

**Peer mentor & peer involvement roles in prison study series**

**CFO Community Living Unit Ambassador initiative at HMP High  
Down.**

Dr Katherine Albertson (2024)



## Contents

<b>Peer mentor &amp; peer involvement roles in prison study series</b> .....	1
<b>CFO Community Living Unit Ambassador initiative at HMP High Down.</b> .....	1
<b>Section 1: Mapping HMP High Down’s CFO Community Living Unit (CLU) Wing model.</b> .....	1
1.1    HMP High Down.....	1
1.2    The CFO wing model at the CLU .....	1
1.2.1    Specialist staff team .....	2
1.2.2    Meaningful activity programme .....	2
1.3    Peer involvement role selection, training, progression, and supervision .....	3
1.3.1    Recruitment .....	3
1.3.2    Training .....	3
3.3.3    Progression routes .....	4
1.4    Peer involvement across the programme .....	4
1.4.1    Phase 1: CFO Course .....	4
1.4.2    Phase 2: Community activities programme .....	4
1.4.3    Ambassador’s day-to-day contribution.....	4
1.5    Impact of peer involvement role .....	5
1.5.1    Ambassadors .....	5
1.5.2    Those supported by Ambassadors.....	5
1.5.3    Resident groups most benefitting .....	5
1.5.4    Wing climate .....	6
1.5.5    Wider prison.....	7
1.6    Peer involvement role attributes .....	8
1.6.1    Attributes .....	8
1.6.2    Gendered expectations: Male lifers operating in peer involvement roles in prison ..	8
1.7    Profiling residents more fulfilling life in prison aspirations.....	9
1.7.1    Enablers.....	9
1.7.2    Barriers .....	10
1.7.3    Aspirations .....	10
1.7.4    Peer involvement role as enabling collective aspirations?.....	11
1.8    Mapping further social capital building potential.....	11
<b>Section 2: Good practice, lessons learnt, and recommendations</b> .....	13
2.1    Identification of good practice examples .....	13
2.2    Identification of key challenges .....	13
2.3    Key lessons learnt.....	13
2.4    Recommendations .....	13

2.4.1	Clarify peer involvement role profile & progression.....	13
2.4.2	Optimise wider peer involvement role continuum .....	14
2.4.3	Optimise external accreditation options & existing prison pathways .....	14
Appendices: .....		15
Appendix 1: Utilising a Service User Ladder to embed a peer involvement strategy.....		15
Appendix 2: Mapping peer involvement roles at HMP High Down .....		17
Acknowledgements .....		18

## Section 1: Mapping HMP High Down’s CFO Community Living Unit (CLU) Wing model.

This section begins by mapping HMP High Down’s CFO wing pilot model. Section two presents the findings specific to the Community Living Unit (CLU). Details of the study design, methods and data collection activities undertaken at HMP High Down, and final sample profile details are presented in the Technical Appendices CFO Community Living Unit HMP High Down document. Please note: All respondent quotes in this report are pseudonymised<sup>1</sup>.

### 1.1 HMP High Down

High Down is a men’s prison and young offender institution (YOI), a Category C Training and resettlement prison near Sutton in Surrey, hosting 1200 prisoners. The CLU is a designated Lifer’s wing containing approximately 98 beds.

Table 1.1: HMP High Down profile

Category	CFO wing resident profile	CFO wing name
Adult Male & YOI Category C training & resettlement, prison	Lifer, Public Protection (IPP <sup>2</sup> ) and Extended Determinate (EDS <sup>3</sup> ) sentences	Community Living Unit (CLU)

### 1.2 The CFO wing model at the CLU

The CFO wing model is designed to offer a meaningful activity programme to wing residents. The residents have access to positive role models, generated with both the mixed CFO, HMPPS, Prime Provider, and Sub-contracted partner staff team. In addition, residents are encouraged to act in specific peer roles to support engagement in the CFO programme and promote a more community-feel on the wing. Community-capacity building activities are facilitated at the CLU, via the CFO Lifers activity programme focussing on management of and reflection on serving a long or indeterminate sentences (Life, IPP or EDS). These activities are delivered alongside a wing environment conducive to rehabilitation<sup>4</sup>, designed to make the CLU somewhere participants want to be. The key aims of the CFO CLU wing model are:

1. To provide a community wing environment where participants are given the tools to help with tasks contributing to society and lead law-abiding lives.
2. To provide Lifer wing residents peer involvement role opportunities to motivate other wing residents both to engage in the CFO programme and to provide support for others to sustain their positive engagement.

<sup>1</sup> Pseudonymisation is a data management and de-identification procedure by which personally identifiable information fields within a data record are replaced by artificial identifiers, or pseudonyms, meaning different names are used.

<sup>2</sup> Sentences of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPPs) were created by the Criminal Justice Act 2003 and started to be used in April 2005 for serious offenders whose crimes did not merit a life sentence. IPP are set a minimum term (tariff) which they must spend in prison. ([MoJ IPP Fact Sheet](#), accessed 18/02/24).

<sup>3</sup> Extended Determinate Sentences (EDS) were introduced in December 2012 as the replacement to the IPP sentence. ([Prison Reform Trust- Extended and Indeterminate sentences](#), (Accessed 18/02/24).

<sup>4</sup> CFO provide funding for wing redecoration, furniture, pictures, plants, kitchen equipment, e.g., toasters, kettles, air-fryers, and microwaves and t-shirts for CFO Officer staff and wing residents in Peer involvement, Peer support and peer mentor roles.

3. To provide a safe and supportive environment for long sentence serving prisoners.

### 1.2.1 Specialist staff team

The initial CFO pilot funding provided 18 months' salary costs at HMP High Down for:

- a CFO wing Custody Manager to co-ordinate operational delivery.
- two full time specialist HMPPS CFO Prison Officers<sup>5</sup>; and
- a subcontracted third sector Prime provider, providing three Case Managers.

In addition, HMPPS provided a Governor-level CFO wing pilot sponsor to support this innovation. Elements of core delivery are complemented by the prison's Physical Education Department staff and involve wing resident profile appropriate external charity sub providers delivering specific sessions (for example, Thinking Skills, Counselling, Mindfulness and Yoga). Prime provider staff are supported by their own agencies' line management. The CFO on-site delivery staff team are supported by regional CFO Performance Management and Evaluation teams. The Prime provider for delivery at HMP High Down is Shaw Trust<sup>6</sup>. The Shaw Trust operational delivery staff team offices are on the same floor as the CFO Custody Manager, and the HMPPS CFO Specialist prison officers have an office on the floor below.

### 1.2.2 Meaningful activity programme

At the CLU, meaningful collective generating activities are delivered via two discreet phases:

**Phase 1:** A 8-week CFO Lifers' activity programme involving between eight to ten residents.

**Phase 2:** A range of wing community-based activities, where opportunities exist for residents to 'give back' to their wing community.

To 'give back' is loosely defined as to engage in unpaid volunteer roles designed to improve the social climate on a wing and encourage a sense of belonging and pride in the living environment. These group activities are detailed in the table below.

Table 1.2.2: Phase 1 delivery phases at CLU & location

Phase 1	Phase 2
CFO Lifer Course: Classroom based, over 8 weeks.	CLU Community activities programme, over 8 weeks.
Delivery site location	Delivery site location
A CFO dedicated room in the Education Building.	CFO dedicated room in the Education building.

The phase 1 Lifers' course focuses on self-reflection, critical thinking skills, and strategies designed to help those serving long sentences think through their sentence planning options. Phase 1 is delivered by Prime provider Case Managers, alongside a number of resident profile appropriate external delivery sub-contractors and external charity sub providers. The weekly delivery is complemented by team building gym-based activity-time facilitated by the prisons

<sup>5</sup> At HMP High Down, the CFO Specialist Officers were graded at band 4.

<sup>6</sup> [CFO 3 - Shaw Trust Main](#)

Physical Education Department. The phase 1 core programme includes external Lived Experience agency staff coming back into prison to share their experience and inspire CLU residents on the programme:

*“We’ve met Lifers on this here course that are now out in the community and they have come back in to speak to us...like a role model, they show us that it’s possible that you can make it out to the other side because they managed the change. I’ve seen many people lose hope in here”*  
*(Devan, Ambassador & Peer mentor-trained, interview).*

*“I’d like to do that, to talk to young people and my experience in prison and drugs and try to steer them away from my lifestyle”* (Akai, Peer mentor-trained interview).

### 1.3 Peer involvement role selection, training, progression, and supervision

The aim of embedding a peer involvement element of delivery in the CFO wing model is to provide empowering role opportunities to residents. These opportunities can enhance CFO aims of generating a different relational community atmosphere and affect a positive social climate on the wing and the wider prison. At the CFO CLU, the unpaid Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Ambassador role was selected to support the delivery of the CFO Lifer wing activity programme.

Table 1.3: Peer involvement role delivery model at the CLU

Peer Support role(s) selected	Peer Support role training provider	Training accreditation	Supervision/ oversight	Progression routes
<b>Ambassador</b>	Prison’s Education provider, A4e.	QS Accredited Level 2 Award in Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG).	Weekly CFO Community meeting.	Currently being considered.

#### 1.3.1 Recruitment

Ambassador recruitment involved HMPPS CFO staff approaching wing residents who expressed an interest in this role. Based on CFO staff team discretion, recruitment into this role at the CLU is an ad-hoc process. It was also apparent those attending the Ambassador course did not see the role or the training being provided as attached in any way to the CFO activities programme. It is important to note however that the CFO operational delivery team are currently reconsidering their peer involvement role selection, as it is becoming apparent that:

*“The Ambassador training has not really prepared them for what we’d like them to do”* (Phillipa, Senior Management team, interview).

#### 1.3.2 Training

Those expressing an interest in the Ambassador role attend an externally accredited QS Level 2 Award in Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) course, delivered by the Prison’s Education

provider, A4e. The Ambassadors' interviews highlighted a distinct lack of clarity (to the point of being comprehensively incorrect in some respects) regarding the profile and scope of this role profile, particularly when comparing it with other peer roles available in prison:

*“The Ambassador training, it’s very, very similar to the likes of the Listener training...” (Marshall, Ambassador interview).*

### 3.3.3 Progression routes

The interviews with the Ambassadors at the CLU identified little in the way of the role holders considering this peer involvement role as an opportunity to progress. However, wing residents reflected this could easily be addressed with more resident engagement and a clear communication strategy:

*“I lived on a PIPE unit before I came here... The prisoners got more involved in the running of the wing, that’s what you need here.... you were more involved in making the wing work, for all of us. So, we’d have a community group, and we’d all go in there, sit down and express us opinions” (Julio, Peer Mentor & Ambassador-trained, not participating in the programme, interview).*

## 1.4 Peer involvement across the programme

### 1.4.1 Phase 1: CFO Lifer Course

The interviews, workshops and focus groups undertaken with a range of wing residents and staff generated little indication the Ambassador role holders were operating at all during the delivery of the phase 1 Lifer course.

### 1.4.2 Phase 2: Community activities programme

The delivery of the phase 2 community activities programme, although popular amongst CLU residents, similarly contained no evidence of Ambassador role engagement, support, or input. There are a multitude of ways in which Ambassadors can be deployed in arranging and delivering phase 2 activities to ensure they maintain and extend these relationships post phase 1 of the CFO delivery:

*“The relationships built were loosely based around course activities. The intensity is lost afterwards” (Brayden, CLU resident interview).*

### 1.4.3 Ambassador’s day-to-day contribution

Similarly, our interviews generated little indication Ambassador role holders were operating at all on the wing on a day-to-day basis. Indeed, Ambassadors interviewed highlighted a lack of clarity about the expectations and purpose of the role they had received training for:

*“Well, the Ambassadors, it’s like, I think when you come back, the wing probably don’t even know that you’ve done that course. You do the course and then once the course is done, it’s over. I think you just try to use the skills you learnt to practice them” (Marshall, Ambassador interview).*

## 1.5 Impact of peer involvement role

### 1.5.1 Ambassadors

All the Ambassadors interviewed indicated they had enjoyed the training, however they had little guidance how the training could be put into action on the wing or in their future sentence planning. During our second data collection site visit, a number of Ambassadors had clearly thought through how they'd like to contribute to other wing residents' engagement with the CFO programme and had made their own plans:

*“There’s another Lifer course starting in two weeks. I’m going to be a guest for a week. Because I want to explain to the guys what the course consists of, how beneficial it can be, the skills they can get from the programme, and why it’s essential they stay with the programme and finish it off” (Curtis, Ambassador interview).*

### 1.5.2 Those supported by Ambassadors

The wider resident interviews similarly contained little indication the Ambassadors role holders impacted on their experience of life on the CLU. Many wing residents mentioned the impact of the peer involvement role of Lifer Rep<sup>7</sup> at the CLU as having a positive and inspiring effect on the community. Good practice was identified as supporting peer involvement roles on the wing, as the CLU plays host to a weekly peer-run and peer-led recovery group meeting:

*“We spoke to the CFO Officers who agreed and said we would use the space on a Monday evening and, yes. At the moment we’re getting between five to eight people coming along, which is quite good. It’s on when we have association in the evenings- every week” (Devan, Ambassador & peer Mentor-trained, interview).*

The Lifer Rep was identified as playing a key peer support role on the CLU. It was also apparent clear this peer involvement role holder modelled a skills set associated with the peer involvement role of a peer mentor in prison:

*“I tell them – you’re just like ‘No one’s done nothing for me, and I want this, and I want that’. Reality check, things don’t happen like immediately all the time in life, you have to exercise patience sometimes. So, if you’ve asked an officer, give that officer a chance to be able to come up with the result. If it doesn’t happen you know, let’s re-evaluate and see if we can work a different route, or give that person a chance to actually explain why they haven’t managed to come up with that” (Jamar, Ambassador & Lifer Rep, interview).*

### 1.5.3 Resident groups most benefitting

Over time, as the peer involvement role selection at the CLU is reconsidered, identifying the profile of the residents the staff team would most like to see benefitting is a good starting point. CFO staff could work together with CLU residents to identify which resident group require the most support and then develop their own peer involvement role profile tailored to supporting this target group.

---

<sup>7</sup> The Lifer Rep role is a paid peer involvement position, paid for by the prison at peer role rates of pay.



#### 1.5.4 Wing climate

The term 'social climate' refers to the general character of the social milieu where people live (Bennett and Shuker, 2017). Life on a prison wing is traditionally portrayed as one of barely contained tension and calibrated confrontation in an "intrinsically infantilizing environment" (Crew, 2012, p 411-429). In contrast, opportunities for offenders to gain a sense of social inclusion, acceptance, and belonging are rare. These factors are identified as embodying key social climate-related concepts of citizenship, social justice, integration, and solidarity. All these are factors identified as key to transformation including desisting from crime (Maruna 2012; McNeill 2012; Fox, 2015: 2016).

##### *Community and relational mapping results*

At the CLU, as established above, residents were largely unaware of the Ambassador peer support role. Our "Community and relational mapping and prioritisation" focus group data analysis notwithstanding indicates a potential disruption of 'traditional' wing relationship dynamics (described above) at the CFO CLU. At CFO's CLU wing, 12 key relationships on the wing were identified (n=12); these were mapped against 5 relational constructs, from most to least: Knowledgeable; Trusted; Supportive; Honest; and Power to change. For the wing residents attending the mapping focus group, that had graduated from the CFO phase 1 Lifer course, in summary it was found:

- HMPPS CFO Specialist Officers were rated more highly in every construct than the generic prison wing officers.  
This is in contrast to the cohort who had not started on the CFO course when their focus group took place, CFO Specialist officers were not mentioned at all as key relationships in their experience of the wing.
- The wing resident community were rated more highly than Ambassadors in every construct.  
This is in contrast to the cohort who had not started on the CFO course when their focus group took place. The wing resident community were not mentioned at all by that cohort.
- Interestingly, the Lifer Rep role was not mentioned at all.  
This is in contrast to the cohort who had not started on the CFO course who identified the Lifer Rep role being approximately equivalent to the Ambassador role.

These findings are consistent with a strengthening of relationships between the HMPPS CFO Specialist officers and the wing resident community, and the strengthening of the wing community itself during the process of the intervention. In short, this supports the hypothesis that the traditional relation map of the wing has been disrupted positively by the CFO intervention. This disruption is not associated with the CFO Ambassador role itself but linked to engagement in the CFO Lifer course at phase 1 in our data.

It should be borne in mind that the cohort who had completed the CFO phase 1 interventions were different individuals from those who had not engaged with the course. Therefore, it may be the case that these cohorts are not directly comparable. Conducting mapping of the wing community and relational context would have functioned better as part of a before and after evaluation of the CFO wing initiative activity. This would have provided us with a wing community and social climate baseline, which could have then been repeated post CFO wing

initiative start up for more validated impact findings. This is an unavoidable limitation of the evaluation study design, due to designated evaluation commissioning timelines.

### 1.5.5 Wider prison

The senior staff team at HMP High Down have a rapidly developing strategic grasp of the potential for peer involvement roles across the prison. Particularly the potential of the peer mentor role. They clearly appreciate the key involvement of the third sectors involvement maintaining externally delivered externally accredited peer involvement training pathways:

*“The peer mentor role, we’re readjusting the way that we get people into specific pathways. There are three levels that we have here. So, we have St. Giles who deliver Learning to Advise (LTA). There’s a progression route to Level 2, which Shaw Trust will deliver and then there’s a progression route to Level 3 peer mentoring which St. Giles deliver... but if it’s not accredited, where’s the benefit?” (Simon, HMPS Library Lead, interview).*

From a commissioning point of view, it was acknowledged that more direction was required regarding a more standardised and categorised format across the peer involvement role spectrum. This would be valuable to inform the strategic development of a consistent approach to peer involvement roles available in prison. More broadly across the prison, the sense that the impact of the CFO wing model was positive was evident:

*“It’s definitely something that you feel on the unit tangibly. Whenever you go on there, the CFO here at High Down has the temperature of being a decent and respectful unit that gives people an opportunity to explore, hope to explore what it might mean to live in a productive community and to work on some of their own individual issues. Individually and collectively...” (Marianne, HMPPS Senior Management Team, interview).*

The CFO peer involvement role development is also being watched with interest as these roles are viewed strategically as potentially key to contributing to positive transformation in the social climate of prison life:

*“It’s not universally going to be 1200 guys that can do that, but there is there is something about that idea of calmness and that idea of being respectful when communicating with other people. I think you can see that on the CLU perhaps more than you can on some of our more general population units. If somebody who was extremely refractory, extremely difficult. It goes out saying ‘Please and thank you’ and being really calm and communicating in a different way. I mean that’s huge... the peer roles are quite layered, you know... [and] you can’t run services without the kind of User Voice” (Marianne, HMPS Senior Management Team, interview).*

These questions about expanding user-voice input into prison service management are intertwined with capacity-building and developing more formalised training for collective representation connected into the existing Prisoner Council infrastructure. Resourcing constraints may limit peer involvement role development in custody. HMP High Down’s Prisoner Council members readily acknowledged current resourcing restrictions negatively impact resident engagement:

*“When we feed problems up to the prison, they says they cannot fix them because of resource constraints” (HMP High Down Prisoner Council peer involvement role mapping and infrastructure focus group, Researcher notes).*

However, when prompted by the focus group evaluation team facilitator, there was acknowledgement that the Council could play a much larger part in the process:

*“Two of the Prisoner Council agreed the Council had a potential part to play in shaping the way the anticipated increase in HMPPS use of peer involvement roles, including peer mentors, would be a logical place for development. However, it was clear the Prison Council membership had not thought about this and their role in these developments until being prompted to now” (HMP High Down Prisoner Council peer involvement role mapping and infrastructure focus group, Researcher notes).*

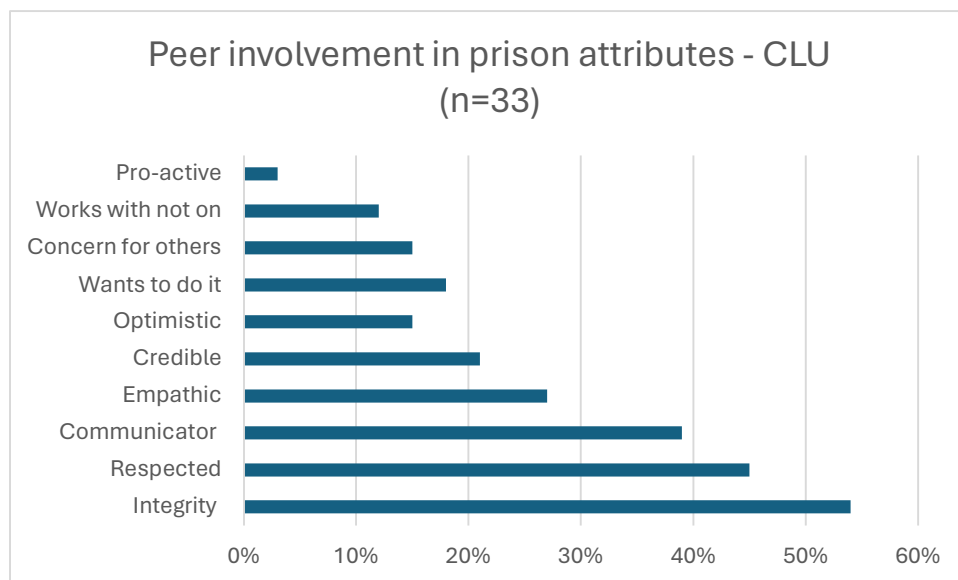
## 1.6 Peer involvement role attributes

Three core conditions of peer mentoring in the criminal justice system have been identified as: Caring, Listening, and Encouraging small steps (Buck, 2018). The interview respondents from HMP High Down (n=33) had much more complex expectations regarding the most desirable attributes of peer mentor and peer involvement roles holders in the custodial context.

### 1.6.1 Attributes

1:1 interview generated attributes were assigned to an inductive typology of ten key prison-context based peer involvement role attributes. These are presented in order of prioritisation from the interviews conducted at the High Down pilot site (n=33) in the graph below.

Graph 1.6.1: Peer involvement attributes – the CLU



### 1.6.2 Gendered expectations: Male lifers operating in peer involvement roles in prison

Sentence planning in the custodial context is an important part of any individual's journey through the prison system (Jiang and Winfree, 2008). While there is research on the effects of

outcomes such as institutional misconduct and recidivism, little research explores how sentence programming and progression may affect residents serving long, indeterminate and life sentences. These are “a group often denied programming” in the global context (Thomas and Grosholz, 2024). This illustrates the potential significance of the range of peer involvement roles available across the wider prison to CLU’s resident profile in particular (Micklethwaite, 2020). When serving a long sentence, it has been observed that many prison residents have exhausted the system’s basic educational routes and vocational training, and technical education to life skills courses options, thus services provided to long termers and Lifers are not prioritized (Nellis, 2013; Gottschalk, 2014). It has been suggested that inclusion of long termers and Lifers in research and policy is an imperative to utilising this largely untapped and valuable resource in the prison environment and could play a potentially key role in the improvement of prison life (Kazemian and Travis, 2015). Yet, there remains little indication that the policies and programmes targeting prisoners are tailored to this group. We know little about effective interventions within this cohort, including the potential impact of peer involvement roles specifically.

## 1.7 Profiling residents more fulfilling life in prison aspirations

The analysis of the two “More fulfilling life in prison” focus groups conducted with CLU residents found a distinct contrast between the enablers identified by each of the two CLU resident groups. Our first focus group was with an established and bonded cohort having completed the CFO Lifer training at the CLU. In contrast, the second participative focus group was conducted with a group of non-established wing residents who had just signed up for the next iteration of the CFO Lifer course but also included two participants that had only just arrived at the CLU. Both members of the research team in attendance reflected their sense that both new wing residents appeared to be displaying shock from receiving such an extended sentence.

### 1.7.1 Enablers

Enablers to CLU residents ‘living a more fulfilling life in prison’ were identified by the first focus group, in order of priority as:

1. **Being able to keep in regular contact with family.**
2. **Opportunities to foster relationships** with wing community and peer groups, and a sense of a social life on the wing, for example cooking and eating together.
3. **Meaningful activities** to engage with, providing them with a sense of progression and a small sense of choice and/or autonomy.

Whereas the second focus group participants would not entertain the notion that any positive discussions could be conducted regarding prison being enabling in any way:

*“None. You are in prison. End of”; “You can do as many courses as you like- but you are still in prison” (Resident participative evaluation focus group 2, those signed up for next Lifer course cohort, Researcher notes).*

### 1.7.2 Barriers

The CFO Lifer course completers' participant group discussed the barriers they saw to CLU residents being enabled to live a more fulfilling life in prison are cited as culminating around four key areas indicative (as they saw it) of their experience of prison life:

1. **Expensive** phone rates.
2. **Negative behaviour being rewarded**, that "short termers are prioritised", and seemingly "endless procedural process delays".
3. **Lack of contact with OMU** and prison staff availability, and the large proportion of prison staff being newly recruited, inexperienced, and as lacking knowledge they need access to around prison-specific regime processes and options.
4. **Mental Health deterioration**, and a lack of progression opportunities, often culminating in a sense of "Getting nowhere, losing hope, and turning to drugs to cope".

In direct contrast, the second participant group reported prison wing staff attitudes, training and culture as being, in their view, the most significant barrier to every resident being able to live a more fulfilling life in prison:

*"Prison officers have the keys, so they get to say what the community is, and they cheat and lie to keep their jobs, I've heard staff boasting about how long they've left people locked up. I had a bereavement but, rather than understand me [my behavioural response] they just banged me up" (Resident participative evaluation focus group 2, those signed up for next Lifer course cohort 2, Researcher notes).*

### 1.7.3 Aspirations

The CFO Lifer course completers participant group discussed their aspirations and made suggestions for improving wing life at the CLU, centred on three areas where they felt living a more fulfilling life in prison could be more effectively be enabled, to:

1. **Developing and maintaining stronger more regular family ties.**
2. **Improve access to** "education and IT training and a wider range of accredited courses, significantly with Lifer wing *"residents being enabled to contribute into the selection of training and course choices by the prison"*.
3. **Facilitation of more social time** with their peers on the wing: *"doing arts and crafts", but more about "being with other people", "sitting out of the cell", and "There needs to be a lot more society on the wing"* (Beneficiary participative evaluation focus group 1, Lifer Course completed cohort 1, Researcher notes).

The less integrated pre-CFO Lifer course wing participants life aspirations were non-existent, despondent, or negatively framed and largely indicated their anger towards prison officer staff at previous institutions or other wings at HMP High Down:

*"Maybe they can get sensitivity, psychological and bereavement training" (Resident participative evaluation focus group 2, those signed up for next Lifer course cohort 2, Researcher notes).*

The contrasting distinctions identified in the analysis of the focus groups could be interpreted as suggesting the need for the CFO wing activities programme (and the CFO peer involvement

role) potentially to operate differently at different times for wing residents at the CLU. In the first participant groups engagement with the CFO programme had clearly facilitated this group's bonding. In the second group, one could consider the CFO activities delivery as potentially operating as a positive induction to the CLU by making links for new arrivals to more established pro-social wing residents to hopefully alleviate distress. Ensuring CFO Lifer 'graduates' acting in Ambassador roles are involved in the delivery of the next iteration of the Lifer course may facilitate this for distressed new arrivals on the CLU.

#### 1.7.4 Peer involvement role as enabling collective aspirations?

CLU residents, in theory at least, acknowledged the CFO peer involvement role could be used to represent wing community's aspirations for a more fulfilling life in prison in more formal decision-making forums, as their "champion" (specifically strategies 2, and 3 listed above). Resident discussions on this concluded that any peer involvement role would need additional reinforcement from prison staff to actualise the role in this more active context and subsequent discussions centred on the lack of power prisoners have. Questions were also raised regarding the appropriateness of the Ambassador role selection as not being the "right" kind of peer involvement role for this function:

*Long discussion about lack of prisoner power.... prisoners haven't got any power, "so these Ambassador's don't either" .... Group reflected on what kind of peer involvement role would be appropriate: "Maybe the Lifer Rep could do that, or that one that's on the Prisoner Council maybe" (Participative Evaluation workshop 1, Researcher notes).*

This potential for the CFO peer involvement role to be more effective as an agent of change across the wing was also identified in the majority of CLU resident's 1:1 interviews:

*"Or if there's something you want to engage with that doesn't exist, they [could] help you make it a reality" (Julio, Ambassador, Peer Mentor-trained, interview).*

### 1.8 Mapping further social capital building potential

Building social capital in populations subject to criminal justice sanctions has been identified as enhancing positive health and justice outcomes (Mills and Codd, 2008; Farrall, 2013; Lafferty et al., 2016; Albertson, 2021). Currently there is no consensus regarding the measurement of social capital for residents in the custodial setting (Lafferty et al., 2018). A qualitative tool was applied in this study (Nugent and Schinkel, 2016; Albertson and Albertson, 2022; Albertson et al., 2022). In this study we align an integrated analytical social capital building framework to an established service user participation structure and apply it to this custodial context (cf. Brosens, 2019). We understand this more strategic approach as key to integrating an informed peer involvement role strategy into CFO's commissioning preferences. We present our site-specific social capital building findings visually here, utilising the 3-traffic light colour scheme. Green indicates successes identified, Orange indicates realistic future success potential, and Red indicates little, or no realistic opportunities identified during our site visits. For a CFO staff team focussed practical social capital building-informed example for peer involvement role strategy development, see Appendix 1.

Figure 1.8: Social capital building potential capture site-specific results (cf. Albertson and Albertson, 2020).

Three sources of social capital	Six stage social capital building process model <u>Opportunities to:</u>	Evidence from HMP High Down's CLU and peer involvement delivery model:
<b>A: Micro-level:</b> Relational/ bonding social capital  (individual, relational + close friendship networks)	<b>Stage 1:</b> regularly associate in strength-based, enabling meaningful activity groups where friendships can develop across the wing community?	The CLU's phased CFO programme was identified as a key source of regular strength-based meaningful activities for wing residents, as a space for the formation of trusting individual and group relationships across the wing.
	<b>Stage 2:</b> engage in reflective, capacity building & problem-solving focussed activities & tasks in a trusted group setting?	Wing residents on the CFO programme identified as engaging in reflection in a trusted group setting.
<b>B: Meso-level:</b> Cognitive/ bridging social capital  (Wing community setting)	<b>Stage 3:</b> contribute to core delivery of activities programme as trusted wing community assets?	No formal delivery contribution for peer involvement role holders identified. The potential for further formalised CFO Ambassador contribution to core programme delivery evident. Plans for Ambassador CFO Lifer course graduates to contribute to future iterations of the course being discussed.
	<b>Stage 4:</b> Represent, propose, and advocate wing community generated ideas, preferences, & service delivery solutions in wing practice decision making forums?	Informal contribution as part of day-to-day resident interaction with CFO delivery staff team identified. No evidence of being associated with the CFO Ambassador role on the wing. CLU's Lifer Rep role identified as contributing. Further developmental opportunities for more formalised representation evident.
<b>C: Macro-level:</b> Structural/linking social capital  (Wider decision-influencing & change settings)	<b>Stage 5:</b> represent wing community aspirations and contribute to wider prison decision making forums?	CLU resident representation identified at HMP High Down's Prisoner Council, not associated with CFO Ambassador role.
	<b>Stage 6:</b> represent the currently serving prisoner resident community's living experience and contribute to strategic prison service policy making settings?	No evidence documented. Future opportunity developments identified.

## **Section 2: Good practice, lessons learnt, and recommendations**

Based on the key findings presented above the following recommendations are made to both progress and embed the CFO peer involvement role element of delivery at the CLU.

### **2.1 Identification of good practice examples**

At the CLU, good practice in the delivery of the CFO peer involvement element was identified by the staff team as:

- Excellent utilising of inspirational lived experience input as a core part of the CFO programme delivery is an excellent example of good practice with regards to inspiring wing residents alongside CFO peer involvement role holders that they too can hope to achieve a brighter crime free future.
- An enthusiastic and dedicated partnership approach to delivery, underpinned by ringfenced funding and prison staff buy-out.
- Another excellent good practice example of a 'wing resident-user-led' initiative (see Appendix 1) as the CFO staff team support a weekly peer-organised, peer-attended and peer-run recovery group on the wing.

### **2.2 Identification of key challenges**

At the CLU, key challenges to the delivery of the CFO peer involvement element of delivery were identified as:

- Confidence that the Ambassadorial peer involvement role profile was appropriate for purpose.
- Lack of clarity around expectations of the Ambassador role holders' functioning on the wing during phase 1 and phase 2 of the CFO core activity programme delivery.

### **2.3 Key lessons learnt**

This study identified the following key lessons learnt by the CFO delivery staff team at the CLU, as they reflected on their peer involvement role pilot delivery experience:

- Discussing and agreeing what is needed from the CFO peer involvement role holders on a day-to-day basis.
- Identifying a peer involvement role profile to match these expectations.

### **2.4 Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made to inform the further embedding of the peer involvement role element of CFO delivery on the CLU wing:

#### **2.4.1 Clarify peer involvement role profile & progression**

- Decide and articulate as a staff team involving CLU residents, what the expectations are of those having completed any peer involvement role training and communicate this clearly to all CLU residents.



- Review the potential to provide a more formalised strategic oversight and supervision infrastructure for the peer involvement role element of CFO programme delivery.
- Embed the visibility and activity of these peer involvement role expectations by aligning expectations to the core CFO programme delivery cycle.
- As a delivery staff team, discuss and agree an appropriately transparent shared peer involvement role recruitment and selection process.
- This would be co-produced with existing peer involvement role holders and involve wider wing residents.
- Formalise peer involvement role holder access into CLU wing practice decision-making forums.

#### 2.4.2 Optimise wider peer involvement role continuum

- Utilise and embed a wider range of peer involvement roles in a progression pathway culminating in externally accredited, independently delivered peer training options involving the prison's Education and Library team.
- Develop a progression route map for peer involvement role opportunity options linked to the sequencing of CFO programme engagement cycle.
- Incorporate influential paid wing peer support roles as peer involvement role holders who can continuously champion the CFO initiative, such as the CLU's existing Lifer Rep and Community Information Orderly (CiO) to compliment and support unpaid peer mentor and Ambassador peer involvement roles.

#### 2.4.3 Optimise external accreditation options & existing prison pathways

- Align the CFO peer involvement role initiative delivery with existing peer involvement in prison role infrastructure, linking up with HMP High Down's Prisoner Council initiative.
- Liaise with the prison's Education department to ensure CFO peer involvement role holders access to existing independently delivered and externally accredited peer involvement role training.
- Link the CFO peer involvement role delivery initiative into wider prison peer involvement forums to optimise CFO peer involvement role holder access into wider service-delivery-decision-making settings.
- Enable CFO peer involvement role holder developmental and progression opportunities to act in communal representation and advocacy peer roles, essential for driving transformational culture transformation changes forward for both CFO wing and wider prison community aspirations. This will increase both horizontal and vertical social capital building opportunities for CLU's peer involvement role holders.

## Appendices:

### Appendix 1: Utilising a Service User Ladder to embed a peer involvement strategy

This table represents a practical example of how CFO delivery staff teams can think through their potential future strategy towards increasingly embedding peer involvement roles into their every-day practice of delivering the peer involvement role element of the CFO initiative. This table maps not 'what is done', but 'how it could be done' by aligning practical delivery specific actions mapped onto the service user involvement ladder.

Appendix 1 table: Mapping CFO's peer involvement strategy onto service user participation ladder

	Service User involvement ladder	Peer involvement in CFO wing	Key characteristics....	CFO peer involvement role (CPIR) holder...
0	<b>Non-engagement</b>	CFO wing residents 'take it or leave it'	Wing residents are offered a unidirectional CFO programme of activities.	N/A
1	<b>Information</b>	CFO staff tell wing residents what is on offer.	CFO staff inform wing residents of some aspects of the service, changes, activities, etc.,	CFO staff delegate this information to CPIR for wider dissemination across the wing.
2	<b>Consultation</b>	CFO staff give wing residents a choice and they decide between options. 'either this or this?'	Wing residents are consulted about some aspects of the service, they may provide feedback. CFO staff may use that feedback to make decisions and shape the delivery of the initiative.	CPIR hand out & collect in wing resident preferences and hand over feedback sheets to CFO staff team.
3	<b>Participation</b>	CFO staff and wing residents decide together 'who does what, when, how, why'.	Wing residents take part in decision-making, but ideas, responsibilities, making arrangements & delivery (all active roles) are conducted by CFO staff.	CPIR & CFO staff team decide to do something together, CPIR motivates others to contribute, collect & analyse feedback & present key findings to CFO staff team.
4	<b>Co-production</b>	CFO staff and wing residents develop, decide, and deliver the initiative together.	Wing residents have an equal part in the process, they take decisions jointly, all have active roles and responsibilities.	CPIR responsible for designing, disseminating, collecting & analysing feedback sheets & deciding amongst key preferences to go with in partnership with the CFO staff team.
5	<b>Wing resident-user-led</b>	CFO staff and wing residents become colleagues and co-produce in an equal as possible 'therapeutic alliance'	Wing residents take lead in activities from beginning to end and start new complimentary initiatives	CPIR representing wing resident aspirations approaches CFO staff team with the idea &

			independent of the core CFO initiative delivery.	with CFO staff support realises new peer-led initiative benefitting the wing community
--	--	--	--	--

## Appendix 2: Mapping peer involvement roles at HMP High Down

The analysis of the Prisoner Council and Community & relational wing mapping workshop generated data at HMP High Down revealed residents (and many prison staff) were aware of clear distinctions in peer involvement roles available. These distinctions contribute to our wider understanding of the peer mentor in prison role. These distinctions are synthesised and presented here in a format to assist the CFO delivery staff team at HMP High Down to action the recommendations made in this study<sup>8</sup>.

Appendix 2 table: Peer involvement roles available at HMP High Down (n=16)

Peer involvement role title	Paid/ Unpaid	Induction	Single issue/skill/task	Bridging role	Collective/civic representation
	<i>As per PSO 4460<sup>9</sup> payment guidance</i>	<i>EG. Formal induction, orientation, navigation, signposting or crisis</i>	<i>EG. Specific health condition, skill or crisis orientated role profile</i>	<i>EG. Formal recruitment, sustaining &amp; motivating participation role</i>	<i>EG. Formal wing decision-making forum (WDF) and/or Prisoner Council (PC) roles</i>
<b>Induction orderly</b>	Paid	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Community Information Orderly (CIO)</b>	Paid	Yes	Yes	No	No
<b>Listener</b>	Unpaid	Yes	Yes	No	No
<b>Cleaners, Food servers, Laundry etc.</b>	Paid	No	Yes	No	No
<b>Red Band<sup>10</sup></b>	Unpaid	No	No	Yes	No
<b>Shannon Trust Mentor</b>	Unpaid	No	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Education Mentors (Classroom Assistant)</b>	Paid	No	Yes	No	No
<b>Healthcare Orderly</b>	Paid	No	Yes	No	No
<b>Violence Reduction Orderly &amp; Equalities Reps</b>	Paid	Yes	Yes	No	No
<b>Gym Buddy/Rep</b>	Paid	Yes	No	Yes	No
<b>Drug &amp; Alcohol Mentors</b>	Paid	No	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Industries Mentors</b>	Paid	No	Yes	Yes	No

<sup>8</sup> While the research team made every effort to independently triangulate this data, the currently minimal strategic infrastructure overseeing peer involvement roles in custody means we acknowledge the data in the table below is chiefly presented from the prison resident perspective.

<sup>9</sup> HM Prison Service (2020) Prison Service Order 4460: Prisoners pay: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/paying-prisoners-for-work-and-other-activities-pso-4460>

<sup>10</sup> In the male prison estate, a Red Band describes a resident who has earned special trusted status, who is permitted to work unsupervised and move around selected parts of the prison unescorted.

<b>Peer Mentors</b>	Unpaid	Yes	No	Yes	Some WDFs, not PC.
<b>Ambassadors<sup>11</sup></b>	Unknown	-	-	-	-
<b>Social Care peer<sup>12</sup></b>	Paid	No	Yes	No	No
<b>Offender Management Unit orderly</b>	Paid	No	Yes	No	No

## Acknowledgements

The first, and biggest thank you must go to everyone at HMP High Down for participating so enthusiastically in this study. It is their patience, time, and interest in this topic which made this study possible. My thanks must also go to my expert advisory group, made up of Professor's Del-Roy Fletcher and Kevin Albertson, and Dr Jake Phillips. I would also like to warmly thank my data collection team, Dr Lauren Hall, Dr Jennifer Rainbow, and Dr Sarah Goodwin, whose enthusiasm, good sense, and animated engagement ensured our fieldwork trips away were fun as well as extremely productive. Finally, I would like to thank the CFO leadership team for their genuine curiosity, which combined with an applicable purpose driven approach meant a positively charged working collaboration underpinned this study.

---

<sup>11</sup> The Prisoner Council were unaware of the Ambassador role being available in the prison.

<sup>12</sup> This role is outlined in various PSIs: 16/2015 Safeguarding Adults; PSI 17/2015 Prisoners Assisting other Prisoners; PSI 03/2016 Adult social care; and PSI 06/2016 Guidance for prisons and probation services on the delivery of social care and support services for adult offenders.