

Community organisations tackling re-offending

Action Acton (AA) is a member of the Development Trusts Association
This is how they work to tackle re-offending in their community.

John Blackmore- Chief Executive of Action Acton

[Music begins] “My name’s John Blackmore, I’m the chief executive of Action Acton and my role is to work with the board to make Action Acton a sustainable organization so that we can effectively deliver our mission of promoting community and economic regeneration in disadvantaged communities.

[Cutaway: images of South Acton Estate; sign, park, building]

“We started 10 years ago in partnership with the community and in partnership with local groups [Cutaway: Action Acton placard] and organizations.

[Cutaway: The Doughnut Factory]

[INTERVIEW] Action Acton decided to work with offenders [CUTAWAY: JOHN WRITING IN OFFICE] because a key part of our mission is to work with disadvantaged individuals in the community [INTERVIEW] and offenders experience additional disadvantages [CUTAWAY: AA EXT] to many of the other people we work with because of their criminal record. [CUTAWAY: BROCHURES] Many offenders we work with have no educational skills or qualifications.

[INTERVIEW] “There wasn’t a lot of work going on [CUTAWAY: AA INT] in terms of providing employment support for offenders. And we found through doing that, [CUTAWAY: SOUTH ACTION ESTATE] then not only can we benefit the individual offender, [INTERVIEW] but we can also benefit the local community because the offenders live in the local community. [CUTAWAY: SOUTH ACTON ESTATE] Through providing them with a future in terms of employment that helps make a safer community.”

Michael Finn- AA Client

“My name’s Michael Finn. [CUTAWAY: MICHAEL WALKING ON STREET] I came to Action Acton about a year ago. My last probation officer suggested them to me [EXT AA-MICHEL ENTERS] because I was constantly under my parole term. [INTERVIEW] I’d been having trouble finding employment so [CUTAWAY: MICHAEL AT RECEPTION] I went in, spoke to them, registered, and [MICHAEL SMILING] ended up getting put under the supervision of Nicky.”

Nicky Robertson-Peek: Project Manager AA

“My name’s Nicky Robertson-Peek, and I’m a project manager for Action Acton, and one of the projects I work on is the offender project with prolific and priority offenders.

“Action Acton offers kind of intensive [CUTAWAY: NICKY ON PHONE/TYPING] support to help offenders and ex-offenders to find employment training or education, and that ranges from basic employability skills up to liaising with employers [INTERVIEW] to particularly sourced vacancies for offenders.

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[CUTAWAY: MICHAEL/NICKY]

Michael Finn: AA Client

[CUTAWAY: MICHAEL/NICKY TALK AT DESK] “The main help that Action Acton has given me is motivation and encouragement. It’s difficult sometimes when [INTERVIEW] you’re going so long without employment and so long without a reply from job applications.”

Nicky Robertson-Peek: Project Manager AA

[CUTAWAY: NICKY AT DESK] “Initially Action Acton was involved with the ESF Exodus Pilot Project [INTERVIEW] working with offenders. And this kind of really highlighted the fact that holistic approach was required. And we felt the need that this kind of group [CUTAWAY: MICHAEL AT COMPUTER] particularly had for intensive support to get them back into employment. Another point that found was when we were doing—developing our PPO project [INTERVIEW] —that office research kind of suggested that most of the people working with this kind of group felt that employment was a significant part [CUTAWAY: NICKY POINT OUT SOMETHING TO MICHAEL ON COMPUTER/ MICHAEL SMILES] of stopping re-offending. But only 5% of projects that were currently running had specialized employment support.”

Michael Finn: AA Client

“The reason I would say Action Acton is better than other places I have been to, personally, is that they seem to have more time to be able to dedicate [CUTAWAY: MICHAEL AND NICKY AT DESK] to each individual. Certainly myself, I’ve found that Nicky has been able [INTERVIEW] to do a lot more than just that standard CV and job search with me. [CU INTERVIEW] She’s been able to give me a lot advice and just sit there and discuss ideas [CUTAWAY: CU NICKY SMILING] and options with me.”

Nicky Robertson-Peek

[CUTAWAY: NICKY TALKING TO MICHAEL AT DESK] “Well, offender projects feed into the other work that Action Acton does. [INTERVIEW] So one of the main things we’ve found is that because they run alongside our mainstream job brokerage projects, that we create an environment where people aren’t seen as an offender, and they can kind of integrate into that. The other factor is that we have advisors working on various different projects who might specialise in different areas. For example, might be construction, or someone might be particularly good at benefits. [CUTAWAY: AA EMPLOYEES AT COMPUTER] And then they’ll benefit from [CUTAWAY: CU OF AA EMPLOYEE] that person’s experience in those areas.

[INTERVIEW] “And then there’s also the obvious fact that we have—[CUTAWAY: INT AA SHOTS (BROCHURES, POSTERS)] that all our services are open to all the offenders. So that could be literacy, numeracy, whilst they’re job searching. [INTERVIEW] We have an Acton Market project which helps people set up [CUTAWAY: INT AA, ACTON MARKET POSTER] their own market stalls. [CUTAWAY: EXT ACTON FARMERS MARKET BANNER] There’s volunteering services—so there’s a range of other services that they can access through Action Acton.

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[INTERVIEW] “I think this is kind of one of Action Acton’s strengths is that we’ve kind of maintained that then actually finding employment is only half the battle. So we do offer [CUTAWAY: NICKY AND MICHAEL TALKING AT DESK] quite a lot of in-work support. We can liaise with employers on their behalf in order to make it kind of sustainable. It completely varies [INTERVIEW] on the level of support that an offender requires but we do see people coming back to us when their circumstances change or maybe they’ve got some issue that we can help them resolve. And we’ve found that this has been quite successful in stopping people re-offending.”

Steve Wyler: Director DTA

“Traditionalists, and government generally, should start first with local organizations as the answer. [CUTAWAY: ALT EXT SHOT AA BUILDING] And the reason is that people are [CUTAWAY: AA EMPLOYEE] not numbers, they’re not statistics, they have [CUTAWAY: AA CLIENT] complex, multi-faceted lives, [CUTAWAY: EXT AA] and they are operating in a [INTERVIEW] complicated world. And the thing about local, community organizations, large and small, um, is that they can get to know people as individuals. [CUTAWAY: NICKY/MICHAEL TALKING AT DESK] And large corporates can’t do that. They can get to know people as individuals and they know their [INTERVIEW] community inside out. You bring those two things together you have a chance of really changing things.”

[CUTAWAY: MICHEAL ON STREET]

Michael Finn: AA Client

[INTERVIEW] “Long term, I really want to be a social worker. [CUTAWAY: CU MICHAEL AT COMPUTER] I’m kind of almost getting to that point now where I think that I’m going to be able to, to kick that off. [INTERVIEW] My short-term plans are, I’ve recently, [CUTAWAY: NICKY ANSWERING PHONE] through Action Acton again, been put onto another organization. They’re going to pay [INTERVIEW] for my driving lessons and my driving test [CUTAWAY: CU MICHAEL] in exchange for 80 hours of voluntary work taking [INTERVIEW] meals to homeless people and, and, and vulnerable people. Which is another thing that’s going to be good for me because [CUTAWAY: NICKY/MICHAEL AT DESK/COMPUTER] to get on the social working degree [CUTAWAY: CU MICHAEL TYPING] you have to have 6 months of voluntary work. [INTERVIEW] I’m going to be applying next month [CUTAWAY: NICKY/MICHAEL AT DESK/COMPUTER] to go to college to do the access to social work course, which will [INTERVIEW] hopefully start in September. So, basically things are starting to come together now. Hopefully 2010 will, [laughs] will be good for me.”

John Blackmore: Chief Executive AA

“In five years time, I’d like to see Action Acton have its own premises in [CUTAWAY: EXT AA SIGN] [CUTAWAY: DIGITAL SIGN- *PROMOTING COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC REGENERATION*] the community because in terms of sustainability and security, in terms of our presence [INTERVIEW] in the community, it’s important that we actually have premises that [CUTAWAY: JOHN IN OFFICE] know are sustainable. [CUTAWAY: AA EMPLOYEES AT DESKS] We’d like to expand the work we’re doing in terms [INTERVIEWS] of helping people get jobs, education

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[CUTAWAY: BROCHURES] training, and self-employment. And we'd like to expand our [CUTAWAY: AA EMPLOYEE AT COMPUTER] work with adult and [CUTAWAY: AA CLIENT] young offenders. [INTERVIEWS] I'd like to see Action Acton being the community [CUTAWAY: LS EXT AA OFFICE, PEOPLE WALKING BY] anchor for Acton." [Music fades out].