

Voluntary Sector News

Welcome to the sixth edition of our Newsletter

Many thanks to those of you who have contributed to this edition. As ever, we would welcome suggestions for contributions to our next newsletter. Please contact us via the email addresses shown below.

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New Prison Service National Voluntary Sector Co-ordinator

We are pleased to announce that Graham Verrall will be joining the NOMS Voluntary Sector Unit in early January. Graham joined the Prison Service in 1978 initially as a Physical Education Teacher, later becoming a Drug and Alcohol Strategy Manager and Resettlement Governor. He has served in both Male and Female establishments across the full range of prisons, his last position being at HMP Dartmoor as Head of Reducing Re-offending.

Graham sits as a Trustee on several Charity Boards including the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous as a non-alcoholic Trustee. He has also spent a considerable amount of his free time fund raising for a wide range of local and national charities, activities ranging from crossing the Gobi Desert to white water rafting in North Wales!

Graham recently received a STAR Award for Outstanding Leadership, sponsored by the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL). He was selected from nearly 1,500 nominations to be one of 18 winners presented with the top prize which included a trophy and a certificate at the Quality Improvement Agency's STAR Awards ceremony.



Graham writes:

“As a former Head of Resettlement I am fully aware of the immense role that the voluntary and community sector can and do play in the resettlement and rehabilitation of offenders. I am even more aware of the tremendous untapped resources that are currently available but which, due to a wide range of reasons, are not utilized resulting in many offenders losing valuable, life-changing opportunities. I also despair at the large number of fantastic initiatives that fail due to lack of resources, support or understanding. It is for these reasons that I am so eager to take up my post in the NOMS VSU to champion such causes”.

NOMS Grants Programme

In response to a letter on behalf of the sector from Clive Martin of Clinks and Lucy Gampell of Action for Prisoners' Families expressing concerns over the value of the NOMS Voluntary and Community Sector Grants programme, NOMS Chief Executive, Helen Edwards, replied setting out the position on the funding available for the scheme.

By way of background, the grants initiative resulted from a genuine desire to put new money into those under-funded parts of the sector that are vital if we are to reduce re-offending. The VCS grants scheme was designed as an ongoing, rolling programme, intended, subject to budget delegations, to run beyond the three years of the initial grants round until such time as it may be decided to discontinue the scheme.

Helen expressed her regret that the wording on the grants application forms for this and last year caused confusion about the amount of money that is available for new awards. I should like to add my apologies to Helen's for the confusion caused. We shall ensure that the wording for any future rounds is clarified. Helen gave her assurance to the sector that there had been no cut in funding. The value of the programme remains as originally introduced: i.e. a budget of £500k per year.

The present misunderstanding arose because the funding commitments made to successful three-year projects in year one have to be met from the £500,000 budget available in each of the subsequent years. This effectively means that, although the expenditure in each year remains £500,000, the

amount that can be allocated to new projects is less.

The funding available for new grants in 2007/08 will be £207,000 - a little more than we first thought because one of last year's successful groups has withdrawn its project. We looked very carefully at the possibility of further increasing the funding, but I am afraid that at this point in the year all revenue funding is already committed. However, I am pleased to say that we have managed to find up to

£200,000 additional capital funding which will be available in the form of capital investment grants to organisations that are awarded grants under the scheme for 2007/08 and are able to identify and pay for start-up costs of fixed assets before the 31st March 2007. We hope this additional resource will enable the successful organisations to add new value to their original plans.

Jeremy Page

Head of NOMS Voluntary Sector & Assisted Prison Visits Unit

Home Office Offender Management Bill

As most of you will be aware, the Home Office has just published an Offender Management Bill. This follows hot on the heels of the Home Secretary's widely publicised speech at Wormwood Scrubs. He took the opportunity to emphasise the central role that he saw for the voluntary sector in the post-legislative world. He said that it was crucial that we bring the voluntary sector back to centre stage "as an equal," and that the sector needs to be able to act as an "equally professional partner in supervising and rehabilitating offenders when they leave prison, and in the community." For those of you who have been following the development of NOMS, this is a real milestone in the journey towards ensuring that third sector providers are able to reach their full potential in delivering services to offenders.

The relevant section of the Bill is that which will deliver changes to the way that probation services are delivered across the whole of England and Wales. Currently, the statutory duty to make arrangements for the provision of probation services rests exclusively with the local probation board. We are proposing a framework that allows us to play to the differing strengths of different providers, while adding the flexibility to develop new kinds of working across the public, private and third sectors, and between custody and the community, to better meet local needs.

Probation is a crucial service, vital to public protection. Accordingly, we are investing record sums in the sector. This year we will spend over £900m on it, which in real terms is up by 40% since 2001/02. In line with this growth in funding, the number of people working in the service has also increased substantially, with the current number standing at around 21,000 compared with 15,000 just five years ago.

Despite this extra investment, and the hard work and dedication of probation officers around the country, we have still not managed to make a sufficient impact on the most crucial outcome, reducing re-offending: almost 60% of offenders re-offend within two years. We need to make sure that we are getting the most out of our investment. It is

clear that the public sector cannot do all that needs to be done on its own.

As such, we are aiming to open up the service so that the particular skills and expertise of the voluntary and private sectors can be utilised wherever appropriate, to ensure that we have the best probation service possible – and not one that is hidebound by historic provision. We want to allow all of those who have the right skills and expertise to be able to make a contribution to the management of offenders, whichever sector they come from.

You will all know that voluntary organisations, such as Mencap, Scope and the RNIB, have a lot to offer as service providers for people with learning or physical disabilities. Similarly, we believe it is vital to allow organisations such as yourselves, who specialise in work with offenders or the problems offenders face, to have a greater chance to make a contribution to the effective and safe management of offenders.

After all, as the Home Secretary pointed out, it is a frequently forgotten fact that the probation service grew out of the voluntary sector. That's why there are already so many voluntary sector organisations working with the public and private sectors to deliver services. Over 1500 different organisations in total are currently working with offenders, with more than 600 projects working with probation in the community.

Opponents of our plans claim that they amount to privatisation. This is wrong. The public sector probation service is already centre stage in our work with offenders and will continue to be so. Our aim is for a new network of viable, successful public sector trusts, working in partnership with providers from the private and third sectors to deliver high-quality services for the benefit of offenders, the courts and the public. It is our belief that this new approach will help reduce re-offending and ensure greater public protection – with the result that law-abiding members of our society will feel substantially safer.

Duke of Edinburgh Award Volunteer - Laura Creegan



Laura has been a volunteer at HMP Send Visitors' Centre for more than two years. Laura, now 16 years old, started volunteering for Send Family Link in October 2004, as the service to the community module of her Duke of Edinburgh award. She stayed on after the required three month period was finished, helping in the Visitors' Centre on Sunday afternoons and during school holidays. While the visitors are booking in and waiting in the centre Laura helps in the tea bar and assists the centre Managers at the booking desk. The staff at the Visitors' Centre find Laura's advanced IT skills an invaluable help and she now plays an important role in producing and presenting monitoring

data. Over the past two years Laura has tackled any task – from wrapping hundreds of Christmas presents to changing a visitor's tyre! Laura says *"I enjoy helping the visitors and families and find that it has given me an insight into an aspect of life that I previously knew little about"*.

Laura was born in Guildford and has always lived in the area. She completed her GCSE's earlier this year and is now

studying for her A levels in Maths, Business Studies, French, ICT and Critical Thinking. She plays the classical guitar and is currently working towards grade 7. She is also a qualified gymnastics coach, working with younger gymnasts twice a week.

Amazingly Laura still finds she has some spare time and enjoys meeting up with friends to go shopping and to the cinema.

Conference date for your diary!

NOMS Voluntary Sector and Assisted Prison Visits Unit will be hosting a conference on
22nd March 2007
at the Business Design Centre in Islington

"What Value Partnerships – public, private and voluntary sector?"

We will be advertising this shortly, so, if you are not already on our mailing list but would like to receive details, please email

Lyn.stanford@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk or phone 020 7035 0211.

Please note - we are unable to take bookings at this stage!

Progress ... the NOMS Change Up Projects

As reported in issue 2, the NOMS Change Up projects are part of a £4 million programme to increase engagement of the voluntary and community sector in geographical areas of deprivation and priority public service areas including the correctional services. The projects, which will end in December 2006, will be evaluated to measure the projects' impact and outcomes and to inform future developments.

The first three projects listed below are testing different models of partnership working, principally larger organisations working with smaller organisations.

Step Up

Crime Concern is responsible for the Step Up Programme in the West Midlands region. Using a social franchising model, the programme aims to enable local voluntary and

community sector organisations rise to the challenges presented by NOMS. Ironically, as the programme nears the end of its life, those challenges are starting to materialise following the publication in August of the Home Office Document “Public Value Partnerships”.

Some recent examples of our work include: a highly successful seminar - Working with Offenders in Prisons and the Community - giving an overview of two national training packs to support staff and volunteers; awareness raising of probation and its challenges, aimed to equip participants to work more effectively within the probation and the emerging NOMS environment; bespoke consultancy on two projects wanting to develop partnerships with probation and; a joint initiative arranged with the National Body of Black Prisoner Support Groups as part of their S.E.E.D 4BME Offenders Project.

Our forthcoming events will see a partnership with Skills for Justice, to look at ways for organisations to gain accreditation and recognition for the work they undertake with offenders and a series of “working lunches” to explore forthcoming opportunities with NOMS and how the social franchising model can help capitalise on these.

An important part of our work is to meet regularly with the Regional Offender Manager and the four Chief Officers of Probation in the region to promote the sector’s work across the region.

We are pleased to announce that the Aston Centre for Voluntary Action Research has been commissioned to complete the evaluation of the Step Up project and will be working with Crime Concern and the organisations and other stakeholders involved in the project to identify key lessons arising from the programme.

Partners in Reducing Re-offending (PiRR)

This London wide project aims to help small and medium sized charities prepare for NOMS. It brings organisations together into consortia building groups which are based around the eight resettlement pathways forming the London Resettlement Action Plan. Additionally, PiRR supports a BME and a Women’s Strategy Group.

Responsibility for PiRR has now been transferred from the Revolving Doors Agency to Clinks, the national infrastructure organisation supporting voluntary sector organisations that work with offenders and their families, and which works to strengthen and develop the partnerships between voluntary and community-based organisations and the Prison and Probation Services in England and Wales. While this work continues, Clinks is also focusing on developments related to NOMS.

Clinks now has a London Project Manager, Lynne Laidlaw, who will be reviewing the PiRR evaluation, and, in consultation with the Steering Group and other consortia members, will agree ‘ways forward’ to build on the established and valuable work of PiRR. In particular PiRR is interested in building the capacity of the VCS to meet the challenges of forging sustainable relationships with funders and commissioners, and the demands of demonstrating how effective the sector is in bringing about positive changes to the lives of the people and clients that it serves.

Visit www.clinks.org for more information about Clinks and where, over the coming months, PiRR will establish a new web presence. Lynne can be contacted at lynne.laidlaw@clinks.org.

MOVE

MOVE (Managing Offenders through Voluntary Sector Engagement) is managed by Nacro, the National Crime Reduction Charity. Its main aim is to capacity build the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in Leeds to enable them to help deliver the Regional Offender Manager's target of reducing re-offending by 10% by 2010 and to involve VCS organisations in the city in delivering elements of integrated offender management services.

The NOMS Reducing Re-offending National Action Plan identifies improvements in seven 'pathways' as contributory factors in reducing re-offending. In Yorkshire and Humberside, the Regional Offender Manager has created an additional two pathways, Priority and Prolific offenders and the Voluntary and Community Sector.

VCS Engagement with MOVE across the pathways	
Pathway	No. of VCS organisations engaged
1. Accommodation	14
2. Education, training & Employment	13
3. Mental and Physical Health	13
4. Drugs & Alcohol	10
5. Finance, Benefits & Debt	10
6. Children & Families	9
7. Attitudes, Thinking & Behaviour	13
8. Priority & Prolific Offenders	10

MOVE has been holding community consultation events throughout the year to inform the sector on Offender Management including Commissioning and Contestability. Diversity is a key component of MOVE and, in response to VCS needs identified at their events, MOVE has run a number of training programmes for small and diverse VCS organisations in Leeds. MOVE has engaged with over 75 organisations and developed a Consortia group consisting of 29 organisations which are representative of the Regional Pathways.

MOVE has prepared and skilled up members of the consortia to enable their engagement in the NOMS commissioning process from 2007. It has also supported two member organisations to secure contracts for offender related services with West Yorkshire Probation Area. The toolkit for VCS groups on "*How to work with Offenders*" was launched at the MOVE conference on 15th November 2006. You can download a copy from www.e-vision.org.uk.

MOVE has worked alongside another Change Up project, CRISP, which has played a key part in raising awareness of NOMS in the Yorkshire and Humber Region.

Clinks Regional Information and Skills Project

The Clinks Regional Information and Skills Project (CRISP) have a remit for the East Midlands, the North East and Yorkshire and Humberside.

2006 has seen the project bringing diverse players within the voluntary and community sector together with public and private criminal justice agencies for networking, learning and action planning. It has achieved this in the following ways:

- Nine Action Learning Sets have met to share their questions and challenges about creating and/or improving front line services for offenders. The sets have broken down cultural dissonance and enhanced knowledge management between different agencies.
- Regional Information and Skills Events served a useful purpose in raising awareness of the NOMS in the first half of the year. These enabled VCS organisations to better understand the opportunities that may exist to develop their work under NOMS.
- Three sub-regional conferences were held between May and August 2006. These events have generated considerable interest and early reports suggest new service provision is being planned.
- Volunteering with Offenders in the Community Resource Pack and training has been offered in the three regions.
- Weekly e-bulletin, Light Lunch, points recipients to infrastructure support and alerts them to relevant developments in the third sector and the criminal justice system.

The project has actively engaged with 1194 individuals, and its usefulness is reflected in some of the comments below.

Quotes:

“Very useful bulletin. Some material I haven't seen elsewhere. And congrats especially on AL sets.”

Chief Executive of National Infrastructure Organisation

“I think it would be hugely beneficial to sustain beyond December the work and impact that CRISP delivers with regard to VCS PAT and Step Change objectives.”

Regional Government Project Manager

“A big thank you to you and your colleagues for the Conference yesterday. The sessions were very useful and the networking opportunity was one of the most relevant I have experienced in my professional life.”

Project Officer, Local VCS Organisation

S.E.E.D 4BME Project

The National Body of Black Prisoner Support Groups' S.E.E.D 4BME Project was established to facilitate and develop the infrastructure and capacity of BME voluntary

and community sector organisations to enable them to engage effectively with NOMS. “S.E.E.D 4BME” stands for Sustainability, Empowerment, Engagement, and Development for Black and Minority Ethnic Offender Support Groups. Working in both the North West and South West regions, the project has been successful in developing a regional consortium in the North West. This emerging consortium comprises of support organisations that are currently providing services for BME offenders and their families covering one or more of the action pathways. The consortium is in the process of developing a set of protocols for working together in order to offer culturally appropriate services to the Regional Offender Manager, in support of the resettlement agenda. In the South West the project has worked closely with the Regional Offender Manager and his Deputy to establish a reference group comprising of BME support organisations. This group has agreed terms of reference and works as a collective to review the action plans for the Reducing Re-offending Partnership Board ensuring that issues of race and diversity are integral to the planning process. The S.E.E.D 4BME project has established forums, facilitated a national conference, held capacity building sessions and worked strategically with a range of partner agencies to improve the environment of BME offenders and their families. The project will also develop a good practice guide, sharing practice from across the country.

For further information on these projects, please contact:

Carol Buckland, NOMS Voluntary Sector and Assisted Prison Visits Unit
carol.buckland3@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk or on 020 7035 0212.

Expanding Partnerships in the South West Probation Area

In March 2006, Avon and Somerset Probation Area (ASPA) held its first partnership conference, invited were guests from charities, voluntary agencies, private companies, colleagues from Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and other interested parties.

The aim of the conference was to expand on the work ASPA already do with external partners, creating further opportunities to form relationships with organisations and businesses that are well placed to support and add real value to the probation service objectives.

There are key areas which would particularly benefit from future partnerships and the focus was targeted on the provision of ‘Accommodation’, ‘Alcohol’ and ‘Finance, Benefit and Debt’

in line with the Reducing Re-offending Action Pathways.

Together with details of the conference, we sent out an invitation to agencies to submit an ‘expression of interest’ to bid for funding to provide these services.

The aims and objectives of the conference were:-

- To introduce prospective partners to the aims of ASPA and our priorities in the delivery of the Reducing Re-offending Action Plan.
- To provide an opportunity for networking with and between all partners.
- To identify the process and next steps in the commissioning of new partnerships.

- To promote best practice with a view to improving the quality of services being provided for offenders.

We had speakers from Clinks, a Business Manager advising the private sector, the Programme Manager from our Regional Reducing Re-offending Partnership and ASPA senior managers.

A series of key workshops were held covering topics, such as:-

- Working with Black and Minority Ethnic Offenders.
- Working with Women Offenders.
- Working with Alcohol Related Offending.
- Meeting the Accommodation Needs of Offenders.
- Meeting the Employment Needs of Offenders.

The workshops raised some very interesting issues and due to the popularity of the conference ASPA will be running a similar day next year.

Eleven formal bids to provide services were received and a commissioning panel, chaired by a Board Member was convened in May to assess all bids against set criteria, the following we are pleased to say were successful:

Accommodation Bids:

Bath Churches Housing Association – started August 2006 by providing short-stay housing and support mainly for PPO offending being released into the Bath area, but any spare spaces are offered to the local probation team.

2 Bridges Drug and Alcohol Trust – started July 2006 by providing accommodation for females being released from HM Women’s Remand

Centre Eastwood Park with drug and alcohol problems.

Alcohol bids:

The Nelson Trust – started providing alcohol counselling on the 1st July 2006 at the 4 offices in Somerset.

The CAAAD Project (Community Action Around Alcohol & Drugs) – starting early September 2006 to provide alcohol counselling at the three large offices in Bristol, with offsite counselling and support being provided at their home base of the Barton Hill Settlement in Bristol.

ARA (Addiction Recovery Agency) – starting early October to provide alcohol counselling in North Somerset (the Weston Super Mare area).

We are hoping shortly to finalise the provider in Bath and NE Somerset. This will then give us an area wide alcohol counselling service working to the same specification. We did not have any bids for Finance, Benefit and Debt, but are currently exploring opportunities to offer this service to offenders.

To ensure that these new partnerships are on a clear and defined footing, ASPA expect these new partners to accept our ‘service agreements’ and ‘information sharing protocols’ before start-up and agree to the quarterly monitoring of the contract, looking at the performance of all parties.

So far, so good, all partnerships that have started up have been going well, and the first monitoring was due in October. On an excellent note, it is great to see our partners working so well with our staff; it bodes well for the future.

Frank Meadows
Partnership Development Manager
Avon & Somerset Probation Area

C-NOMIS Update

Since the last update on the progress of the new IT system to join up the prison and probation services, much has happened, not least a slight alteration in the name of the new system! It is now formally known as C-NOMIS, following the discovery that the single name NOMIS was already in use as a brand name.

The C-NOMIS project has been working closely with the Prison Service and the National Probation Service to prepare for the advent of C-NOMIS. Significant work needs to be done in advance at individual establishment and probation area level to adapt business processes, to undertake data cleansing on existing offender records prior to migration and to train staff. Activities in these areas are well advanced.

HMPS has appointed a national business change support team to take forward the implementation of C-NOMIS along with the offender management model and NPS is planning a similar approach. C-NOMIS project staff will be supporting and working with these national initiatives which represent the business taking over the responsibility for implementation and the associated business changes. This business led approach will ensure in particular that awareness of current voluntary sector service provision in prisons and probation areas will be kept very much to the fore in implementation planning. The project business change team is also conscious of the need to be mapping out existing voluntary service provision at local level, particularly as probation areas are now required to increase the level of sub-contracting to voluntary and private providers.

It was originally planned that the first release of C-NOMIS would go live in HMPS Albany on the Isle of Wight in July 2006. Technical and contractual issues have caused a delay in this and that has knock on implications for the rollout across the rest of the country. An announcement will be made shortly on how and when the system will be rolled out but the initial "go-live" at HMP Albany is envisaged to take place shortly, followed in the middle of 2007 with implementation in probation services and other prisons, starting a process which will be completed in 2008. Further information on C-NOMIS can be obtained on www.noms.gov.uk.

Footprints

Footprints is an example of a community chaplaincy scheme which seeks to help prisoners leaving HMP Dorchester.

The project is situated immediately outside the prison gate and its team of 50 volunteers have regular access to prisoners prior to release. They continue working with them in the community, and have achieved some success in helping them keep off drugs. There is a

team of qualified counsellors who work with prisoners and their partners providing an integrated holistic approach. Six ex-offenders, who want to give something back, are also involved in the project.

"Time for Families", a three day accredited relationship building course for prisoners and their partners, is run by Footprints in HMP Dorchester.

By the end of March 2006, the project had been running for 16 months and had helped over 150 clients.

Future plans include developing a protocol to enable prisoners to open a bank account; providing office work experience to a Category 'D' prisoner who is being granted day release; and introducing Dorch TV that will be available in each prison cell showing a range of programmes which Footprints will source, plus some they will commission such as Stress Management; Epilogues; Forthcoming Events and Courses; and also messages from the Governor and staff. It is believed only one other Prison offers this in the UK, and no other Local Prison.

Footprints has received a Dorset Criminal Justice Board Award in

recognition of their innovative work, and a National Award by the Howard League for Penal Reform.

Anthony Sherman, Co-ordinator writes:

"Whilst we have had some disappointments, one of the joys of our work.....is to see people benefiting from the help they have received and moving away from an offending behaviour lifestyle".

For further information, please contact:

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Reducing Re-offending Alliances Audit

This summer was not a time for twiddling thumbs and idle reflection in NOMS, but for a major audit of work on the three Reducing Re-offending Alliances: nationally, regionally through the ROMs and locally through prisons, probation and partners. The purpose of the audit was to:

- gather evidence of current activities that contribute to the alliances;
- identify and share current good practice;
- give us firmer foundations to build and develop the contribution of employers, local organisations and people to the pathways in the Reducing Re-offending Delivery Plan; and,
- Inform planning for each of the alliances/regional plans and a follow up event with Ministers early in 2007.

All ROMs' offices and most prisons and probation areas replied. Their responses are currently being analysed by the national leads on the Alliances who will produce a summary of each region's return for the ROMs. Already the returns have been used to inform the last meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Group on Reducing Re-offending, which met on 26 October 2006.

Each Alliance has made significant progress since the launch in November 2006. Amongst the most significant achievements are:

- Yorkshire and Humber, working with Business in the Community, to develop a toolkit to help practitioners engage business in the reducing re-offending agenda
- BiTC, Crimestoppers, Prince's Trust and the Safer London Foundation acting as intermediaries to promote the Alliance to their corporate contacts.
- Reducing re-offending becoming a mandatory indicator in Local Area Agreements (LAAs) from 2007/8 onwards.
- Developing an East Midlands Demonstration project, which will produce a toolkit of good practice in local partnership working to be launched at a conference in February or March 2007.
- Reducing re-offending being included as one of the round 9 Beacon Council themes.
- Developing a Volunteering strategy, which will shortly be published for consultation
- Preparing an Arts Strategy for consultation to emphasise the potential role of the arts in reducing re-offending,
- The Regional Step Change initiative in Yorks and Humberside, which is testing and developing approaches to enhancing the involvement of the voluntary and community sector in delivery of services to offenders.
- The continued development of the Community Chaplaincy projects, which now number some 23 either operating or being developed.
- Launching the Faith alliance at a major conference on 23 November.

The audit has revealed many examples of good practice in taking forward the development of the alliances and innovative partnership working with employers, local authorities, voluntary and faith organisations and communities. These have included organisations being represented on regional sub boards e.g. the North East's regional Education, Training and Employment sub board is chaired by National Employment Panel representative; housing protocols like the one in Yorkshire and Humberside; and service level agreements being developed such as the one St.Thomas and Guy's Health Trust is in the process of agreeing to provide jobs for offenders.

One of the most interesting examples of innovative good practice featured in the audit that is relevant to all the Alliances is the Work Out project run by the London-based charity, Pecan. Under this Pecan, with support from the London Regional Offender Manager, helps ex-offenders find stable employment. The Work Out staff, together with mentors recruited from London churches, engage with up to 30 offenders per month, providing one to one job coaching, assistance with finding permanent work and help with housing and other needs. This support continues once the offenders are in permanent work.

Phillip Rees
NOMS Community Integration Unit

Volunteering and Arts Strategies

We announced our intention to publish the above two strategies for consultation in our last newsletter. Unfortunately, these have been delayed for a number of reasons. Both are subject to some re-drafting following internal discussion, but we are hopeful that they will be available for consultation soon.

Probation Board Sub-Contracting

Colleagues will be aware that Probation Boards need to meet a service sub-contracting target of 5% by April 2007 and of 10% by April 2008. Broadly speaking the target is as a proportion of revenue budget and refers to spend on offender service delivery.

Some in the VCS have been sceptical about this initiative, recalling an earlier attempt in the mid 1990s to do something similar. Some in probation have been more than sceptical, and concerned as to how they will meet the targets at a time of financial constraints and heavy demands. The sub-contracting starting base is low, something between 2% and 3%, as an average across probation areas. So, why are we doing this? There are a number of reasons:

- Currently legislation prevents the Home Secretary from contracting with providers other than probation boards for probation services. We are introducing legislation to address this limitation by creating probation trusts and opening up the market. However, pending a legislative change, we have the option of waiting or of doing what we can now. We have chosen the latter and through sub-contracting we intend to see a wider range of providers working in partnership with each other and probation boards to “up” performance from now on. You will have heard the Home Secretary’s demands for probation reform.
- The targets reflect our direction of travel. This is important, especially during a period of uncertainty. Setting these targets should leave probation boards in no doubt that we are looking for the best combinations of providers from all sectors to address the serious problems that offenders present to victims and communities. And, we have made it clear that no one provider can do all that is needed to reduce re-offending and improve public protection.
- Sub-contracting should enable better dialogue between providers from all sectors, both about meeting needs more fully and demonstrating increased value for money. It also reinforces our determination that smaller local providers that deliver what is needed have a place.
- The targets support one of our key business drivers – we want the targets to drive forward our intentions to have more efficient and effective service delivery.

All these themes find expression in the publication ***‘Improving prison and probation services: public value partnerships’***, published in August 2006. But, what is going to be different from what happened in the mid 90s? This time, although the targets have

been set by the National Probation Directorate, probation boards need to have their sub-contracting plans approved by the Regional Offender Managers, the regional commissioners of services. This is to tie in probation board plans with the broader ROM commissioning priorities for her / his region. In this way the ROM, as the channel for funding, can co-ordinate sub-contracting plans and potentially see opportunities for some larger scale exercises where boards have similar sub-contracting intentions.

Now, this may not be perfect, but it is part of our wider approach to driving up performance, as we move from systems of direct line management to ROMs commissioning services. But, even as commissioning develops we will continue to see a place for sub-contracting, by any provider from any sector, not least to retain the smaller providers who may not be able to manage the business risks but also in recognition of the fact that ROMs with limited resources neither can nor should hold all contracts themselves.

Joe Kuipers
NOMS Commissioning and Contestability Unit

http://noms.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-publications-events/publications/strategy/impr_prison_probation_partnerships

Together Women Programme

The Together Women Programme (TWP) is a programme of work to establish and test out *“radical new approaches to meet the specific needs of women offenders, including one-stop centres...to tackle the causes of crime and re-offending among this group, and reduce the need for custody”*. TWP aims to meet the needs of women at various stages of their offending history, from prevention and diversion from custody, to resettlement on release, through managed liaison between criminal justice agencies and other statutory, community and voluntary organisations.

The funding for TWP was announced by Charles Clarke in the 2004 spending review, amounting to £9.15m over 4 years to 2009. The projects will be based in two ROM areas: the North West and Yorkshire and Humberside.

A great deal of work has been done by the two ROM offices and Joe Tumelty

(North West) and Hilary Campbell (Yorkshire and Humberside), in particular, have dedicated most of their time and resources this year to getting the projects off the ground. We have also been ably supported by the Commercial and Competitions Unit, where Paul Walsh has provided the necessary procurement and commissioning expertise to deliver TWP.

Yorkshire and Humberside

Following a commissioning process, Foundation Housing was selected to be the TWP service providers. They will lead a consortium consisting of Doncaster Women’s Centre, DISC and Touchstone. There will be three service delivery areas in Leeds, Bradford and Doncaster. Jenny Bowles is the TWP Project Manager, and she will be leading the TWP Pathway Action Team which will provide a strategic steer for

the consortium's work. Her details can be found at the end of this article.

North West

This region will have two distinct TWP projects: the main one will be in Liverpool, managed by the Lighthouse Project; and there will be a smaller one in Salford, managed by Salford Foundation. Maura Partington is the project manager for the ROM and again, you will find her contact details at the bottom of this article.

Research

An integral part of TWP is the research which will identify whether the TWP approach will work for women offenders and women at risk of offending. We have modelled the approach on the work that has been done by the Asha Centre in Worcester, and the Calderdale Women's Centre in Halifax, and we are very grateful to both Jenny Roberts and

Clare Hyde for their contributions to the development of TWP. We will be undertaking action research to help in the initial development stages, and we will then take forward an outcome study during the lifetime of the Programme to provide us with a "what works" view of TWP.

Stakeholders

We have developed a national stakeholder reference group, consisting of Home Office officials, key policy leads from other Government Departments, representatives from the Criminal Justice System and the voluntary and community sector. They are providing us with much useful feedback about TWP, and we look forward to receiving their views and comments on the draft Equality Impact Assessment, which was sent out last month.

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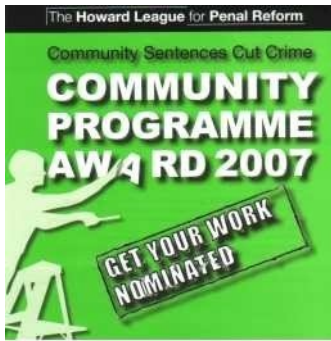
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Howard League Awards

The Howard League for Penal Reform launched its Community Programmes Award scheme to celebrate successful community schemes dealing with offenders. The awards have been presented over the last two years to 17 diverse programmes providing supervision to different groups of people and chosen to be honoured as outstanding community programmes. This award will increase publicity for and promote the use of community programmes, showing what they can achieve and how effective they are. It will also ensure that the very best community programmes are celebrated and lessons can be learned so that best practice can be replicated.



It is because we want to see fewer victims of crime that the Howard League for Penal Reform is continuing its Community Sentences Cut Crime campaign. For the majority of non-dangerous offenders community sentences are more likely to prevent further offending. They help to make a person take responsibility for their offending and put something back into the community.

What is it?

The Howard League for Penal Reform annual award for the country's most successful community programmes dealing with offenders. The aim is to encourage public and government support for successful community sentences.

Why?

- To increase the profile of, confidence in and use of community sentences.
- To encourage and foster good practice, share information and promote creative programmes.

What are the criteria?

- Programmes need to be part of a community sentence.
- They should be rehabilitative and help prevent future offending.
- They could meet the needs of specific client groups e.g. women, young people or ethnic minorities.
- They should involve users in planning and evaluation.
- Encourage offenders to think about the consequences of their crime.
- Be based on restorative principles.
- Be cost effective.
- Work collaboratively with the community.

The full criteria can be found on our website www.howardleague.org

How do I nominate?

- Nominations have to be made by email or post by 5 pm Tuesday, 1 May 2007
- Any organisation, group or individual can make nominations. Self-nomination is permitted
- We welcome nominations from statutory and voluntary organisations
- Nominations must include a synopsis of the community scheme, not exceeding 500 words. Supporting evidence should be provided including evidence of effectiveness
- Further information and a nomination form are available at www.howardleague.org or contact the Howard League for Penal Reform office on 020 7249 7373.

What is the prize?

The winning schemes will be highlighted and widely publicised. Winners will be invited to make a presentation at an awards ceremony to be held in the summer of 2007.

Mounted certificates will be presented to the 10 outstanding projects at a celebratory event.

The Howard League for Penal Reform, 1 Ardleigh Road, London N1 4HS

Tel: 020 7249 7373, Fax: 020 7249 7788

Web site: www.howardleague.org

Investing In the Future of Public Services

Does your charity deliver public services? Is accessing funding an issue? If you've answered yes to these questions, Futurebuilders England may be in a position to help you.

Futurebuilders England is the government backed £125 million investment fund for the third sector. The fund provides a combination of loans (which always forms the majority of each investment), grants and capacity building support to voluntary and community organisations that want to deliver better public services. Organisations repay the loan element of the investment by earning revenue through forming contracts with public sector agencies.

Futurebuilders invests in a range of organisations including charities, social enterprises, community interest companies, voluntary groups and community organisations. It offers investment packages to organisations that are delivering services, or would like to deliver services, in one or more of the following five public service areas: crime, community cohesion, children and young people, health and social care, and education and learning. Since 2004, Futurebuilders has offered over £67 million in investment packages to over 170 organisations.

One organisation to have benefited from Futurebuilders England is Equinox Care – a London charity providing residential and community services to people with drug,

alcohol and mental health problems. The organisation was awarded a £272,000 investment from Futurebuilders, which helped in the establishment of “Friends Road”, an innovative drug ‘stabilisation’ programme to help people for whom traditional drug treatment programmes have been unsuccessful. Working with hard-to-reach and socially excluded groups, the programme at Friends Road provides a structured residential environment to help people identify and change behaviour in relation to persistent and chaotic drug abuse and associated crime. The service is supported by a consortium of London Drug and Alcohol Action Teams, with the majority of referrals coming from local Drug Intervention Programmes.

Another organisation to have received support in the form of a Futurebuilders investment is Pecan. Futurebuilders invested £199,750 in Pecan – comprising a loan, a revenue grant, and capacity building support – to develop and pilot an employment training and job brokerage programme for the re-integration of ex-offenders into employment. The programme is currently based in Lambeth, Wandsworth and Southwark, and the organisation aims to expand the service to the whole of London within 5 years. Pecan has secured contracts with public sector agencies, thus providing paid employment for the ex-offenders while at the same time enabling repayment of the loan.

Richard Gutch, Chief Executive of Futurebuilders England, said: *“Futurebuilders is committed to helping voluntary and community organisations improve public service delivery by providing them with access to suitable finance. The biggest part of every Futurebuilders investment will always be a loan and this is repaid through public sector contracts or fees. Equinox Care and Pecan have both been successful in securing contracts for their services, which will allow them to repay their loans in a way that supports their ongoing development and sustainability.”*

For further information visit
www.futurebuilders-england.org.uk



We are often asked to speak at funding fairs, events and workshops. If you are organising, or attending, an event that will be attended by at least 15 voluntary or community sector organisations who would like to hear about Futurebuilders, please get in touch. We’re also happy to talk to funding advice worker networks and other supporter organisation staff. Contact Lin O’Hara, Outreach & Development Manager, on 0191 269 2856. or lin.ohara@futurebuilders-england.org.uk

Grassroots Family Days and Support Project

In May 2005, the Blackburn Diocese Board of Social Responsibility was granted funding from the Invest to Save Budget to run a 3-year pilot project designed to offer support to prisoners and their families. The prisons included in the pilot are HMP Preston, HMP Wymott, HMP Lancaster Castle and HMP Kirkham. Project staff are based in both the prisons and the community, and interventions are delivered using a



combination of paid employees and volunteers. The project aims to maintain links between prisoners and families, to support individuals who are affected by the imprisonment of a family member, and to facilitate improved resettlement outcomes for prisoners, thereby reducing re-offending.

The Strategic Board comprises senior representatives from a range of partner agencies including; Blackburn Diocese Board of Social Responsibility (the grant holders), Prison Service North West, National Probation Service Lancashire, Lancashire Constabulary, GONW and the Drug Action Team. The National Black Prisoner Support Group also attend to ensure that policies and practices adopted by the project are inclusive and representative. The project will now be a part of the NOMS Families and Communities pathway steering group.



Grassroots Team, Families and Volunteers

- In the first year of the project, 345 prisoners and their families asked for support; this demonstrates clearly the need for advice and support.
- 93 families are currently being support by the project.
- 41 Volunteers are part of the Grassroots team.

Ian Lockwood, CBE, HM Prison Service North West Area Manager formally launched the Grassroots project at HMYOI Thorn Cross, Conference Centre on Tuesday 26th September 2006. The launch highlighted the importance of the work done by Grassroots to maintain family ties and reduce re offending and celebrated the work of the volunteers.

Grassroots was presented with the Family Ties award at the POPS Crystal Heart Awards ceremony on 26th October. The awards are designed to reward examples of outstanding work being carried out by the individuals and teams working within the Criminal Justice System. Grassroots will be participating in Action for Prisoners Families challenge to make prisons more “family-friendly” to mark the 10th Anniversary of the UN Year of the Family.

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Probation Engaging with the VCS in the Northwest Region

The probation service has a long tradition of joint working with the voluntary sector. There are numerous examples of probation staff helping to set up voluntary organisations and serving on management committees of

a range of projects. During the 1990's probation areas were increasingly required to spend a proportion of their core budgets on voluntary sector provision to ensure that offenders could access housing, drug, education and related services. The creation of the

National Probation Service in 2001 and the introduction of centrally driven cash linked performance targets, together with the transfer of budgets to a number of joint commissioning arrangements (e.g. Supporting People, DAT's, etc.) meant that contracting full voluntary and community sector (VCS) services represented a much smaller proportion of probation budget expenditure, and probation staff resources were increasingly focused on ensuring that targets were met.

The launch of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) in 2004 significantly raised the profile of the voluntary sector and its potential for contributing to the effort to reduce re-offending. The emerging commissioning role of Regional Offender Managers set a new context for corrections agencies (prison and probation) to demonstrate that they were equipped both internally, and in respect of their external partnerships, to address the issues critical to reducing re-offending.

It was against this backdrop that the North West National Probation Service Regional Forum, supported by the Regional Offender Manager, commissioned Clinks to identify the

range of engagement with the VCS and to develop a regional approach to partnership working between the probation service and the VCS. The project confirmed some very positive strands of probation practice in this arena including:

- Good tendering and contracting practice in all probation areas.
- Commensurate monitoring and review arrangements.
- Robust and comprehensive engagement with the VCS in

Unpaid Work Units and by Diversity Managers.

- Good use of procurement practice to promote race equality and diversity.

It was found there was scope for further development and areas in the region would enhance their engagement with the sector by:

- Making more strategic use of information about offender need.
- Publishing strategies that identified the benefits of VCS engagement.
- Disseminating and replicating the positive relationships with the VCS established by specialist staff.
- Developing effective and updated information about VCS services.

The project sought the views of voluntary sector contracted providers, as well as those that were working closely with the service. They clearly valued their relationships with the probation service. From their perspective the service:

- Held comprehensive information about offender need.
- Was influential in decision making in commissioning bodies.
- Provided an effective entry point to the criminal justice system.

Both during and after the project each probation area convened a number of VCS engagement events bringing together current and potential providers of services to offenders. These provided an opportunity for the VCS to learn about current service priorities and the progress being made in implementing the Regional Reducing Re-offending Action Plan. The events

also enabled the service to identify those organisations that would be interested in further developing both formal and informal partnership arrangements.

The overarching messages from this project were that the probation service continues to have a robust relationship with the VCS which was impressive given the constraints mentioned

previously. Building on this solid platform the project identified the potential for a renewed and exciting range of partnership initiatives that would deliver real reductions in re-offending.

Malcolm Thomson
Clinks

Capacitybuilders

In response to the HM Treasury's 2002 Cross Cutting Review of the Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Service Delivery, the Home Office published ChangeUp, the cross-Government framework on capacity building and infrastructure in the voluntary and community sector. ChangeUp's aim is that by 2014 the needs of frontline VCO's in England will be met by support which is sustainable to fund, accessible to all and reflects and promotes diversity.

Launched in April 2006 to work in partnership with government and other infrastructure bodies, Capacitybuilders has the initial responsibility of managing the £70 million ChangeUp programme for the financial years 2006/07 and 2007/08. Led by experts from the community and voluntary sector, Capacitybuilders manages the distribution of funding to bodies that support frontline organisations bringing about radical change to the way in which the voluntary and community sector works.

Funding Programmes

Initially tasked with the management of the existing ChangeUp Continuation Fund, Capacitybuilders was quick to unveil its first funding programme in June 2006 - the *Consortia Projects Programme*. Aimed at providing valuable ongoing infrastructure development and support within the voluntary and community sector, the majority of applications received concentrated on training initiatives, staff awareness and the development and improvement of skills in the sector. The main funding areas covered focused on the six Government themes of ICT, governance, finance, performance, workforce development and volunteering. Following the review of applications over the summer, the Grants Committee approved over 60 recommendations and offers were sent to successful applicants across England.

In August Capacitybuilders was delighted to launch its second funding programme - *Improving Reach*. Targeted at improving access and support to organisations that may have previously been unable to benefit from ChangeUp, this programme is aimed towards black and minority ethnic groups, refugee and migrant groups and isolated rural groups. Initially a pilot programme, it is hoped that this scope will be broadened in future years, following an evaluation of the pilot.

The deadline for applications was in October. Responses are now being reviewed and assessed by the Grants Committee, with the aim of notifying successful applicants before Christmas.

Looking Ahead

Capacitybuilders' strategy document, *Fit For Growth*, states that in addition to creating and managing funds, our key objectives include '*encouraging extra investment in infrastructure*' and making an '*informed case to central and local Government and other agencies for sustained, coordinated investment in VCO's over the long term*'. In line with this, Capacitybuilders has welcomed the opportunity to lobby for change in the sector across Government, and has been involved in discussions on a number of key funding issues including End of Year flexibility and multi-year funding.

Capacitybuilders is also committed to commissioning work on learning and development and aims to develop an evaluation programme highlighting best practice and assessing the outcomes of funding initiatives. It is also proposed that Capacitybuilders will create a learning and innovation fund in 2007/08 to help understand what works in infrastructure provision and how best to improve the quality and effectiveness of services.

If you would like further information about Capacitybuilders and the ChangeUp programme, please visit www.capacitybuilders.org.uk