

## The 5-Part Plan

### 4. Community Mentoring – Individually and Group based.

1. **Individual mentoring:** Mentoring is a gift that is shared. It is a relationship that enables purposeful conversation. The conversation assists the mentored to reflect on their own experience, make-informed decisions and act upon the ideas that are generated. The purpose of mentoring is development. It is about learning, not teaching and both mentors and those mentored grow from the experience. In mentoring, people develop a trusting relationship through a conversation that enables them to set and achieve goals, make decisions and solve problems. Mentoring is enriching and satisfying for both partners. For our purpose, it involves walking alongside another person as they make the transition from prison back into the community. It is not about being an expert on life; it is about taking an interest in another person's progress. Pathway Trust provides training and support to volunteer mentors so that they are able to safely provide support to released prisoners.

2. **Group Mentoring:** Circles of Support originated in Canada, in the field of disability. The concept has been adapted to work with released prisoners. It brings together significant people in a person's life in a Circle of Support meeting where the individual shares their hopes, aspirations and needs.

This creates an opportunity for others to offer support, or to contribute according to their own ability and motivation. The facilitator clarifies the nature and extent of each contribution so that no one feels required to participate beyond their stated limits. Supporters work as a team with the facilitator, reducing the risk of burnout or being overwhelmed by an individual's needs.

For released prisoners, a Circle of Support can bring a high level of community support into a period of high need — the transition from prison to community life — in a structured manner. Some released prisoners will already have people who are ready, able and willing to be part of this process. Others will find it difficult to find people with this level of commitment, or will (wisely) seek not to re-establish relationships with past associates. Many people within Christian communities have a high level of social capital (good standing, respect, contacts etc), and are motivated to reach outside their peer group to help others, and already have some contact within the prison environment. The barriers to these people sharing their social capital are perceptions of risk, fear of the unknown, and being unaware of the need. We aim to reduce these barriers by providing guidance, training and support.

