

Notes from the Reducing Reoffending Third Sector Advisory Group (RR3) quarterly meeting

1st June 2021, via video call

Attendees:

Peter Atherton, Community led initiatives CIC
Martin Blakeborough, Kaleidoscope
Dez Brown, Spark2life
Francesca Cooney, Prisoners' Education Trust
Lisa Dando, Brighton Women's Centre
Peter Dawson, Prison Reform Trust
Will Downs, Clinks (notes)
Helen Dyson, Nacro
Pippa Goodfellow, Alliance for Youth Justice (co-opted member)
Paul Grainge, Recoop

Alasdair Jackson, Recycling Lives
Vicki Markiewicz, Change Grow Live
Ellie McNeill, Liverpool and Sefton YMCA
Jessica Mullen, Clinks (chair)
Tina Parker, Pact
Laura Seebohm, Changing Lives
Khatuna Tsintsadze, Zahid Mubarek Trust
Emma Wells, Community Chaplaincy Association
Tracy Wild, Langley House Trust

Officials:

George Barrow, Ministry of Justice
Alex Chalk MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice
Bettina Crossick, HM Prisons and Probation Service
Chris Gunderson, HM Prisons and Probation Service
Chris Taylor, HM Prisons and Probation Service
Anna Webb, Ministry of Justice

Apologies:

Anne Fox, Clinks
Dee Anand, Together for Mental Wellbeing

1. Welcome and introductions

- 1.1. Jess Mullen, Director of Influencing and Communications, Clinks welcomed the group and gave apologies for Anne Fox, Chief Executive, Clinks.
- 1.2. Jess welcomed three new members to the group who were appointed through an open recruitment process: Ellie McNeill, Chief Executive, YMCA Liverpool (medium sized organisation); Alasdair Jackson, Chief Executive, Recycling Lives (employment); and Vicki Markiewicz, Executive Director, Change Grow Live (substance misuse).
- 1.3. Jess welcomed Pippa Goodfellow, Director, Alliance for Youth Justice who has been co-opted to the meeting to provide expertise on youth justice.
- 1.4. Jess welcomed Alex Chalk MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice and invited a round of introductions from attendees.

2. Reform and reunification of the probation service

- 2.1. Jess Mullen thanked the Minister for attending and welcomed the opportunity to share with him the key findings from the RR3 special interest group (SIG) on probation reform (since this meeting took place [the final report of the special interest group has been published here](#)).
- 2.1.1. Jess said engagement with officials in the probation reform team has been excellent. Where challenges emerged, the department engaged in a constructive way to find solutions and this contributed to the voluntary sector emerging as the main partner in the delivery of rehabilitation and resettlement services.
- 2.1.2. Despite this, the involvement of the wider voluntary sector in day-one services is low. Across 110 contracts there are only 26 lead providers, of which 23 are voluntary organisations. The involvement of small and specialist organisations in supply chains is low. There is a lack of Welsh organisations delivering in Wales and very few organisations led by and focussed on racially minoritised people in supply chains.
- 2.1.3. These contract outcomes reflect the concerns raised by the RR3 Special Interest Group, particularly in relation to the complexity of the commissioning processes and the barriers to the participation of smaller organisations. There was an opportunity to now reflect on these outcomes and to learn from lessons to inform the commissioning of future probation services.
- 2.2. Alex Chalk MP thanked the group for inviting him and thanked Jess for her reflections. He said the voluntary sector is full of motivated and innovative individuals. He recognised the misgivings people have had about contract outcomes but also reflected the pressures faced by the department in commissioning these services during Covid-19. He said he was keen to work with the RR3 to ensure learning can be taken forward to ensure the right services are commissioned for future services. The reformed probation model, alongside the various programmes the department are rolling out on accommodation, substance misuse and employment, presents a positive juncture and the RR3 can play an important part in this journey.
- 2.3. Khatuna Tsintsadze said that [in a recent parliamentary discussion](#) Alex Chalk had mentioned prisons need to be a place of security, but also a place of humanity, rehabilitation and hope. She said racially minoritised people consistently report more negatively about their experience in prison. [Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons thematic review on resettlement for racially minoritised prisoners](#) showed a failure to provide effective resettlement support. Khatuna welcomed the minister's commitment to these issues through regular meetings with the sector and would welcome further commitments from the department to ensure all people in prison experience prison as a place of humanity, rehabilitation and hope.
- 2.3.1. Alex Chalk reiterated his commitment to addressing disparities in the criminal justice system. He said the department continues to take forward the learning and lessons from the Lammy review as well as address recommendations made by the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities.
- 2.3.2. In relation to resettlement, Alex Chalk said the department is putting in measures to address issues such as delivering a ground breaking reform to accommodation that should ensure every person leaving prison should access short term accommodation. These interventions benefit everyone including racially minoritised people.

- 2.3.3. Jess Mullen said that newly commissioned accommodation services do not take into account the specific needs of women. Alex Chalk welcomed the feedback and encouraged the group to feed into such initiatives to ensure they are successful.
- 2.3.4. Martin Blakebrough said there were examples, for example in women's services and accommodation, where no Welsh agency felt able to come forward to bid for services due to the commissioning processes. This has meant vital local services have missed out.
- 2.4. Martin Blakebrough said that devolution arrangements in Wales, where services relevant to justice are devolved but criminal justice itself is not, can lead to the Welsh government disengaging with criminal justice agencies and creating gaps in funding. An example of this is the recent decision from Welsh government to award health and social care workers a Covid-19 bonus payment, but many health workers in the criminal justice system are ineligible. He suggested Alex Chalk engage with Jane Hutt MS, Minister for Social Justice on the issue.
- 2.4.1. Alex Chalk said he meets with Jane Hutt, for example around the Residential Women's Centre in Wales and can pick up these wider issues with her. He reiterated his desire for learning from day-one commissioning to be taken forward to ensure the right organisations across England and Wales are commissioned into the future.
- 2.4.2. Chris Taylor shared the disappointment that there were no bids across some competitions in Wales. Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) therefore had to ask organisations across the border to take on contracts. He said the National Probation Service team in Wales will continue to encourage organisations to qualify onto the Dynamic Framework for future opportunities.
- 2.5. Laura Seebohm said in recent years the probation service has fallen away from the kind of multi-agency discussions that can be so important in reducing reoffending. She said this is part of the reason why there is a lack in confidence in the efficacy of community orders. She asked what the direction of central government would be to encourage regional probation directors to engage with local partnerships.
- 2.5.1. Alex Chalk welcomed the comment. He hopes that the reforms to the probation system can help restore credibility of community orders in the eyes of the public. He said caseloads are key to this and that the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is in the process of a major recruitment drive for probation officers.
- 2.6. Alasdair Jackson said that small organisations found the experience of bidding for day-one contracts too complicated. Lisa Dando said many small and specialist organisations did not even qualify for the Dynamic Framework. They asked what mechanisms would be deployed to reach out to small and specialist organisations.
- 2.6.1. Alex Chalk said he would take away these points and discuss with officials how processes can be made simple and streamlined. As the department resets the probation system they want to refine and perfect commissioning processes. The department is conscious that there are providers out there who have not yet been commissioned and can do great things. He said he was interested in engaging with Regional Probation Directors (RPDs) around opportunities for micro-commissioning and how to best tap into services locally. Chris Taylor reiterated this and said not all future services will be commissioned via the Dynamic Framework, with the option of co-commissioning routes in each area and the use of grants.
- 2.7. Alasdair Jackson welcomed the comments from Alex Chalk about the wider ambitions of improving services and asked how the department would ensure the whole of the criminal justice system, including prison staff, are brought along with these ambitions as experience

has shown that positive initiatives can be frustrated when people on the ground aren't committed to them.

- 2.7.1. Alex Chalk said the department cannot always micromanage the implementation of broad initiatives on the ground. He said a crucial part of this is capacity in the system. Prison places need to be built to alleviate pressures on overcrowding and more probation officers are needed to reduce caseloads in the community. He said greater capacity can help reduce pressures and create an environment where innovation, compassion, humanity and determination can prosper and where staff retention is improved.
- 2.8. Jess Mullen thanked the Minister. She said the RR3 would soon establish a SIG on commissioning and that this will offer a vehicle to explore some of these issues in more depth including taking forward opportunities around micro-commissioning that the Minister referred to.
- 2.9. Alex Chalk thanked the group again and left the meeting.

3. Actions, work plan and updates

- 3.1. The group approved the [minutes from the previous meeting](#). The only outstanding action is for the MoJ and HMPPS to respectively share organograms with the group. Bettina Crossick said she has followed this up and should be able to share soon.
- 3.2. **Action: Bettina Crossick and George Barrow to explore providing up-to-date organisational charts for stakeholders of MoJ and HMPPS respectively.**
- 3.3. Jess asked the group to agree to the work plan that had been circulated prior to the meeting.
 - 3.3.1. Lisa Dando said she would like to see the commissioning SIG look at the best mechanisms for the commissioning of specialist providers and share examples of good practice including co-commissioning. Jess Mullen agreed this should be an area of consideration.
 - 3.3.2. Both Lisa Dando and Dez Brown welcomed a specific focus on racially minoritised people in the work plan. Dez said that given the focus of the Sewell report, they should consider young people in the criminal justice system and the youth estate as part of that work.
 - 3.3.3. George Barrow said that the MoJ is preparing a response to the Sewell report. He confirmed the MoJ is focussing largely on recommendations 12 and 18, though there was also some attention on recommendations 4 and 19. George is also interested to explore whether the MoJ stewardship funding, administered by RPDs and Clinks, has been effective and what learnings can be taken from that to inform conversations around micro-commissioning.
 - 3.3.4. Pippa Goodfellow stated her willingness to support the RR3 around engagement focussed on young racially minoritised people in the criminal justice system.
 - 3.3.5. **Action: Jess Mullen to engage Dez Brown and Khatuna Tsintsadze to scope the potential RR3 work on racially minoritised people in the criminal justice system.**
- 3.4. Jess Mullen and Bettina Crossick gave an update on the Third Sector Strategic Board. The board has been set up to consider strategic questions around how the MoJ and HMPPS can best work in partnership with the voluntary sector. Jess welcomed this development which will help to continue the work of HMPPS to address issues around communication between the sector and HMPPS [raised by the RR3 SIG on Covid-19](#).

- 3.4.1. In addition to officials sitting on the board, Clinks has been allocated a seat as holders of the HMPPS/MoJ infrastructure support grant. Four further seats have been allocated to RR3 members. RR3 members will be invited to put themselves forward for the seats and the chair and secretariat will select individuals in a way that seeks to ensure a diversity of experience and expertise, particularly in relation to ability to represent the view of organisations working with people with protected characteristics.
- 3.4.2. Bettina Crossick said philanthropic funders will also be represented on the group and similarly to the RR3, there will be opportunities for other voluntary sector experts to be co-opted to the group where additional expertise is required.
- 3.4.3. Khatuna Tsintsadze asked for a list of members of the board. Bettina said the draft terms of reference would be shared with the group.
- 3.4.4. **Action: secretariat to share terms of reference for the Third Sector Strategic board with the RR3 and provide details on how RR3 members can apply to sit on the board.**

4. Prison regime reform

- 4.1. Jess Mullen welcomed Chris Gunderson, HMPPS to the meeting.
- 4.2. Chris Gunderson gave an update on the prison regime reform programme known as the Future Regime Design (FRD) project.
 - 4.2.1. FRD has two phases of work. Phase 1 will create a stage one model for prisons to progress into in line with the [National Framework for Prison Regime recovery](#). Stage one is the regime state at the last point in the national framework. It is the point at which prisons can run a full suite of regime activities, though this is likely to still involve some limited legacy Covid-19 controls, such as regime groups, testing and the vaccination programme. As prisons are still viewed by Prison Health in England (PHE) and Prison Health in Wales (PHW) as high risk environments, it is not automatic that relaxation of the controls in the community will mean an immediate and commensurate relaxation in equivalent prison controls. HMPPS is working collaboratively with PHE and PHW to determine the levels of national controls still required as part of the design of stage one.
 - 4.2.2. The stage one model will include a set of national standards and principles that will apply across the estate. Alongside that, there will be a bespoke set of tailored frameworks for each function of a prison. For example, the regime in a reception prison will focus more on people's immediate needs and settlement, and in a resettlement prison the focus will be on more formalised learning and interventions. Key worker models will also be prioritised. Stage one is the point at which ownership of prison regime design reverts from the centre (a temporary command and control response during the early pandemic), to governors of individual prisons. At stage one, governors will design their own regimes and the national stage one model will set parameters, principles and standards that they have to operate to when doing so.
 - 4.2.3. Some prisons are already moving towards stage two of the national prisons framework, so the development of stage one is rapid and therefore the scope for this is somewhat limited. The revised stage one will however be the gateway to larger and more systemic reform of regime delivery in prisons. This is one part of the wider Prison Reform Portfolio Programme, a 3-year piece of work to establish a more substantial redesign of prison regimes. The scope for this is much wider and will be driven by a vision of time in prison to be time well spent. The work has three broad areas of focus:

- 4.2.3.1. *Purpose* – to work towards a more personalised approach to meaningful activities; to focus on assessing the needs and risks of individuals and deliver a regime that addresses those needs and risks. HMPPS will work towards establishing measures that support such outcomes.
- 4.2.3.2. *Place* - to consider how the physical environment and ways of working can ensure safety, decency and order, and to increase ways in which the processes and activities delivered within a residential unit empower prisoners to develop life skills such as time management, personal responsibility and learning to live successfully and contribute to a group. Chris Gunderson acknowledged that restricted regimes during Covid-19 impacted upon people’s quality of life and their level of mental health, but he said regime restrictions also had the positive impact of reducing mixing and therefore limiting violence and contributing to people feeling safer. HMPPS wants to reform the regime in recognition that the Covid-19 restrictions imposed out of necessity to preserve life, though detrimental in some ways, have given a unique opportunity to pause regime, reset what is important and rebuild on what can be improved. This will be built on a foundation of safety, order and decency which will be achieved in stage one as a first step towards reform.
- 4.2.3.3. *People* – to make sure staff and partner agencies are able to support prisoners in the most effective way, to enable individuals to make effective use of time in custody and achieve the right outcomes for people in custody. HMPPS is meeting with governors and prison group directors, and engaging with a variety of stakeholders, to think about what this should look like. The principle is to create ‘time well spent’ in every prison. This is the strapline for future regimes and the three P’s (Purpose, Place, People) are pillars of this. Chris expressed that all of this thinking is at a very early stage, and the project is focusing on designing a stage one regime. Although there are not yet all the design solutions beyond this, that’s the remit for the three year programme that follows the opportunities, appetite and energy to achieve improvements and better regime outcomes are immense.
- 4.2.4. Chris Gunderson said he is interested in exploring how prisoners can have greater personalisation within the regime offer. This includes a potential regime needs assessment that identifies needs and tailors individual regime participation to personal needs and objectives. Immediate assessments in prison must think about people’s immediate needs, legacy issues from the community, maintaining effective family connections and learning to live in custody. Chris wants to ensure that people are accessing the right interventions at the right time. Where meaningful activity and education is available, the prisons need to know who that will be best suited for.
- 4.2.5. There is a performance work stream to explore how HMPPS centrally can drive the right behaviours amongst senior leaders locally, and to ensure quality of intervention as well as quantity of delivery are achieved in the right balance. .
- 4.2.6. Chris explained that there are opportunities to grow structured on wing activity (SOWA), which are extra-curricular informal activities led by staff and potentially prisoners within residential units as well as cells. The aim is to create more informal enrichment activities through pop-up activities on residential units, harnessing skills and interests of staff as group facilitators. There is huge potential in this as all ideas, but, needs careful consideration.

- 4.2.7. Chris said HMPPS is at a very early stage of the work. It is keen to hear from people about what needs to be improved in prison regimes, particularly in relation to the learning from Covid-19.
- 4.3. Khatuna Tsintsadze said that she understood the programme is at an early stage and asked what plans were in place to publish information about HMPPS's programme that can be shared with interested organisations. Jess Mullen agreed and said that engagement with the sector would need to go beyond the RR3 group.
- 4.3.1. Chris Gunderson said HMPPS is working on a public-facing narrative. There is a national communications lead for this piece of work and they have engaged already with Inside Time, National Prison Radio and Prison Reform Trust's prisoner forums to share information.
- 4.3.2. Chris said HMPPS was confident its long-term plans would lead to better outcomes and tailoring of service, but he is conscious of moving away from a one-size fits all approach that it had pre-pandemic. He stated the need to achieve a balance of safety and sufficiency in the regimes they deliver, such as smaller regime groups potentially in those sites with significant safety challenges, but only where a change is required. Those prisons that were high performing and ran safe and purposeful activities pre-Covid-19 which are supported by post-Covid-19 risk assessments, should continue to deliver them.
- 4.3.3. He invited more suggestions of the way in which HMPPS can reach out to voluntary sector colleagues or partners. HMPPS wants this to feel like an inclusive design process.
- 4.3.4. **Action: Chris Gunderson to share outward-facing communications about the regime reform programme with the group.**
- 4.4. Dez Brown said through his work in prisons he has seen the value of a therapeutic approach to both staff and prisoners dealing with poor mental health and trauma. He suggested the regime reform should explore opportunities for people in prison to be offered therapy and opportunities for both prisoners and staff to train as therapists.
- 4.4.1. Chris Gunderson said he was aware of models for establishing therapeutic environments. He invited attendees to send relevant information and evidence to him and his team in support of such ideas. He said the team were considering how trauma-informed approaches being deployed in women's prisons can be deployed across the male estate.
- 4.4.2. Chris Gunderson said the workforce reform team that sits alongside this programme will look at staff supervisions and the potential for reflective learning amongst prison staff and the offer of proper professional development. Continuing Professional Development is an area of reform that has attracted interest and HMPPS has engaged with health colleagues with experience in this area to discuss and explore further HMPPS are looking at the opportunities to give staff on the frontline new areas of specialism, development and training, for example in communications. He said it would be worthwhile exploring whether therapy could also be a specialism they promote, but again this is at a very early stage and needs consideration alongside all other opportunities.
- 4.4.3. Lisa Dando supported therapeutic approaches to be rolled-out beyond the women's estate. She said it would be challenging to force the culture change that will be needed for this to work and to support prison staff to work in that way. Trauma-informed and therapeutic approaches are not easily rolled out with half-day training. She suggested

HMPPS would need to commit resource to this, including bringing external trauma-informed supervisors into prison.

- 4.4.4. Chris Gunderson said he accepted trauma-informed approaches can't be achieved through a half day training session and needs wider cultural change. He said his team is working closely with the work stream on culture led by Jessica Fairbairn to ensure their proposals align with work to shift culture.
- 4.5. Francesca Cooney said a truly personalised approach to education would be challenging to run, given the number of prison officers you would need to enable small cohorts to access tailored work. She said there would be a vital role for in-cell technology in this. Francesca offered to facilitate contact between Chris and prison teachers and education providers to work through some of these challenges and opportunities.
 - 4.5.1. Chris Gunderson said he did not want the regime reform programme to be solely considered a technology scheme. The roll-out of in-cell technology in prisons continues, but this is a gradual process. HMPPS is interested in both tech-enabled education provision and different ways of delivery, including remote delivery, that isn't delivered through technology.
 - 4.5.2. Francesca Cooney said there has been good in-cell materials developed but this is a very flat way of learning and not suitable for everyone (in particular people with additional needs). Some Ofsted reports have also been critical of the materials provided. There is also a danger of 'paper fatigue' and learners not wanting to engage any more in this way.
 - 4.5.3. **Action: Francesca Cooney to facilitate contact between HMPPS regime reform programme and prison teachers and education providers.**
- 4.6. Peter Dawson asked what the resource constraints will be. Less time out of cell shouldn't be accepted as a trade-off to achieving smaller regime groups. If the useable day is longer (including evenings and the weekend), smaller regime groups and decent time out of cell can be achieved. There's a cost to such an approach but HMPPS should be transparent about the resourcing choices that will underpin the scope of this reform programme.
 - 4.6.1. Vicki Markiewicz said that some substance misuse services in prisons are most effective in reasonably sized groups, to enable the sense of a community in recovery. Vicki said she was happy to help facilitate contact between the HMPPS prison reform programme and substance misuse staff to feed into that the design of regime groups.
 - 4.6.2. Chris Gunderson welcomed this offer. He said for stage one there will be a national risk assessment process, which helps each prison determine the size of groups they can convene and will take into account the relaxation of Covid-19 controls, with Covid-19 learnings and local data and context to determine appropriate group sizes. He said group sizes will be locally determined and therefore it is hard to make a clear statement nationally on what will be possible.
 - 4.6.3. **Action: Vicki Markiewicz to facilitate contact between HMPPS regime reform programme and front-line substance misuse workers.**
 - 4.6.4. **Action: Chris Gunderson to share information about national risk assessment process to determine group sizes under stage one.**
- 4.7. Paul Grainge said peer support programmes can play an important role in empowering individuals to help maintain independence in prison. It should be considered seriously as part of their review of meaningful and purposeful activity and as the same importance of education and industry.
 - 4.7.1. Chris Gunderson said activities are not inherently purposeful for all but are only purposeful if they have an impact on the individual against an identified need. Some

activities are currently delivered as something that prisoners are sent to, rather than something they are allocated to based on need. Prisoners should have tailored activities to a greater degree where possible. HMPPS wants to explore how it can encourage and empower staff to feel invested in the regime and the quality of services they are sending people to and to recognise value of things like peer services.

- 4.8. Khatuna Tsintsadze asked how HMPPS can ensure that these services are accessible to prisoners equally and fairly and asked whether the HMPPS prison regime reform programme has worked with specialist charities representing racially minoritised communities to shape the programme of work.
 - 4.8.1. Chris Gunderson said HMPPS should own the fact that its Covid-19 regimes have had differential impact on certain cohorts. A Senior Management Team representative from the national diversity and inclusion (D&I) team sits on the reform programme and is drafting a joint vision statement that aligns the ambitions for future reforms with the national D&I vision. They will then meet with regional D&I leads to ensure the centre is filtering down into prison plans.
 - 4.8.2. Chris also reiterated the importance of tailored services in the new model. He said each prison will need a proper needs analysis and assessment of its population in order to understand what purposeful activity offer is needed in each prison. This is part of the design principles for the stage one model.
- 4.9. Dez Brown said the importance and role of prison chaplains can often be overlooked and communal worship will continue to be important through recovery and reform.
 - 4.9.1. Chris Gunderson said chaplaincy colleagues are developing a model on how pastoral services are delivered at stage one. He said the one of the work streams for future regime design will explore how faith services and pastoral services are provided, how communal worship can be enhanced by in-cell faith services, and how chaplaincy services can reach out into families.
- 4.10. Jess Mullen asked about the Youth Estate.
 - 4.10.1. Chris Gunderson said there is a parallel programme of regime reform taking place within the Youth Custody Service (YCS). The YCS will also have a stage one which leads into a regime reform programme. There will be an alignment of principles between HMPPS and YCS on their programmes, for example a shared ambition towards personalisation, taking a needs-based approach and focussing outcomes on meeting individual needs.
 - 4.10.2. Pippa Goodfellow said it is important the work of the parallel programmes of reform speak to one another, especially around transitions between the youth and adult estate that are trauma-informed. She said some transitions had not taken place during Covid-19, exacerbating pressures. Chris Gunderson said he would take that away.
- 4.11. Jess Mullen thanked Chris Gunderson and said Clinks and the RR3 can support the regime reform programme to further engage with the voluntary sector with regards to needs assessments and identifying gaps in provision. Chris Gunderson suggested representatives from different work streams in the regime reform programme could attend future meetings.
- 4.12. **Action: Chris Gunderson and RR3 secretariat to explore whether leads on regime reform work streams can attend future meetings.**
- 4.13. **ENDS.**