



The Centre for the Study of Crime, Criminalisation and Social Exclusion

Liverpool John Moores University

EU PREVENTION OF AND FIGHT AGAINST CRIME



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Reducing Reoffending Research Project

Action Learning Set 6 – Turin, Italy, 10th September 2015

1. Introduction

The final Action Learning Set (ALS) took place in Turin and allowed the Life Change Programme in Italy to showcase its progress to date, particularly in terms of its partnership working and efforts to create sustainable employment opportunities for ex-offenders within a difficult economic environment. This challenging context is made tougher by societal reluctance to give ex-offenders a second chance in the form of job opportunities for example.

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 organisations responsible for health and social support, the social rehabilitation of offenders as well as former LCP participants.

A repeated agenda item of the six action learning set meetings is providing space 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 months 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. The morning session was concluded by a short presentation by the LJMU team and round-table discussion on the proposed format and themes of the project final report.

With the end of project conference only ten weeks away the main thrust of the afternoon session was conference planning and updates. A key part of the final conference for the ‘Reducing Reoffending’ Project will be raising awareness among the delegation of attendees of the on-going work to reduce reoffending within the three jurisdictions and to explore the lessons the different partners have learned from the experience of working collaboratively this past three years. To that end the agreed conference structure has time set aside for three 10-minute videos that will enable the partners to showcase their work and allow attendees to generate a real understanding and appreciation of the work taking place in Knowsley, The Hague and Turin through short, concise and visually stimulating presentations by the partners themselves. The medium of self-made video/DVD presentations allows partners great control and flexibility in how they project their voice and their operations to the audience.

In the interests of the learning objectives for the conference and of ensuring the delivered content on the day is consistent and coherent a set of prompts has been produced to help structure these presentations. These prompts are detailed in the Action Learning Set 5 Report. As agreed in The Hague at Action Learning Set 5, these presentations will help explore the broad areas of respective partner's **role** 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 partner's feel they've 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 have been provided with their own bespoke prompts built around the core themes.

This meeting in Turin provided the opportunity for a first screening of the three videos followed by a supportive critical analysis and group discussion around the strengths and weaknesses of each video and how well each video met the given brief. The timing of this ALS was such that sufficient time now exists for each of the partners to edit their videos in light of the agreed comments. As mentioned earlier, the tailored brief for each of the partner videos can be found in section 9 of the Action Learning Set 5 Report on the project website. Equally, in due course following the End of Project Conference in November 2015, the videos will also be uploaded to the project website <http://reducingreoffending.co.uk/>

2. Welcome Address from Francesco Casciano, Mayor of Collegno

Mayor Casciano began the meeting by thanking the ERI for their sterling work in delivering the LCP in Italy and more particularly within the municipalities of Collegno and Grugliasco. He stressed the importance of **partnership working**, a recurrent theme of this entire project, and the positive outcomes arising out of these **synergies**. These partnerships extend across businesses such as the Cidiu Waste Company, Triciclo Cooperative, Zappi Plant Nursery, Viridea Green Company and the Ecocentre of Collegno. Whilst these organisations may not be able to provide actual job opportunities for ex-offenders what they do provide is a valuable insight into the skills and knowledge required to secure a job in these particular avenues of employment. **Partnership working** also features strongly in the **inter-agency collaboration** on the LCP between, for example, the social services departments of Collegno and Grugliasco, the Italian ministry of Justice and the Compagnia di San Paolo. All of whom sent representation to the action learning set meeting and gave a brief insight into their remit and involvement with offenders.

As will be demonstrated in the update presentation from the ERI below, the Italian model around the **employment pathway to desistance** is centred on **social entrepreneurship**. The social enterprise model traditionally works in the social and educational sphere and is geared to promoting employment inclusion for disadvantaged groups. Whilst representing only a small fraction of the Italian business landscape and typically made up of micro-businesses, social enterprises are a growing phenomenon and represent a potentially employment niche for excluded ex-offenders. Mayor Casciano emphasized that the municipality would continue to support and encourage the development of these micro-enterprises in light of the role they can play in tackling social and employment exclusion of offenders.

3. Update from MALS and Knowsley

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 **National Probation Service (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 Offender Rehabilitation Act (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 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 **supervisory staffing shortages in prison**. The organisational changes with 'probation' represent an ongoing challenge and as result the **referral process to MALS** has been problematic. 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 where their support, counsel and guidance had prevailed. In one case, for example, a vulnerable offender with complex mental health and drug dependency issues did not engage with probation services that were unaware of his mental health issues. The offender's situation was exacerbated by ineligibility for state benefits and as a result engaged in repeated criminal behaviour to fund drug use. MALS were successful in identifying his need for drug rehabilitation services and were instrumental in arranging an agency support package around him.

4. Update from the Safety House, The Hague

Benjamin, Kiebler from the Dutch delegation began the update with an analogy of the Safety House. This vivid analogy likened the Safety House to an elephant surrounded by a group of visually impaired people. From their own individual perspectives, the phenomena in front of them could be a wall (torso) or a rope (tail) or a spear (tusks). However through a **joint approach** they might come to the realisation that it is an elephant. In other words, whilst different agencies (police, psychologists etc.) may have a particular narrow perspective on any case, by joining their ideas together and working in partnership they can generate a more **holistic understanding and impactful response**.

It was explained that whilst there have been no significant changes to the methodologies of the Safety House which are detailed in the earlier action learning reports in this series, 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 previous ways of working and how they would like to work with the Safety House. There is also the not insignificant 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 with the Aftercare section within the Safety House. Sabine Sniijders outlined an interesting 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.

5. Update from the European Research Institute, ERI

In the past six months, the ERI have completed another LCP course 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 section 2 of 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, mental health, drug and substance issues of some ex-offenders. Iskender Forioso outlined a recent new grassroots project supported by the ERI entitled **Progetto 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 initiative 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 the infirm.

6. Final Report Structure (LJMU)

The LJMU team drafted the following plan for a structure of the EU funded Reducing Reoffending final report. Following a brief outline of the plan a round-table discussion was convened. The points of clarification from the round-table are captured in the final column of the table below.

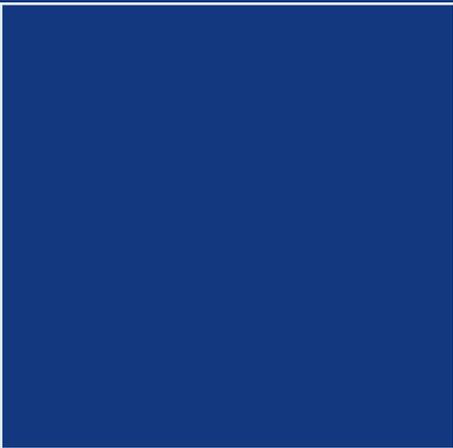
Draft Plan for Final Report updated 15/09/15 (working on the assumption of a 32 page report)		Potential Challenges	Round-table comments
<p>The process of international ideas exchange, policy transfer, and the sharing of good practice</p> <p>Estimate - 12 pages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify and provide commentary upon the partners and the very different criminal justice landscapes/cultures they are drawn from</i> • <i>Offer reflection on the Action Learning Sets and their thematic evolution (identifying any exchanges of practice or best/good practice as snapshot case studies)</i> • <i>Provide an analysis of the very dynamic and evolving environment of supporting and supervising offenders to help contextualise the project within broader trends in offender management/criminal and social policy</i> 	<p>Ensuring up to date and accurate information on partners and their status (ALS6 should help address this issue)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish original objectives of the project • Identify the partners • Set partner's work in the context of massively diverse policy and transitional landscapes • Consider whether a timeline graphic might help visualise the 'project journey'
<p>Third Sector Mentoring Provision as a Model of Working: The MALS case study</p> <p>Estimate – 8 pages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Explore the origins, structure and ambition(s) of MALS and the LCP</i> • <i>Review the project criteria and objectives for MALS and the LCP</i> • <i>Explore the issues related to MALS's third-sector status and assess the extent of their involvement in partnership work(ing)...examining such things as the type, strength, and consistency of referrals into the LCP; the extent of information sharing; the impact of funding (in)stability; and working across one (thinking and behavioural skills) or more of the seven pathways</i> • <i>Reflection on the design, the implementation, the utility and the practice of the LCP</i> 	<p>Evidencing and explicitly citing examples of policy transfer (ALS6 should help address this issue)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the LCP focus • LCP experience and impactfulness? • Extend to 12 pages?

Draft Plan for Final Report updated 15/09/15 (working on the assumption of a 32 page report)	Potential Challenges	Round-table comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Examine identifiable strengths and weaknesses of LCP working practice(s) - using focus group data where appropriate - to explore such themes as in-community versus prison based delivery; participants' levels of focus/motivation; difference in approach to statutory services; engaging all cases (however complex) and the challenges of the new commissioning environment;</i> • <i>Overview of best practice and the realities of policy transfer in practice across the EU (i.e. the impact of contexts as the UK learned from NL and passed the learning on to IT).</i> 	<p><i>Table continued overleaf...</i></p>
<p>Performance of those who have been on the LCP: The UK and Italy</p> <p>Estimate – 8-10 pages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Analysis of the available data for the following 3 figures > 1) re conviction data; 2) reoffending rates; and 3) reoffending gravity, drilling down further when looking at (amongst other things) variants in age, crime type, length of mentoring input</i> • <i>Explore police data 'worms' and softer measures</i> • <i>Case studies...though used throughout a series of detailed testimonies</i> • <i>Establish issues addressed and issues devoid of impact</i> • <i>Also to include impacts outside of offending statistics as many are still in prison in the UK but their records show significant improvement in behaviour and cooperation within the prison environment</i> 	<p><i>Extend this section to 12 pages?</i></p> <p><i>The quality and richness of the data; 1) many of the MALS cases aren't on CORVUS and data can't be drilled down for them; 2) large numbers of the in-prison LCP cohort are still serving sentences or have been at liberty for less than 12-months</i></p>
<p>Facing forward in the future</p> <p>Estimate – 4 pages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide assessment of the criminal justice policy futures of partners and of integrated offender management, supervision and support</i> • <i>Revisit key lessons in reducing reoffending</i> • <i>Recommendations on how these lessons might be implemented in practice.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Who is responsible for delivering and administering offender management services</i> • <i>Potential for policy transfer across very different cultural and organisational terrains?</i> • <i>Consider extending this section beyond the estimated 4 pages</i>

6. Appendix 1: Participants

Meeting attendees were:

- Hans Metzmakers – The Hague City Council, NL
- Benjamin Kiebeler – Safety House, The Hague, NL
- Sabine Snijders – Aftercare Team, Safety House, The Hague, NL
- Iskender Forioso – Researcher, European Research Institute, Italy
- Federico Floris – Practitioner, European Research Institute, Italy
- William Revello – Ufficio Pio, Italy
- Loli Ghibaudi - Ufficio Pio, Italy
- Raffaella Sorressa – Ufficio Pio, Italy
- Lorenzo Verrua – Ufficio Pio, Italy
- Elisa Azzarone – Ufficio Esecuzione Penale Esterna (UEPE), Italy
- Augusta Casagrande – City of Collegno, Italy
- Annalisa Calandri – Centro Intercomunali Socio Assistenziali alle Persone (CISAP), Italy
- Cristina Galletto - Centro Intercomunali Socio Assistenziali alle Persone (CISAP), Italy
- Martino Salvatico – ERI, Italy
- Paula Sumner – Head of Safer Communities (including KIOM and Domestic Violence Victim Groups), Knowsley Borough Council, UK
- Yvonne Mason – Project Coordinator, Knowsley Borough Council, UK
- Stephanie Richmond – Senior Probation Officer, National Probation Service, UK
- Peter Hughes – Senior Probation Officer, Merseyside Community Rehabilitation Company, UK
- Anthony Evans – MALS , Merseyside, UK
- Andy Rankine – Merseyside Police, UK
- Giles Barrett, Matthew Millings and Lol Burke, Liverpool John Moores University, UK



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