



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

6th September 2016

Attending:

Patrice Lawrence	Clinks (Secretariat)
Richard Nicholls	Clinks (Chair)
Richard Booty	NOMS
Angela Christopher	NOMS
Michael Adu	NOMS
Jill Greenfield	Barnardo's
Lee Stephenson	Jigsaw Visitors Centre
Alison Goddard	Lincolnshire Action Trust
Helen Attewell	Nepacs
Mark Proctor	Ormiston
Luke Carey	Pact
Matthew Livingstone	PLA (Pre-School Learning Alliance)
Diane Curry	POPS
Sarah Hillier	Spurgeons
Evan Jones	St Giles Trust
Joanne McIntosh	HACRO
Charlie Weinberg	Safe Ground

Apologies:

Andy Keen-Downs	Pact
Emma Wells	Future Unlocked

1. Introductions and welcomes

The members of the Special Interest Group introduced themselves. New attendees were Evan Jones (St Giles Trust), Matthew Livingstone (PLA) and Michael Adu (NOMS). Gabrielle Lee is no longer part of the team.

2. Reviewing the notes of the previous meeting

Since the previous meeting on 12th July, the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) in each region has started to meet with local organisations. Members of the group described diverse experiences. Some had no contact as yet, others felt the approach to information-gathering was a little ad hoc, while others had found meeting with the SPOC helpful. There appeared to be considerable variation between the regions.

The Group also discussed the potential for learning from this process as a whole, including the difficulties for the voluntary sector when bids have a tight turnaround time.

3. Update from NOMS' officials Richard Booty, Angela Christopher and Michael Adu

Richard Booty understood that the regional SPOCs were currently liaising with local organisations. Angela Christopher will collate the information into a consistent framework.

Budget

Richard Booty confirmed that the budgets have now been agreed. Money will be allocated to regions on the basis of £65 per head for every adult male prisoner in a public sector prison (not including high security). As anticipated, some regions have lost funding in the reallocation while others have gained. The regions with an uplift in funding are Kent, Sussex and Essex, North East and Yorkshire, the North West and the Midlands. The region with the most significant shortfall is the East Region, followed by London and Thames Valley and the South West. The Group queried the possibility of Deputy Directors of Custody (DDCs) supplementing the shortfall in the budgets. Those decisions will be made regionally.

There are three public sector prisons in Wales Region that are not subject to NOMS' procurement process, although the existing family services contracts are likely to be subject to the same timetable as the English services. NOMS can provide support if required.

The reform prisons are not part of this process – they are funded separately. The contracts are equally vulnerable, though. The budget is allocated is similar to the £65 per head allocation in the public sector. The reform prisons are welcome to participate in the roadshows if they choose.

PIN and roadshows

On 16th September 2016, the Prior Information Notice (PIN) will be uploaded with an indication of the budget allocated to each regions and details of regional workshops for NOMS to explain the process and for organisations to meet and network. The dates and locations are:

7th October: London Region at Clive House

10th October: South West Region at HMP Guys Marsh

10th October: North East and Yorkshire Region at HMP Askham Grange

11th October: East Region at Sterling House, near HMP Highpoint South

14th October: Midlands plus Women's, High Security and Young People at Newbold Revel

17th October: Kent, Sussex and Essex Regions at Petty France

19th October: North West Region at HMP Kirkham

Additional funding

NOMS want governors to be innovative and work in partnership to attract additional funding, but acknowledged concerns that governors successful in raising money could be penalised by having their NOMS funding reduced. They will work towards minimising this possibility in future contracts.

Group members questioned the appropriateness of NOMS asking about potential providers' potential to raise additional funds. Members felt that the voluntary sector should not be expected to subsidise vital services for the children and families of prisoners in public sector prisons, such as play services in visitor halls, by fundraising from grants and funds to provide. NOMS responded that there was no expectation of any matched funding, but knowledge was required about organisations' ability to generate income.

Supporting 'intelligent procurement'

It was argued that there needs to be a wider understanding of how the voluntary sector generates its own funds. The voluntary sector has to continually reconfirm its value and procurement processes rarely acknowledge the value the voluntary sector brings in terms of innovation and collaboration. This feels especially pertinent as the commissioning process model will consist of a prime organisation who will subcontract services to smaller organisations.

What are the intelligent questions that separate the generalists – that is, organisations that bid for a wide range of tenders – from the specialists? What are the elements that improve families' experiences? Is it the play area and

refreshments in the visits hall? A visitor centre? Family engagement work including advice, specialist support, family learning and other courses and interventions? Is it the effectiveness of the bookings hall? The regional Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) are gathering information on all of these aspects. Has NOMS kept to the principles of the voluntary sector compact?

The Group were also concerned about the commissioning timetable having experience of previous tenders that have had to be written over the Christmas period. The Group were assured that there would be a 30-day period to submit the bid.

Concerns were also expressed over the employment rights of current staff. New contracts may mean significant role change and staff may not be subject to TUPE conditions if new organisations take over delivery of the services.

NOMS acknowledged that there needs to be a mature contract management approach that can take into account the unexpected issues that affect the voluntary sector. Some good models have been identified.

Further discussion

Following NOMS departure, the Group discussed the impact of developing services on a smaller budget, particularly in prisons where there have been no previous services. Had there been an Equality Impact Assessment to monitor the impact of the changes?

Discussion also continued on the accuracy of calculating the allocated budgets based on £65 per adult male prison. The Group felt strongly that the services they delivered were valued at more than £65 per person.

4. Actions

- a. PL will recirculate the list of SPOCs.
- b. DC will report back to RR3 about the experiencing of influencing the commissioning process.
- c. RB/MA will update the organisations about the extensions of their contracts.
- d. The Group will explore how to represent the potential losses of services by calculating their values as £65 per head. This will be a key item at the next meeting.

Date of the next meeting **8th November in London.**