Reducing Reoffending Project 2012-2015

End of Award Report

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EU PREVENTION OF AND FIGHT AGAINST CRIME

The project aims, objectives and methodologies

The stated principal aim of the 'Reducing Reoffending in the EU' project since its inception has been *To prevent crime by reducing reoffending rates through coordinated targeting of resources at those offenders whose criminogenic needs require additional intervention and support*. The two objectives partners have been working towards to delivering during the 3-year life cycle of the project are:

- To utilise a multi-agency approach to improve offenders self-worth, self-motivation, desire to change and willingness to engage, and increase their opportunities to receive education, training and employment opportunities.
- To develop the Life Change programme with the voluntary sector, to assist with mentoring, re-integration through access to the 7 pathways out of reoffending, and improving public confidence that reoffending rates are reducing.

The structure of the project was designed to prevent crime and reduce reoffending across Europe by developing a transnational partnership with Knowsley MBC, The Hague and the ERI. At its core has been the development and delivery of the innovative Life Change Programme (LCP), a programme developed by using best practice and drawing on evidence of effectiveness (see accompanying training guide for more detail on course content). The structured programme of work that ran through the project placed the emphasis on Knowsley based partners to design and pilot the LCP in Year 1 and to develop the training guidance (based on the pilot) that would ensure the course had a legacy of intervention work. Finally the Italian partners at the ERI would then deliver a pilot of the LCP in year 2 to test the validity of the programme and to explore the capacity for policy transfer. Throughout the lifecycle of the project the Action Learning Sets provided a forum for the methodology and tools for strategically fighting crime to be shared between partners to evaluate best practice in crime prevention. The role of the Dutch partners from The Hague was to contribute their experiences of operating the Safety House (as a model of good practice) to help share and develop learning throughout the whole of the project.

What made the original project ambitions innovative was:

- Use of offender rehabilitation as the primary purpose of crime prevention.
- An emphasis on offender rehabilitation within the community post-release.
- A multi-agency, multi-disciplinary approach covering various types of offender and crime.
- A structure of pilot, best-practice exchange, peer review, and production of a portable model of working.

The Knowsley Community Safety Partnership (KCSP) were the lead agency at the start of the project. KCSP undertake a varied portfolio of activities linked to criminal justice and community safety of which the Knowsley Integrated Offender Management scheme (KIOM) is one function. This is made up of statutory agency partners of the local authority, probation and Merseyside Police and co-opted partner agencies such as HMP Liverpool, housing providers, MALS and the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). In 2011, the partnership conducted a review of procedures and a partnership planning day between Merseyside Police, probation and Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (KMBC) mapped out an offender's journey from custody to community and in so doing sought reassurances and agreements from the various partners about what they could provide by way of support services. The formalised partnership has been agreed at senior management level and an information sharing protocol facilitates data transfer. Partners are drawn from public, private and third sector organisations as this is seen as the only way forward in an age of declining resources. Working in partnership reduces duplication in services, helps to reduce reoffending by adding value collectively and using resources in a better way.

The KMBC Corporate Plan 2012-2015, cites significant reductions in levels of crime and anti-social behaviour which could be seen as a reflection of the effective partnership working in place. However a significant level of uncertainty lies ahead in the short to medium term with regard to partnership working as the imposition of austerity measures continue to take hold and impact upon all partners. More specifically, for the criminal justice landscape in England and Wales the introduction of the Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014 (ORA) has presented a series of fundamental challenges, especially on probation services. As of June 2014, probation work is now undertaken by two separate organisations: a publically owned National Probation Service (NPS, responsible for managing high risk of harm offenders) and privately owned Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs, responsible for managing low and medium risk of harm offenders). At present, the operating models for both organisations remain under development, therefore there remains a degree of uncertainty as to what the future of their work with offenders will look like. Significant uncertainty surrounds how the new prime contractor which will take control of the supervision and monitoring of low and medium risk offenders will operate and what working practices they will institute. The intended outcome of the Reducing Reoffending Project for KCSP is the opportunity it affords for sharing best practice across international jurisdictions with lessons being taken from The Hague and the transfer of ideas from Knowsley to Italy.

The Safety House Haaglanden is a publicly funded body that has been in existence since 2009. Safety Houses are aphysical entities that work on a regional basis and with every Safety House working across several municipalities. Key partners in the Safety House model are the local authorities in the region and local government departments such the Department for Public Order and Safety (led by the Mayor) and the Municipal Social Service. In terms of service delivery partnership working can involve the police and representatives from Youth Care, probation services, Public Prosecutor's Office, welfare organisations, and mental health-care organisations. Other organisations are also invited to the Safety House on a needs basis such as housing providers. Most of these organisations are publically funded but some are also private with public subsidies. Partnership working is assisted by the operation of a single specially designed computer system for case management with bespoke portals for the different agencies to submit their relevant data. Data sharing and collaborative working agreements are in place between organisations. The Safety House organisations work in a coordinated fashion with a shared vision to develop a plan to support a complex 'problem' individual or family and seeks to tackles the multifarious needs that have been identified (e.g. housing, domestic violence, children, drugs dependency). More straightforward cases are not processed through the Safety House. An outcome of the Safety House conference is that one organisation will ultimately take the lead for co-ordinating the help and interventions detailed in the plan for that particular family or individual.

Recent changes to the criminal justice and organisational landscape in the Netherlands means many organisations are evolving and in transition. On one hand, there is the centralisation of policing services, conversely there has been the decentralisation of youth care services and an accompanying reduction in youth care budgets. These transitions are designed to bring more power to local people through devolving powers to the city municipalities. The Safety House operates within three guiding pillars (heath-care pillar, criminal pillar and the Municipal pillar). City mayors in the Netherlands are very different to mayors in the UK. Fundamentally the mayoral system in the Netherlands has delegated powers. Hence the mayor has considerable powers within the criminal justice sphere and can enact, for example, spatial restraining orders on perpetrators of persistent anti-social behaviour. Responding to young Dutch people involved in extremism is also a current priority for the Dutch authorities **(see Section 5)**. Rehabilitation is seen as a fundamental goal in the Netherlands and is publically acceptable. Prison is the last resort after the use of intervention programmes. It is felt that the interventions do work and are effective but that it also difficult to measure. Success is measured by a case study evidence based approach and the continued popularity of the Safety House among organisations who value the approach to seeking resolutions through co-operation for wide ranging issues such as spikes in the burglary rate within particular areas to rising levels of Islamic radicalisation. Every Safety House action plan is bespoke. For single agency intervention, gauging impact is relatively straightforward. When multiple partners are involved deciphering and acknowledging the respective impacts of the partners is more problematic.

The European Research Institute (ERI), is a social enterprise based in Turin. In tackling reoffending, the ERI works with two city councils as well as a social service which is not affiliated with any particular municipality. Local enterprises and other third sector organisations such as psychological services are partners to the ERI. The ERI takes the lead on relevant agendas of the partners and the sequencing of this arrangement sees the ERI liaising with the municipalities. In turn the municipalities contact social services who then invite ex-offenders to work with the ERI. Participation is on a voluntary basis.

Unlike the KCSP and the Safety House, the ERI are not a statutory criminal justice agency. As a social enterprise their connections are based on networking and communication between partner agencies. Formal contracted relations though exist between the partners. The city councils provide the physical spaces within which ERI LCP activities operate whilst social services assist with the pre-selection of potential programme participants. Rehabilitation is accepted in Italy but has minimal support. There are limited budgets to support the rehabilitation agenda and there is a general feeling that the landscape of criminal justice in Italy is overly complex and opaque wherein high profile corruption and the misuse of wealth and power provides another layer of obscurity in trying to understand the terrain. In addition, new laws created in 2014 such as 'Legge svuota carceri' involves the release of a significant number of low-risk prisoners in order to counteract prison overcrowding but without the required levels of support for rehabilitation in the community this law is likely to prove problematic. A computer system is in place to record information but this is primarily used by the ERI. The other partners have access to it but their use of it is quite limited. ERI identified the lack of information about offenders. The lack of co-ordinated joined up practice and information sharing between social services and the prison system is an important emergent issue. ERI is sometimes asked to negotiate between organisations as a result. Given the importance of information sharing in the new climate of criminal justice services, these communication blockages are a major obstacle to effective multi-agency working. A key outcome of the Reducing Reoffending Project for the European Research Institute is the opportunity to deliver the LCP developed by MALS and thereby consider its transferability to another setting.

Through their involvement with the KCSP and KIOM particularly, **Mentoring Achieve Learn Support (MALS) Merseyside** delivers an offender mentoring programme to provide focused support and mentoring opportunities for offenders. Though by no means exclusively, much of their work is focused on incarcerated offenders and working

with individuals throughout the fraught period of their transition from prison back into their communities. Intervening at this point is seen as crucial to:

- Help individuals overcome the particularly acute difficulties faced by prisoners reintegrating into mainstream society.
- To help mediate the influences of problematic peer groups and of other aspects of the individual's social environment(s) that contributed to their offending behaviour.

The MALS model is premised on partnership working that sees individuals referred to MALS through the KIOM joint action group, or (under the auspices of the KIOM and working in unison with probation partners) sees MALS workers proactively engage individuals within the prison setting several weeks before the offender is due for release. It is important to stress that at this earliest point of intervention MALS are able to establish that whilst they work in partnership with criminal justice agencies (and by extension the organisation secures the gravitas of being a partner agency and secures the access opportunities this grants them) they retain their independence and their own professional integrity in working with individuals. Each individual is then matched with a mentor who will support their mentee through (amongst other things) the provision of emotional support, as well as practical support around seeking workplace opportunities, accessing housing, education, and training. The mentors are all volunteers (some of whom have been offenders themselves in the past, though the majority have not) and they all commit to the programme for a minimum of 12 months. The mentors all undertake training and throughout their time with MALS are expected to be available at least twice a month for face to face mentoring sessions and to be flexible as regards telephone and email contact with their clients.

Academic staff from **Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU)** constituted the research partner within the project. Their primary role was to facilitate the action learning sets and to capture the shared learning. This approach involves bringing together delegates from each of the partners in the project, working alongside other professionals from the host jurisdiction to consider; a) what the partners are doing to reduce reoffending, b) what results is the approach taken having in terms of reducing reoffending, c) what works well, for whom and under what circumstances, and d) ways in which best practice might feasibly be transferred amongst the partners. Using available data sets, LJMU was also tasked with gauging the impact of the EU project funded intervention work in Knowsley (MALS and the Life Change Programme).

Action learning encourages people to reflect in groups, called sets, on their actions. Typically action learning sets (ALS) should be composed of five to seven people who meet regularly to examine their practice. Effectively they are like focus groups but are facilitated to encourage learning, reflection and action whilst also providing the research partner, LJMU, with a source of data.

As a participatory approach, action learning (AL) was instrumental in the sharing and development of best practice on reducing reoffending. At its core, AL takes place through a 'plan, do, study, act' (PDSA) approach. This involves repeated cycle of experience, reflection, proposing ideas based on that reflection and planning to test those ideas. Consequently the project partners supplemented by invited delegates from the host jurisdiction formed a community of practice (CoP) to share information and experiences and hence learn from each other in an increasingly trusting and supportive environment. ALS meetings took place bi-annually and hence provided sufficient time between meetings for partners to have made measurable progress. Bi-annual frequency also facilitated a significant degree of learning momentum to develop. Each of the meetings allocated a section of time in which the partners gave a progress update. Broadly speaking the focus of each ALS meeting revolved around three key analytical questions:

1. What do you consider to have been the key barriers/challenges to reducing reoffending?
2. What has/has not worked?
3. How can 'success' or 'progress' be measured in each case and what evidence do you have?

After each ALS, LJMU produced a summary report of the meeting which sought to capture the key learning from the event and an overview of emerging issues. An edited version of the summary report from each ALS meeting is presented below sequentially whilst a fuller transcript of the meeting is available at the project website www.reducingreoffending.co.uk.

- **The diverse status of the three international partners**
- **The different offender profiles**
- **Differing definitions of prolific offenders**
- **The safety house as an exemplar of best practice in partnership working**
- **The challenges of evidencing the impact of effectiveness**

Featured presentations

- 'Action Learning Set Method' - Liverpool John Moores University
- 'Context of the First Action Learning Set' - Gert Kortenbach (Assistant to the Director of Public Safety, The Hague)
- 'Context, Service Needs and Service Provision in the UK' – Paula Sumner (Head of Community Safety Services, Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, UK)
- 'Service Provision in the UK' - Claire Donohue (Mentor, Achieve, Learn and Support (MALS) – Knowsley, UK)
- 'Overview of the Safety House Model of Service Provision in the Netherlands' - Benjamin Kiebeler – (Safety House Manager, The Hague)
- 'Practice Examples of Service Provision in the Netherlands' - Heidie Pols (Safety House Process Manager)
- 'On Measuring Results' – Benjamin Kiebeler (Safety House Manager)
- 'Service Provision in Italy' - Iskender Forioso (European Research Centre, Turin)

Commentary

The objective of the first ALS was for each of the partners to explain what measures they were taking to reduce reoffending. Given its location in The Hague, the first ALS was built around the showcasing of the Safety House model used in the city and then broadening the focus to reflect on how other partners operate similar systems of multi-agency working in their efforts to reduce re-offending. The presence of practitioners who work within the Safety House structure (themed around families and domestic violence; juvenile and youth crime; the resettlement of offenders; and, working with prolific offenders) allowed international partners the opportunity to engage directly with individuals involved in front-line service delivery. For staff from the Safety House these discussions allowed them to explore and question how differently service provision is delivered in the partner jurisdictions. The following main themes emerged from the first ALS which took place in The Hague:

1) The different jurisdictions were starting from different baselines in terms of the offender profiles and patterns of criminality in their respective areas. In Knowsley there was a high volume of crime reflecting and resulting from wider structural deprivation within the area. Involvement in criminal gangs and domestic violence were seen as priority action areas in Knowsley. In the Netherlands there were less prolific offenders and in Italy imprisonment tended to be reserved for those who had committed the most serious crimes. Despite these differences in offence profiles, the partners presented data that suggested that reoffending rates were similar. In respect of identifying and classifying prolific offenders both The Hague and Knowsley schemes operate screening tools that use frequency of offending in combination with other factors such as age, needs and risk of offending. The base definition in the Netherlands, on the other hand, is an individual who had been convicted of 10 criminal offence in the past five last, one of which had been committed in the past 12 months. In Knowsley a prolific offender is someone who has 20 criminal offences in the last five years, with four or five committed in the last year or alternatively using a matrix to score the seriousness of offending based on risk factors, an individual with only one or two convictions but who police intelligence suggests are more criminally active than their convictions indicate.

2) The nature of the work undertaken was influenced by, and reflected, different societal attitudes in each of the jurisdictions towards the use of imprisonment. In the Netherlands there is also a specific sentence for prolific offenders. This normally consists of a suspension of imprisonment for two years if the individual concerned avails themselves of the offer of help and support to address their offending. This was viewed as means of society fulfilling its obligation to an offender before sentencing them to imprisonment. This approach was very different to Italy, for example, where imprisonment is viewed much more as a deterrent, reflected in austere provisions.   As a result, although intervention and support provided during imprisonment was seen as important in all three jurisdictions, in both the Dutch and Knowsley schemes there appeared to be more of a community focus on delivery post- release. Within Knowsley the emphasis was on establishing a plan of action prior to the individual leaving prison and ensuring that they accessed the appropriate services on their release. This was facilitated and greatly enhanced by the co-location of key multi-agency partners. In contrast, in Italy, there was no formal post-release support offered and, although released prisoners could apply to social services for assistance, this rarely occurred. A significant proportion of those serving prison sentences in Italy were foreign nationals and this raised additional challenges in terms of their resettlement.

3) All three jurisdictions reported on the value of robust and meaningful engagement in working with service users and victims. Where the contact was mandated as part of a court order (as in the Netherlands) or a requirement of release on licence (as in the United Kingdom) there were legal sanctions which could be used to encourage compliance. This was more difficult where no such sanctions existed and therefore requiring a skilful blend of care and control.   The participants identified a range of creative initiatives including mentoring and restorative justice, both to engage resistant individuals and sustain their motivation. In Italy, for example, workers had used photography as a means of facilitating discussion.   Building trust with individuals who often have a history of negative experiences of authority and sometimes gain 'status' from their offending, meant that employing appropriate staff, both in terms of knowledge and personal skills, was crucial. It was acknowledged that these are not innate qualities, meaning that appropriate training and support for staff is essential. Some powerful arguments were made for interventions (particularly, but not exclusively, those designed for young people) to ensure they recognise the vulnerability and victimisation of offenders themselves and that, by extension, any punishments or sentences take into consideration the duty to provide support and care in these respects. Whether the issue is young people's mental health problems, or the extent to which their offending is a direct result of peer pressure or their own experiences of victimisation, respondents felt the criminal justice system needs to be alive and responsive to this.

4) Jurisdictions identified issues created by the social context of offending behaviour. In all three jurisdictions, (relatively) higher than average levels of mental illness, homelessness, and unemployment were observed. A trend that is perhaps inevitable given the potentially problematic nature of the target groups under discussion. Criminality was also often seen to be more entrenched within the target groups and linked to criminal networks/families. For this reason, it was felt that there was a need for early intervention and to view the individual's behaviour within a broader context. Delegates were keen to stress that in responding to youth offending and in particular in developing sentencing/punishment options, due care was given to seeing the underlying root causes of offending as issues of social inclusion. These vulnerabilities and experiences can take different forms in different places: practitioners from the Netherlands identified the problem as caused by growing numbers of young people with mental health problems. Those from the UK talked about the pressures of gang culture as a catalyst for the onset of offending behaviour. There was a common belief however that more needs to be done to educate individuals, their families and wider society of the need to intervene and tackle problematic behaviour early so to avoid the onset of more serious and endemic offending.

5) Securing the 'buy in' and support of the local communities was seen as a significant contributory factor in the success of interventions. Where work has already taken place to involve the local community to enhance the services delivered it has proved successful. For example, in Knowsley this involved a mentoring scheme utilising the insights of ex-offenders and encouraging local businesses and community organisations to provide employment and volunteering opportunities for those who were making progress on the scheme. In the Netherlands volunteers from the local community have been used on some projects to patrol areas where there were high incidences of anti-social behaviour reported.

6) Whilst amongst all partners (to varying degrees) there was a belief that their interventions 'worked', actually evidencing this and proving their worth/value to political and public audiences was very difficult. It was acknowledged that developing measures of effectiveness was likely to be crucial given current and future financial restraints on public spending. In their own different ways the partners were trying to build an evidence base of impact. The Knowsley scheme was in the early stages of collating data in terms of reducing reoffending. The Hague had some data but found it very difficult to monitor. Whilst in Italy, the data available on youth offenders who are supervised following release was being used. However, it was felt that the nature of the work presented particular problems in terms of establishing its effectiveness. Firstly, as already noted each of the schemes were starting from different baselines in terms of defining problems, offender profiles, and broader structural factors. All these factors need to be considered and contextualised when accurately judging 'effectiveness'. Secondly, because of the nature and necessity of multi-agency working when responding to offenders with often multiple and complex needs, it was difficult to single out and identify which services/organisations were having a direct impact in terms of reducing reoffending. Thirdly, the 'success' of the schemes was often about building up trust and good relationships with individuals and these 'soft' targets were much harder to quantify. Despite these challenges, the importance of being able to demonstrate effectiveness was recognised by all the participants. Gaining feedback from individual offenders (and in the case of domestic violence work, victims) that had benefitted from the schemes was seen as an important mechanism to counter-balance negative media representations. The need to enhance data capture and analysis methods was also identified as a significant challenge. Many participants cited the absence of a robust case management system as a blockage to successful partnership working. Collating and being able to access and explore data in one location was seen as a method to help demonstrate effectiveness, to allow for the pinpointing of successful interventions and a tool for facilitating closer partnership working through information sharing agreements and explicit commitment by partners to multi-agency working.

Action Learning Set 2 (Knowsley) – Showcasing the work of local criminal justice partners

Key emergent learning:

- **The development of an understanding of the delivery and operation of local criminal justice services in England and Wales**
- **The examination of the origins, organisation and delivery model of MALS' Merseyside's Life Change Programme**
- **The exploration of the potential for exporting peer mentoring into Dutch and Italian contexts**

Featured presentations;

- 'Integrated Offender Management Scheme: A Multi-Agency Approach' - Jamie Brougham (Merseyside Police) and Nick Kayani (National Probation Service)
- 'Children and Young Persons' Tactical Response'- Tami Garvey-Jones (Merseyside Police) and Kevin Rigby (Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council)
- 'Overview of Youth Justice in Knowsley' - Justin Thompson (Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council)
- MALS: Origins, Structure and Ambition(s) – Claire Donohue, Anthony Evans, Leah Gorry (MALS Merseyside)

Commentary

The objectives of the Knowsley based ALS 2 were threefold; firstly, for partners to reflect on emergent questions from the previous ALS; secondly, for hosts Knowsley to showcase the work of local criminal justice partners; and, thirdly to focus specifically on the (potential and real) use of mentoring and of the work of MALS Merseyside in particular. As a consequence the morning was taken up by presentations from representatives of each international partner, ensuring delegates were able to get the ALS 1 requested clearer sense of the respective offending profiles of the three areas. Whilst a series of detailed insights from representatives from Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Merseyside Police, and Merseyside Probation Trust identified some of the partnership and innovative work to tackle re-offending being conducted in the Knowsley area.

The first run of three presentations saw representatives from each of the partner nations deliver presentations that a) updated the group on progress being made in efforts to tackle reoffending, and b) in addressing one of the emergent issues of ALS 1, gave more of an idea of the current structural responses to tackling reoffending and of the offending profiles of the partner areas (such that delegates could contextualise and determine the scope for importing/exporting good practice).

Representatives from Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council explained their roles and areas of responsibility within the Council. They mapped out for delegates how responsibility for the social/criminal justice policy themes of community safety, youth offending service provision, stronger families, youth service and social growth initiatives are dispersed, funded, and held accountable at local and national levels. In so doing, the presenters were at pains to stress how during this period of austerity in British politics (as in other European jurisdictions) the level of cuts being made in public services (and within crime reduction strategies specifically) can be as high 50% for some departments. In terms of the Reducing Reoffending Project it was noted that a number of national and regional developments are impacting on the work in Merseyside. Amongst a series of major criminal justice policy changes was, in November 2012, the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) in 42 of the 43 police force areas of England and

Wales, and the subsequent announcement of significant changes in how offenders are managed and supervised on their release from custody. The election of PCCs has a number of consequences for how criminal justice services are purchased and managed regionally. PCCs are responsible for developing and overseeing five year plans to reduce crime and within this planning offender management is a prominent feature. In respect of *Transforming Rehabilitation* the now statutory requirement to supervise and rehabilitate all offenders leaving prison and to ensure that support is developed 'through the gate' and prior to release replicates the (in hindsight pioneering) ethos of reducing reoffending that underpins this project. However, marketization of service providers delivering these interventions has led to uncertainty over the partners and organisations who will be involved and the roles they will have, particularly in respect of the part probation will play.

The presentation from The Hague was able to report on the continuing positive development of the work being conducted under the auspices of the Safety House. Increasing numbers of cases have been referred to the Safety House. The Safety House team has become increasingly adept at quickly establishing the level of intervention required and in formulating action plans for the individuals involved, with clear identification of the agencies and/or organisations who will take responsibility for the action plan. It is this feature of the multi-agency working of the Safety House that is seen to be functioning most effectively with increasingly stream-lined meetings firstly analysing the case and then determining where responsibility should sit. Moreover, that all Safety House partners are using the same computer system means communication channels are open and data exchanges are frequent and up-to-date (in the discussion that followed members of the UK delegation remarked how the delays in getting the case management system up and running in Knowsley was still leading to the 'double-key entry' by agencies and the retention of duplicate records.

Amidst this reflection on the progress being made in the Safety House there were also notes of caution offered. Firstly, the information used to inform the screening process is not always as robust and detailed as staff would like. Inevitably offending behaviour is informed by a whole series of factors that impact on individual's lifestyles and forming a complete picture of people's lives to help inform intervention decisions is challenging. Secondly, whilst offender/client engagement with the Safety House plans is generally good it is inevitably the case that some clients fail to adhere to what they have signed up to and that means then partners need to agree on contentious collective actions/decisions about how to handle the individual (i.e. deciding to use prison as punishment and then to return to working with the individual at a later date). Thirdly, (as other partners have reported) the multi-agency context inevitably brings organisations with different working philosophies and approaches together. Amongst others, these include those partners driven by crime control objectives, those from the health sector and those from a welfare perspective and reconciling these can be difficult in collective interventions. Negotiation and dialogue is required to enable agreement and compromise to be found in both the working practices and working ethos of the partners. Fourthly, and a further dimension of multi-agency working involves determining offender progress and establishing the respective roles of partners. Inevitably the action plans will involve multiple partners and whilst identifying milestones are the result of extensive discussion and analysis, so too is the retrospective gauging of the impact the partners have made upon particular cases. This uncertainty means pinpointing what interventions work (and why) is difficult and that can have implications for future planning and resource allocation. The questions and discussion that followed saw the UK partners in particular echo the concerns around evidencing the impact of interventions and observe how, in the absence of robust statistical data to pinpoint the impact being made, securing outside agencies support is challenging. Whilst both UK and Dutch delegations highlighted the contributions case studies could make to capturing the good work they feel is taking place there was recognition that there are real difficulties untangling which interventions specifically are working (and how) and establishing what has been the contribution of specific agencies in the process.

The presentation from the ERI, continually made clear just how difficult the prevailing economic conditions have made life in Italy and the effect the presenters believed this was having on offending behaviour. At different points the rates of suicide and the frequency of domestic violence offences were highlighted with increases of 45% and 70%

respectively in their occurrence in the last year alone (from 2012 to 2013). Moreover, with further data being presented that appeared to show links between offending behaviour and the likelihood of a family member with a previous conviction, household size and histories of substance misuse the need to offer new interventions to tackle reoffending was made explicit. The presenters were pessimistic that the situation (in respect of being proactive in tackling offending behaviour) will change as politically and socially they felt that the impetus is not there currently. Offending was not, from the perspective of the presenters, considered to be a priority for government spending and whilst there is recognition that more needs to be done to address the apparent increase in juvenile offending, education and other child-related services were seen as insufficiently able to cover prevention work. Socially and culturally the presenters expressed their concerns at what they saw as the promotion and celebration of materialistic values over and above that of the collective good. In terms of offending behaviour the growth in the incidence of corruption, robbery, and individuals participating in national and international crime organisations is seen as a further, albeit extreme, development of the quest of individuals to make money quickly. In trying to offer a more positive outlook the presenters identified that it is crucial that young people are engaged positively and that an alternative voice and lifestyle is presented to them than the highly damaging perspectives portrayed in the mainstream media. The ERI want to encourage the development of a set of activities dedicated to protect minors at risk of becoming offenders or victims and to promote this peer-to-peer work through (social) media communication tools. The extreme rates of joblessness and the increasing number of three generation households all bring their own tensions for young people to deal with. However, working with schools and sports centres the presenters were convinced that it would be possible to encourage young people to resist drifting into criminal behaviour and later in the day they recognised the role that mentors (similar to those utilised by MALS) could play within this. A further dimension to the difficulties faced in the delivery of mentoring services was the challenges of working with foreign national prisoners, a group who make up a significant proportion of the inmate population in Italy. Not only are these prisoners destined to leave the country on release (and hence make 'through the gate support' difficult) but they are also a group that the presenters felt there is little government enthusiasm for providing financial support for.

- **The development of the understanding of the workings and operation of the Italian criminal justice system**
- **The examination of barriers and blockages to delivering the Life Change model in the Italian context using a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) approach.**
- **Developing a SMART action plan for each jurisdiction.**

- **'The work of the Penal mediation Centre for Juvenile Offenders' -** Giovani Ghibaudi (President of the Penal Mediation Centre for Juvenile Offenders)
- **'Italian criminal justice system' -** Mizar Forioso (ERI)

Commentary

The ambition of ALS 1 and ALS 2 had been to showcase the integrated criminal justice practice operating in The Hague (Netherlands) and Knowsley (Merseyside, UK) respectively. With ALS 3 the emphasis shifted to explore the capacity to import some of the examples of good/best practice - taken from Dutch and UK partners - into the Italian context. The LCP, developed and currently delivered by MALS Merseyside, had been previously identified as a mode of working that could be introduced into the work of the ERI. However, a key objective of ALS 3 was also to raise collective awareness of the operation of the criminal justice system in Italy more generally so that delegates can make more realistic assessments of the potential for integrating different and innovative ways of working to reducing reoffending.

With the project reaching its halfway point and attention increasingly focusing upon the impact of the innovative work seen in Knowsley and the implementation of new working practices in Italy, the agenda for the day was a mix of reports on progress and a range of interactive activities designed to get delegates planning with greater conviction for how the scheme will continue to develop. The first run of presentations concerned introducing delegates to the workings of the Italian criminal justice system, and, in the talk about the Penal Mediation Centre for Juvenile Offenders, of trying to establish the opportunities for the European Research Institute to develop lessons learned from European partners. The ERI sought to develop and implement three key aspects of learning from previous ALS meetings. These include partnership working akin to the Dutch Safety House model of using a collective web portal to share information, ensuring that mentors receive psychological support in order to maintain their own wellbeing and finally the ERI have begun the LCP programme with young people. The latter was proving challenging as the young people vary from day to day in their motivation to engage. The Italian delegates felt this may be improved by making the final day of the LCP an internship (work experience day) and getting an ex-offender to run the programme. They are intending to use the same evaluation forms as Knowsley to monitor impacts although, unlike the UK and Netherlands, adults in Italy receive no support post release from prison. In view of this, the ERI is working to develop links with the prisons to attempt to run the LCP for adults on release from prison (ideally based around the UK inspired group working model). However, this requires permission from the municipalities.

The Dutch delegation followed this up with an update on developments on the work being undertaken by the Safety House in and around The Hague. One of the biggest shifts in the operation of the Safety House since ALS 2 is that they have gained more control of how they work in that they are focussing on specific target groups rather than simply tackling long lists of individuals identified by the police through multiple arrests. The government-backed regionalisation of Safety Houses (i.e. roll-out to neighbouring smaller cities rather than operating solely in The Hague)

means they now work with nine local authorities. This has created two predominant concerns. Firstly, whilst partners are generally happy for the local authority to take the lead in coordinating a diverse range of service providers, there is concern that Safety House Process Managers are being used as mediators in resolving inter-agency problems, rather than partners resolving the problems themselves. Secondly, harmonising Safety House strategy across the nine local authorities who each have differing procedures is difficult. The Dutch delegates also reported a recent rise in Dutch Muslim young people who, by virtue of returning from or seeking to travel to the conflict in Syria, have become part of the Safety House caseload. The example was cited of several young women aged between 13 and 17 who were held back at Schiphol airport due to suspicions they were on route to Syria to join the Islamic caliphate in the area highlights that this is a role that sees the Safety House proactively engage groups (to prevent offending) rather than being reactive (to reduce re-offending).

The afternoon session was taken up by an exercise involving each of the jurisdictions, working in national teams, developing a SMART action plan that outlined the next steps for reducing reoffending in their respective jurisdictions. At the conclusion of ALS 3 the partners were left to consider the following issues:

- ***Establish the extent to which the LCP can be imported into the Italian context***. *MALS Merseyside are embedded into the KIOM joint action group and have a clear remit to work with adult offenders referred to the organisation through KIOM. For the ERI the situation is less certain with (at present) no clear referral mechanisms and vagueness surrounding the target group (young people and/or adults, and intervening pre-criminal justice engagement or after as a referral option).*

- ***The need to continually assess the status and potential development of computerised case management systems (and where possible sharing and developing best/good practice)***. *There would appear to be great potential for partners to share (amongst others things) their experiences of determining levels of accessibility for associate agencies, performance management/measurement criteria, and information sharing agreements. The increasing importance to be placed on the measurable outcomes of interventions and the ability of coherent case management systems to capture and tease out successful interventions serves to highlight the benefits that flow from ensuring computer software is in place and operational.*

- ***The need to establish where partner agencies and organisations are positioning themselves in changing criminal justice landscapes***. *In the UK, the rolling out of the TR agenda and the profound shifts taking place in the provision of offender management/support services has consequences for both statutory and voluntary sector organisations. In the Netherlands the adoption of the Safety House model in municipalities beyond The Hague and the increased role for local authority managers have implications for the operations of the Safety House. For the ERI the challenge would appear to be establishing a version of the LCP as a viable referral option in a criminal justice system that appears to utilise limited referral interventions. The broader challenges that shape the landscapes partners find themselves embedded within will inevitably impact upon the stability and performance of the interventions we have shared and examined through the ALS meetings.*

- ***The extent to which the delivery of mentoring should be structured and uniform***. *This is an issue brought into sharper focus by the development of in-prison based LCP schemes in Knowsley and the ERI working with young people. Ongoing reflecting upon the level of consistency and coherence in these modes of delivery is required. For the collective learning of all there is much to be gained from monitoring and evaluating the experiences of delivery models stretched over different time periods, are delivered in very different settings, and by mentors of varying backgrounds. It is also necessary to examine the inevitable business-like pressures that govern resource allocation and planning decisions, that could determine that mentoring services look to develop more regimented forms of interaction even if that may compromise some of their innovation and person-centred approaches.*

Action Learning Set 4 (Knowsley) – Project health-check and target setting

Key emergent learning

- **Providing an opportunity for partners to observe the Life Change Programme in a custodial setting**
- **Consider and reflect upon progress made in delivering on the SMART action plans**
- **Reaffirming the capacity of the partners in reducing reoffending within their jurisdictions**

Commentary

The agenda for Action Learning Set 4 was ambitious, forward-facing, and embedded in sharing and thinking about working practice. In-line with the desire to encourage shared learning delegates then broke into mixed groups to discuss a hypothetical offender case study and to identify processes and interventions that would be applied in Italy, Netherlands and the UK. The exercise highlighted just how varied responses would be and how partners would draw in very different agencies to help address the problematic offending behaviour the case study identified. The ALS started with a direct observation of the LCP and ended with members of the Dutch delegation meeting with Merseyside Police and security officials discussing approaches to tackling football violence and religious extremism. In-between these events there was much detailed reflection on progress. As the day developed the emphasis shifted towards the project outcomes, measures of impact, and the roles of partners in playing their part(s) in achieving these end goals.

Central to ALS 4 was the presentation from MALS Merseyside which reported on the progress they have made since ALS2 to deliver the LCP in Liverpool Prison. This has seen a slightly shortened version of the community based LCP being delivered in a very different setting and the presentation captured the emergent strengths/weaknesses of this new mode of operation **(see Section 3 for a discussion of the efficacy of the Life Change Programme).**

The remainder of the ALS session was taken up with presentations reporting on progress. These presentations also provided the opportunity for delegates to reflect upon and report broader changes and challenges that are being experienced. This focused on the progress made by the Reducing Reoffending member countries on the individual SMART action plans which they developed at the end of ALS 3.

In Knowsley, the shared data management system went online earlier in the year. The new Police-owned software (CORVUS) went live across all five boroughs in Merseyside. The boroughs can now see detailed data on one another's most criminal identified nominals. However, the implementation of the shared data management system has been problematic. The original intended software, Mi-Case, was side-lined as it did not provide the required functionality and proved too expensive. As an alternative the police hosted CORVUS database that uses a weighted matrix based on Police intelligence to identify those causing most harm/concern is going to be adopted. This should allow for individuals who are deemed problematic to be added manually to the IOM cohort however the system has not yet got the IOM cohort recidivism data or pathways data. Whilst the five areas are at least now able to communicate and monitor offenders who move around the boroughs, there are some ongoing difficulties with the data management system including: diverse criteria for producing the scoring matrices (i.e. different areas prioritise different types of offences); inability of CORVUS to take in data from Voluntary Organisations (VOs) such as MALS (not least because CORVUS entries have to be entered using the police network), meaning that MALS have had to construct their own data/monitoring system in order to demonstrate impact. MALS is currently undertaking the third cohort of the LCP in HMP Liverpool and will run one more by the end of December. Significant lessons have been learned from these cohorts, including the importance of ensuring that those on the course are those who are nearing release (i.e. within six months) in order that their learning is fresh in their mind when they re-enter

community life. This programme criterion has been communicated through posters on all prison wings to clarify LCP eligibility.

Attempts to secure funding to support MALS sustainability are ongoing. This has not been easy in the current climate of austerity and reduced funding. Lessons drawn from MALS funding experiences include:

- the need for VOs to advertise themselves and be persistent;
- to be able to demonstrate impact (which this project should help);
- the need to respond to new policy environments.

A lack of funding in this area had meant MALS delivered almost all the interventions themselves however the volunteers are all working towards Personal Development Plans and MALS are developing an accredited mentoring provision certification so they can offer their mentors more in return for their time.

The Safety House team in The Hague were running behind in their action plan due to escalating geopolitical events and resultant additional responsibilities around terrorism in their home country. Throughout the lifetime of the project it has been evident just how the challenge of responding to the threat of extremism has come to increasingly shape the Dutch delegation's working priorities. To that end, the third presentation of the day (shifting the original focus away from localised re-offending) explored the Safety House's response to restricting the growth of organisations within The Hague involved in the glorification and promotion of violently radical interpretations of Islam and to tackle the incidence of people leaving for (and returning from) conflict in Syria and other parts of the Middle East. Ways of working around the new focus on Jihadism is not without teething problems in terms of inter-agency and inter-jurisdictional practices. The main issues for the Safety House have been the required changes to working practice from reactive to preventative. They are accustomed to collaborating on individual plans for reducing reoffending, but have had to shift to preventative models of working since been involved in working with extremism cases. This shift also requires the Safety House to work with those who are not convicted, meaning they do not have the weight of the law behind their activities. Recruitment of potential extremists through social media is a significant challenge as there is not one specific leader. Power structures are spread, meaning it is difficult to identify a core person or group to influence. Such communications cannot simply be stopped as this has implications for basic human rights. Current planning has highlighted the importance of inclusion work to tackle terrorism such as engaging young people through school, sports, and health-care services and so on. It is anticipated that prevention work may also extend to providing schools and families with tools to help identify potential terrorist activity or migration to Syria for extremist purposes. A final difficulty with prevention work is planning the termination of interventions and measuring impacts. Specifically, pinpointing the precise point at which someone has 'desisted' and is no longer deemed a risk.

The European Research Institute (ERI) failed to meet their initial target of testing the LCP with ten young people as the drop-out rate was so high. The group began with seven participants but six left before the programme finished. The Italian delegates felt this was due to the programme running post-prison; a time when young people were averse to participating in a structured programme which felt either like a return to prison or indeed to a school environment. In addition, young people were said to leave prison and immediately return to their former peer groups, meaning that they felt little need for the social contact provided by the LCP. On a more positive note the ERI have successfully recruited two ex-offenders as mentors to the team.

In terms of programme delivery the decision has been made to focus engagement efforts on adults in the short-term with a view to developing intervention work with young people in custody as the LCP model matures. In the first cohort of ten, half the participants were male and half were female, all attended voluntarily and had been encouraged to engage by social services due to their legal status. These adult participants reported feelings of isolation so appeared to appreciate engaging with others through the group-based and one-to-one activities. Most

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had very basic needs (i.e. employment, food and companionship) as they were isolated and lived on the fringes of society. Whilst the majority of the curriculum was consistent with the UK based LCP delivery model the ERI have developed some distinctive elements. The group are forming a partnership with the Agriculture Academy of Turin to help the LCP participants to learn to read as well as to help them to create a garden project which will in turn help them gain employment by growing and selling their produce to buy more food as they have nothing in terms of state benefits.

Action Learning Set 5 (The Hague) – The Dutch approach to tackling complex needs

Key emergent learning

- **Highlighting innovative practices with the Safety House**
- **Consider and reflect upon progress made in the intervening six months**
- **Planning for end of project conference**

Featured presentations

- **The Hague Approach to Aftercare for Ex-Offenders Commentary –** Sabine Snijders (Safety House)
- **Safety House Victim Centred Approach - Sharing Good Practice Across Borders –** Benjamin Kiebeler (Safety House)
- **Safety House Approach to Countering Extremism -** Hatice Durmaz and Sjoerd van der Luijt (Safety House)

Commentary

With the venues of the 5th and 6th ALS meetings switched to allow the Life Change Programme in Italy the opportunity to fully bed itself in and recruit more participants the emphasis here was about allowing partners to delve deeper into the workings of the Safety House structure(s) in The Hague and provide opportunities for shared learning. With this objective in mind the emphasis was on showcasing Safety House projects that seek to reduce reoffending behaviour. The first presentation focused upon the approach to aftercare support to recently released prisoners. The case was made for identifying and engaging individuals prior to their release from prison and building in support for their resettlement and reintegration needs. With evidence of success in terms of reoffending rates of those service users who have been engaged through the service it was a presentation of a model of working that encouraged partners to explore the possibility and potential of implementing similar approaches in their proactive intervention work. The very clear emphasis on sharing practice continued with the morning's second presentation of a case study analysis of Safety House intervention work. In addition to the presentation, shared learning was stimulated by small group discussions of how national partners' criminal justice systems would respond to the case study scenarios presented.

The Hague Approach to aftercare for ex-offenders

Dutch delegates from the Aftercare team (part of The Hague Municipality but a participant in the Safety House) gave an overview of the pre-release intervention work they undertake with prisoners. The two core objectives of the aftercare team are to prevent repeat offences and to increase employment and 5 identified principle issues were listed as needing to be addressed to help support ex-prisoners and simulate case work; 1) identity papers; 2) accommodation/shelter; 3) income from work and state benefits; 4) debt counselling, and 5) care (physical and mental).

All services in the five key areas are provided in collaboration with service provider partners. This includes Probation Officers, Youth Intervention Team (notably in the Netherlands this is for people aged under twenty-seven years),

Central Coordination Point who help with access to secure night shelter and medical care, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment services who arrange access to benefits and work and finally the Premature School Leavers unit who specifically support those who left formal education early to return to work. The project's operation was covered as follows;

- Procedurally, the Aftercare Team recognise that **the first 72 hours post release for prisoners are crucial in the prevention of reoffending.** To this end the team conduct weekly prison visits where they try to engage all prisoners aged eighteen and over from The Hague (and, as of 2014, the surrounding areas) who are situated in the two local prisons. As the prisoners leave the establishment, the Aftercare team immediately provide living essentials to reduce the likelihood of reoffending (including supermarket coupons, debit cards and travel coupons to get to the benefits office) as well as working with the Homelessness Team to secure housing.
- For 2014 **the Aftercare Team have demonstrably impacted on reoffending rates**, facilitated by their collaborative approach and partnership work. 25% of those interviewed by the Safety House in prison reoffend in the twelve months following their release as opposed to 60% reoffending rates for those who do not see them (all reoffending that results in a return to prison is counted in these results).
- **The Aftercare Team is publicly funded and their provisions are statutory, but participation by ex-offenders is voluntary**. The aftercare team engage both short and long term prisoners and work with people who do and do not also have probation officer support. As in the UK, housing and support for addiction are two of the biggest problems experienced by the Aftercare team in attempting to support their service-users. The issue is made particularly acute in the Netherlands by the system of fines for those caught drinking on the street, as many are homeless and dependent. These fines accumulate resulting in further criminalisation of the cohort and imprisonment as they have no money.
- The **voluntary nature of intervention facilitates good relationships with and cooperation from their service-users**. In many instances, the contrasting but collaborative relationships of the Probation Officer as enforcer and the Safety House as service provider results in high levels of effectiveness in reducing reoffending.

The Action Learning Set then split into mixed national groups at this point to hear a case study presentation and consider how this case would have been approached in the respective partner countries. The case study was a serious crime and a complex case concerning a man with substance dependencies who murdered his wife, has learning difficulties and failed to comprehend the impact of his crime on the victim, their child or the victim's family. The goal for Mr X was to initiate an early release from custody but without this being a catalyst for public unrest. Probation services were critical to any plan going forward and advised about an early release programme and what this would entail. The Safety House became the co-ordinating hub for this multi-agency plan prior to release. The first step in this plan was to map out the complexity of the case which involves an individual serving a sentence for a serious crime, the individual's learning difficulties, possible public unrest precipitated by his early release, the custody of a small child who wants no contact, the fear and anger of the victim's family, his personal financial debts and inability to manage these. He does have an older daughter who he has a stable relationship with and this might be an option for short term housing post-release. The partners that came together at the Safety House to action the short term plan included:

- **probation services** who were directly involved in assessing risk factors but also assisted with finding Mr X employment in another city;
- the **police** whose role was to liaise with the victim's family and offer an emergency hotline;
- the officer of **The Department of Public Order and Safety** (under the auspices of the Mayor) who placed an spatial restraining order on Mr X;
- **youth care services** who provided support for the grandparents raising the child;
- **Aftercare Team** supported by probation that ensured Mr X complied with the condition of his release and kept in close contact with him. The **Aftercare Team** also provided financial support for commuting etc;

- **Forensic Policlinic Services** whose role it was to assist with finances and accrued debt;
- The **Municipality** who assisted with housing waiting lists and finding a place to stay; and
- **mental health organisations** who attended to Mr X's psychiatric and psychological well-being.

Mr X was released early from custody and the short term plan engineered in the Safety House proved effective. There has been no public unrest following his release and he has not reoffended himself. Mr X is employed and has complied with the strict conditions of his release. He received practical and emotional support through debt and psychological counselling. In terms of housing, Mr X lived for a short time with his daughter before suitable housing was found. He is also now clean of drugs. Once again, the long term plan for Mr X following his official release involved a multi-agency approach co-ordinated within the Safety House:

- **probation services** assisted with finding sustainable employment;
- **Aftercare Team** supported Mr X though the process of applying for state benefits;
- **probation** and the **municipality** encouraged Mr X to continue on a voluntary probation programme;
- the **Municipality** through the powers of the Mayor extended the spatial banning order; and
- **mental health organisations** continued psychiatric treatment and support.

Once again, the long term plan in this case, appeared to have been effective. Mr X has not reoffended or contravened his spatial banning order. He now works in a second-hand goods shop and values his social contacts. He has received benefits advice and help with his finances. In terms of his mental well-being and drug habits, long term treatment has been put in place. Despite the undeniable impact of the interventions made in this case, all active agency partners can still make use of the Safety House if and when required in the future.

The responses to this case study by the action learning set mixed national groupings are arranged by topic below:

- **Sentencing and case management** - In the UK, the offender would have received a mandatory life sentence for the offence of murder (or could have received a discretionary life sentence for a lesser charge of manslaughter, if the court considered him to present an on-going danger to the public). This contrasts with the actual sentence in the Netherlands of 12 years, released after 7 for good behaviour and completion of specified programmes in the prison. Similarly in the UK the offender would only be released once they had completed set programmes in the prison, but additionally following an assessment at which all professionals (including the prison governor and probation officer) agree to the disposal. The presence of a young child in the case, the learning difficulties and the related lack of remorse would place this case as high or very high risk, meaning custody time would be prolonged in the UK until sufficient interventions have been undertaken to ensure that risk is manageable in the community. This could have been similar in the Netherlands had the courts considered that the man was not 'treatable' due to the level of learning disability as such cases are generally kept in secure accommodation indefinitely. In the UK, licence would continue for life (albeit that contact reduces significantly if it is assessed that risk has significantly reduced), unlike the six month period received in the Netherlands. In Italy the sentence for the murder would have been long term imprisonment, and on release (assuming the person was over 25 years of age) there would be no provision apart from Social Services, but only in areas which have this service. In areas without Social Services offenders simply serve longer in prison.
- **Balance of public protection and offender need** - In the UK, the offender would be subject to MAPPA (multi agency public protection arrangements) which is a statutory framework for developing a robust multi-agency risk management plan to manage and reduce risk in the community. This is achieved through the four pillars approach, which integrates a combination of supervision, monitoring, control, and victim safety actions. The main focus of MAPPA is public protection. MAPPA arrangements are prescribed by a set agenda, rather than the more flexible approach in the Netherlands (although since the offence was committed the stringency of conditions and imposed statutory probation for such cases has increased).

- **Housing -** In the UK, an offender with this type of risk and need profile would most likely be required to reside in an approved premises (probation hostel) until further assessment, monitoring, and rehabilitative work had been undertaken. The length of time would be dependent upon the individual's progress. Both the UK and the Netherlands shared similar difficulties in that there is a lack of housing and particularly for ex-offenders. In the Netherlands this difficulty is principally caused by structural issues in that offenders cannot afford private housing, and this is compounded by the fact that there is a lack of social housing and what is available has up to seven year waiting lists.

- **Approach to victims -** Within the UK, there is a statutory duty under the Victims Charter to consider the needs and views of victims. The Victim Information Scheme provides statutory contacts with all victims of serious sexual and violent offences, which carries the same responsibilities as in Netherlands law (i.e. to inform families of released dates and to consult them regarding the offender's release). In the UK there would have to be a Domestic Homicide Review by an independent reviewer (which goes to the Home Office) to consider the interventions of all parties and work out whether the case was predictable or preventable.

- **Funding -** In the UK, funding for the Probation comes from the Ministry of Justice (there is no specific budget for the social care aspects), whereas in the Netherlands the intervention was funded by the Urban Security Unit (part of the Municipality) which provides a budget for such work to the Aftercare Team at the Safety House. The latter is done because the municipality recognises that such investment is offset by reductions in the amount of benefit the offender is likely to draw over his lifetime.

- **Media coverage -** There were differences between the UK and Netherlands in terms of media coverage in that the former would have been likely to draw significant attention, whereas in the latter, the Mayor asked the family not to talk to the press meaning that coverage was limited.

Safety House approach to countering extremism

Delegates were then provided with an overview of drivers behind the establishment of project work taking place in the Safety House in response to the increase challenges posed by radical Islamic extremist groups. The presentation outlined the ambition and objective(s) of the project work; their methodology of working; and identified developments in their field of working. The delegates then discussed the issues raised by the presentation and the key emerging themes from those exchanges are listed below:

- **Goals and target group -** The aim of the project work is to develop a case management approach that contributes to decreasing the terrorist threat through the weakening of the Jihadist movement in The Hague. The target group is individuals with a Jihadist conviction who have intentions of travelling to Syria or Iraq (potential Jihadist traveller), have travelled to Syria or Iraq, have returned from Syria or Iraq and/or are recruiters and/or facilitators.

- **The local approach –** As discussed earlier, the first official notice received from the General Intelligence and Security Service in the Netherlands identifying a potential threat from Jihadists, especially those returning from those areas engaged in the conflict came in July 2012. This development raised a number of issues and challenges for the authorities because, as with most European countries, there was a lack of information in terms of how many individuals were involved and what messages they had received from other extremists. A range of factors had to be considered including how traumatised is the individual following their experience of been involved in a conflict situation? What risk does the individual pose to others in the community?

  Working together, the Mayor and representatives from the municipalities and Public Prosecutions Department developed an information sharing agreement which given the status of the public officials involved gave legitimacy to the process. A programme of action was established in 2015 and is funded until 2019. It is targeted at potential Jihadist travellers and detainees and those who are sympathetic to this cause. The main focus of the programme is on gathering intelligence and intervening in an appropriate manner. The approach builds on the

policy of the prevention of polarisation, radicalism and Jihadism already adopted in The Hague and is developed around the following four strands:

1. Networks and communication
2. Knowledge and skills
3. Social resilience
4. Approach with a personal focus

- **Methodology -** Once an individual has been identified as potentially falling within the remit of the target group a meeting is scheduled by a process director and relevant professionals. The success of the approach is about building cooperation at both the local, regional and national levels. A guiding principle to the work is that it is preventative and not solely repressive in its outcomes. The working method adopted consists of the following:

  - Case discussion (individual and family focussed plan of action)
  - Alignment discussion (Prioritizing, qualitative and quantitative data)
  - Tactical discussion (Develop regional cooperation)
  - Triangulation (Mayor, police, public prosecutor)

Due to the growth in the number of cases identified in the target group a dynamic assessment framework has been developed by the professionals involved and tested on existing cases. This provides an objective means of building up a profile of the individual and supports planning suitable interventions with the partners. There are 54 risk factors identified which cover behavioural aspects, terms of reference, personality and personal biography. The framework is also reactive to international developments.

- **Developments –** The presenters established that were (at the time of the presentation) 76 identified cases in The Hague that fall within the remit of the target group of which 13 individuals have attempted to go to Syria or Iraq to support the jihadist conflict. Two case studies were then introduced to the group that helped to highlight the challenges involved in working with the target groups (**please see full report of ALS 5 for more details)**.

In the discussion that followed the presentation, the following points were raised:

- The system employed for working with the target group was developed for a different offending population (i.e. to reduce reoffending amongst prolific offenders). This presents a new set of challenges as many of the individuals involved are not already in the criminal justice system and in some cases haven't committed an offence;
- The system is dependent on the individual's voluntary cooperation and only works because most individuals are willing to cooperate and accept the services provided for re-socialization;
- Those most at risk of radicalisation in The Hague fall within the 15-27 age group but identifying individuals is a complex process. At present this is mainly done through police intelligence and the application of a dynamic risk assessment tool by the Municipality in respect of those individuals who exhibit significant signs of radicalisation. At the time of the presentation the tool had only been used in several dozen cases. The tool is not used for far-right and other extremist groups which Knowsley delegates felt compromised the tool's ability to be used on Merseyside;
- In the absence of 'a standard profile' of those who engage in extremist activities, professionals have to be alert to the dangers of stereotyping individuals and indeed of disadvantaging whole social groups;
- In England and Wales there is a duty on the police to produce a counter-terrorism profile to identify potential risks so that resources can be targeted appropriately and as the ALS meetings best/good practice has covered previously (from the UK experience) networking and liaison with agencies and Muslim communities is essential;
- Concerns were raised about the role of social media as a mechanism to recruit vulnerable people.

A workshop activity was also designed to allow delegates to report back their six monthly progress on reducing reoffending within the three jurisdictions. The presentation from the UK delegates focused on the work of MALS and the Life Change Programme:

- A total of eight programmes have now been delivered in community and custodial settings (with the majority (six) in the custodial setting). In total seventy-six people have now completed the LCP.
- More recently, MALS have extended their reach via the LCP into HMP Kennet, a category D prison on Merseyside, where an iteration of the LCP has been conducted to date.
- In terms of data management, MALS have streamlined their data capture systems on clients through the implementation of a new user-friendly database.
- MALS have also gained approved mentoring status from the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation which allows MALS to use the Foundation's kite mark on its website and materials which further cement the credibility of MALS and the mentoring they deliver.

In recent months, staffing issues in HMP Liverpool in the face of declining resources has delayed arrangements for the next LCP programme. However it was reported that these logistical difficulties had now been overcome for the next cohort but in the medium to long term it is clear that these deep-seated problems facing the criminal justice system in the UK and manifest within the prison system in the form of increasing episodes of violence between inmates and between inmates and officers compounded further by staffing shortages poses a significant challenge to the planning of future LCPs in custodial settings.

A more streamlined and systematic approach to how MALS works with the National Probation Service (NPS) and the CRC is required and the update presentation presented flow diagrams to show how this might be operationalised in future in terms of mentoring and the LCP. Pivotal to this new set of working arrangements is ongoing communication with the CRC and NPS and the relevant offender manager for an LCP or mentoring nominee. Equally, processes for reporting across and up were also clearly stipulated along with an action plan for troubleshooting problems (whether they originate with probation staff, mentee, volunteer mentors etc.) and finding an effective resolution. The update presentation by MALS concluded with an illustration in the form of client testimonials received from the latest LCP cohort. There was a call from around the table as to whether these letters might be made available to the offender managers so they might see the impact on and personal reflection by service users which was portrayed vividly in the letters.

The ERI update presentation briefly outlined the latest figures on participation in the Italian LCP:

- Currently eighteen ex-offenders have been involved in the programme divided between two iterations of the programme. Both of these groups have included both men and women.
- The ERI managed to persuade most of the first cohort to stay on as mentors for the second cohort. What was distinctive about the second cohort was their high levels of social isolation compounded further by their age profile (typically around fifty years old).
- Making progress with the LCP cohorts and achieving an element of sustainability with the participants is hampered by the Italian economic situation which means employment and jobs are few and far between and the terrain simply gets harder for those who have a criminal record. In addition, the LCP received little or no financial backing from the state. The LCP's closest state institutions, social services, are also bedevilled by funding shortages.
- In terms of employment, the ERI have attempted to raise awareness of the benefits of employment by arranging a talk around the skills required to get a job and practical demonstration from one of the region's largest waste disposal companies. Though real opportunities to get employment in this sector are a distant prospect for LCP participants owing to now strict regulation in employee recruitment following

- As an organic and radical response to the dearth of suitable employment opportunities, members of the second LCP group have turned to self-employment and the pooling of their skills. With the help of the ERI in developing their ideas and a business plan, members of both the first and second LCPs have a unique opportunity forthcoming to pitch their idea to one of the country's largest banks to gain funding.

At the conclusion of this ALS the discussions turned to the end of project conference to be held in Liverpool. In the interests of the learning objectives for the conference and in the interests of ensuring the content delivered on the day is consistent and coherent, the delegates were given a series of prompts to help structure the presentations that are produced. As collectively agreed, these presentations help explore the broad areas of respective partner's **roles** in reducing reoffending, the challenges they feel they experience/overcome in working towards reducing reoffending; and then, in respect of involvement in the project, the **highlights** of working with international criminal justice partners, the **learning** that partners feel they have taken from the project, and then what they feel the **sustainable outcomes** are for their efforts to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour. However, recognising that the interventions featured from the three partners areas are funded, structured and operate very differently, each national partner has their own bespoke prompts built around the core themes stated above:

MALS Merseyside

- Who are MALS and what work are they involved in to reduce reoffending?
- What works best in reducing the likelihood of those leaving prison reoffending again?
- What barriers do you feel mentoring programmes like yours need help to overcome to improve their ability to reduce reoffending?
- How transferable do you feel the LCP is to other EU members?
- Drawing upon your experience as a partner in the Reducing Reoffending Project how realistic is the possibility of international criminal justice policy transfer (try to be as explicit as possible in identifying the opportunities for and barriers against policy transfer to help the audience understand the full context of making policy transfer happen)?
- What will be the key learning you will take from your involvement as partner in the Reducing Reoffending Project?

Safety House, The Hague, Netherlands

- What is the Safety House and how does it operate to reduce reoffending?
- What works best in reducing the likelihood of those leaving prison reoffending again?
- What barriers do you feel multi-agency interventions like yours need help to overcome to improve their ability to reduce reoffending?
- Drawing upon your experience as a partner in the Reducing Reoffending Project how realistic is the possibility of international criminal justice policy transfer (try to be as explicit as possible in identifying the opportunities for and barriers against policy transfer to help the audience understand the full context of making policy transfer happen)?
- What will be the key learning you will take from your involvement as partner in the Reducing Reoffending Project?

ERI, Turin, Italy

- What is the ERI and how does it operate to reduce reoffending?

- What works best in reducing the likelihood of those leaving prison reoffending again?
- What barriers do you third sector/non-statutory interventions like yours need help to overcome to improve their ability to reduce reoffending?
- Drawing upon your experience as a partner in the Reducing Reoffending Project how successful has the introduction of the LCP been?
- What do you think the future holds for the LCP in Italy; will its delivery be sustained?
- Drawing upon your experience as a partner in the Reducing Reoffending Project how realistic is the possibility of international criminal justice policy transfer (try to be as explicit as possible in identifying the opportunities for and barriers against policy transfer to help the audience understand the full context of making policy transfer happen)?
- What will be the key learning you will take from your involvement as partner in the Reducing Reoffending Project?

Action Learning Set 6 (Turin) – Sharing good practice across borders

Key emergent learning

- **Highlighting innovative practices within the ERI**
- **Consider and reflect upon progress made in the intervening six months**
- **Planning for end of project conference**

Featured presentations

- **Round table of Italian criminal justice support agencies –** Francesco Casciano (Mayor of Collegno); William Revello Ioli Ghibaudi, Raffaella Sorressa, Lorenzo Verrua (Ufficio Pio, Italy); Elisa Azzarone (Ufficio Esecuzione Penale Esterna (UEPE), Italy); Augusta Casagrande (City of Collegno, Italy); Annalisa Calandri, and Cristina Galleto (Centro Intercomunali Socio Assistenziali alle Persone (CISAP), Italy)
- **'Aftercare section: Project for housing and work (funded by a subsidy from the Custodial Institutions Agency)' -** Sabine Snijders (Safety House)

Commentary

The final ALS took place in Turin and the first presentation and welcome was provided by the Mayor of Collegno, a municipality within the city of Turin where the Life Change Programme has been operationalised. In his welcome address the Mayor emphasised the importance of networking and inter-group collaboration to both support those who have participated in the LCP and also raise awareness of the types of employment opportunities that might be available. Throughout the morning the ALS participants were provided with insights into the nature of the partnership working in Italy via a series of impromptu vignettes from the invited Italian delegates including former LCP participants. In line with the format of previous ALS meetings space was provided for each of the three national partners to bring the group up-to-date on what has happened within their jurisdiction since the last meeting six month ago. Once again, the ALS facilitated three presentations which captured what had happened within the realm of reducing reoffending during the intervening months. Each presentation was also asked to reflect upon progress made as well as any anticipated or unanticipated factors that may have arisen.

MALS and Knowsley began their six monthly update with a statistical overview. Since the last ALS in The Hague, four more LCP courses have taken place. In total 105 have completed the LCP and a further 227 have been mentored. Of these 23 have gained full time training or employment, 43 have received support to make a housing application and 50 people have received support and guidance for drug services. From a macro-economic perspective, representatives From Knowsley MBC and the two arms of probation, the Merseyside Community Rehabilitation

Company (CRC) and NPS recounted some of the key financial challenges facing a deprived neighbourhood such as Knowsley under central government austerity plans not least the £100 million pounds of funding cuts that have and will continue to impact heavily on all public services in the borough. The scale of these cuts to funding should not be underplayed. In terms of policy changes, the introduction of the ORA in February 2015 means that statutory supervision is now the norm for offenders receiving short term custodial sentences (less than 12 months). These formerly non-statutory offenders are now actively managed on a statutory basis by the new Merseyside CRC or National Probation Service (depending on level of risk) with input from the Police, for a period of one year after release from custody. Meanwhile, the NPS continues to manage high risk offenders. Strategically this changed *modus operandi* requires a new approach to integrated offender management and the various criminal justice partners in Knowsley are responding to this challenge by meeting imminently to discuss new ways of working collaboratively. In addition, there are other challenges that have and continue to face Knowsley and MALS over past six months. MALS has faced some difficulties delivering the LCP within the prison primarily due to ongoing supervisory staffing shortages in prison. The organisational changes within 'probation' represent an ongoing challenge and as result, the referral process to MALS has been problematic for probation due to reallocation of caseloads and other priorities. However, through the efforts of probation and MALS staff, recovery work has now been undertaken and the partnership is back on track. The financial cuts with the public sector and local council authorities has meant massively reduced budgets for drug treatment services whilst housing, another key pathway out of re-offending has also been significantly affected. Despite these obstacles, MALS spoke briefly in the time allocated about a small number of case studies were their support, counsel and guidance had prevailed.

The delegates from The Hague explained that whilst there have been no significant changes to the methodologies of the Safety House which are discussed earlier in this report, there have been notable changes to the strategic environment and ways of working which to a large extent mirrors what has happened in the UK. The top down approach previously in place has given way to a national policy of decentralisation where local structures reorganise the social care agenda for their local populations. The key prevailing argument for this new approach is that decentralisation can deliver better public service outcomes at reduced cost.   Simultaneously financial cutbacks within an era of austerity have also impacted on the total resource availability. The decentralisation process has led to the creation of local municipal Social Teams who have a role in providing care to citizens who cannot arrange the care for themselves (at times this has led to collaborative work with the Safety House). This represents a challenging prospect because there are nine municipalities which are culturally different in their ways of working and how they would like to work with the Safety House in future. Also there is the significant matter of population size differences with municipalities ranging from 20,000 to 500,000 residents. The Social Teams themselves also vary in size from a few persons taking care of a small municipality to teams of twenty seven people. Nonetheless the Safety House sees the challenges presented by the new organisational environment as a unique opportunity to develop new and better ways of working.

The last six months have also seen changes within the Aftercare section within the Safety House. A delegate from the Safety House outlined an initiative around the provision of housing and employment for ex-offenders which resonates well with the LCP in its broadest sense. The objective of the initiative is to provide intensive support to ex-offenders in gaining sustainable housing and/or employment. The project started in January 2015 via financial support from the Custodial Institutions Agency (part of the Ministry of Justice). The project is aimed at ex-offenders in the 18-35 age bracket. At present the target is 60 routes to employment and housing (20 routes to housing and 40 to employment). The differential in the numbers is a result of the greater challenge in securing sustainable housing solutions. In terms of the housing route, the project provides four months of assisted living during which time the ex-offender gets intensive mentoring support, help with financials planning and searching for a sustainable housing solution. If after four months an extension to assisted living is required, then this can be arranged. The employment route enables the ex-offender to find a job. Once again, intensive mentoring support is provided. The employment route also provides practical advice on completing an application form, preparing for a job interview etc. Even when

employment is secured, ongoing mentoring support and aftercare is provided to try and ensure that the candidate's situation is sustainable. The qualifying criteria for a place on the housing element of the project are the candidate must be aged 18-35 years. They must be an ex-offender with no probation and no outstanding criminal prosecutions. The candidate's housing status must be homeless. For the work route, the candidate must be 18-27 years, an ex-offender with no outstanding criminal prosecutions and not homeless. Given that the project is still in its embryonic stages of development, the initiative has achieved some encouraging results. These include 15 people on the housing route and 3 people have already found sustainable housing. There are 30 people on the work section of the project and most of these candidates have started employment training or have a trial position with an employer. Three people have secured a job contract. Project funding is being sought for 2016, thinking about the LCP again it would be a further positive outcome and extra value added if some of the candidates from 2015 were able to help out in some way or even provide some mentoring support for the 2016 candidates.

In the past six months, the European Research Institute has completed another Life Change Programme with a group of participants in the city of Turin. In addition, a conscious effort has been made to vary the mentors for this course so as give more people an experience of mentoring. As mentioned earlier in this report, a key facet of the Italian LCP model focuses upon the employment pathway to desistance and is centred on social entrepreneurship. This is a direct response to the dearth of opportunities available to ex-offenders in the mainstream labour market due to employers' exclusionary practices, as well as the mental health, and drug and substance issues of some ex-offenders. The Italian delegates outlined a recent new grassroots project supported by the ERI entitled *Progretto di Ecoeducazione e Nuove Socialità* (PENSO). The closest English translation is Project for a Sustainable Education and Creation of New Social and Job Opportunities. This 'bottom upwards' imitative directly involves ten ex-offenders thinking creatively about self-help measures that might effectively mobilise the energies and talents of a small group of ex-offenders. The key aims of the PENSO project are to create and organise entrepreneurial activities which allow people to help each other. An additional aim is around collaborative team working. Hence the PENSO enterprise activity focuses upon the re-sale of recycled, refurbished and up scaled household furniture with the target group being disadvantaged families and individuals. The funding for the PENSO initiative derives from a range of handyman services such as home repair services, painting and decorating, storage area and garage clearances, furniture removals and providing mobility support for older people or those with disabilities.

Section 3 – Assessment of Project Deliverables

The previous section of this report is concerned with capturing the learning generated through the action learning sets and helps to evidence that the partners have throughout the project participated in dialogue and reflection about good and best practice in their jurisdictions and all have had the opportunity to engage with and contribute to the development of the LCP, the key deliverable from the project in its entirety. This section of the report will now turn its attention to the experiences of those who have been on the LCP and to draw out the learning for partners and beyond about the challenges and benefits of developing peer mentoring models of working (in turn, the Merseyside and Turin based operation of the LCP). But before moving to review the available data of individuals' experiences it is necessary to stress, in light of reviewing the original project objectives, just how much the criminal justice landscape (particularly in the UK) has altered since the original proposal was authored in 2012.

At the time of the original proposal in 2012 UK based Local Authorities were still working towards delivering on their statutory duty under The Police and Crime Act 2009 to develop plans to reduce reoffending. Knowsley MBC had, like many other local authorities, established multi-agency teams to work with identified problematic offenders. In the main these were statutory partners from the police, probation and prison services but increasingly the list of multi-agency partners grew to include housing associations, employment services and voluntary organisations. At the time of writing the proposal there was no statutory duty to provide supervision or offender management services to people leaving prison having served less than 12 months. This project was perceptive in recognising how problematic the offending behaviour of this group was becoming and amongst its aims had an explicit aim to engage this group and attempt to provide a service to groups of offenders who were routinely drifting in and out of short-term prison sentences and not being engaged by services. This ambition was insightful as in 2013 the UK Coalition government of the time embarked on the implementation of its TR agenda, a wide ranging reform programme of offender management and supervision services that had at its core the commitment to supervise and manage all those leaving prison having served less than 12 months. This supervision would be provided to high-risk offenders by the publicly funded NPS with medium and low risk offenders being supervised by CRCs (a mix of private and voluntary sector partner organisations and collaborations who competed to win contracts in 21 contract package areas the Ministry of Justice had defined). Though other sections of the report cover the detail and consequences of these fundamental changes in policy what can be said here is the TR agenda and the earlier introduction of PCPs in England and Wales (in November 2012) has, and continues to have huge consequences for the provision of offender management services as arranged within integrated management schemes, and in particular has certainly reduced the explicit role of Local Authorities in driving local criminal justice policy agendas. These changes have radically altered the landscape from when the original proposal was conceived.

Performance of those who have been on the LCP

This report section gauges the experience of UK based offenders who engaged MALS Merseyside through the Life Change Programme. It is difficult not to understate the challenges of evaluating intervention impact caused by the absence of a service user case management system from the start of the project. A key element of the original proposal for the project (written in 2012) was the investment that was to be made in the Mi-Case management system, a computerised database of service users assigned to the IOM that would allow all partners to gather, access, and share information in a real time and secure manner. Importantly, in impact measurement terms, the Mi-Case system would also enable the management of performance against set criteria and to allow for the management of cross border offending between Merseyside Police and partners and the neighbouring Greater Manchester Police. A case management model of this type would enable users to scrutinise individual's offending profiles, to track changes in their offending behaviour and to monitor their engagement with IOM partners.

Once the project started however the Mi-Case Management System was reviewed and following a demonstration by the suppliers concerns were raised by key IOM stakeholders regarding functionality and integration with their systems and the software package was not pursued. A further software system was similarly explored but also not pursued and it has not been until the final year of the three-year project that the Knowsley based IOM team have been able to make increased (and effective usage) of the CORVUS case management system. More than being mere tools for recording information and gauging performance of service users the current use of the CORVUS case management system is demonstrating how such formats have the capacity to drive the planning and prioritisation of IOM working.

In the absence of a Case Management System to be able to quickly and systematically draw down data on changes in individuals (offending) behaviour a number of different strategies to gauge impact have been employed that are reported on here:

1. Firstly, 12-months into the project, a cohort of 15 service users were identified who were then tracked through manual checking of police data systems for (re)offending data. Information collated by MALS was cross checked with this official police data to help conduct a fairly basic recidivism analysis that helps draw out learning from the service user's experiences of intervention work.
2. Secondly, the unforeseen move into delivering the Life Change Programme (LCP) in two local prisons has seen large numbers of people engaged within prison. To explore the experiences of in-prison service users a series of focus groups were conducted with the first 5 cohorts of inmates and this section reports on the themes that emerged. The learning that can be generated from this strand of the research is again supplemented by manually downloaded police and prison records to explore what happened to those who have been engaged by the LCP.

The remainder of the chapter works through these strands of the research activity and endeavours to share learning and draw out lessons to help judge the impact and performance of intervention work. Under each section the commentary will help explicitly identify key learning and findings.

Recidivism analysis of case studies

The original ambition of the project was to see funds used to invest in a Case Management System to record and monitor service users' experiences on the IOM scheme in Knowsley (and within that their involvement with MALS Merseyside and the Life Change Programme). Despite attempts to invest in case management software, 18 months into the project advanced case processing software still was not in place and at that point decisions were made about alternative data capture strategies. The first of these involved reviewing in excess of 70 cases MALS Merseyside had on their records through working with the IOM project and identifying 15 case studies to profile. At

that time the criteria used to identify the case studies was that MALS Merseyside had had extensive engagement (at least four mentoring sessions) with the individual and that service users had engaged with the Life Change programme. The process of generating the sample and indeed establishing the sample size for the case studies helped to identify how skewed MALS workload had become and how a smaller number of clients were now demanding a great deal of their time (see the table below for the time commitment invested in each individual). The table below identifies each of the 15 case studies, establishes the number of offences they had committed in the three years prior to engagement by MALS, the level of involvement MALS have had with them up until July 2015 and the reoffending data for 3, 6 and 12 months since the individual's first engagement with MALS.

Case Study	Pre-MALS	Engagement with MALS		Post MALS		
	Offences in 3 years prior to MALS	Number of Sessions	Time with client (hours)	Cumulative re-offences from first date working with MALS		
				Within 3 months	*Within 6 months*	*Within 12 months*
Peter	**2** *manslaughter; possession of a firearm*	**81**	**38**	*0*	**1** *attempted burglary*	*1*
Craig	**3** *3 domestic violence*	**50**	**22**	**1** *domestic violence*	*1*	*1*
Steve	**3** *2 POCD; theft from vehicle*	**34**	**16**	**1** *POCD*	**3** *assault; 2 PO*	**4** *harassment*
Paul	**2** *theft from person; theft shop*	**193**	**88**	*0*	*0*	**1** *theft shop*
Glenn	**7** *2 x burglary; 2 x theft from vehicle; theft shop; vehicle interference*	**55**	**57**	**1** *burglary*	*1*	**2** *theft shop*
Kyle	**4** *2 x theft shop; violence against the person; common assault*	**132**	**59**	*0*	*0*	*0*
Patrick	**8** *4 PO; 3 possession of bladed article; burglary*	**191**	**89**	*0*	**1** *threatening behaviour*	**3** *PO; robbery*

Shelly	**3** *2 theft shop; receiving stolen goods*	**109**	**49**	*0*	*0*	*0*
Vince	**1** *assault occasioning actual bodily harm*	**180**	**78**	*0*	*0*	*0*
Jason	**12** *4 burglary; 2 violence against person; 2 PO; 2 theft vehicle; 2 theft person*	**65**	**28**	*0*	*0*	*0*
Matt	**2** *2 burglary*	**47**	**20**	*0*	*0*	**1** *POCD*
Joe	**3** *2 PO; possession of bladed article*	**139**	**66**	*0*	*0*	*0*
Harry	**3** *burglary; POCD; theft vehicle*	**76**	**38**	*0*	*0*	*0*
Liam	**7** *5 x PWITS; 2 x POCD*	**108**	**52**	*0*	*0*	*0*
Karl	**1** *assault occasioning actual bodily harm*	**96**	**49**	*0*	*0*	*0*

Key; POCD (Possession of Controlled Drug)   PO (Public Order Offence)   PWITS (Possession of controlled drug with intent to supply)

From the outset it is important to stress that these figures should be read with a number of caveats in mind. Dealing with such small numbers makes pulling out statistically significant findings difficult and there is no control group against which to compare the results achieved here to better help understand what has happened here to change offending behaviour (although having a control group would prove very difficult to generate when the offending profiles at the onset of working with MALS and the mechanisms/criteria for referring into MALS are as diverse as they have been here). These case studies represent the clients that MALS have engaged with above all others and who were considered the most challenging to work with, but as a consequence they are clients that MALS can lay claim to have most meaningfully worked with. From analysing the data what we can say is as follows:

- 8 of the 15 case studies selected did not register a single re-offence in the 12-months since their first engagement with MALS.
- Only 3 of the 15 case studies have reoffended twice or more in 12 months since their first engagement with MALS.
- It is the case that during the time these individuals worked with MALS they were also linked in with other agencies as the majority were also seeing a probation officer. However, the frequency and cumulative amount of time that MALS spent with the individuals saw MALS assume the status as the dominant intervention. As the two case studies below go on to report the individuals turned to MALS for a variety of support needs on a largely _ad hoc_ and fluid basis.
- The data captures 3 years of offending activity prior to working with MALS and only 1 year post start date of working with MALS. Whilst this lack of chronological balance needs to be borne in mind, it is apparent that in only one case is it possible to see an increase in the gravity of offence type. Of the remaining 6 cases who have offended the gravity of their offending behaviour has either stabilised or shows signs of decreasing.

These data help capture some rather broad headline figures to help scrutinise the impact of the intervention work that has taken place here. As the action learning sets and observational research with MALS exposed it is only when the details of specific case studies are drilled down into that the full scope of the intervention work can be captured and crucial contextual understanding is generated in judging the impact and performance of the interventions that have been developed. The report will now explore the experiences of Peter and Paul to help develop the learning for those looking to operationalise and scrutinise peer mentoring projects such as the Life Change Programme.

Case study – Peter

Peter's offence was manslaughter of his best friend. He had previously been involved in gang culture.

MALS first involvement with Peter came when they along with partner agencies attended a MAPPA meeting to discuss Peter. It was decided that MALS meet Peter at the hostel he was staying as a condition of his licence…having initially met Peter with probation officers present the MALS worker then met Peter again by himself 3 days later.

Peter had a number of conditions on his licence; to reside where instructed by probation; not to engage with named associates and he was also excluded from the Knowsley area. Peter was experiencing problems at the hostel by virtue of his smoking cannabis, arguing with staff, and returning late back to the hostel. Having declared to the MALS worker he was bored. Following discussions and discovering that Peter had an interest in working out the mentor and mentee starting attending a local gym together, this would last a number of months and built a strong relationship between the two of them.

Being the other side of the City to where he had been brought up Peter was keen to move nearer his parents. The MALS worker was able to use their contacts to arrange an interview with an organisation who work with clients who have been released from custody. He successfully secured a room there and attended regular sessions, sometimes attending twice a week and he kept attending the gym with his mentor. His cannabis use declined and he was engaging his probation officer (who reserved special praise for MALS in creating the initial engagement).

Having been complying with his licence, engaging with MALS, and with his probation officer deeming there no longer to be any risk, by the time of his next MAPPA it was decided that Peter could live with his mum, dad and sister. Peter was beginning to feel the confidence to tackle his dyslexia so an assessment appointment was made for him.

Unfortunately Peter didn't attend the appointment and the mentor heard through other mentees that Peter was mixing with people he'd met whilst in custody and that he was now engaging in troublesome behaviour with his new peer group. Having missed a further appointment with MALS Peter was arrested for breaching his exclusion zone order and in due course absconded. Whilst on the run Peter called his mentor to inform him that he would hand himself in but prior to doing so he was caught riding in a stolen car.

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This is a reminder of the type of clients MALS work with and the context from which many are drawn. This creates issues not only for the level of mentoring input required but also it does draw attention to the need to consider mentor's welfare and potential implications that may flow from their involvement in the project

This is a good example of not only the importance of multi-agency working, but of MALS being viewed as offering an alternative/ specialised input

The MALS worker's experience and discretion - to determine that the dynamic of the initial meeting was not working and that a second one-on-one meeting was required – ensured the client engaged

The evolving relationship has seen the mentee confide candidly about their feelings in a way more thoroughly than other interventions are picking up or are geared towards recognising. As the ALS discussions drew attention to, it is important mentors have a platform and the confidence to feedback both the client specific information *and* the general client 'needs' being routinely identified with a view to help address apparent gaps in service provision

The emotional and time investment being made here by the mentor to develop this relationship is extensive. Whilst this looks to be paying dividends here (and should be praised) it does again encourage reflection on the demands placed on volunteers and the challenges of resourcing and planning provision

The probation officer concerned was quoted directly in the presentation and was clear that they believed the individual would not have engaged as meaningfully and for as long as they have but for the intervention of MALS. Moreover Peter was not involved in criminal/anti-social behaviour for a period of months whilst being mentored. Both appear to be clear evidence of success but recording and quantify this impact is difficult

Thinking again of the mentors - their well-being and training needs - at work here are issues of client confidentiality in terms of handling tales about their mentee and of the dilemma of reporting criminal behaviour. Similar to the challenge of managing and processing intelligence on individuals fed through the KIOM structure there is a great responsibility on the mentor to use their discretion and professional integrity

That the mentor hears about Peter's behaviour from other mentees and that Peter rang his mentor whilst 'on the run' implies relationships of trust have been built. Having engaged with the extensive mentoring input and having seen a suspension of offending behaviour the intervention 'worked'…but it is the case Peter offended again raising questions about what is success. What is feasible for mentoring to deliver? And what are realistic goals for clients?

The case study of Peter was the subject of a group learning exercise at ALS3 and to protect anonymity names and personally identifiable information have been changed. The commentary that runs alongside the developing case study is in part shaped by questions/observations generated by the partners in the wide-ranging discussion that flowed from the workshop. It is being used as a learning tool by virtue of its ability to tease out a series of challenges and dilemmas faced in delivering mentoring services that others can learn from.

There are a number of key/emerging themes from the examination of Peter's story:

- MALS role within the IOM arrangement was to provide the thinking and behaviour skills input, as one of the seven pathways into and out of offending that the project would look to attend to. With Peter we see that at times support here is being offered that goes beyond that brief in terms of assistance with accommodation, substance (mis)use and throughout an emphasis on health and well-being. Indeed in all of the 15 case studies MALS offered support in three or more areas in terms of health and well-being, employment and training, accommodation, claiming benefits, and substance (mis)use support in addition to the original emphasis on thinking and behavioural skills. ***Both the remit of IOM partners and their role expectations need to be more clearly defined (and governed) or the routine delivery of broader support needs to be more explicitly recognised when judging the performance and impact of the intervention***.

- The partners, in analysing this case study and drawing upon their own experiences of peer mentoring engagement, argued that mentoring offers an innovative and dynamic intervention, with the scope to develop positive role models and to offer a form of non-judgemental support. For a group who many believed lacked figures of respect to look up to and who appear to enjoy wholly negative and antagonistic relationships with authority figures there was a feeling that mentoring could bring a 'new voice and a new input' into encouraging offenders to see the need to change their behaviour and Peter's case stands to support these claims. ***A challenge for mentoring services and the partners they align themselves to/with is to develop models of working that allow them to remain independent from specific criminal justice agencies but yet still be closely aligned to many in their routine working practices***. The embedding of MALS within the IOM scheme at Knowsley was seen as a model of good practice in working collaboratively yet maintaining the critical distance required to encourage offenders to see the project as something different to the more established institutional structures of criminal justice.

- Within the necessarily delicate positioning of peer mentoring schemes within more established criminal justice structures extensive thought and planning needs to be given to information-sharing agreements and for boundaries to be established, as much for the mentors and mentees as the criminal justice partners. Inevitably there needs to be intelligence exchanges between statutory agencies and mentoring services to provide necessary detail of the clients being referred but for data protection reasons this need to be formally defined. For the mentors too, a balance has to be found that does not lead to them knowing more than they need to about their clients, particularly if it complicates the mentoring relationship (if the mentee is suspicious about how and why their mentor knows so much about them and/or if the mentor is uncertain about what can be disclosed to/with the client). ***Establishing information sharing protocols and defining the directional exchanges of information (whether mentors should report unreported crimes made known to them and the extent to which intelligence is passed down to the individual mentors) are a foundation on which mentoring needs to be built.*** For the most part, the way MALS and the IOM have engaged with one another during the 3-year project due in large part to the efforts of the individuals involved, but also through the careful management of information exchanges can be cited as an example of how such agreements could work/function.

- In Peter's case, as in all the 15 others, we see the individual turn to MALS on a regular basis for support in acute moments of need but beyond that for a more on-going informal relationship. Clearly strong

relationships develop over time and the support MALS offers is viewed by the individuals as substantively different from what they access elsewhere. However, the informality (and inconsistency) of being able to plan and structure working around providing such support presents peer mentoring organisations with real operation challenges. The time demands of working with clients here are explicitly captured in the table. *The clear challenge for peer mentoring interventions is to find an operationally workable balance between structured and uniform service delivery and being able to adhere to the stated (and noble) ambitions of providing ongoing pastoral support*.

- Beyond the focus on the organisational arrangements for peer mentoring is the concern for the medium and longer-term welfare of the mentors and their capacity to provide on-going support. Clearly the time commitments invested here are extensive but so too is the emotional labour being invested in the work by the mentors. The inevitable instability of working with individuals who live chaotic lifestyles and sustaining fluid mentoring relationships is demanding and *a clear challenge for peer mentoring provision is about protecting the well-being and esteem of the staff engaged in mentoring*.

Many of these issues are picked up again in this second case study of Paul. However, Paul's case helps open up further areas for reflection.

The case study of Paul

Paul is 37 years old. He was 13 years old when he first came into contact with the criminal justice system and has had numerous spells in prison during the last two decades. He has been arrested and charged multiple times for thefts from shop and thefts from the person and has been a heroin and crack user for much of his adult life. Throughout this time he has engaged with, and often failed to complete, a number of in-prison and community based statutory and non-statutory interventions. 6 months before he engaged with MALS (in April 2013) Paul completed a spell in rehabilitation where he had been sent on the completion of his last prison sentence (a 6-month sentence for theft from the person).

Paul completed the Life Change Programme and then undertook a voluntary placement with MALS with ambitions to train to become a mentor himself. In an impromptu interview with the research team, Paul was quite explicit about how the lead mentor being an ex-offender had been the hook to engage him linking in with MALS. Being a similar age and having shared similar life histories made Paul feel that the mentor had an empathy with his situation; more so than other programme leaders he had experience. In particular, the lead mentor understood 'trigger moments' for making a change. He was positive about the input of MALS in supporting LCP attendees but also identified the helpful way they challenged some of his conduct which made him more thoroughly assess his behaviour. He spoke with conviction about how the programme had helped him think differently and that it made him consider the implications of actions (on himself and others) and to be more patient in trying to engineer change in his behaviour. He was remorseful and embarrassed when reflecting on his previous criminal activities and in particular when he considered the level of actual and threatened violence he had used in a number of street robberies. Whilst clearly still in a vulnerable state at this early stage of his engagement with MALS, Paul seemed committed and focused on stabilising his behaviour.

During his time with MALS, Paul attended an additional thinking skills course and wanted to establish his own support groups for people with addictions. However antagonistic relationships with his partner and family started to impact upon Paul's esteem and MALS (correctly) feared that Paul had started using heroin again. Through daily visits to Paul's house and daily phone calls MALS sought to meaningfully re-engage Paul and this even stretched to (with Paul's consent) interacting with family members. MALS found activities for Paul to be involved in at their offices to occupy his time and to offer on-hand support when he felt vulnerable or tempted to use drugs.

The support work for Paul stretched over a 7-month period during which Paul did not commit any offences. Within 12-months of starting work with MALS Paul would re-offend once with a theft from a shop. His drug use had increased and he was also enduring spells of homelessness.

As with Peter previously we are seeing Paul engage with MALS over an extensive period of time and receiving support across a range of needs with the thinking and behavioural input being supplemented here with attention to health and well-being, employment and training, substance (mis)use, and accommodation. At the height of the engagement over the first 5-months of his involvement with MALS, Paul was receiving an average of 4 hours a week input (ranging from formal one-to-one work, group sessions, meaningful activity in the office, support with substance (mis)use and health). During this time Paul did not reoffend and was for the most part drug free and tackling his addiction issues. Paul has a long history of involvement in the criminal justice system and throughout this time has been a habitual user of substances. That his offending behaviour and drug usage ceased during this time has to be considered successful.

However an issue of crucial importance for IOM schemes to grapple with, using the now established case management system for IOM nominals in Knowsley, an individual like Paul would not be considered a priority, nor would he be placed highly in the list of individuals for the scheme to target. CORVUS generates scores for all nominals listed on the system based on offending data and intelligence reports. The system also has the capacity to generate an individual's current 'cost of crime' factoring in the investment across policing, prison and probation services in managing the offender and estimating the financial impact on society of an individual's offending behaviour. The table below identifies Paul and a handful of the other case studies for which data is available and matches these against a selection of randomly and anonymised Knowsley based individuals from CORVUS. The table identifies individual's current cost of crime and the comparable cost 12-months beforehand. The scoring system used by CORVUS is also listed with individual's score at September 2015 and (where data is available) 5 months previously.

Case Study	Cost of Crime 09/2014	Cost of Crime 09/2015	CORVUS Score 04/2015	CORVUS Score 09/2015
Peter	1823864	1823864	645	464
Craig	1750	11540	411	411
Steve	9790	19580	286	545
Paul	1011	1774	509	562
Glenn	97700	108543	764	874
Patrick	35728	101338	498	871
Harry	3925	8533	287	561
Liam	1526	1526	298	448

Sample High		*234891*		*2463*
Sample Medium		*16390*		*975*
Sample Low		*24400*		*594*

There are a number of observations to make about the table above;

- Paul has a current cost of crime of £1,774 (at September 2015) and 12-months ago that figure was £1,011. His CORVUS score is 562 and was 509 12-months ago. Within the context of the case study group, and even more so when lined up against the current IOM priority individuals in the high, medium and low categories, these are low figures and would not make him a priority case to focus on. Yet, as we have seen previously,

Paul has consumed a great deal of attention and support during a time when such data was available to govern the referral processes to MALS. ***A clear challenge for IOM partnership arrangements is the extent to which they use the figures for the cost of crime and offence scoring to determine who to work with and who to refer***. By extension, ***for peer mentoring services the challenge for them is to explore the extent to which they adapt their prioritisation of (potential) clients to such measures***.

- Peter, our previous case study, is registered as having a cost of crime far higher than any other in the case study group. His high value is due mainly to the gravity of his primary offences and the prison sentence that ensued (and CORVUS carries through these factors for up to 2 years beyond the 'at liberty' date at the end of the sentence) as there have been no new recent offences. ***If measures like the cost of crime and real-time individual offence scoring become more prominent features of the organisation and planning of IOM work and the sums of money being talked about are so high there needs to be ways to be able to attribute the impact of partners in positively altering these figures***. CORVUS has the capacity to record the intervention work that takes place across the range of pathways (thinking and behavioural skills, accommodation, employment etc.) but how these are operationalised into measurable and costed impacts is a challenge for the system to address.

The concern with costs and the prioritising of clients within more formalised and business-like ways of governing IOM are key and emergent considerations partnership arrangements need to explore. In respect of the role peer mentoring schemes can, will, and should play within this evolving landscape there are powerful features of Peter and Paul's case studies to reflect upon:

- Firstly, there clearly needs to be ***realistic ambitions about what mentoring schemes can achieve***, something that is challenging to establish at the best of times but something brought into even sharper focus in light of the more business-like priorities that abound in criminal justice policy landscapes. To successfully mentor an offender could take one or two sessions, one or two months or even longer, and the unpredictability and largely chaotic nature of the offenders lives offenders means generating a simple formula for success is very difficult. A theme of the learning through the project has been to stress that patience needs to be shown with mentoring interventions and that that imposing targets or rewarding organisations by virtue of their success may warp priorities. In the case of Paul, someone who might not necessarily be considered a priority, the challenge for a small charitable organisation committed to helping individuals address their problematic behaviour having to stop or compromise their service provision is made explicit.

- Secondly, MALS have during the lifetime of this project been used as a key IOM referral resource and have through referrals from the IOM worked with a range of individuals with very mixed offending profiles. Some of those more 'extreme' clients have found their way to MALS because traditional interventions have not proved to be successful in tackling their behaviour and mentoring is the latest in an often extensive personal biography of criminal justice experiences. The willingness to work with offenders from all backgrounds and with diverse criminal careers raises considerations about ***the potential need to consider different tiers of mentoring provision***. Whether that be thinking about the skills and experiences required to work with (amongst others) young and adult offenders; those who have committed acquisitive as opposed to violent crime; or, even to consider matching the gender, nationality or ethnic group of mentors and mentees. In the case studies presented here, the ex-offender status of the mentor has been crucial and it helps bring into focus questions about who the mentors are and what skills and/or experiences they are required to bring to their position. Any move towards diversifying peer mentoring provision would of course be dependent upon getting greater numbers of ex-offenders involved in delivery and would have extensive resourcing implications.

- Thirdly, and a concern voiced by an experienced supporter of peer mentoring provision during the project, is that ***the provision of mentoring services must not go so far that it privileges offenders and that a balance needs to be struck in providing support but in also being fair to the wider community***. A dilemma of

incentivising and providing support for individuals beyond mentoring alone, the concern was that (for example) trying to arrange work placements or providing educational/leisure activities for mentees (as we see with Paul) is a level of investment that is not readily available to people who come from similar backgrounds and areas who have not broken the law. Whilst discrepancies in accessing training/education and further support can be understood within the context of prison programmes, concern was expressed that when it is more localised mentoring organisations that are negotiating and creating opportunities this may cause unease and create localised tensions (if ex-offenders are seen to be supported into employment and/or local employers are seen to work too closely with groups of ex-offenders at the expense of others).

Focus group research of the in-prison delivery of the Life Change Programme

The delivery of the Life Change Programme in two local Merseyside prisons has developed into the predominant mechanism for delivering the programme. With the first cohort of service users being engaged in HMP Liverpool in November 2013, one year into the three-year cycle of the project, the work in prison has been fruitful source of clients for MALS to engage. In order to gauge service users' experiences of the programme, the research team conducted focus groups with each of the first five groups supervised by MALS meaning that a total in excess of 55 men were engaged throughout an eleven month period running between November 2013 and September 2014. The next section of the report draws out the key messages emerging from those focus groups before some basic assessment of available re-offending data is examined and the key learning from the in-prison based delivery of the LCP are examined.

The participants on the first sweeps of the LCP were almost exclusively selected to undertake the programme on the basis of being from the Knowsley area, although very few participants knew each previously. Participation was voluntary and the majority of people attending had been introduced to the programme through one of the prison governors (who, in the vast majority of these early cases, also escorted the men to their sessions in the visitor centre for the duration of the course). The programme ran two days a week on week one, one day on week two and continued to alternate this way for four weeks totalling six total full days of intervention with each day equating to a themed session in the morning and another themed session in the afternoon. At the end of the course the participants 'graduate' from the programme, each receiving a certificate, with their family or significant others in attendance.

Over the months that the course has run in the prison this timetable of delivery has changed and the course is completed over a shorter period of time but at the time of these early formative runs of the course the programme was stretched over a six week period.

There were two very prominent features of the focus group discussions that took place. Firstly that **attendance and the levels of participation were extremely high**. All the men who had attended the classes attended the focus groups and all made contributions in the discussion and the level of engagement would have to be considered impressive for a group of people who routinely commented about how they may not previously prior to the LCP have engaged with such an exercise. Secondly, the focus groups were **overwhelmingly positive in their assessment of their experience of the LCP** and even though many identified how challenging and unsettling they had found some aspects/sessions there was a strong sense that overall the programme had had a positive and beneficial impact on their thinking and behaviour. To drill down more specifically into the data it is possible to identify 5 predominant themes in how the men reflect upon their time on the LCP; 1) a clear sense of the programme messages getting through; 2) the role of the ex-offender as tutor; 3) constructive challenging; 4) a mutually supportive environment; and 5) the productive (and not cynical) assessment of intervention work.

The LCP, designed and delivered by MALS, is a programme that offers participants a series of sessions covering a range of issues concerned with bringing out positive behavioural changes. Sessions on *communication*, *values and beliefs* and *making a change* compel attendees to consider their individual behaviours and actions. Sessions concerned with *CV and interview technique* and the *market place* are about identifying constructive ways to develop skills. This is a programme developed and delivered by an ex-offender and an experienced mentor of ex-offenders and it is one designed with the needs and interests of the ex-offender in mind (however ready or able the course participants to recognising this). What came through in the focus group discussions is that in a curriculum that is thematically broken up into discreet components the participants were able to identify (and embrace) a **clear sense of the course objectives** in the learning they were partaking in:

> *'I keep taking it back to other courses, they're there to change you and they're there to be copied, this programme is different because it's about what we can get out of it and what we're going to achieve ourselves…that's what makes it different. On other courses you got to give an answer and if you don't give the answer or don't know the answer then the course leader tells you the answer, but this course is different you've got your own answer, he's got his own answer, there's no well Billy Smith in 2002 said this it's about you and your own way of thinking'*

Throughout all the focus groups there was a palpable sense that participants' experience of the programme contrasted with their previous enrolments on a range of generic and focused programmes of work. Clearly the range of themes covered in an ambitiously comprehensive curriculum made the programme stand out for many participants. Whilst the scope and depth of coverage that can be afforded to each theme in the time allotted is open to scrutiny, the following comments encapsulate the views of the men:

Making a Change - *'When we get out we've got a whole bag of tools we can put into action just from this course…There's something about this course in every aspect of our life… When we get out something could happen with your missus or something and you could think of something on this course that would help you to solve that situation… What I've took in from this course, it's locked in, and I'm no angel and I know there'll be stations in my life where I can think back to this course and think, well hang on, I can put that into action.'*

Judgement and Respect - *'a big part of this is about judgement and how we judge others, that session changed a lot of things for a lot of people, you start understanding what hurt calling someone a smackhead does you start then thinking about other people and you realise you judge people in the same way others have judged yer and that annoy you'*

Victim Awareness - *'It gives you that lateral thinking. You're not just blinded by one direction….You're thinking of others – who else is going to be affected by it [offending] as well.'*

Offender Behaviour - *'You've got a victim of crime that actually comes in and talks to you and tells you how they feel. Because there's a few of us, you know when we were younger, we have stolen from people, we've broke into people's houses and cars. You don't realise the knock-on effect that that has for other people…That person who you've smashed their car window and rocked their car radio when you were a kid…them people have to explain to their kids why the car window's smashed, why you've got no music on for the kids taking them to school. It's the little things like that, it's the knock on effect. Not just for them but for the community as well. And you don't realise that, you don't open your mind to everything else – the stone in the pond, the ripple effect of how many different people it affects.'*

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Communication and Teamwork - *'My father left, I was a victim of domestic abuse, my father beat my mum up for years and like I'd never ever told anyone about it. I came on this course and opened up to the lads because I felt like I was in the right environment you know? I'm only twenty-one I've just come from YO [Youth Offender] jails where it's always people my age...Came on this course with lads that are all older than me and I don't know I just felt like, comfortable speaking about it. Because I want to make that change. I've always had that weight on my shoulders and I've needed to let it out. And I've let it out and I feel much better.'*

Clearly the role of the programme tutors in communicating these course objectives and encouraging the participants to engage with and absorb them, as the above indicates, was a powerful feature of the programme. For the majority of participants it was **the facilitator's status as an ex-offender** that helped make this happen. His life experience and the perspectives it allowed him to develop led the men to believe that he was more empathetic to their circumstances, more understanding of the challenges the men faced in addressing their behavior than other tutors they had experienced. But beyond these skills as a facilitator it was clear that the majority of respondents drew something meaningful from the very fact that he was running the sessions and could act as a role model in encouraging others to believe in pursuing a commitment to behavioural change:

> *'From minute one when you seen him you knew this was different. He's been there and worn the t-shirt you can see it, you know it, many of us knew him when he was younger and you see him stood there leading the session and your like yeah, this guy can do it so can I. All the courses are taught by people who try hard but this guy is a proper change, an inspiration, he gone from being involved in all sorts to this, it's amazing'*

The praise for the lead mentor extended to his facilitation of the classes, his ability to manage the group discussions and to maximize class participation. Respondents routinely remarked how he would interject to stop people talking over each other to allow participants to have their say and how even though discussions would develop and drift the tutor was always keen and able to pull the conversations back round to the session theme being developed. A key part of this facilitation style and something looked upon favourably by the men was the tendency of the lead mentor to **constructively challenge participants** and to encourage them to think more deeply about their answers and contributions:

> *'It was like when he asked a question. Even though he was asking the group, he was asking one person at a time and gave them time to give their answer... He'd ask each person individually for their answer so he was getting everyone to interact.'*

The cumulative effect of the men finding the sessions stimulating, of feeling they were respectfully listened to and the faith they had in the facilitator to manage class discussions with a healthy blend of humour and sombre sharing of experiences meant the LCP successfully created a **mutually supportive environment**. The group reported feeling being able to discuss previously hidden or psychologically harmful episodes in their life within the group setting and that the group's collective sense of respecting people participating in this way stretched beyond the confines of the classroom:

> *'It's like him [another group participant]. Before this [course] on the wing he was a loner he was always by himself, nobody talked to him...He was always kicking the door, on his alarm bell and things like that. But the lad had his own issues in his head that none of us knew about. And when he spoke about it in here it was heart rendering...And he was easy enough with us to open up and talk about his past, like we all have. And now everyone on the wing looks after him and talks to him.'*

The comments thus far help to capture the overwhelmingly positive assessment all participants in the five focus groups offered on their time on the LCP. Many of the contributions focus on the in class learning, sharing of experiences, and the originality of the course content and delivery style. Some respondents went further and

identified the ***productive impact and tangible benefits*** they had started to experience that bolster their assessment of the course. In some respects this was about applying specific techniques/lessons from the sessions, whilst for others it was the manifest statement of intent to challenge their problematic behaviour that was becoming increasingly important to them:

> *'I got bad news today and normally I would have smashed my pad – punched a wall and kicked stuff like that. And I didn't. I just went in my cell and just grumbled…That again brought home to me today that the course has worked – more than I realised.'*

> *'I sat there with my girlfriend and my work [course folder] and went through it with her. She said "wow, you actually are doing something with the course then." She'd just thought I was sitting here having a laugh and joke with the lads. She was like "you have actually written loads of stuff down."…And when she was going through the work that I'd done…she was going through it and there's things in there about her and the kids…And I said well I've been telling you this is it, done [no more offending] and she was like "We'll see, we'll see. When I see that I'll give you the credit for it" but then when she was looking at my work she realised, he's not telling me lies, he's doing it. She sat there and she was telling me "I'm proud of you" and just to hear that was like "wow!" It takes your breath away.'*

To complement the positive assessments offered here by the participants the research team also spoke to senior prison staff. They were keen to point out how strong attendance had been for the cohorts and how the men were often waiting in the rooms to be escorted to sessions such was their enthusiasm to take part. For the first cohorts through the LCP the prison staff felt able to identify improvements in general behaviour around the wings from the men involved.

Key/emerging learning from the in-prison LCP research

- The contributions of participants throughout the five sweeps of focus groups was overwhelmingly positive and one of the core underpinning drivers for this appears to be ***the content and stimulation service users found within the curriculum***. For others looking to develop similar interventions a key strength here was the development of a programme of sessions that individually covered a range of powerful individual themes but that also work together collectively. The coherence of learning objectives helped service users identify and engage with the key messages of the course.

- As important as the quality of the course content has been ***the quality and credibility of the course facilitators cannot be understated***. Having an ex-offender as the primary course facilitator has been absolutely crucial to stimulating the men's initial interest and the insights he has offered to the design of the programme and throughout its delivery has sustained the men's engagement. But there was extensive praise for the range of guest speakers utilised who were all seen to bring something different and something powerful to the thematic sessions.

- Crucial to the successful delivery and operation of the in-prison LCP has been ***the support from the prison staff and in particular the gravitas of governor level involvement***. From a practitioner's perspective such support is logistically necessary, whilst clearly the support MALS received from staff was also noticed by the men and helped raise the legitimacy of the scheme in their eyes.

- Despite the high levels of engagement and the strong support from senior prison staff, there have been issues that have compromised the consistency of the programme delivery. The very first run of the LCP was spread over a much longer period of time than is now conventionally being used to operate the sessions and it has not always been the case that sessions that involve guests from outside the prison (e.g. the market place and graduation ceremonies) have been able to run smoothly. The challenges of operating a programme within a prison mean such logistical challenges will arise, particularly at a time of cuts to prison sector budgets and staff sizes. *The challenge for those looking to deliver similar provision is to try to plan for and be ready to accommodate inevitable structural changes to the curriculum*.

- A final area of concern, and one that makes gauging the impact of the LCP difficult, concerns *the mechanisms for selecting candidates for the course*. The table below identifies the 12 men who composed the first cohort of the LCP in November 2013. What that table shows is that after 6 months only 4 of the men had been released (one had subsequently returned to prison) and that after 12-months 7 men had been released. With 5 of the original cohort still serving the same sentence they were on at the time of the LCP this does raise the issue of the referrals being made into the course and how many of the people are close to the end of their sentences. The LCP has been designed with the men's exit from prison in mind (the market place session in particular is about linking in with support mechanisms outside the prison estate) and when the men are so far from their sentence completion it can compromise the impact of the work being delivered. Such mixed release dates were repeated in other cohorts and made it difficult to compile follow-up reoffending data.

1st Cohort 05/11/2013	Release date	Status 6-months on from first engagement	Status 12-months on from first engagement
LCP Case 1	23/05/2014	Prison	At liberty – no re-offences
LCP Case 2	09/03/2017	Prison	Prison
LCP Case 3	25/09/2014	Prison	At liberty – no re-offences
LCP Case 4	25/04/2014	Prison	At liberty – no re-offences
LCP Case 5	19/02/2016	Prison	Prison
LCP Case 6	16/10/2017	Prison	Prison
LCP Case 7	10/03/2014	At liberty – no re-offences	At liberty – no re-offences
LCP Case 8	27/12/2013	Prison (new sentence) – 2 re-offence	Prison – 2 re-offences
LCP Case 9	05/11/2015	Prison	Prison
LCP Case 10	23/12/2013	At liberty - 3 re-offences	Remanded in custody - 5 re-offences
LCP Case 11	01/02/2017	Prison	Prison
LCP Case 12	24/03/2014	At liberty – no re-offences	At liberty – no re-offences

The Italian experience of the Life Change Programme, led by ERI, has by September 2015 engaged a total of thirty people across three runs of the programme. The first two cohorts were based in the Turin municipalities of Collegno and Grugliasco, with the support of CISAP. The third run of the LCP took place in Turin, in partnership with Uepe (*Ufficio Esecuzione Penale Esterna* of the Ministry of Justice) and the Social Services of the District 1 of Turin. The participants on the LCP were recruited to the programme by their respective Social Service and informed of the opportunity to voluntarily attend the course. In total 40 people were offered the opportunity to participate in the programme. All but one of the participants in the LCP had served multiple prison sentences ranging from one week to twenty years.

Training for the first cohort was delivered exclusively by the ERI. The second and third cohorts saw two ex-offenders play a role in developing the peer mentoring component of the programme. The LCP was delivered across eight consecutive weekly 4 hour sessions. Weeks 1 and 2 introduced the LCP model and the subsequent weeks focused on addressing the needs of the ex-offenders, with an explicit focus employment. In practice this meant a total of eight local employers engaging with the programme outlining areas for skills development and on occasion developing work placement opportunities.

At the time of writing only one of those who attended the LCP has been returned to prison (for an offence committed prior to their engagement in the programme). The emphasis on employment development has led to ten of the cohort starting up a social enterprise under the supervision of the European Research Institute staff. Consequently, on-going contact has been maintained with all of those involved in the project

Case studies

Case study A is about Roberto, a man in his mid-forties from Italy. He attended the first course of the LCP (Spring 2014). Roberto has a history of alcohol and drug issues. He has several convictions for drugs and theft related offences. During his custodial sentences he has engaged in a variety of employability related programmes. However, in the past twelve months he has relapsed and following three months in a rehabilitation facility and having been engaged by Sert (Services for additions pathology), he was introduced to the ERI. It is through working with the ERI and SERT collaboration that Roberto has undertaken a three months building maintenance job scholarship.

Case study B concerns Paulo, who is in his late forties to early fifties. He attended the second cohort of LCP (Autumn 2014). Paulo has had two prison sentences ten years apart. He has no history of alcoholism or drug addiction problems. He started to attend the LCP a few days after his release. Paulo had very little by way of financial resources following a two year prison sentence. For Paulo, his involvement in the LCP sessions provided ways for him to channel his resentment and anger in a positive manner. Together with another person who attended the second LCP, Paulo was chosen by the ERI to take on a mentoring role in third run of the programme (Spring 2015). With the

support of the *Ufficio Pio* of the *Compagnia di San Paolo* (instrumental body of the major Italian banking foundation), he was offered employment and maintains daily contact with the ERI.

Conclusion

- A constant theme of the project has been the challenges of attempting to engineer policy transfer when the international partners occupy such different positions in their respective criminal justice landscapes. The Dutch publically-funded Safety House model with statutory responsibilities contrasts sharply with those of the ERI which operates within a social enterprise sphere. In between the two, the Knowsley partners operate within a more mixed model of public, private and third sector statutory and non-statutory provision. What has become apparent during the lifetime of the project is that each of the partners has different capabilities to influence change and implement the learning gleaned from the project. **A consideration for future transnational collaborative ventures would be to consider carefully how well potential partners complement each other and their ability and agility to implement change.**

- As this project has shown, the capacity to evidence policy transfer is difficult. The Life Change programme provides a microcosm to highlight the complexities of exporting specific interventions. Dutch and Italian partners have found it difficult to contemplate directly replicating the implementation of the LCP within a prison-based setting. In the Dutch context, the challenges of operating an LCP model revolve around the availability of mentors per se but more specifically the need to be responsive to the needs of a cultural diverse prison population. For the ERI, the issues were more structural, such as gaining access to the prison estate and establishing clear and consistent referral mechanisms into the LCP. **The key learning is to develop models that are flexible and sensitive to the challenges involved and the willingness of collaborative partners to support each other in the complex transference of ideas between heterogeneous settings.**

- There is a need to try to retain a focus on the Reducing Reoffending Project objective(s) within a particularly volatile and changing policy context. As the action learning sets have developed it has been noticeable how difficult it has been for the partners attending to keep a clear and coherent focus on the specific project aims of the project. For UK and Dutch partners, much more embedded within institutional structures than their Italian counterparts, the impact of shifting political priorities/agendas has been especially pronounced. In the UK the on-going and far from complete impact of the TR agenda has had a significant impact on the devolving of probation services, and prior to that the development of the role of PCPs has meant fundamental changes in local criminal justice commissioning practices. In the Netherlands, changes to the strategic environment and modes of working have created a decentralised State where local structures organise the social care agenda for their local populations. The decentralisation process has led to the creation of local municipal Social Teams who have a role in providing care to citizens who cannot arrange the care for themselves (at times this has led to collaborative work with the Safety House). This represents a challenging prospect because there are nine culturally different municipalities. Moreover the recent shift in focus towards responding to the threat posed by the rise in numbers of people engaged in extremism and

associated with Islamic fundamentalism movements has clearly seen a gear change in the priorities of local and national government agendas. Without doubt, the many local, national and supranational pressures that have impacted upon the project partners in the past three years have clearly tested partners' agility to respond and adapt to changing roles, contexts and resourcing. It is testament to the project partners' tenacity that they have been able to navigate the changing tides of macro-social and economic policy whilst attempting to keep the project objectives high on their agendas. **The challenges for future transnational projects are 1) to try to ensure that a focus on the project outcomes remains constant and project partners cohere around the project and remain resilient, but that 2) there is a well versed ability to articulate and contextualise the impact of the changing national and supra-national policy landscape in making the realisation of these aims possible.**

- A concern in the longer-term is the structural stability and sustainability of the working practices the project has endeavoured to develop. Due in part to the shifts and changes happening at a macro political level, but often influenced by micro level funding concerns the challenges of sustaining the models of working this project has developed are considerable. For example, securing funding for MALS is crucial to their on-going ability to innovate and deliver the LCP, ensuring the integrity of the Safety House model of working amidst the on-going plans to roll the model out regionally, and finding ways for the ERI, as a social enterprise, to keep connected in with statutory bodies are all sources of concern. **The continued operation of LCPs (in the UK and Italy) and emphasising the value of maintaining multi-agency working (and the open/active information sharing between partners that underpins IOM and the Safety House) could be seen as the project's defining contributions. However, the challenge of ensuring these messages/impacts endure is difficult and one partnerships have to address.** This may mean that tighter oversight and operation of integrated offender management means partnership arrangements need to recognise and be sensitive to the vulnerabilities of third sector partners like MALS Merseyside and the volatile nature of the work they do. As a small organisation reliant on often short cycles of funding it can be difficult to plan provision in the medium and longer-terms, likewise mentoring interventions can be short, powerful and effective in the space of a matter of weeks, or, as has been seen in the report, engagement work can stretch over a series of months. The EU funding has allowed MALS to generate a degree of stability and across these past three years they have developed and evolved their working practices (the creation of the LCP manual and the in-prison delivery of the LCP model being prime examples). However for MALS and smaller third sector partners like them it is clear thought needs to be given to their sustainability within integrated offender management arrangements, the potential for partners to play a role (if indeed they should) in helping their sustainability, and to the development of the mechanisms that enable partners to extract and evidence their contribution and impact to secure future funding opportunities. The very nature of multi-agency working and attributing impact to specific intervention work makes this last point very difficult to advance (as Dutch and UK based partners have found) but there is clearly an urgent need to meaningfully explore how more can be done in this respect to help the planning and resourcing decisions of all partners.

- Using AL was seen as consistent with the underlying premise of *Plan, Do, Study, Act* (PDSA) and practitioner community engagement approach. The intention was that partners would be encouraged to reflect on actions taken and develop learning through a series of questions aimed at exploring the progress or transferability of a change idea. All the partners were given information on how action learning sets work in a purist sense stressing the importance of a core group who have been directly involved in the Reducing Reoffending project and can speak confidently to its progress within their jurisdiction. However a combination of staffing changes and the macro-political realities of changing priorities within jurisdictional criminal justice spheres has meant that achieving a consistent ALS membership, as the purist model would suggest, was problematic. Nonetheless, this did not detract from the exchange of ideas and learning

emerging from the six meetings. If anything, the learning was enriched substantially by the *ad hoc* involvement of additional specialist practitioners from the jurisdiction where the ALS meeting took place. Equally the optimum size of ALS membership was regularly breached but once again this was not deemed detrimental to the reflexivity required to feed into and impact upon on-going change processes. This was partly because each meeting was supported by a negotiated clear agenda and brief that was circulated to the partners involved a number of weeks before the meeting. **A flexible approach to the use of the action learning method ensured that a participatory approach was maintained to asking and discussing key questions around reducing reoffending whilst also developing an overview across the transnational jurisdictions.**

- The Reducing Reoffending Project has in part made a **strong case for the positive role and added value of peer mentoring schemes in tackling offender behaviour, attitudes and beliefs but also a series of lessons and considerations for its implementation and practice elsewhere**. The affirmative role of peer mentoring is presented at length in Section 3 of this report where for the fifteen individuals selected for longitudinal tracking, reoffending rates in the 12 months since engagement with MALS as the dominant intervention look highly encouraging. There is also some evidence of the Life Change Programme's positive impact arising out of the in-prison focus groups not least the kudos of the lead mentor and the reflective comments of participants on their own past behaviours. However, the complex narrative of some of the case studies and the operation and implementation of the LCP initiative raise a series of learning points that any criminal justice jurisdiction looking to replicate peer mentoring schemes might reflect upon. On a strategic level, the key issues include assessing the scope of the interventions taken on by the peer mentoring organisation and how these relate to the duties of other criminal justice partners. It is a very challenging prospect to disentangle the complex lives of some offenders and then signpost their support needs accordingly but ways of working need to be identified that recognise the multi-faceted service provided by mentoring organisations and acknowledges their contribution accordingly, but that also values their 'independence' whilst at the same time keeping the peer mentoring organisation under the umbrella of the criminal justice estate. Equally on the in-prison LCP the processes and systems of prisoner referral must reflect the founding principles of the in-custody LCP so as to maximise the positive impact on individual participants. On a personal well-being level, the chaotic lives of the individuals that MALS engages raises some fundamental questions about mitigating harm (emotional well-being) of the mentoring staff who become involved in sustained and unpredictable mentoring support. Following on from this perhaps there is a need for a spectrum of tailored mentoring provision for say adult offenders guilty of acquisitive crime offences as opposed to adults with a violent crime conviction? The final learning point to consider relates to social justice and the potential for emerging local tensions. Mentoring services could be argued to be privileging offenders via the provision, for example, of work placements and educational opportunities that the wider community may find difficult to access.

- **The final challenge is the need to think about, and develop the ability to demonstrate effectiveness and impact of intervention work**. The workshops have continually identified the on-going issues with IT systems and case management tools, and how case studies are often much more illustrative than difficult to compile and define quantitative data but across the project there is need for partners to think about and start articulating ways to measure impact systematically both quantitatively and qualitatively. The ability to produce evidence of impact and to pull out results will make the claims to modify practice, based on the project's experience, much more compelling and coherent. As can be seen the headline figures for the recorded reoffences of service users within 12-months of their first engagement with MALS do make for positive reading. However what the analysis of the work and input MALS and integrated offender management partners invest with service users exposes is the need for case management systems to govern intervention contributions. With increased collective usage and joint authorship of individual profiles on a

case management system it would be possible to engage in much more widespread analysis of reoffending data and to pinpoint the frequency and extent of partner interventions. As is being realised now with CORVUS, sophisticated case management systems also have the capacity to attribute offence scoring and cost of crime figures to individuals and so go beyond mere recording tools to help drive the management and targeting of resources to the most problematic individuals. From a probation perspective, Merseyside CRC is one of five CRCs within Purple Futures working to introduce a new single IT system. Apart from enabling more efficient and focused case management and supposing the introduction of a new model of working with service users, it will enable Responsible Officers to control allocated budgets to work with individual service users. In addition it will support the process of payment by results (PbR) and provide information regarding the effectiveness of interventions from Merseyside CRC. Clearly some good work is happening here, with more coordinated application and management of this industry it would seem possible to imagine mentoring interventions working more evidentially efficiently with priority offenders.