and Reform White Paper in November last year.

This includes giving governors more powers over education, work and health, so they can tailor support to the prisoners in their charge.

---

## **News story: Improved mail service ensures loved ones can stay in touch**

The new contract with Neopost will mean Britain's Armed Forces will continue to receive hard copy, secure mail, including photos, from their loved ones, for free and with no break in service as the new imail INTouch system takes over from the e-bluey on 1 April 2017.

The new imail INTouch system will allow users to send up to eight pages, including high definition photographs and official documents. The old e-bluey system that is being replaced only allowed single pages to be sent and did not support high definition photographs. Use of the e-bluey has dropped by 98% since 2007, with the same fixed cost, meaning it no longer provided value for money for the taxpayer.

With around 4000 personnel on over 20 operations around the world, communications are very important to personnel and their loved ones, especially for those who do not typically use electronic communications.

Defence Minister Mark Lancaster said:

We are investing in a better mail service to make sure our Armed Forces can stay in touch with their loved ones for free when they are away from home.

Along with improved internet connections and global post deliveries, imail means families can now send longer messages and share higher quality photos than before with personnel serving around the world.

The MOD's new contract with Neopost will reflect actual usage and offer around half a million pounds worth of savings, which will be reinvested into welfare services like improved internet and Wi-Fi provision around the world.

By offering both secure internet calls, emails, a letter and parcel service, as well as the imail INTouch service, we have ensured that our personnel have a range of ways of keeping in touch with their loved ones while they are deployed.

Sara Baade, Chief Executive, Army Families Federation

It's good news that this service is being rolled out and there will not be a gap between e-Bluey ceasing and the new contract with Neopost beginning.

Communication with families whilst on operations is vital for morale and it is encouraging that this service will offer a raft of ways for families to stay in touch with their loved ones.

We will monitor this contract to make sure it is offering families the best service possible and we eagerly await news of how the reinvested money will be used to support Army welfare services around the world.

The MOD is committed to the welfare of its people and enshrined the Armed Forces Covenant in law, a promise from the nation that those who serve or have served, and their families, are treated fairly. Replacing the ageing e-bluey service is recognition of the fact that, to provide the best possible communication system for service personnel overseas, we must take advantage of the latest technology. This is why the funding for e-bluey is being redirected to imail INTouch and development of cutting-edge communications solutions.

---

# [SNP letting down hundreds of youngsters with mental health problems each year](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- SNP letting down hundreds of youngsters with mental health problems each year

27 Mar 2017



Research has revealed that hundreds of children every year are receiving mental health treatment in unsuitable wards.

The release of the worrying statistics come ahead of the publication of the Scottish Government's Mental Health Strategy this week.

It has previously been advised that all youngsters in need of acute mental health support should be treated in one of the specialist children's mental health wards across the country.

However, between 2007 – the year the SNP came into power – and 2015, a massive 1,840 children and adolescents were admitted to non-specialist beds. The total of 248 recorded between 2014/15 shows that the number of youngsters unable to receive treatment in these specialist units remains frighteningly high.

The Scottish Conservatives are calling for the SNP to start treating the issue of mental health with greater seriousness, and ensure that there are enough inpatient beds for children and young people across Scotland.

**Scottish Conservative mental health spokesman Miles Briggs said:**

“This is yet further evidence of the SNP government's lack of attention in regard to mental health.

“It's worrying to see so many children with acute mental health problems not being given treatment in the most appropriate environment.

“Mental health issues are now more apparent than ever and it's only right these youngsters receive the specialist care that will give them the best possible chance of a speedy recovery.

“The SNP has to provide more support for these vulnerable people in its

upcoming mental health strategy, and this means investing in children and adolescent mental health services.”

---

Miles Briggs PQ and table of number of children and adolescents being admitted to non-specialist beds between 1999 and 2015:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Number-of-children-and-adolescents-non-specialist-beds.pdf>

Scottish Conservative mental health policy:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Scottish-Conservative-Mental-Health-Policy.pdf>

---

## Minister launches hunt for 2017 Apprenticeship Awards Cymru stars

The Minister selected Crimewatch Alarms Ltd and CW Electrical, a Newport-based electrical contractor and security and fire alarms specialist, as a shining example of what can be achieved by a business that invests in apprenticeships to develop a highly skilled workforce.

She’s hoping that many similar companies across Wales will apply for this year’s coveted awards, which are launched by the Welsh Government in partnership with the National Training Federation for Wales (NTfW). The awards are sponsored by Pearson PLC and supported by media partner, Media Wales.

Application forms are available to download from the [NTfW’s website](#) (external link) and the closing date is **noon on June 23, 2017**.

Finalists in 11 categories will be shortlisted for awards, which will be presented at a high-profile ceremony to be held at the Celtic Manor Resort, Newport on October 20, 2017.

Crimewatch Alarms Ltd and CW Electrical is a family run business that has made training and development its top priority since it was formed by managing director, Harry Meese, 31 years ago.

Being named Small Employer of the Year in 2016 was the company’s first major award since the SME Award 2007 from Constructing Excellence Wales and has been a springboard for significant business growth.

“Entering last year’s Apprenticeship Awards Cymru was one of the best things we have ever done,”

said director Rachel Meese-Kendall.

“It has taken the company to another level and created lots of opportunities for us. I was advised by one of the judges, a former award winner, to take every opportunity that was given to us and that’s what I’ve done.

“Winning the award has thrown us into the limelight and improved our business turnover. Due to extra work, we have recruited three more staff and are taking on three new apprentices from a local school in September.”

The company now employs 39 staff, with another new job in the pipeline. There are five apprentices currently on the books and another two trainees are soon to progress to apprenticeships.

The company mainly works for large residential landlords and development companies across South Wales, but it is now expanding into England.

Rachel explained that the company had planned for business growth, due to an upsurge in the building industry, by ensuring that its workforce is multi-skilled. Former apprentices who have grown with the business make up around 70 per cent of their operative team.

The company works with training provider Coleg QS to provide the best training possible for not only its own workforce but also apprentices employed by other contractors and clients.

Delighted that the company was continuing to reap the rewards of investing in apprenticeships, Skills and Science Minister, Julie James said:

“Developing skilled people is vital for our economy and Crimewatch Alarms Ltd and CW Electrical is a shining example of the business success that can be achieved by investing in and developing the workforce.”

The Minister added:

“More employers across Wales are recognising the value of our successful apprenticeship programme and the need to raise higher level skills in order to address skills gaps and respond to industry changes.

“The Apprenticeship Awards Cymru provide a perfect platform for us to celebrate the achievements of the programme through our star

apprentices, employers and learning providers whose stories never cease to amaze and inspire.”

The awards recognise learners, employers and training providers across Wales, who have excelled on the Welsh Government’s Traineeship and Apprenticeship Programmes.

The Apprenticeship Programme is funded by the Welsh Government with support from the European Social Fund.

In the employability category, there are awards for Traineeship Learner of the Year for Engagement and Level 1. There are also awards for the best foundation apprentice, apprentice and higher apprentice of the year.

The business category includes awards for small (1 to 49), medium (50 to 249), large (250 to 4,999) and macro (5,000 plus) employer of the year, while work-based learning practitioners will compete for assessor and tutor of the year.

---

## **News story: Broadband providers drop cancellation fees for Armed Forces personnel**

The commitment from the UK’s biggest broadband providers representing 95 per cent of Britain’s broadband market comes into force immediately, and will benefit tens of thousands of Forces households in the UK and abroad.

The change agreed to under the tenets of the Armed Forces Covenant includes BT, EE, Plusnet, Talk Talk and Virgin Media, who have all committed to treating military personnel fairly when cancelling their contracts.

Up until now, members of the Armed Forces who are deployed overseas or to different parts of the UK not covered by their provider could be forced to pay a cancellation fee. They will no longer have to face this cost and be disadvantaged due to the mobile nature of service life.

Defence Minister Mark Lancaster, said:

Our Armed Forces are sent all over the world and across the country to help keep our country safe and they should never be at a disadvantage because of this. The removal of cancellation fees by leading broadband providers is yet another example of the Covenant in action, which is making sure our brave personnel are treated fairly. It’s a welcome move and we’re looking forward to seeing

what more British businesses can do to support our military.

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation ensuring that those who serve or have previously served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly and not disadvantaged by their service. Delivery partners include businesses and trade bodies, charities and community organisations, local authorities and government departments.

BT Chief Executive Gavin Patterson, said:

Armed Forces personnel play a vital role protecting our country, whether serving overseas or stationed away from home in other parts of the UK. That's why we're committed to ensuring they don't have to pay for broadband or TV services they can't access, when they find themselves in this situation. Whether it's through today's announcement, our hiring of ex-armed forces personnel, or through our work with Reservists, BT, along with our fellow signatories are proud to support our country's military personnel.

TalkTalk Chief Executive, Dido Harding, added:

We recognise that service personnel and their families face unique challenges, not least due to the fact they are regularly posted to new locations all over the country and abroad, often at short notice. TalkTalk was the first ISP to recognise how tricky this can be and offer free disconnections for service personnel moving overseas, and we're delighted that the rest of the industry has followed suit.

Today's announcement follows previous Covenant pledges by UK businesses to support personnel when they are posted overseas.

Last year, the UK's largest insurers and brokers allowed personnel and their families posted abroad to keep their No Claims Bonus for up to three years, and also waived cancellation fees.

47 of the UK's high street banks and building societies also committed to letting personnel posted overseas and around the UK rent out their homes without facing higher mortgage costs or having to change to a buy-to-let mortgage.