

Reducing reoffending in the North East: improving joint working between prisons and local authorities

Agenda Item No: 15

Version 3 – 9 September 2013

	Joint Working	
	Recommendations for joint action	
1.	NOMS and local authorities should work together with other key partners via a North East reducing reoffending forum. The remit of the forum should be to strengthen communication, create a framework for information sharing, consider opportunities for joined-up approaches, joint-funding or co-commissioning of services and to respond to the opportunities, issues and risks presented by the planned reforms of offender management and 'through the gate' services.	Proposed that Steven Hume, Community Safety & Security Manager, will represent SBC on this Forum.
2.	In advance of the competition for rehabilitation services, ANEC and NOMS should work with partners (including local Police and Crime Commissioners) to articulate local priorities (including the particular needs of women offenders) to the commissioners of future rehabilitation services and to potential providers.	
	Recommendations to local authorities	
3.	Local authorities participating in pilot work with adults with multiple complex needs, including the forthcoming 'Making Every Adult Matter' pilots, should ensure the criminal justice sector is actively engaged in this work	Stockton Council is not taking part in a MEAM pilot, but is involved via Regeneration (Roland Todd) in the DWP's Families with Multiple Problems initiative, known in the North East as 'Family Wise'. SBC is represented via Redcar & Cleveland Council on the Southern Cluster Local Offender Partnership Group, chaired by Sheena Maberley from NOMS.
	Recommendations to NOMS / North East prisons	
4.	North East prisons should agree a process to strengthen information sharing between Heads of Reducing Reoffending in relation to reducing reoffending approaches in their own establishments and their engagement with partners.	

5.	NOMS and North East prisons should maintain and build on the role of the IOM prison officer which is highly regarded by partners. Consideration should be given to mainstreaming aspects of this role within the role of Offender Supervisors.	
6.	Prisons should seek opportunities to co-locate some Offender Supervisors with DART (Drug and Alcohol Recovery Team), housing workers and family support workers within the prison to strengthen the 'whole prison' approach to release planning for short sentence offenders and to strengthen expertise and links with community-based services. Attention should be given to early joint release-planning for those with complex needs and the highest risk of reoffending.	
7.	Prisons should seek to have a consistent approach to partner agencies visiting prisoners for resettlement purposes and should consider developing a framework for all North East establishments covering external agencies engaged in resettlement work.	
	Accommodation	
	Recommendations for joint action	
8.	NOMS and the Regional Homelessness Group should strengthen and formalise their relationship through a task group with a specific remit for housing and offenders. This group would consider and progress the issues raised in this report and a previous report by ANEC on offender accommodation in the North East and monitor the outcomes of current joint initiatives	
	Recommendations to local authorities	
9.	Local authorities should work with their social housing providers to review allocations practices and ensure allocation decisions do not unreasonably restrict access to social housing for offenders.	Julie Nixon / Caroline Wood
10.	Local authorities should work with their social housing providers to encourage pro-active engagement with police, probation and prisons in order to preserve tenancies or end tenancies in a managed way where a tenant is in prison. Housing providers should be encouraged to reflect this in their policies, protocols and practices.	Julie Nixon / Caroline Wood

11.	Local authorities should consider how the use of administration fees in the private sector affects tenants in their area and work with landlords to ensure it is not a barrier to accessing private rented accommodation.	Julie Nixon / Caroline Wood
12.	Local authorities should consider applications to prison governors for community discharge discretionary grants. This could help to secure accommodation prior to a prisoner's release where a 'through the gate' worker is supporting the prisoner and there is a risk of homelessness.	Julie Nixon / Caroline Wood
	Recommendations to NOMS / North East prisons	
13.	Prisons should ensure Offender Supervisors are briefed to tackle the housing myths which circulate amongst prisoners. This would support the prisons' Every Contact Matters agenda.	
14.	NOMS North East should work with its housing contract providers to review activities to prevent offender accommodation loss and put monitoring of outcomes in place to identify any gaps in provision	
	Finance, Benefits and Debt	
	Recommendations to local authorities	
15.	Local authorities should work with prisons to raise awareness of welfare reform and financial inclusion support available to families. For example, local authorities and their partners could supply information and displays or consider running surgeries through prison visitor centres.	Julie Nixon / Welfare Reform Board
16.	Local authorities should consider how welfare rights services and local advice agencies are represented on local reducing reoffending strategic groups and whether these agencies are able to provide evidence of unmet need amongst prisoners and their families to support the local authorities' financial inclusion work.	Lesley King / Liz Hanley

	Recommendations to NOMS / North East prisons	
17.	Prisons should ensure Offender Supervisors and prisoners are aware of the local schemes which have replaced Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans and ensure there is a process for supporting prisoners to access them where eligible.	[Dawn Welsh, SBC, liaising with Holme House and Kirklevington about 'Back on Track', SBC's social fund scheme]
	Mental and Physical Health	
	Recommendations for joint action	
18.	NOMS, prisons and local authorities should work together to develop a social care screening tool for prison staff and a clear social care pathway including a discharge planning process for prisoners with identified social care needs.	Liz Hanley SBC. Would expect NOMS to take the lead on this.
19.	Local authorities, prisons and NOMS should work with other health and wellbeing partners to strengthen healthcare pathways for offenders with 'lower level' mental health problems and those not previously known to community mental health services.	Peter Kelly
	Recommendations to local authorities	
20.	Health and Wellbeing Boards should ensure the health needs of offenders, including mental health, are fully reflected in local Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) and strategies.	Peter Kelly (already included in Stockton JSNA, with Darren Boyd as topic author)
21.	Health and Wellbeing Boards should encourage GP practices to identify a lead GP for patients who have had contact with the criminal justice system.	Peter Kelly Needs a wider discussion at CCG or regional level. May prove difficult to resource.
22.	Local reducing reoffending strategic groups should seek to engage mental health and learning disability services in order to consider and address identified gaps.	Mike Batty
23.	In their public health role, local authorities should consider how preventative work aimed at promoting healthy lifestyles and addressing mental health problems can be continued in prisons.	This is a role for Public Health England, rather than for local authorities.

	Recommendations to NOMS / North East prisons	
24.	Prisons should share the findings of prisoner health needs assessments with local authorities in the North East to inform JSNAs and commissioning of services in the community.	
	Drugs and Alcohol	
	Recommendations to local authorities	
25.	As community-based drug and alcohol services are being re-designed and commissioned, commissioners should ensure there is a clear, single referral route from prison to the community	Peter Kelly (already in place via Kerry Anderson and Jo Heaney)
26.	Commissioners should give attention to pathways for alcohol treatment and recovery and to the 'recovery to recovery' pathway, to ensure those who have recovered in prison have a clear pathway into community-based recovery and mutual aid. Criminal justice data could usefully inform JSNAs in this area.	
27.	Commissioners of drug and alcohol services should consider the evidence around the role of the family in an offender's recovery and how a 'whole family' approach could support their commissioning outcomes	
	Recommendations to NOMS / North East prisons	
28.	NOMS should consider re-establishing regional meetings, bringing together prison DART staff with community-based service providers to share information and seek solutions to common problems. Engagement with drug and alcohol commissioners should be considered as part of this.	NB current concerns about future resourcing of Drug Recovery Wing at Holme House, and potential impact on caseloads of DART team
	Employment, Training and Education	
	Recommendations to local authorities	
29.	Local authorities should ensure their work to promote digital inclusion addresses the barriers offenders face in accessing on-line employment and benefit services.	Lesley King

30.	Local reducing reoffending strategic groups should review whether formal information sharing arrangements between probation and Jobcentre Plus staff are operating effectively and take action to address any weaknesses.	Mike Batty
	Recommendations to NOMS / North East prisons	
31.	Prisons should consider how they could work with VCS partners who are developing accredited peer mentoring programmes for offenders, ensuring the available evidence on peer mentoring is taken into account. It may be appropriate to consider this at the proposed North East reducing reoffending forum.	
32.	NOMS and North East prisons should explore the possibility of using Virtual Campus as a means of providing local information about housing, benefits and family services.	
33.	North East prisons should engage with local authorities about future opportunities to tender for local authority contracts.	
	Children and Families	
	Recommendations for joint action	
34.	NOMS, prisons and local authorities should work together with key partners to develop a shared, 'whole family' approach to the children and families pathway for the North East	
35.	NOMS, North East prisons and local authorities should consider ways that families are currently engaged in the offenders' sentence and recovery plans and seek to strengthen engagement with families at all stages of the criminal justice process. A starting point would be working with prisoners' families where there is already a Team around the Family or Team around the Household in place.	Shaun McLurg SBC would expect NOMS to lead on these and to link in with local authorities.
36.	Prisons and local authorities should pilot the Troubled Families 'common offer' as a first step to strengthening working relationships. NOMS should continue to facilitate a task and finish group to monitor the pilot.	Mike Batty

	Recommendations to local authorities	
37.	Local authorities should include evidence about the impact of imprisonment on children and families in their local needs assessments and strategies.	Shaun McLurg (and Peter Kelly)
	Recommendations to NOMS / North East prisons	
38.	NOMS and North East prisons should carry out a short review of the parenting programmes currently being delivered in North East prisons considering how they are resourced, who they have and have not reached, the impact they have had and what works best for different prisoners. This information should be used to inform future programmes and services for parents in custody and their families	
39.	Prisons should consider alternative ways of enabling prisoners to access parenting support. For example greater consideration could be given to the use of ROTL (release on temporary licence) to enable some prisoners to access services for parents within the local community as part of resettlement plans.	
	Women Offenders	
	Recommendations for joint action	
40.	Prisons and local authorities should consider working with community-based services to provide awareness-raising sessions for staff to better understand the needs of sex workers.	
41.	Prisons, children's services departments and family support workers should consider opportunities to work together to improve the preparation for and management of last contact visits for women in custody.	
	Recommendations to local authorities	
42.	Commissioners should consider local evidence relating to the shortage of appropriate accommodation for women offenders in their area, including the current housing outcomes for women offenders with complex needs who present as homeless, to inform future service provision.	Julia Nixon / Caroline Wood

43.	Local authorities should include evidence about the needs of sex workers in Joint Strategic Needs Assessments to inform the commissioning of services.	Peter Kelly (Jo Heaney leading)
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