



Minutes from Reducing Reoffending Third Sector Advisory Group (RR3) Special Interest Group on Commissioning Family Services

12th July 2016

Attending:

Patrice Lawrence	Clinks (Secretariat)
Richard Nicholls	Clinks (Chair)
Gabrielle Lee	NOMS (National Offender Management Service)
Richard Booty	NOMS
Angela Christopher	NOMS
Jill Greenfield	Barnardo's
Polly Wright	i-Hop
Lee Stephenson	Jigsaw Visitors Centre
Alison Goddard	Lincolnshire Action Trust
Helen Attewell	NEPACS
Mark Proctor	Ormiston
Andy Keen-Downs	Pact
Jennie Stanton	Pact
Chris Money Penny	PLA (Pre-School Learning Alliance)
Diane Curry	POPS
Sarah Hillier	Spurgeons
Caroline Hackett	St Giles Trust

Apologies:

Emma Wells	Futures Unlocked
Joanne McIntosh	HACRO
Matthew Livingstone	PLA (Pre-School Learning Alliance)

1. Introductions and welcomes

The members of the Special Interest Group introduced themselves. PLA, represented by Chris Money Penny, was new to the group. Gabrielle Lee and Richard Booty from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) joined the meeting for the main item. They were accompanied by Angela Christopher, a policy advisor working in the procurement team.

2. Reviewing the notes of the previous meeting

Deferred as the Group wanted to maximise the time with the NOMS representatives.

3. Feedback from the meeting between Clinks and NOMS' Richard Booty, Gabrielle Lee and Angela Christopher

Deferred and subsequently incorporated into the following discussion.

4. Presentation from Richard Booty, Gabrielle Lee and Angela Christopher

The meeting took place the day after Rt Hon Theresa May MP was appointed leader of the Conservative party and Prime Minister. It was anticipated that a Cabinet reshuffle would lead to ministerial change at the Ministry of Justice.

Gabrielle, Richard and Angela updated the Group on both the prison reform programme and the procurement process as it stood at the moment.

It was acknowledged that the issue of funding caused concern at the previous meeting. However, the total commissioning budget will remain the same with an expectation that there will be a spread of services for families of prisoners across all regions, including prisons who currently have limited or no services for families. As a result, some prisons that are considered well-served may experience a reduction in funding.

Some key points:

- The process aims to combine a published government policy with guidance, support and good practice examples. The framework will allow for flexibility so mandatory requirements will only be included if:
 - it will have a negative impact on services delivered by other providers if they are not included
 - It will be actively harmful if NOMS did not include them
 - It is a legal requirement
- SPOCs (Single Point Of Contact) in each region will collate information on the existing services for families and the different specifications. SPOCs will manage communication between governors and providers locally and

oversee some of the procurement process. Local providers were urged to make contact with their SPOC. (A list of SPOCs is available for circulation.)

- The six early adopter reform prisons are not part of this process.
- Procurement frameworks can be flexible with the opportunity to buy in additional services as required, though it is important that governors are supported through the procurement process.
- The intended outcomes include more equitable distribution of funding; improved outcome measures that address reduction of re-offending and intergenerational crime; more autonomy for governors to deliver the required outcomes and a predictable delivery framework that is flexible, provides innovation, accountability for funds and encourages matched funding.
- It is anticipated that the specifications will be ready by November 2016 and visitor centre contracts relaunched by May 2017.

Members of the Group sought clarification on a number of issues:

- I. Clarification of the new regions.
Action: NOMS to send Clinks an up-to-date regional map and the names and email addresses of the SPOCs to circulate to group members.
- II. Does the budget only include money used to commission the voluntary sector? Some visitor centres are staffed by prison staff OSGs (Operating Support Grades). It was felt that this money held by prisons to deliver 'in-house' services should be identified and added to the new procurement budget.
- III. There was concern that money will be attached to the basics of processing families through visits. Organisations often bring their own money to deliver services such as play work with children visiting prisoners. How will prisons be persuaded to commission these services from their own budget?
- IV. There must be a clear role for the voluntary sector in influencing practice and opportunities to develop collaborative partnership working. The work must go beyond the prison gates into the community.
- V. What support are the SPOCs receiving to identify effective practice and to develop the specs? Are there central guidelines or are all decisions left with the individual SPOCs? How will they identify the range and effectiveness of different services?
- VI. What will be considered a good outcome and how will they be measured? How will children's rights be measured and included within the outcomes?
- VII. Can NOMS provide a standard timeline for the procurement process?

- VIII. Has any equality impact assessment been carried out in relation to safer custody and potential cuts to services to families?
- IX. Decency is the bedrock of visitor centres. Where does it fit it into this agenda?
- X. Will procurement incentivise collaboration between agencies?

5. Agreement for future action

The NOMS officials left the meeting and the members discussed the implications of the changes.

Richard Nicholls announced Clinks' supporting role in the Lord Farmer led Review on strengthening engagement between families and adult male prisoners to support positive outcomes.

The review sets out "to investigate how supporting offenders to engage with their families can lower recidivism, aid rehabilitation and assist in addressing the issues of intergenerational crime".

There are three main aims:

1. What can we learn about what works to help families and offenders maintain and even improve family ties, where appropriate, while in custody, in the male adult estate?
2. What can we learn about what works to help those prisoners who do not have any family connections, either because they have been through the care system or because the nature of their offending precludes contact with their families?
3. How can we translate this into policy and commission for change within existing budgets?

The review will aim to consider policy recommendations which would be relevant to the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) owned reform, specifically the prison reform programme (estates and increased autonomy for prison governors)

- Inside prison
- Where prisons and families interact

The review will commence in July 2016 and conclude with a report to the MOJ in January 2017 (date TBC). Although not formally commissioned by the MOJ, the review's focus is welcomed by officials and ministers and there will be assistance from officials provided in order to undertake the review. *

Clinks staff will support various aspects of the review. Patrice Lawrence will liaise with organisations working with the families of prisoners to seek a wide range of family experience. Anne Fox is the review's deputy chair.

Andy Keen-Downs and Diane Curry who are members of this group will sit on the Review task group.

Members of the Special Interest Group welcomed the review, but questioned the timing. It was felt that the recommendations from the review should influence the development of the new commissioning specifications. Could the commissioning timetable be delayed prior to the conclusion of the review?

Key actions from the meeting:

NOMS will send the Powerpoint presentation, contact details for the SPOCs and a map of the new regions for circulation to group members

Diane Curry will collate the queries arising from the discussion including the possibility of the commissioning process being delayed until after the Farmer Review concludes and raise them at the full Reducing Reoffending Third Sector (RR3) Advisory Group Meeting on 16th August 2016.

6. AOB

Richard Nicholls informed the group about two forthcoming events giving information about grants to pilot innovative activities in reform prisons. The events are on 26th July in York and 27th July in London.

Andy Keen-Downs informed the group about the forthcoming dissemination event for the launch of the research conducted on the Family Engagement worker model of service by Cambridge University's Institute of Criminology.

The next meeting will take place on **Tuesday 6th September at 12.30pm.**

* This was agreed prior to the change of Prime Minister and justice ministers.