

YELLOW RIBBON ::

# HELPING CHANGE LIVES

Established in 2013, Yellow Ribbon is a through-the-gate charity which works with ex-offenders, providing a vital bridge between prison and effective life back in the community.

Believing forgiveness and reconciliation are key to welcoming people out of prison and back into society we befriend, assist, challenge and change behaviour that may have led to offending.

By offering accommodation, one to one mentoring, and helping ex-offenders address issues, we believe that lives can be turned around.



**“Every person is unique, and so is their journey...”**



Yellow Ribbon recognises that Ex-offenders can face a complex set of barriers when beginning their journey of return to the community. For each person that journey will be different. All start from a slightly different place. All will have slightly different eventual goals.

**Therefore the help and support that we provide must take account of this uniqueness and build upon it if clients are to have the best possible chance of reaching their full potential.**

Because we recognise this, Yellow Ribbon works with ex-offenders upon release, (and ideally shortly prior to) assessing the support each individual needs and putting together a suitable support plan - utilising a holistic, purposeful approach which provides accommodation, work-based learning and growth in life skills. This ensures the best possible chance of our clients succeeding in reaching their goals, breaking the cycles of negative behaviours and moving into a productive and sustainable future.

Key to this transformation is building a trusted and valued relationship so their voice is heard. Focusing on the one is essential, as each of our clients is unique and needs support tailored to their needs.



**One of the biggest hurdles people have on release from prison is finding accommodation.**

Leaving prison can be a confusing and difficult time for many people. Many will have suffered a relationship breakdown, or be unable to return to their previous address either as a licence condition or through risk of return to previous offending behaviours due to their environment and association with others.

This often results in ex-offenders ending up in a Bail Hostel upon release. These however are often reported as being difficult places to live, where the risk of drug use and / or violent behavior are frequently present.

Yellow Ribbon provides safe stable accommodation at multiple properties in Telford, Shrewsbury and the west midlands, currently housing up to 37 clients.

Our properties range from house shares to individual self-contained flats.

**“Stability begins by having a safe place to live...”**

**Yellow Ribbon recognises the importance of a suitable living environment as a base from which our clients can begin the journey back to a place in society.**

We also have links to private landlords and are able to assist clients in moving on to a property of their own when ready for more independent living..

Our clients are quick to confirm that living in one of the Yellow Ribbon properties has given them the start they need to rebuild their lives.

# “The right support saves lives...”

**Yellow Ribbon provides the critical through the gate support often needed by those who are being released from prison:**

In 2013 the Ministry of Justice published a report entitled: Transforming Rehabilitation: a summary of evidence on reducing reoffending.

It identified the following as some of the major causes of re-offence:

- *Drug misuse*
- *Alcohol misuse*
- *Impulsivity or low self-control*
- *Attitudes that support crime*
- *Poor support networks*
- *Lack of/poor family and intimate relationships*
- *Lack of employment*
- *Lack of Suitable accommodation*
- *Mental Health Issues*

And identified the following as factors significantly contributing to the reduction of re-offence:

- *Sobriety*
- *Employment*
- *Hope and motivation*
- *Having something to give to others*
- *Having a place within a social group*
- *Not having a criminal identity*
- *Being believed in*

**At Yellow Ribbon we recognise the importance of all of these factors and provide active support and mentorship.**

We have in-house counselling and support services for mental health combined with mentorship and befriending, and work with a large number of partner agencies who can provide additional specialist support with issues such as substance misuse and alcohol recovery.

We also ensure that clients are supported with things that others may just take for granted – such as help understanding forms, making benefit claims and coping with day to day life.

Support services include: Addiction support, Mental Health Support, Debt management & Budget advice, Life Skills building and family / relationship support.



# “Getting work has turned my life around...”



**A key step in returning to a useful and productive life is securing employment, but getting a foot back onto the employment ladder is not always easy for prison leavers.**

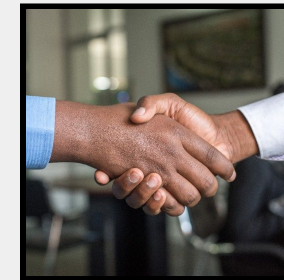
It is sadly fairly common still for there misconceptions about reliability of those with a previous conviction, but it is widely accepted that ex-offenders on the whole go on to be excellent employees.

Here at Yellow Ribbon, we have a range of projects which address these issues, providing training opportunities and work experience as part of the returning to work process.

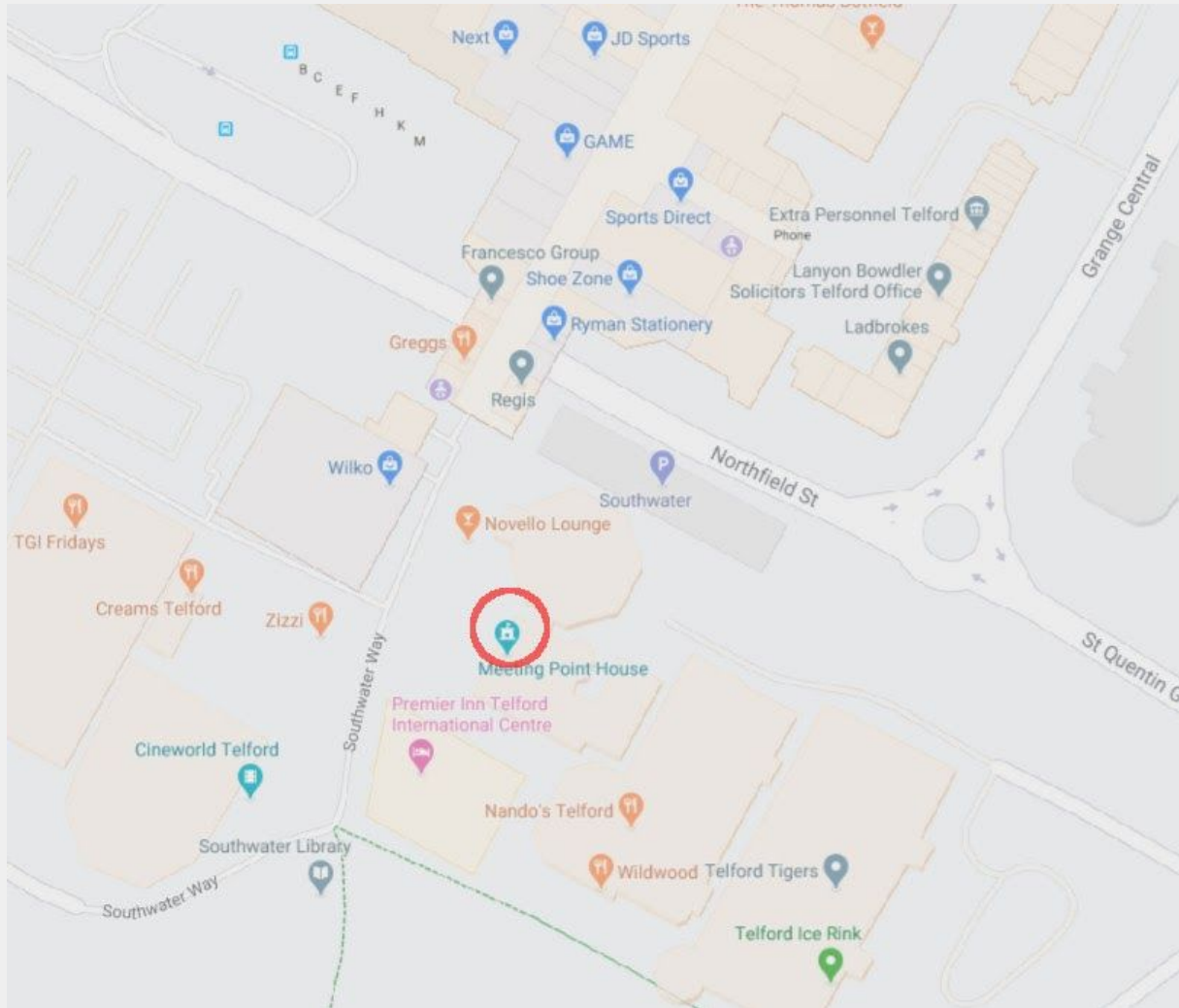
We look at all of our clients skills and experience and use this to create a personal employment plan which will help those released from prison to identify areas where they can upskill, to improve their qualifications and CV, to gain work experience, to apply for jobs and to gain suitable employment.

We enjoy close ties with local employers and agencies, and have been successful in placing our clients in both paid and voluntary posts.

If you are an employer and have any questions about accepting volunteer work placements / internships or are in a position to offer full time employment to our clients we would like to hear from you.



# Contacting Yellow Ribbon



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