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## **Stakeholders Briefing Note Number 2**

We wrote to you some months ago regarding the restructuring of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), and what its implications would be for our relationships with stakeholders. This latest briefing note provides an update on developments within the NOMS Agency since then.

### **Overview**

The new NOMS Agency has brought together the headquarters of prison and probation with the objective of enabling more effective and efficient delivery of prison and probation services and maximising the resources available to front line services. When fully formed, this new headquarters will operate both at the centre, and also in the English regions and Wales under Directors of Offender Management, powerful regional commissioners within a devolved Agency. The Prison Service (public and private) and Probation Service will operate within NOMS, increasingly working more collaboratively and effectively with each other and with partners at regional and local level to reduce re-offending. Public sector prison staff will be employed by NOMS. Probation staff will continue to be employed by their Probation Board or Trust.

Work has continued with developing the overall vision and strategic objectives of NOMS. The NOMS Purpose, Vision and Values has been finalised, and is attached.

### **Regional Reorganisation**

A job specification for the post of Director of Offender Management has now been agreed. Two DOMS have already been appointed (for the South East and South West regions), with the remainder to be appointed in the coming weeks and an announcement made about the successful candidates in February. Work is also being progressed on the regional structure which will sit beneath the DOM, as the prison Area Office and the ROM's office are merged to create a single regional office. DOMS will undergo a period of induction prior to formally taking up post in April 2009.

### **Probation Trusts**

The intention is to provide opportunities for all Probation Boards to become Trusts by 2010 in line with the commitments set out in the Offender Management Act. There are four remaining dates when Probation Areas may submit their application for Trust status: they are in February, May, July and September 2009. A revised set of tests have been developed to ensure that Trusts are capable of delivering the services that are required. NOMS will support Boards to meet the required standard. Key requirements include:

- Probation delivery structures must support delivery of Offender Management at local community level

- Boards will need to show that they have the capability to make the transition to Trusts
- Business Plans must demonstrate the ability to deliver services effectively within a challenging financial climate
- Voluntary mergers, initiated locally, will be supported where this will enable Boards to meet the requirements for Trust status.

The tests are designed to be clear, objective and challenging and will cover the following categories:

- Local accountability and engagement
- Operational Performance
- Use of resources
- Operational capability.

Due to the number of areas yet to achieve Trust status the assessment process will include the requirement for a number of regional and national panels to be established to consider applications. Training will be available for all assessors and panels will include national representation to ensure consistency and continuity.

Following their application on the first available date in November 2008, a panel chaired by Lord Carter of Coles has determined that Lancashire and Greater Manchester will be offered the opportunity to become Trusts from April 2009 operating on contract to the Ministry of Justice

### **Update on Partnership Board**

The North East's 'Reducing Re-offending Partnership Board' was set up in response to the NOMS 'Pathway and Partnerships Review' and supersedes the Reducing Re-offending Strategic Board. The 'Pathway and Partnerships Review' evaluated the role of several reducing re-offending and pathway structures in the region and made a number of important recommendations for future policy development. This led to the creation of a compact, strategic 'Reducing Re-offending Partnership Board', which met for the first time in October 2008. The Board's main aim is to promote, influence and maintain local, sub-regional and regional strategies to reduce re-offending and it has agreed to take a programme and project management approach to its work. The Board includes high-level representation from NOMS, the Government Office for the North East, the Police, the North East Offender Health Commissioning Board, the National Treatment Agency (NTA), the Voluntary Organisations Network North East (VONNE), the Youth Justice Board, the Learning and Skills Council and the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP).

We would like to thank you for your continued support and cooperation during this time of major change for us, and we will ensure that you are kept updated as work progresses.

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