**The Forward Trust Job Description**

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| **Position Title** | **Essex RECONNECT Peer Support Worker** | **Reports to** | **Essex RECONNECT Team Leader** |
| **Locations: HMP Chelmsford inc. some remote working** | | | |
| **Salary: £24,484** | | | |

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| **Introducing Forward Trust** |

We are The Forward Trust (formerly RAPt and Blue Sky), the social enterprise with charitable status that empowers people to break the often-interlinked cycles of crime and addiction to move forward with their lives. For more than 25 years we have been working with people to build positive and productive lives, whatever their past. We believe that anyone is capable of lasting change. Our services have supported thousands of people to make positive changes and build productive lives with a job, family, friends and a sense of community.

In 2021, Forward Trust were given the opportunity to deliver **NHS RECONNECT** services across the Norfolk & Suffolk prison estate which then extended to cover Essex in April 2023, and further still across the whole of the East of England as of April 2025.

**What is RECONNECT?**

RECONNECT is a care after custody service that seeks to improve the continuity of care of people leaving prison or an immigration removal centre (IRC) with an identified health need, and subsequently aims to address the health inequalities experienced by those individuals. The service starts working with people before they leave prison, where they will have access to a RECONNECT Worker, who helps them to make the transition to community-based services that will provide the health and care support that they need. The RECONNECT service was first announced the [NHS Long Term Plan](https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/publication/nhs-long-term-plan/#:~:text=The%20NHS%20Long%20Term%20Plan%20was%20developed%20in,staff,%20patients%20and%20their%20families%20and%20other%20experts.) (LTP) and is the biggest new investment in Health and Justice services for the past six years. The RECONNECT ambition is to support more people leaving prison to make the transition to community-based services, ensuring that they continue to receive the care and support they need.

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| **Role/Team Overview** |

**Person Specification:**

**In line with Forward Trust Equality, Diversity and Inclusion framework, this NHS commissioned RECONNECT service takes pride in recruiting those with lived experience, be that of physical or mental ill health, substance misuse or of the criminal justice system. As a result, we are looking to recruit someone with a relevant lived experience for this position in order to enhance the provision of our service.**

Within this role, you will be responsible for providing a comprehensive, inclusive and bespoke RECONNECT service, including advice and guidance to Forward Trust clients **across HMP Chelmsford and the wider community in Essex.**

RECONNECT enables service users to access and sustain supportive interventions upon release from prison, whether that be substance use needs, physical health or mental health support, in addition to general well-being advice and guidance. The service will offer mentor link in, sign-posting, GP referrals, aftercare support and a connection to the wider Forward community. Following a referral 12-weeks prior to release, the service will identify the service user’s health needs via a robust assessment with a bespoke care plan then created with the client at the centre.

**Some of the Key responsibilities of the role are as follows:**

* Process referrals and provide updates to referrer on assessment outcome.
* Conduct in-depth needs assessment for all suitable referrals.
* Maintain contact and support to Service Users for up-to 6 months post-release with health and wellbeing needs as identified during assessment.
* To manage a busy caseload of diverse service users, supporting them with the reintegration into society and to engage with local healthcare providers in the community.
* To support Team Leader with the recruitment and training of prison peer supporters.
* Maintain excellent partnerships with external agencies and key-stakeholders.
* To demonstrate high level admin skills, including keeping clear and concise case notes as well as completing detailed assessments, care plans and risk assessments.
* Support with implementing and maintaining clear referral pathways for external agencies and stakeholders such as Offender Management in Custody, Family / Self, Prison and Healthcare.
* Ensure that a holistic service is delivered safely to our clients in line with individual and team targets.
* Working closely with your colleagues you will discuss and share best practice and fully engage with risk assessment processes to deliver a high-quality service safely.
* To make referrals to Forward Trust Meet and Greet service and support with Meet at the Gate releases as applicable.
* Ensuring that service users are fully connected in with local services in preparation for release into the community.

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| **Accountabilities** |

Forward Trust’s core purpose is to break the cycle of crime and you play a key part in bringing it to life. In practice, this means supporting your colleagues to deliver interventions to the standards required and to the needs of each client.

As a RECONNECT Peer Support Worker you will be responsible for contributing to the targets set by Forward and the local commissioners to make this service a success. You will be client facing assessing and responding directly to the needs of the service user, whilst communicating with internal and external agencies to ensure an excellent quality service. You will actively seek Service User feedback both during and after their engagement to identify good practice and ways for the service can improve.

**Service Delivery**

* To increase access to and uptake up of healthcare, mental health and relevant services for people leaving prison.
* To reduce health inequalities for prison populations.
* To ensure that the health needs of individuals who are leaving prison are met.
* To ensure a safe transition from prison to community healthcare, mental health and other support services in England and to provide ongoing support so that engagement is maintained.
* To receive and review referrals for the RECONNECT service, identifying those who require a referral to a community health service or other service and ensure they are supported in their engagement.
* To facilitate engagement and liaise with community healthcare and/or other services and enable delivery of a coordinated response.
* To provide advocacy, practical support and to act as a voice for individuals who struggle to engage.
* To develop detailed knowledge of community healthcare and other services and to develop relationships so that users of the RECONNECT service are able to access comprehensive and co-ordinated care.
* To support Team Leader with the recruitment, training, and line management of community mentors /volunteers and peer supporters (within the prisons) as well as supporting them to achieve OCN or equivalent qualification/s in mentoring.

**Performance Management**

* Meet required KPI’s and targets to corresponding deadlines
* Encourage a positive working environment through role modelling and sharing good practice within the team.

**Quality and Safety**

* The RECONNECT Team will identify any safeguarding concerns and make the appropriate referrals.
* Ensure continuous improvement of the project by sharing best practice.
* Alert the implementation lead to any significant risks or problems arising in the course of managing and monitoring the project.
* Ensure that information, including statistical data, for audit, research and reporting purposes, is effectively and efficiently collected, recorded and collated in the assigned area.
* To support Team Leader in conducting quality checks and observations for prison peer supporters.

**Administration**

* Complete and maintain care plans and assessments to the required standards.
* Ensure all case management/intervention documentation is maintained to the expected audit standards.
* Feed into quarterly reports to the Commissioner which will include S/U feedback and how Forward has responded to this feedback.
* Utilise both Nebula and SystmOne to keep accurate case notes in line with contractual expectations.
* Ensure data capture forms are submitted in a timely manner in order to reflect outcomes.

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| **Role Criteria** |

**Below is a list of the criteria required to apply for this role; please address each of these points in your application.**

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| **Knowledge, Skills and Experience** | | |
| Lived Experience of either the Criminal Justice System, Substance Use and/or Physical or Mental ill Health. | Essential |  |
| Experience of working within mental health, emotional wellbeing or substance misuse services | Desirable |  |
| Experience of carrying out comprehensive assessments and the design and implementation of SMART care plans. | Essential |  |
| Experience of delivering structured interventions to service users | Essential |  |
| Experience of facilitating groups | Desirable |  |
| Use of motivational interviewing techniques in both 1:1 and group settings | Essential |  |
| Strong IT skills and Admin Skills to support project and caseload management | Essential |  |
| Flexibility to meet the needs of the service as it develops | Essential |  |
| Ability to represent The Forward Trust in a positive and professional manner | Essential |  |
| Ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of stakeholders and in a variety of formats | Essential |  |
| Experience of working within the criminal justice sector | Desirable |  |
| Experience of working effectively with partner agencies to promote successful outcomes for service users | Desirable |  |
| Experience of implementing new projects within required timeframes | Desirable |  |
| Good organisational and planning skills | Desirable |  |
| **Personal Attributes** |  |  |
| **Proactivity** – Quick thinking with a high-level use of initiative | Essential |  |
| **Resilience** – Solves problems, takes learning on board from mistakes to aid personal and professional growth | Essential |  |
| **Adaptability** – Can work in fast-paced changing environments | Essential |  |
| **Confidence** – Has confidence in own abilities, has good eye contact and able to communicate clearly and concisely | Essential |  |
| **Team Work** – Works in harmony with colleagues to deliver results | Essential |  |
| **Open to Feedback** - Open to constructive feedback in order to further develop | Essential |  |
| **Qualification** |  |  |
| A Diploma in Health & Social Care or equivalent | Desirable |  |
| Relevant qualification to the field of mental health or substance misuse | Desirable |  |

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| **Forward’s Mission and Values** |

**Our vision**:

Is that anyone, whatever their history and circumstances, can find the help they need to turn away from a life of crime and/or addiction, to build a fulfilling and productive life with family, work and community, while inspiring and supporting others to follow the same path.

**Our mission**:

Is to bring lasting change to people’s lives, away from addiction and/or crime by delivering services that inspire the belief in a better life, and provide clear steps to achieve this change- bringing benefits to our service users, their families and communities.

**Our values**:

Underpin all of our work. They are at the heart of Forward- who we are, what we do and how we do it.

**Empowering:** We pride ourselves on treating others with care, respect and dignity, whether our clients, colleagues, supporters or partners. We believe in nurturing self-belief and independence to empower people to achieve their goals. Through the inspiration of others and by being honest and approachable we aim to support people to build the trust and courage to be the best they can be.   
 **Collaborative:** We seek out opportunities to collaborate with others, identifying common goals and complementary expertise and abilities. Through a respect for the strengths and differences of others; effective and open communication; and a commitment to remaining flexible in our approach, we strive to achieve the best outcomes together.   
  
**Expert:** We approach problems using insights and evidence to find a solution. Our approaches are proven to work and make a positive impact. We are trusted experts, consistently delivering quality whilst remaining adaptable and resilient in the face of change.

**Courageous:** We are deeply committed to our work and ambitious in what we can achieve. We are unafraid to challenge or speak up if it’s needed to do the best work we can. We are courageous enough to not only embrace or generate change where it means we can make an even bigger difference, but also to take responsibility to play our part in delivering that change.   
  
**Innovative:** We embrace creativity in all that we do. Whether seeking out new approaches, adapting and responding to changes around us, solving problems, engaging others or finding smart and cost effective ways of working, we actively look for innovative ideas and new solutions in our efforts to do our best.

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| **Competencies** |

**Self-Awareness/Management:** Sets, maintains and reflects on appropriate professional/personal boundaries within the workplace. Has the self-awareness to state accurately her/his personal responsibility and skill level.

**Relationship Building:** Builds strong, professional and positive relationships with all. Establishes a reputation for modelling trust and collaboration across Forward.

**Effective Communication:** Provides timely and high quality information to the appropriate people. Delivers open and clear expression of ideas and opinions, both face-to-face and through written medium. Listens effectively and responds appropriately with others.

**Honesty and Integrity:** Interacts with others in a way that simulates trust and confidence; employs a set of behaviours based on a strong sense of fairness and discretion, honouring confidentiality and always acting in a manner consistent with the values of Forward.

**Open to Change:** Accepts that change will always be a feature of Forward: responds positively to new developments and adapts successfully to evolving circumstances and events.

**Positive Attitude:** Bases behaviour on a positive set of beliefs, demonstrating a “can do” mentality that seeks solutions and answers to situations; valued by others for her/his affirming and helpful working style.

**Commitment and Accountability:** Answerable for her/his own personal actions; understands the link between her/his own responsibilities and activities, as well as the broader organisational goals of Forward. Rises above personal circumstances and implements a plan of action when confronted by issues or problems.

**Creativity and Innovation:** Generates ideas about, and forms approaches to, the work s/he undertakes. Open-minded and considers how s/he can constantly refresh the way in which s/he carries out duties for Forward.