

Manchester charity teams up with top local poet to celebrate 40th anniversary

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Local charity Back on Track is teaming up with the renowned Manchester poet Longfella as part of their 40th birthday celebrations. The poet – real name Tony Walsh – will work with a group of Back on Track's service users, creating a unique new piece to be performed at the charity's 40th anniversary event in July.

Longfella is one of the UK's top performance poets whose work has been acclaimed by Sir Alex Ferguson and Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy, among many others. He says: 'I'm really looking forward to this one. Back on Track do really great work with disadvantaged adults and this project will give them a voice.'

He will be working with a group of people getting their lives back together after going through problems like homelessness and addiction. The six week project will be a chance for the group to draw on their life experiences, with most writing and performing poetry for the first time.

Back on Track was founded above a car parts shop in Chorlton in 1977 and now supports more than a thousand people a year at their centre in Ancoats. The charity supports ex-offenders - helping them put their pasts behind them and stay on the right path - and people with experience of homelessness, substance misuse and long-term mental health problems.

Siobhan Pollitt, Back on Track's Chief Executive Officer, says, 'Tony's poetry makes you laugh, makes you cry and makes you think. Working with a poet with his skills is a fantastic opportunity for our service users. We can't wait to see what they come up together!'

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