

Press Release

CHURCHES BREAKING ADDICTIONS THAT CAUSE POVERTY

A woman was so desperate to walk away from her gambling habit and break her cycle of debt that she photocopied photos of herself and distributed them to local bookmakers with a message that she should not be served under any circumstances.

It was moving stories like this from clients that led debt counseling charity Christians Against Poverty to introduce a pilot service to help people with addictions.

CAP Release Groups is today one year old and in 12 months alone, it has begun 30 new groups around the UK and today (June 19) has another training room full of church reps ready to learn and expand the network.

So far, more than 130 people have been helped; the most common problems are smoking, alcohol abuse and drug dependency – all of which have a direct impact on their income.

The Centre for Social Justice has identified five pathways to poverty: family breakdown, educational failure, worklessness and dependency, addiction and serious personal debt. CAP Release Groups is giving churches another way to tackle these issues at the core for the benefit of their locality, while giving them a good reason to connect with people.

Aside from the top three most common habits, others have been more surprising including one lady who needed help to stop her buying new handbags.

“The sessions are designed to help people look at the reasons behind their addiction – whatever that is - and discover what is at the root,” said Dave Nobbs, Release Groups Developer.

Sessions include ‘admitting you have a problem’, ‘forgiveness’ and ‘walking into freedom’.

“Our method is designed for people to set their own goals and then we support each individual as they strive for them. Essentially, this is for people who know they need to stop. It’s not about the Church being preachy.”

Some great stories are now coming back from CAP’s partner churches and have been celebrated in traditional CAP style. They include:

- A woman who was using heroin daily and drinking for more than ten years stopped completely after several weeks.
- A man who was dependent on weed and alcohol cutting down to drinking once or twice a week, growing in confidence and finding full-time work.

“What we do has been inspired by the proven 12-steps programme, but where an organisation like Alcoholics Anonymous would talk about a ‘higher power’, we have no problem naming him Jesus. People know up-front that they dealing with a group called *Christians Against Poverty* so we don’t need to be apologetic about who we are.”

CAP Release Groups is the latest ministry from CAP, which now has debt support, money education and job clubs on offer to resource churches to help their communities.

To find out more about starting a CAP Release Groups see: capuk.org/partnership

Ends

Notes to journalists

Christians Against Poverty is a UK charity determined to lift people out of hardship via debt counselling, financial education, job clubs and release groups - all of which operate through churches. All CAP’s services are free of charge and available to all regardless of age, gender, faith or background.

More: capuk.org

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Stock photos: <https://capuk.org/capreleasegroupphotos>