

Action Plan for the Development of Effective Partnership with the Voluntary and Community Sector

2005 - 2007

Introduction

“NOMS is publishing this action plan so that all who have a stake in creating an effective partnership between voluntary sector organisations and the prison and probation services to reduce re-offending are aware of what we plan to do and when, so that you can celebrate a successful partnership which will be key to managing offenders effectively and reducing re-offending”

Fiona Mactaggart
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

The creation of the new National Offender Management Service (NOMS) presents an opportunity for greater involvement in the delivery of services to offenders by voluntary and community organisations, building on the history of partnership between the sector and prisons and probation.

There will be challenges in establishing new relationships and areas where support will be needed if this is to be done successfully.

These include:

- Consultation with the sector
- Communication – to provide information and make organisations aware of new opportunities
- Capacity Building to address areas where the sector needs support to enable it to work with NOMS
- Contestability – ensuring that the development of plans for commissioning and competitive tendering recognise the role of the voluntary sector and its potential as a provider of services
- Contractual and procurement systems that are appropriate and proportionate and allow the inclusion of the wide range of voluntary groups who currently offer services and support to offenders and those who may wish to extend their services to include this client group.

A national conference to celebrate and promote the relationship between NOMS and the voluntary sector was held in November 2004 and attracted over 500 delegates. Following this, a draft strategy setting out proposals by NOMS for working with the voluntary and community sector was published at the end of January 2005.

The strategy was distributed to a wide range of stakeholders via e-mail, with hard copies available for anyone requiring one, and 1000 of these were distributed. It was also publicised via voluntary sector infrastructure bodies to their members. Copies were placed on the Prison Service and Home Office Websites and promoted through the Prison Service Intranet. Information about the strategy was included in Third Sector Magazine.

A full 12 weeks was allowed for the return of responses to the consultation. Organisations were provided with forms for return of hard copies or invited to reply by e-mail.

Two events to facilitate discussion on the strategy were organised during the consultation period in collaboration with Clinks and the relevant Regional Offender Manager, one in York in February and the

second in the West Midlands in April. These were attended by 164 people with a mix of representatives from national and local voluntary organisations, probation and prison staff.

An event was organised in Wales by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action. It was agreed following this event that a separate report looking at current engagement in Wales, gaps in provision and ways in which the relationship with the voluntary sector should be developed in Wales would be taken forward as part of the Pathfinder.

70 written responses were received. Some of these included the views of a number of organisations so that the overall number of organisations represented in the replies was 259.

A report summarising the responses to the strategy is available on the NOMS website and copies have been placed on the Prison Service and National Probation Service Intranets or can be obtained from the NOMS Voluntary Sector and Assisted Prison Visits Unit.

This Action Plan is designed to take forward areas of the NOMS strategy for working with the voluntary and community sector endorsed through the consultation process, and incorporating ideas from the responses received. This sets out a plan of work to put in place an effective relationship with the VCS and to work with the VCS to ensure that it is well placed to take full advantage of the opportunities NOMS will offer when full commissioning is introduced in April 2007.

The Action Plan is intended to be a living document and is only the start of a process for the greater involvement of VCS in NOMS. The Government wishes to see a step change in the extent to which the VCS delivers services for NOMS, and is also committed to ensuring that the relationship is on fair and equal terms as set out in the Compact. NOMS is still in a development phase and this needs to be reflected in its relationship with the VCS but we believe that there are still major advances to realise this vision before the start of commissioning in April 2007.

NOMS has established a number of consultation groups which include representatives from the sector so that

detailed proposals for delivering the Action Plan can be developed with them. NOMS will look to these groups to help identify which areas of business are the most promising in terms of the VCS playing a greater role in service delivery. A meeting to begin that process will be convened shortly.

Updated copies of the Plan will be posted on the NOMS website and details of amendments will be notified in the NOMS Voluntary Sector News. NOMS will report back formally on the work undertaken in 6 months time and then every 12 months.

**National Offender Management Service
Voluntary Sector and Assisted Prison
Visits Unit
The Home Office
3rd Floor Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF**

Email:
Elaine.castle3@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Tel: 020 7035 0209

National Offender Management Service

Action Plan for the Development of Effective Partnership with the Voluntary and Community Sector

2005-2007

Area Of Work	Action	Supported By
Publish Action Plan for Working with the Voluntary Sector	Ministerial Launch	NOMS VSU
Develop work to build a more complete picture of the relationship between National Probation Service and the VCS	<p>Complete mapping for NW Pathfinder Mapping/report for Wales Pathfinder National mapping of current provision Produce report from mapping</p> <p>Link this work to the development/implementation of Regional Reducing Re-offending Action Plans and the review of the National Reducing Re-offending Action Plan and development of the NOMS Strategic Delivery Plan</p>	<p>NOMS VSU Regional NPS Managers ROMS</p> <p>NOMS VSU NOMS CIU/ROMS</p>
Promote good practice in VCS engagement with NPS and range of provision e.g. Drink Impaired Driving, unpaid work, Approved Accommodation, mentoring, advocacy etc	<p>Highlight examples in newsletter</p> <p>Produce a guide for ROMS</p>	<p>NOMS VSU</p> <p>Clinks/ARO SDPP</p>

Area Of Work	Action	Supported By
Address under-representation of services to key minority groups e.g. Women, black, asian and minority ethnic, sexuality groups	Produce report on level/problems of under-representation and highlight current good practice and ways of facilitating engagement Include findings from SEED project Explore ring-fenced funding to support these groups Link with diversity guidance being developed to support ROMS	NOMS VSU Clinks/ARO SPDP NOMS VSU NBBPSG/POPS ROMS NOMS CIU
Link with the work of NOMS CIU to ensure the promotion of areas of VCS engagement e.g. Faith groups, victims, restorative justice, volunteering, mentoring and mediation	Ensure the NOMS/YJB Civil Renewal Strategy highlights VCS engagement in this area. Guide to Volunteering in Prisons Produce a volunteering strategy for NOMS Support the development of training pack for NPS staff working with volunteers Ensure that an evaluation is put in place to assess the added value of mentors in contributing to reducing re-offending	NOMS CIU NOMS VSU/HMPS NOMS CIU & VSU Clinks NOMS CIU & VSU
Promote the VCS as a partner in NOMS	Ensure a VCS focus to the developing corporate, civic society and faith/VCS alliances that will promote ownership of the reducing re-offending agenda by non-CJS partners and local communities	NOMS CIU

Area Of Work	Action	Supported By
Defining the variety of roles the VCS can play as NOMS develops	Promoting areas of service provision as these emerge through website, e-mail and events	NOM ROMS NOMS VSU
Ensuring channels for discussion	VCS Advisory Group established VCS representation on NOMS Board Regular events and conferences	NOMS VSU Chief Executive NOMS VSU ROMS Clinks/ARO SPDP
Establishing representation on key NOMS workstreams	VCS reps on OM Advisory Group VCS involvement in NW and Wales Pathfinders VCS Stakeholder Group identified VCS involvement with National Reducing Re-offending Action Plan review and representation on sub-boards	OM workstream OM workstream ROMS Contestability workstream/ NOMS VSU NOMS CIU
Commissioning	Development and delivery of a procurement strategy for engagement with VCS, black, asian and minority ethnic and small and medium size enterprises, including the provision of framework agreements and infrastructure to promote market access	Head of CCU

Area Of Work	Action	Supported By
Ensuring engagement with local as well as regional and national VCS	Local mapping	ROMS
	Local consultation	ROMS
	Local commissioning and ensuring engagement in line with procurement guidelines	ROMS/Probation Boards/ Prisons CCU
	Utilising existing regional and local VCS infrastructure/ networks	ROMS
	Developing a consortia approach to enable smaller organisation to combine skills and share costs	ROMS
Ensuring an accessible point of contact in prisons and probation areas	Partnership Managers in each NPS Area or nominated point of contact	NPS
	Enhanced role for VSCs in prisons	HMPS
Creating climate for VCS engagement at a local level	Assess need for new services at local level	ROMS
	Map quality of provision	ROMS
	Organise joint training events to overcome cultural barriers	ROMS
	Promote consortia building and provide training and financial support to facilitate this	ROMS

Area Of Work	Action	Supported By
Incentivising collaboration between VCS organisations and with private and public sector partners	Encouraging sharing of resources and costs by VCS through resourcing a pilot project	NOMS VCS/ACU
Accessible information on potential providers	Creation of national database/registration scheme/provider list	NOMS VSU Clinks/ARO SPDP ROMS
Ensure regular communication and information to VCS	VCS information on NOMS Website Newsletters Events	NOMS VSU ROMS
Publicising contract opportunities	Advertise through existing networks, press, roadshows	CCU ROMS Clinks/ARO SPDP
Overcoming unhelpful cultural attitudes	Joint training/staff development Co-location of staff Staff exchanges and secondments	ROMS/NPS/HMPS
Ensuring accessible and appropriate contracting and procurement	Longer term contracts Full cost recovery Realistic timetables for bidding Realistic requirements Outcome not output based Local as well as regional procurement Facility for spot purchasing	NOMS CCU

Area Of Work	Action	Supported By
	Emphasis on quality not price Reduce bureaucracy Balance of risks	
Ensuring recognition of the importance of the VCS across the pathways of the National and Regional Reducing Re-offending Action Plans	Inclusion of VCS in development of plans and clear evidence of a VCS role in national and regional and local action plans	NOMS CIU ROMS
Provide resources to support the development of the VCS as a potential provider of services to NOMS	Monitor and evaluate the 5 pilot projects commissioned through the Change Up programme Monitor and evaluate the pilot projects established with ISB funding to provide an alternative to custody for young adults and services to offenders' families. Review strategic and project grant programme across NOMS and OLSU Establish an annual grant round to support innovative approaches to working with offenders	NOMS VSU NOMS VSU/NOMS CIU NOMS PFU/NOMS VSU NOMS VSU
Ensuring effective evaluation of services	Evaluation included in contracts Clarity on outcome measures in specifications Agreed methodologies for evaluation	NOMS CCU NOMS CCU RDS

Area Of Work	Action	Supported By
Exploring the inclusion of softer outcomes and measuring the distanced travelled	Designing additional evaluation measures and looking at existing systems developed elsewhere	RDS NOMS VSU ClinksARO SPDP
Overcoming barriers to ex-offenders being involved in provision of services	Identifying barriers Identifying ways of overcoming these in consultation with relevant groups Undertaking specific areas of research Link with development of “offender as responsible citizen” agenda	NOMS VSU NOMS CCU Clinks/ARO SPDP Clinks/ARO SPDP NOMS CIU
Explore the potential for the VCS to deliver specific services/ interventions	Establish a small number of pilot projects to look at the potential for VCS engagement in the delivery of unpaid work	NOMS VSU NPD Interventions NOMS CCU ACU ROMS Probation Areas Change Up projects
Growing the Market	Review engagement with VCS by OGDs Use mainstream VCS infrastructure	NOMS VSU/ACU NOMS CCU Clinks/ARO SPDP NOMS VSU CRISP

Area Of Work	Action	Supported By
Promote partnership between VCS and public/private sector	Include in market testing requirements	NOMS CCU
Ensuring effective sharing of client/service information between sectors	Developing national protocols Providing training to promote trust and information sharing Compatible IT systems – VCS access to OASys and NOMIS	NOMS VSU/NOMIS ROMS/Clinks OASys/NOMIS
Ensuring that the different needs of VCS organisations in Wales are recognised	Review of VCS provision in Wales and specific funding streams Development of VCS involvement in Wales NOMS	NOMS VSU/Wales Pathfinder Wales ROM/WCVA
Regular information and communication	Regular e-mail newsletter + paper based Place information on NOMS website/update Events Conferences Circulating and requesting information to/from sector	NOMS VSU ROMS Clinks/ARO
Continue to develop a positive relationship with independent funders	Regular meetings with funders Providing information via ACF Penal Affairs Group Exploring possible opportunities for joint funding Meeting with Lankelly Chase and Tudor Trusts/ Clinks to review impact of SW project	NOMS VSU SW ROM

Area Of Work	Action	Supported By
Take forward the recommendations of the Yorkshire and Humber study	Set up a specific pathway within RRAP for working with the VCS to apply all recommendations	ROM/Clinks
Explore the development of a neutral bidding agency as proposed in the Yorkshire and Humber study	Seek funding to develop and evaluate a pilot project	NOMS VSU NOMS CCU ROMS
Establish consultation groups to help identify new areas of work for Voluntary and Community Sector engagement	NOMS will look to these consultation groups to help identify which areas of business are the most promising in terms of the VCS playing a greater role in the service delivery	NOMS VSU ACU NPD Prison Service ROMS

Glossary of Terms

ARO	Alliance for Reducing Offending
CCU	Contracts and Commissioning Unit
CIU	Community Integration Unit
Clinks	National umbrella group for VCS organisations working with offenders
HMPS	Prison Service
NBBPSG	National Body of Black Prisoners Support Groups
NOMIS	NOMS Information Service
NPS	National Probation Service
OASys	Offender Assessment System
OM	Offender Management
PFU	Planning and Finance Unit
POPS	Partners of Prisoners
ROM(S)	Regional Offender Manager (s)
SPDP	Strategic Partnership Development Project
VSU	Voluntary Sector and Assisted Prison Visits Unit