

Peer mentor & peer involvement roles in prison study series

CFO Discovery wings Peer mentor initiative at HMP Risley.

Dr Katherine Albertson (2024)



Contents

Peer mentor & peer involvement roles in prison	1
Section 1: Mapping HMP Risley’s CFO Discovery wing model.....	4
1.1 HMP Risley	4
1.2 The CFO Discovery wing model	4
1.2.1 Specialist staff team	5
1.2.2 Meaningful activity programme	5
1.3 Peer involvement role selection, training, progression, and supervision	6
1.3.1 Recruitment	7
1.3.2 Training.....	7
1.3.3 Progression routes	7
1.4 Peer mentor activities across the programme	8
1.4.1 Phase 1: CFO Course	8
1.4.2 Phase 2: Vocational work experience.....	9
1.4.3 Phase 3: Community activities programme.....	9
1.4.4 Peer mentor’s day-to-day activities.....	9
1.5 Impact of peer involvement role opportunities	10
1.5.1 Peer mentors	10
1.5.2 Those supported by peer mentors	10
1.5.3 Residents most benefitting.....	11
1.5.4 Social climate on the wing.....	11
1.5.5 Wider prison culture and social climate	12
1.6 Peer involvement role attributes	13
1.6.1 Typology & prioritisation	13
1.6.2 Gendered expectations: Veterans as Peer Mentors in prison.....	13
1.7 Profiling residents more fulfilling life in prison aspirations.....	14
1.7.1 Enablers.....	14
1.7.2 Barriers	15
1.7.3 Aspirations	15
1.7.4 Peer mentor role as an enabling community agent of change?	16
1.8 Mapping future social capital building potential	16
Section 2: Good practice, lessons learnt, and recommendations	18
2.1 Good practice examples	18
2.2 Key challenges	18
2.3 Lessons learnt.....	18
2.4 Recommendations	19

2.4.1	Utilise a wider range of peer involvement roles.....	19
2.4.2	Clarify peer involvement profile & progression	19
2.4.3	Optimise social capital building & impact opportunities	19
Appendices:		21
Appendix 1: Utilising a Service User Ladder to embed peer involvement strategy		21
Appendix 2: Mapping peer involvement roles at HMP Risley.....		23
Acknowledgements		24

Section 1: Mapping HMP Risley’s CFO Discovery wing model.

This section begins by mapping HMP Risley’s CFO pilot model. Section two presents the findings specific to the Discovery wing. Details of the study design, methods and data collection activities undertaken at HMP Risley, and final sample profile details are presented in the Technical Appendices CFO Discovery wing HMP Risley document. Please note: All respondent quotes presented in this report are pseudonymised¹.

1.1 HMP Risley

Risley is a prison for men in Warrington, Cheshire, including men convicted of a sex offence, a Category C resettlement prison, hosting 1100 prisoners. The Discovery wing is a specialist wing that encourages Veterans to move to, contains 200 beds across both People Convicted of Sexual Offences (PCoSO) and Mains prisoner (people convicted for non-sexual offence).

Table 1.1: HMP Risley profile

Category	Sentencing profile	CFO wing pilot
Adult Male, Category C training and resettlement prison.	Short & intermediate sentences, including specialist veteran wing provision, covering both Mains + PCoSO spurs.	Discovery Wing.

The residents on the Discovery wing are encouraged to engage and interact with positive role models, in the form of the specialist CFO staff team and the selected CFO peer involvement role. Community-capacity building activities are facilitated, alongside providing a more conducive wing environment², with the aim of making the CFO Discovery wing somewhere participants want to be.

1.2 The CFO Discovery wing model

The CFO wing model offers meaningful activity programmes for residents to engage in. The Discovery wing is a designated wing to support veterans who are encouraged to act in a specified peer involvement role to support others to engage in the CFO programme and promote a more community-feel. Many wing residents are serving short to medium sentences and the CFO programme at the Discovery wing is focussed on developing key employability skills, managing resettlement-related issues, and developing self-reflection, and thinking skills. The key aims of the CFO Discovery wing pilot are to:

1. Provide a community environment where participants are given the tools to help with tasks to contribute to society and lead law-abiding lives.

¹ 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.

² CFO provide funding for wing redecoration, furniture, pictures, plants, kitchen equipment, e.g., toasters, kettles, air-fryers, and microwaves and Achieve sourced t-shirts for staff and residents in peer support and peer mentoring roles.

2. Provide veteran specific support to enhance their transition and to reduce reoffending as well as prisoners with few or no family ties, care leavers and short-sentence prisoners.
3. Enable veterans to provide peer support to wing residents to motivate and sustain engagement in the CFO programme.
4. Provide a safe and supportive wing environment.

1.2.1 Specialist staff team

The initial CFO pilot funding provided staff salary costs at HMP Risley for:

- A HMPPS/CFO Custody Manager to co-ordinate operational delivery.
- Two full time HMPPS/CFO Specialist Veterans in Custody Support Officers (ViCSOs).
- Three Custody Case Manager roles provided by the third sector Prime provider.

In addition, HMPPS provide a Governor-level CFO wing pilot sponsor to support this innovative initiative. The Prime provider staff are supported by their own agencies line management structures. The pilot site team are supported by their regional CFO Performance Management and Evaluation team. Elements of core delivery are complimented by the prison’s Physical Education Department staff and involve resident profile appropriate external charity sub providers delivering specific sessions. The Prime provider for the CFO wing model programme on the Discovery wing is Achieve³. The mixed CFO staff team all share an office on the Discovery wing.

1.2.2 Meaningful activity programme

The CFO Discovery wing model provides meaningful community-creating activities over three discreet phases:

Phase 1: A 9-week meaningful activities programme with small groups of residents.

Phase 2: A vocational work experience.

Phase 3: Community activities programme enabling ‘graduates’ of the phase 1 + 2 to ‘give back’ to their own wing community, including wider wing residents not directly involved in the CFO programme.

To ‘give back’ is defined as performing unpaid volunteer roles designed to improve the social climate on a prison wing, encouraging a sense of belonging and pride in the living environment. On the Discovery wing, residents can at any time request to be signed up to these phased activity programme. The phased group activities programme delivered on the Discovery wing are detailed in the table below.

Table 1.2.2a: Phased delivery

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 2
Induction and Release preparation: Classroom based, over 9 weeks.	Vocational work experience: Full time over 9 weeks.	Community Projects: Environment improvement tasks, over 9 weeks.

³ <https://portal.careerconnect.org.uk/PagelInfo.aspx?Achieve-Northwest-Connect-New-i232.html>

Each phase 1 cohort of two sets of 8 to 12 PCoSO and Mains groups progress through the 9-week course together as a small group. This phase focuses on all elements of resettlement, employment-related skills, reflection, and critical thinking skills, and is delivered by Prime Provider staff. A number of external delivery sub-contractor session inputs and also involve external charity partners. The weekly scheduled delivery is complimented by team building gym-based activity-time facilitated by HMP Risley’s Physical Education Department. The phased core CFO wing model group activities programmes are delivered in different locations, as detailed in the table below.

Table 1.2.2b: Phased delivery locations

Phase 1 delivery site location	Phase 2 delivery site location	Phase 3 delivery site location(s)
Group meeting rooms on the wing ⁴ .	Bike workshop ⁵ , facilitated by HMPPS Industries Instructor.	Across the wing and wider prison, resourced by a CFO workshop space & CFO Specialist Officers.

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 to enhance CFO aims of generating a different relational, community atmosphere, and affect positive developments in the social climate. Alongside the Discovery wings three-phase CFO activities programme, an un-paid peer mentor initiative was selected from the range of peer involvement roles available in prison. On the dedicated wing, mainly ex-military veteran residents were selected to act in peer mentor roles to support the delivery of the CFO Discovery wing activity programme.

Table 1.3: Peer involvement delivery model - Discovery wing

Peer involvement role selected	Peer involvement role training provider	Training	Supervision/ oversight	Progression routes
Peer mentor	Prison’s Education provider, Novus.	NCFE Accredited Level 2 Award in Mentoring ⁶ .	Weekly CFO Community meeting ⁷ .	Volunteer roles to support wider prison community & Red Band &

⁴ Phase 1 group activities cannot be delivered to mixed PCoSO and Mains groups, therefore are delivered twice daily, either in the morning or afternoon domestic/association time, on a weekly rotation.

⁵ Renovating bikes for Charity shops, Schools and for international children’s charities.

⁶ Accredited qualification with no association with custodial sentence.

⁷ Opportunity to raise peer involvement role-linked role issues with CFO staff team.

				Veterans Rep route.
--	--	--	--	---------------------

1.3.1 Recruitment

HMPPS CFO staff selected at least two veterans from each phase 1 course cohort (one PCoSO and one Mains group) and they participated in an externally accredited L2 NFE Mentor training course. Final peer mentor recruitment selection, having secured security-relevant information, is based on CFO staff team discretion regarding those veterans deemed as willing, and as having both the time and the relevant inter-personal and intra-personal skills.

1.3.2 Training

The peer mentor roles available at the CFO Discovery wing all secured training places on an externally accredited NRC Level 2 Mentoring course, commissioned from Risley’s Education Department, run by Novus. Initially the L2 NFE Mentor training course was delivered face-to-face and off the wing by the Education team. However, regime, staffing, movements, and training rotation sequencing issues impacted on access to timely mentor training delivery to coincide with the Discovery wing’s phase 1 scheduling. The L2 mentor training delivery was redesigned by Education as an in-cell workbook training package to ensure the training was completed before the end of phase 1’s 9-week activity rotation. This adaptation caused concerns which were raised across peer mentor, delivery staff and those supported interviews: *“I don’t know if I am doing it right...I’d rather do the peer mentoring course with some other people in the room”* (Ken, Veteran, Peer mentor interview). Mentors from previous cohorts also expressed their concerns: *“for the later lads doing it, they were doing it in-cell. I think the [face-to-face] course worked well because we were able to have group discussions and get other people’s opinions...I don’t think you can train a peer mentor by just giving someone a book about it”* (Sean, Veteran, Peer mentor interview). On-going supervision is provided by the CFO Custody Manager during a weekly wing community drop-in (one in the a.m. and another p.m. to enable both PCoSO and Mains access). This activity is an opportunity for peer mentor concerns to be raised and provides routine CFO staff oversight of the initiative.

1.3.3 Progression routes

Having one dedicated HMPPS appointed senior staff member to oversee peer involvement across the prison is identified as best practice to oversee peer involvement role progression routes (c.f. South et al., 2012). At HMP Risley, once residents complete the Mentor training at Education, further oversight is transferred to the relevant Custody Manager. There are some drawbacks to this system, as *“in terms of tracking mentor progression [there is] no-one [responsible]”* (Anna, Novus Education Hub Manager).

At the CFO Discovery wing however, the progression routes identified included becoming a Red Band⁸ and/ or a veteran’s Mentor on the wing and included wider opportunities to

⁸ 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. Some Red Bands elect to stay living on ‘home’ wings, and some move into a small, enhanced status accommodation block at HMP Risley.

contribute their skills to assist the wider prison population as classroom peer support assistant roles in Education, and as Shannon Trust mentors.

Many peer mentors at the CFO Discovery wing however cited frustrations regarding the lack of any formal infrastructure to translate their own service development ideas and solutions into more formal decision-making settings. Linked to prison regime issues peer mentors on the CFO Discovery wing have also experienced challenges when attempting to mentor wider wing residents:

“I work mornings and afternoons, but at weekends, I don’t get any association time at all. So, I get 4 hours association, when everybody else gets 8, so during the weekends I can’t Mentor them if they are not on the same regime as me. They have to ask an officer to open a door because this guy is Mentoring me. My thought is - what is the point of being a Mentor when I can’t get out of my cell to Mentor. I just want to help people” (Andrew, Veteran, Peer mentor interview).

Prison wing staff are however restricted in which residents they can unlock, and when which undermines peer mentor availability. Further underlining the negative impacts of prison regime issues on optimising peer mentor opportunities in prison.

1.4 Peer mentor activities across the programme

Peer mentors were found to support the engagement of wing residents in different ways across the phased CFO Discovery wing programme.

1.4.1 Phase 1: CFO Course

During phase 1, peer mentors were identified as facilitating a sense of group solidarity during the course activities provided. The programme content was reported as being relevant and interesting to the wing resident profile, and over an extended time period. This enabled a sense of collective belonging. During this extended period of daily regular time spent with their peer group, peer mentors formed trusting relationships with those they supported in the classroom. These relationships had time to develop, grow and flourish, contributing to a positive and increasingly integrated collective ethos amongst those engaging. The meaningful programme of activities was described by peer mentors as facilitating the formation of collective and identifiable groups: *“as a first phase- it set us up as a group”* (Andrew, Veteran, Peer mentor interview). This activity time effectively served as an opportunity for peer mentors to interact with those they supported, as *“it’s easier to work out what they need, because you get to see more of them, closer quarters if you know what I mean”* (Philip, Veteran, Peer mentor interview).

Peer mentors assisted their peer group to engage in classroom activities and generated closer connections, familiarity, and trust in this group setting. These cohesive relational foundations of a sense of belonging were described as reverberating out onto the wing: *“It’s like a ‘way in’...to other stuff- do you know what I mean? So, it’s like doing it in the classroom there- it’s about building trust in there for later- as trust, well- it’s earned, so you need time with them”* (William, Veteran, Peer mentor interview). Reinforced by the those supported interviewed:

“It is in the classroom where the peer mentors help the most, they give us real life examples to help us understand what we are learning” (John, Non-veteran, Peer supported interview).

Having peer mentors in the classroom during phase 1 was identified as key to motivating and sustaining engagement for many wing residents, a point underlined by wider HMPPS Officer staff interviews:

“They find it interesting, but...loads of them struggle to sit and listen for that length of time and haven’t had a good previous experience of education before- so they find the classroom a bit hard sometimes” (Angela, HMPPS Prison wing officer, Discovery wing).

1.4.2 Phase 2: Vocational work experience

The additional time spent together in a less formal environment during phase 2 provided more informal opportunities for peer mentors to work more effectively on developing the capacity-base of individual residents whom they supported: *“The point is that while you might not ever fix a bike when you get out, but what you are doing is using your brain to work out problems. This means that when you get a problem on the wing you can take that step back and look at it, instead of being blinkered” (Andrew, Veteran, Peer mentor interview).* Nationwide HMPPS staffing issues are however impacted negatively on peer mentors accessing phase 2 activities as an opportunity to Mentor, as security considerations can take precedence: *“We have had issues- as when the phase 2 bike shop is closed, they get frustrated” (Sarah, HMPPS Prison wing officer, Discovery wing).*

1.4.3 Phase 3: Community activities programme

This third phase of delivery suffered from delays linked to meeting the robust regulations required of an appropriate workshop space in the prison. These activities were designed to involve CFO ‘graduates’ in conducting wing and wider prison environment improvement tasks, under the supervision of the HMPPS CFO ViCSOs. At the time of writing, the phase three workshop had just been opened. These delays and prison staff shortages led to progression frustrations from peer mentors and the CFO engagers they supported: *“Phase 1 was delivered by the Achieve staff and it all went swimmingly, phases 2 and 3 are delivered by prison staff, so there are staffing issues [that] need sorting” (Michael, non-veteran, Peer supported interview).* Participant respondents were aware non-HMP delivery staff members were not affected by these regime issue limitations. However, at least two Discovery wing peer mentors did go on to spend their phase 3 allotted weeks utilising their peer involvement skills in the Education Department, acting in an Education Classroom Assistant and a Shannon Trust Mentor role.

1.4.4 Peer mentor’s day-to-day activities

In addition to the phase-linked activities of the peer mentors identified above, our data analysis of wing resident 1:1 interviews (n=35) identified a typology of six ways in which the peer mentors operate on a day-to-day basis, on the Discovery wing, by providing:

1. **a warm welcome and friendly induction orientation support** on the wing, often explicitly replicating the warm reception they received from peer mentors from previous course cohorts.

2. **a bridging role function**, actively “leading” or recruiting new participants into participation with the Wing group activity programme (Croux et al., 2023, p 52).
3. **support during participation in Discovery group activities**, both “during” participation in activity sessions (Croux et al., 2023) and spilling into wider wing association time.
4. **contributing to a positive, hopeful** climate on the wing, generated by the warmth, humour and empathy (Crewe and Bennett, 2012) identified by others as peer mentors exuded a competent and optimistic attitude (also highlighted in prison wing officer interviews).
5. **the positive role modelling** of more collaborative attitudes and behaviours, generating inspiration, and actively raising the aspirations of those around them on the wing (Buck, 2020; Nixon, 2018).
6. **a contribution to wider prison mentoring activities**, as some Peer Mentors went on to volunteer as classroom assistants in Education (Nixon, 2019).

1.5 Impact of peer involvement role opportunities

1.5.1 Peer mentors

All of the peer mentors interviewed on a 1:1 basis (n=15) cited a range of beneficial impacts on them as individuals. Our analysis identified a typology of 4 key areas the peer mentors felt the experience had empowered them, as a role in the prison context that:

1. **invested them with a sense of being valued community assets.**
2. **gave them a sense of responsibility, purpose, and hope:** *“prison is probably the best place to do peer mentoring- it’s where it’s needed most.... There is something in it, prison needs changing, so maybe the peer mentoring is the best place to start with making that change”* (Mitchell, Veteran, Peer mentor interview).
3. **motivated self-reflection:** *“being a peer mentor has made me think – why I am not thinking things through like I am getting others to do- you know? It works!”* (David, Veteran, Peer mentor interview).
4. **Gave them a sense of pride** in being in a position to help others in the wing community.

1.5.2 Those supported by peer mentors

Those supported by having the peer mentors on the CFO Discovery wing all agreed that they were a beneficial addition to the wing community. Those supported reflected that they benefitted in multiple ways from the peer mentor element of the CFO delivery. This ranged from the security of knowing they could be approached for everyday help, instruction, and information, to gaining a sense of security, belonging, and motivation to engage from the peer mentors on the wing. *“You are here to be punished, but we all need guidance...and I have not come across one peer mentor in here that’s not been helpful”* (Alex, Veteran, Peer supported interview).

The vast majority of those supported by peer mentors, alongside 4 of out the 5 wider wing residents not participating in the programme however agreed that this element of the delivery would benefit from more easily identifiable peer mentors: *“they need to be more visible on the wing... How can I know there is someone I can go to – when I don’t know who they are?”* (Ian, Non-veteran, Wing resident not participating in the programme, interview).

Some peer mentors also gained Red Band status, some residing on the Discovery wing and others moved into smaller enhanced accommodation. This movement was cited as hampering the benefits of day-to-day contact and continued relationship building opportunities with wing residents they were supporting: *“It’s great for them and I’m always pleased for them, but selfishly I’d like to keep hold of those calmer ones [the peer mentors] as it does settle the others down a bit”* (Daniel, HMPPS Prison wing officer). This issue is minimised in as much as each wing and each activity cohort benefits from a continuously replenishing crop of trained peer mentors in line with each three-stage cohort going through the CFO programme.

1.5.3 Residents most benefitting

Our data analysis identified a typology of 4 core constellations of residents that benefited the most from the peer mentoring element of delivery at the CFO Discovery wing:

1. **Those new to the wing, first time in prison and socially isolated residents:** *“he’s scared to death... he didn’t come out of his cell hardly, barely spoke to anyone...but I have got him now – I coaxed him [so] that he comes out now and sits at the table next to me...and he will sit there and join in now”* (William, Veteran, Peer mentor interview).
2. **Wing residents not participating directly in the programme:** *“He is always there for any help you need”* (Ian, Non-veteran, Wing resident not participating in the programme, interview).
3. **Mentees engaging in the wing group activities:** *“The [peer mentors] are people I wouldn’t normally have a reason to get to associate with, maybe wouldn’t normally think I’d get on with I suppose”* (Michael, non-veteran, Peer supported interview).
4. **Veterans in the wing community:** by providing a purpose and an opportunity of being utilised as wing community assets, as cited in section above: *“it’s done me good, like usually when I go in jail I get into trouble, but it’s kept my head straight. It’s given me something to do, to focus on”* (Jayden, Veteran, Peer mentor interview).

1.5.4 Social climate on the wing

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). Opportunities for offenders to gain a sense of social inclusion, acceptance, belonging and participation embody key social climate-related concepts of citizenship, social justice, integration, and solidarity. These factors have all been identified as key to transformational change in the criminal justice system (Maruna 2012; McNeill 2012; Fox, 2015: 2016). Our analysis identified a clear sense from all those engaging in our study that the CFO wing model had been successful in creating a positive sense of community on the Discovery wing.

Community and relational mapping results

At the CFO Discovery wing, our “Community and relational mapping and prioritisation” focus group data analysis does indicate a positive disruption of ‘traditional’ wing relationship dynamics (as described above). The focus group participants that had just started on the

course (second week of phase 1 content) both the PCoSO and Mains groups identified 15 key relationships across the wing. In the participant group that had largely completed the phase 1, the PCoSO and Mains groups identified 13 and 11 relational constructs respectively. These were mapped against 5 relational constructs, identified from most to least: Knowledgeable; Trusted; Supportive; Honest; and Power. In summary it was found:

- HMPPS CFO Specialist ViCSO's were rated more highly in every construct than the generic prison wing officers in every aspect but power.
- In three of the four participant groups, the wing resident community were rated more highly than peer mentors and phase 1 course mates in every construct but power.
- Interestingly, the Prisoner Information Desk (PiD) worker was also mentioned as a key relational resource for the Discovery wing community.

These findings are suggestive of the presence of CFO Specialist Officers and peer mentor roles disrupting relationships which are said to exist traditionally on prison wings. 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 was an unavoidable limitation of the study design, due to commissioning timelines.

1.5.5 Wider prison culture and social climate

There is a real sense that the CFO Discovery wing model's success with the peer involvement role element is being noticed and celebrated as a good practice approach with the potential to positively affect the wider social climate at HMP Risley:

“So that peer mentor role of supporting people in subgroups, putting that disciplined learning into effect to help someone else as an objective is helpful, for that direction, not just for veterans, but we are looking to this model's potential for care leavers and young adults- different sub populations...the delivery model outline, which is flexible, makes it more useful to us, as it can be utilised again flexibly to be adapted to the demands of the prison population. We can adapt to that need, which I think makes this pilot more valuable” (Alistair, HMPPS Senior Management team, interview).

Indeed, already actioning strategies to enact the evaluation report recommendations to strengthen the infrastructure surrounding peer involvement initiatives across the prison:

“It's about getting clear expectations...we have no issues of having slightly different regimes, some slightly different rules...if it's properly managed and as a clear process around it... managing that living environment differently, but yes that's certainly on the table. We're introducing formal wing councils, and they'll be able to feed into the Prisoner Council” (Robert, HMPPS Senior Management team, interview).

The CFO partnership approach offer is valued as a rare opportunity for prisons to trial a bespoke but adaptive and innovative approach to positively impacting on the social climate of a prison wing and affecting the prison culture. Governor-level staff at HMP Risley reflected that this experience had energised many of their prison staff in an employment context beset by national recruitment and retainment issues. Clearly welcoming the opportunity to enliven and repurpose a wing that previously had little in the way of a clear identity or purpose:

“Staff involved are really proud, very knowledgeable about what the aims are and selling it to others. I think if people feel invested in what they're doing, they deliver far more for you. So, I think that that's a real kind of good starting point for us” (Alistair, HMPPS Senior Management team, interview).

Indeed, the success of the CFO Discovery wing’s peer involvement role pilot at HMP Risley is gaining a reputation across the prison estate:

“If you can do it in a male establishment like Risley I think every where’s open to it.... [if you can] make it happen at Risley....it just shows that you can do both sides of the establishment, and so [you] could have a project like this work anywhere” (Declan, HMPPS Senior Management Team, HMP Drake Hall, interview).

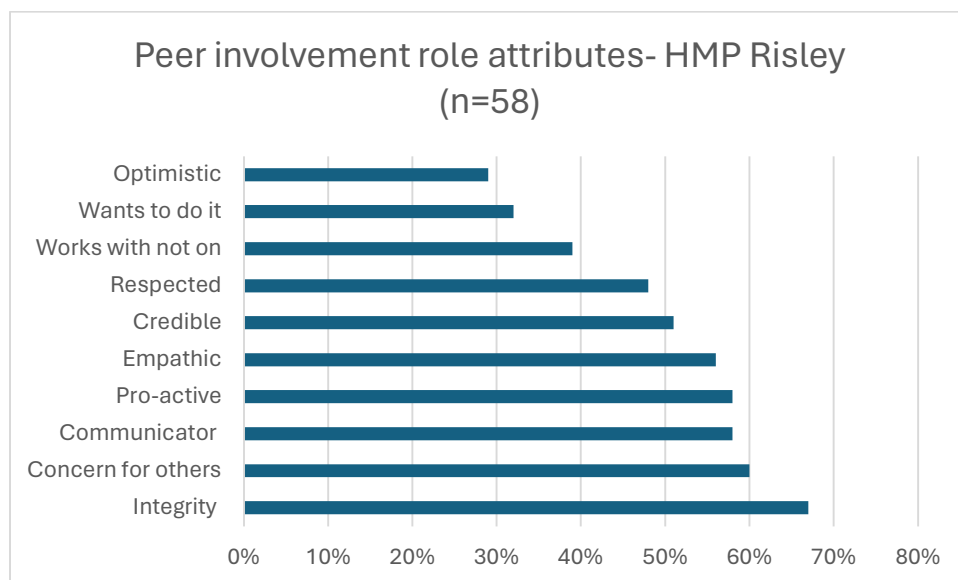
1.6 Peer involvement role attributes

Three core conditions characterising peer mentoring in the criminal justice system have been identified as: Caring, Listening, and Encouraging small steps (Buck, 2018). The interview respondents from HMP Risley however had much more complex expectations regarding the most desirable attributes of peer involvement role holders in the custodial environment.

1.6.1 Typology & prioritisation

Cited attributes were assigned to an inductive typology of ten key prison-context based peer involvement role attributes and presented visually in order of prioritisation from the interviews conducted at HMP Risley (n=58) in the graph below.

Graph 1.6.1: Peer involvement attributes- HMP Risley



1.6.2 Gendered expectations: Veterans as peer mentors in prison

Studies have identified potential concerns with the use of (ex-) forces personnel in prison acting in peer mentor roles, as veterans can be perceived as representing a hegemonic ideal of manhood (Buck, 2019b), with potentially associated concerns of complicating masculine aggression in the prison context (cf. De Viggiani, 2012; Laws and Crewe, 2016). Internationally

however, it is acknowledged that far less is known about the implementation of veterans as peer mentors in forensic settings (Adams and Lincoln, 2021). This study found that the selection of veterans for peer mentor roles was perceived as positive by residents and HMPPS wing officer staff on the Discovery wing:

“I wasn’t in the Army, but we were bought up to respect them” (John, Non-veteran, Peer supported interview).

“Military vets are good for modelling more respectful behaviour, with their experience of discipline and all and they have got work experience they can share...The vets- they mix well, say please, and thank you” (Phillip, HMPPS Prison wing officer, Mains wing).

However, wing residents also critically reflected on the reality that additional attributes (like the one’s listed in the previous section) rather than simply being a veteran were also required for the peer mentor in prison role:

“They have been in the Forces...and I give respect to them for the work they did. But to be a peer mentor, they need to help people decide for themselves, rather than the mentor ending up trying to be in charge themselves” (James, Non-veteran, Peer supported interview).

In general, however, the utilisation of male military veterans in prison as a promising source for recruitment into peer involvement roles at CFO’s wing model pilot sites is a positive step. This strategy illustrating a strengths-based approach to male veteran status by providing opportunities for the positive reframing of veteran-offender status. Capacity building the veteran community as valued community assets in CFO wing model sites is an example challenging often stigmatised and certainly gendered expectation-linked moral panics (cf. Albertson et al., 2017).

1.7 Profiling residents more fulfilling life in prison aspirations

The analysis of the participatory evaluation focus groups conducted with CFO programme engagers at the Discovery wing found that the ‘living a fulfilling life in prison’ aspirations of the two differently sentenced wing resident cohorts (PCoSO and Mains) were broadly similar.

1.7.1 Enablers

The 4 key enablers for CFO Discovery wing residents to ‘living a more fulfilling life in prison’ in common identified are presented below in order of priority across both the profiled residents:

- 1. Opportunities to foster relationships** with peer group, and a sense of a social life on the wing.
- 2. Meaningful activities** to engage with, providing residents with a sense of progression and a however-small sense of choice and autonomy, alongside provision of appropriate incentives for engagement.
- 3. Confidence in consistency** in both knowledge and application of the prison regime rules delivered in a respectful manner to residents by the prison officers.
- 4. Access to basic amenities**, such as kettles and microwaves on the wing.

However, distinctions between the PCoSO and Mains resident's aspirations for living a more fulfilling life in prison were also detected. In particular, the Mains residents expressed a desire for more help towards achieving more external-to-prison focussed tasks, such as acquiring practical qualifications for employment on release, sustaining external family support, and access to exercise-based activities whilst in prison. In contrast, the PCoSO residents identified more internally focussed aspirations for more autonomous living, and more creative and aesthetic activity requirements whilst serving their custodial sentence.

1.7.2 Barriers

Our analysis identified 4 perceived barriers to CFO Discovery wing residents being enabled to live the more fulfilling life in prison were cited as being:

1. **Relational frictions** with unresponsive, disrespectful, and inconsistent prison officer staff, being quick to give negative but not positive comments, and *"banging gates – staff are at work, but we live here"* (*Participative Evaluation focus group 1, Researcher notes*).
2. **Little reward** for good behaviour "but even when you do behave yourself, feels like bad behaviour is rewarded and good is not" (*Participative Evaluation focus group 2, Researcher notes*).
3. **Lack of wing social activities**, training in trades and education stopping at L2.
4. **Lack of basic amenities** and on-going utensil repair, meaning residents "have to use the kettle to warm things up" (*Participative Evaluation focus group 1, Researcher notes*).

1.7.3 Aspirations

Our analysis identified 4 ways in which CFO Discovery wing residents felt living a more fulfilling life on the wing could be enabled:

1. **Improving prisoner-staff relations** (e.g., staff training around noise reduction; drawing on military officer training as core enforcers that also treat their men with respect; A staff retention strategy; and generic prison officer staff that "belong" to the wing).
2. **Implementing wing-specific social group activities to aid wing cohesion** (e.g., Film & popcorn nights; and 5 aside football, games, and competitive activities involving everyone including the wing officers). Significantly, several wing officer staff also felt these types of wing-based activities would be feasible and beneficial to wing morale.
3. **The existing wing community being used as effective community resources**, e.g., decorators and plumber wing residents being "recruited" to improve the wing environment in an Apprentice-style peer involvement role.
4. **An influence pathway, or infrastructure** via which wing residents could propose ideas for activities, suggest realistic events, and have some influence on any changes to the services they are subject to, e.g., having a named link person at Governor level; and small pots of funding to use at peer mentor role holder discretion (as representing wing community aspirations) to enhance wing utilities.

1.7.4 Peer mentor role as an enabling community agent of change?

The workshop attendees reflected on how, if at all, they felt the CFO’s Peer mentor role holders could potentially help them achieve these aspirations for living a more fulfilling life in prison. Some workshop attendees reflected that the peer mentors could lead on helping the community to realise their aspirations (specifically 2, 3 and 4 as listed above). Residents felt that the peer mentor role would however need additional reinforcement to enable them to forge ahead in this regard, such as: *“a role of trust from staff and the peer mentors ought to have direct communication to Governor level”* (Participant findings validation & recommendations feasibility workshop 1, Researcher notes).

1.8 Mapping future 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 to indicate the extent to which horizontal and vertical social capital building resources had been opened up by the delivery of the CFO wing model (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.

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 Risley’s Discovery wing and peer involvement delivery model:
A: Micro-level: Relational/ bonding social capital (individual, relational + close friendship networks)	Stage 1: regularly associate in strength-based, enabling meaningful activity groups where friendships can develop across the wing community?	The 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, supported by peer mentor role holders.
	Stage 2: 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 supported by peer mentor attendance.

<p>B: Meso-level: Cognitive/ bridging social capital (Wing community setting)</p>	<p>Stage 3: contribute to core delivery of activities programme as trusted wing community assets?</p>	<p>Formal delivery contribution set up for peer mentor delivery of core activities identified.</p>
	<p>Stage 4: Represent, propose, and advocate wing community generated ideas, preferences, & service delivery solutions in wing practice decision making forums?</p>	<p>Informal contributions as part of day-to-day interaction with CFO staff team and via internal Prime provider data collection. Further developmental opportunities for formalised peer mentor representation of wing community aspiration pathways evident.</p>
<p>C: Macro-level: Structural/linking social capital (Wider decision-influencing & change settings)</p>	<p>Stage 5: represent wing community aspirations and contribute to wider prison decision making forums?</p>	<p>CFO Discovery resident representation identified at HMP Risley's Prisoner Council, not associated with CFO peer mentor role.</p>
	<p>Stage 6: represent the currently serving prisoner resident community's living experience and contribute to strategic prison service policy making settings?</p>	<p>No evidence documented. Potential for future opportunity developments identified.</p>

For a focussed practical social capital building-informed example for future strategy development, see Appendix 1.

Section 2: Good practice, lessons learnt, and recommendations

Based on the key findings presented above, this section features examples of good practice, identifies key barriers, key lessons learnt and finally, makes recommendations to optimise the implementation of the peer mentor element of delivery at CFO's Discovery wing pilot site.

2.1 Good practice examples

At the Discovery wing, good practice in the delivery of the CFO peer involvement role element were identified as:

- Discovery wing residents cite positive, trusted relationships, and the wider positive impact of peer mentors impacting positively on the wing's social and relational climate.
- An enthusiastic and dedicated staff partnership approach to delivery, underpinned by ringfenced funding and prison staff buy-in.
- Peer mentors utilising phase 1s to establish group belonging, ensuring trusting relationships develop, flourish, and mature during phases 2 and 3.
- Utilising the externally accredited L2 Mentoring qualification route, ensuring Discovery wing peer mentors clearly distinguish the uniqueness of this role from other peer involvement and paid peer support roles available in prison.

2.2 Key challenges

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

- The low profile of peer mentors within the CFO phase 1 core activity delivery.
- Lack of a formalised structure of developmental oversight, supervision, and progression over the CFO peer involvement role journey across the programme.
- Lack of a co-produced peer involvement role recruitment and progression model and alignment of the CFO peer mentor initiative with existing peer involvement role infrastructure at Risley.

2.3 Lessons learnt

At the CFO's Discovery wing the following key lessons were learnt by the CFO staff team during their wing model pilot delivery experience:

- Regime issues are key to successfully delivering the CFO peer involvement role element.
- Sequencing accredited Mentor training to meet CFO core delivery programme timescales can be challenging.
- Co-location and prison staff time buy-out are key to effective partnership working and delivery of the CFO peer involvement element of delivery.
- Ex-forces wing residents, with additional personality, capability and willingness checks are a promising potential candidate pool for peer involvement roles in prison.

- Ensuring peer mentors have high visibility across the wing and involving them in key activity delivery functions are key developmental areas.

2.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to enhance the further embedding of the peer involvement role element of CFO's Discovery wing delivery model:

2.4.1 Utilise a wider range of peer involvement roles

- Utilise a CFO activity embedded in a wider range of peer involvement' roles (e.g., CFO phase 1 graduates becoming CFO Ambassadors) in a progression pathway culminating in externally accredited training routes.
- Increase both the visibility and activity of the CFO peer involvement journey, aligned to participation in delivering core programme activities.
- Conduct infrastructure mapping and co-ordinate stakeholder responsibilities for the peer involvement role delivery element.
- Consider adding inspirational Phase 1 session content to wing residents delivered by successful lived experience practitioners with past experience of prison life to inspire Discovery wing residents they too can achieve a brighter, crime free life.

2.4.2 Clarify peer involvement profile & progression

- Extend the range of peer involvement role opportunities to more wing residents. Peer mentorship has a complex skill set requirement suggesting there may be limited numbers of wing residents for whom this peer involvement role will be suitable (Levenson and Farrant, 2002).
- This should not however exclude any wing residents from participating in the CFO peer involvement role initiative in alternative ways.
- Map out a peer involvement role journey before, during, through and after wing resident engagement with the CFO programme. This journey could potentially incorporate paid wing-based peer support roles, such as the wing's PiD worker role.
- Co-produce a peer involvement role selection process with existing peer mentors and wider CFO Discovery wing residents.

2.4.3 Optimise social capital building & impact opportunities

- Review the CFO partnership potential to provide a formalised strategic oversight and supervision structure for the peer involvement role element of delivery. Develop a structured training, and supervision process.
- Develop formal peer involvement role access into CFO wing service delivery design and decision-making forums.
- Link the CFO initiative into wider prison peer involvement forums to optimise peer mentor access into prison-wide delivery-decision-making settings, such as the Prisoner Council at HMP Risley.
- This will enable peer involvement opportunities to act in communal representation and advocacy roles to drive wider prison service practice change. This will increase

vertical social capital building and collective representation opportunities for peer mentors.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Utilising a Service User Ladder to embed 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 the every-day practice of delivering the CFO initiative. This table maps not ‘what is done’, but ‘how it could be done’ by aligning delivery to a service user participation ladder.

Appendix 1 table: Mapping CFO wing model peer involvement strategy on to service user participation ladder

	Service User involvement ladder	Peer involvement in CFO wing	Key characteristics....	CFO peer involvement role (CPIR) holder...
0	Non-engagement	CFO wing residents ‘take it or leave it’	Wing residents are offered a unidirectional CFO programme of activities.	N/A
1	Information	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	Consultation	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	Participation	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	Co-production	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	Wing resident-user-led	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 independent of the core CFO initiative delivery.	CPIR representing wing resident aspirations approaches CFO staff team with the idea & with CFO staff

				support realises new peer-led initiative benefitting the wing community
--	--	--	--	---

Appendix 2: Mapping peer involvement roles at HMP Risley

The analysis of the Prisoner Council and wing community workshop generated data at HMP Risley revealed residents (and many prison staff) are aware of clear distinctions in the peer involvement roles available. These distinctions contribute to our 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 Risley to action the recommendations made in this study⁹.

Appendix 2 table: Peer involvement roles available at HMP Risley (n=14)

Peer involvement role title	Paid/ Un-paid	Induction	Single issue/ skill/task	Bridging role	Collective/ civic representation
	<i>As per PSO 4460¹⁰ 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 & motivating participation role</i>	<i>EG. Formal wing decision-making forum (WDF) and/or Prisoner Council (PC) roles</i>
Induction orderly	Paid	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
PID	Paid	Yes	Yes	No	PC as part of role
Listener	Un-paid	Yes	Yes	No	No
Cleaners, Food servers, Laundry etc.	Paid	No	Yes	No	No
Red Band¹¹	Un-paid	No	No	Yes	No
Shannon Trust Mentor	Un-paid	No	Yes	Yes	No
Education Mentors	Paid	No	Yes	No	No
Health Orderly	Paid	No	Yes	No	No
Safer Custody & Equalities reps	Paid	Yes	Yes	No	PC as part of role
Veterans Mentor	Paid	Yes	No	Yes	No
Drugs Mentors	Paid	No	Yes	Yes	No
Industries/ Workshop Mentors	Paid	No	Yes		No
Social Care Peer¹²	Paid	No	Yes	No	No

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ HM Prison Service (2020) Prison Service Order 4460: Prisoners pay:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/paying-prisoners-for-work-and-other-activities-psy-4460>

¹¹ 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.

¹² 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.

Peer mentors	Un-paid	Yes	No	Yes	Some WDFs, not PC.
---------------------	---------	-----	----	-----	-----------------------

Acknowledgements

The first, and biggest thank you must go to everyone at HMP Risley 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.