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FROM HERE.....TO THERE

What future for mentoring in the Criminal Justice System?

Conference Report May 2009



The New Hope Mentoring Programme is part of the Good Neighbour Centre (Reg. England No. 3923841 Reg. Charity No. 1083909).



Project Part-Financed
by the European Union
European Regional
Development Fund



Lloyds TSB | Foundation for England and Wales

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Acknowledgements

“From Here... to There” has been the result of a lot of people giving their time and energy in order to bring about some new (I hope) conversation regarding the direction of resettlement mentoring in the coming years. It is therefore right to acknowledge and thank all of those who contributed to the day.

Firstly our mentees and mentor;

- Gavin
- Natasha
- Charlotte
- Christine

Our chair and speakers;

- Paul Slatter
- Sharon Barrett
- Clive Martin
- Steve Matthews
- Joy Doal
- Roger Howarth
- Mieke Vrijhof
- Raymond Douglas
- Richard Stunt

Thanks also need to go to the West Midlands Police, in particular Insp. Kevin Borg and the F1 OCU, for providing the Tally Ho Conferencing Centre for us, and to Rachel Simpson and Amanda Parker from NHMP whose invaluable help make sure the day actually happened.

“From Here...to There” has been the first attempt by the New Hope Mentoring Programme to run a practitioners conference for those of us involved in the provision of resettlement mentoring to offenders resettling in our communities following conviction and sentencing by the courts. As a result I know that there are aspects of the day that could have been better; however the feedback from all who attended has been overwhelmingly positive. Final thanks must therefore go to all of the delegates who attended the day, for their patience and enthusiastic involvement in the day.

Executive Summary

The New Hope Mentoring Programme called the “From Here...To There” conference on the 14th May 2009 in order to ask the question “What future for mentoring in the Criminal Justice System?”. What is needed to ensure that mentoring has an ongoing place in the criminal justice system; what is being provided at the moment; and what gaps are there in terms of both infrastructure and services?

The conference heard from Sharon Barrett (NOMS), Clive Martin (CLINKS) and Steve Matthews (Mentoring and Befriending Foundation) who talked about the strategic view of the resettlement mentoring sector. CLINKS, M&BF and NOMS are all currently working together on various infrastructure initiatives to better equip resettlement mentoring projects up and down the UK. CLINKS are running their Volunteering and Mentoring Network to promote better working together; the M&BF are working with CLINKS on this as well as continuing with their “Approved Provider Standard” which is sponsored by the Cabinet Office; NOMS are developing an interventions database to enable mapping of the various volunteer projects on the ground. This is a significant amount of activity and compliments many other infrastructure projects currently aimed at the voluntary sector generally which provide various project management training courses, safety courses, fundraising courses etc.

Throughout the conference three of New Hope Mentoring’s mentoring relationships were showcased; two mentees (Gavin and Natasha) and one mentor (Chris speaking on behalf of Charlotte) spoke about how mentoring has impacted them. Gavin’s simple statement “**I don’t believe I would be where I am today if they had not helped me!**” speaks louder than any number of words, whilst the witness of Natasha’s and Charlotte’s lives as told through poetry and prose are inspirational – both have overcome significant addictions and chaotic lifestyles to regain their children from Social Services.

Next the conference heard from 4 leaders in their fields; Joy Doal (Anawim Women’s Development Project) working with vulnerable women; Mieke Vrijhof (Trail Blazers Mentoring) working with male young offenders; Roger Howarth (on behalf of North Staffordshire Community Chaplaincy or NSCC) working with (mostly) male adult offenders; and Ray Douglas (Anti-Youth Violence from the Learning Curve project) working with “at risk” young people.

As they spoke they showcased a wide range of different interventions that all included some element of mentoring. Anawim demonstrated the strength of partnership working and announced their enhanced status as one of the first official women’s services “One-Stop-Shops”; Trail Blazers emphasised the need for clearly defined goals and structures for young offenders; NSCC demonstrated that housing provision could be closely linked with very good mentoring outcomes; and the Anti-Youth Violence project showed that mentoring is required to change value structures and understanding in order for lives to be changed – diversionary activity simply will not do it. It became increasingly clear that the voluntary sector is already providing many, if not most, of the sorts of intervention

that NOMS sees a need for. The need is not for more diversity of practice, simply for more of the types of project we already have.

Finally the conference gave delegates the opportunity to ask questions of the speakers. These questions outlined the broad thrust of delegates' concerns and could be broken down into three main areas of concern: 1) Practical problems – 5 questions focusing on infrastructure; 2) Partnership questions – 7 questions focusing on how we can make partnerships work; and 3) Policy questions – 1 question looking at which offender cohort the mentoring effort is being aimed at.

What came over very clearly throughout the day was that although the effort going into infrastructure development and support aimed at improving quality, evaluation and standards is genuinely valuable, people are rather “infrastructured out”! There are enough voluntary sector support agencies and organisations out there already; they need to be enabled to do their job better rather than duplicating their role with new projects and organisations.

Projects value infrastructure training, but they want support that will enable them to access clients more effectively; they want to know how they can work together as projects on the ground or with probation, the prison service or NOMS. Unfortunately there seems to be no infrastructure development aimed at improving mentee access to mentoring that examines ways of linking prisoners and other offenders into a system that can identify appropriate mentoring support whatever their location albeit prison or a community somewhere else.

The conclusions from the day are that:

- 1) The voluntary sector is already delivering the interventions that NOMS and the Government require.
- 2) The voluntary sector needs to roll out these interventions to ensure an even geographical spread around the UK.
- 3) The voluntary sector should develop local working partnerships aimed at sharing resources, expertise and clients.
- 4) In order to deliver this coverage the voluntary sector needs financial support from NOMS and Government to develop working partnerships and role out coverage.

Finally the conference was encouraged to look for a way forward for mentoring within the criminal justice system. From feedback obtained on the day, and the questions posed by delegates, it would seem that the future needs to include a substantive element of collaboration between projects and partnerships with the statutory sector.

One such model of this work is the Birmingham-based partnership called the Birmingham Resettlement Mentoring Forum. This group has run a single point of contact mentoring referrals pilot project in partnership with the LSC as part of the West Midlands Next Steps Test Bed. This work has demonstrated that:

- The concept of a single point of contact mentoring referrals co-ordinator worked.
- Prisons and probation services want this sort of service.
- The voluntary sector can deliver this kind of partnership.

However the evaluation also found that:

- “Whilst the pilot has provided evidence of useful ‘best practice’, 6 months is too short a period to pilot such an initiative. It is our view that rather than being a pilot, the project has been a ‘test bed’ that indicates that a fully funded / resourced, minimum three year pilot is required to explore the benefits of delivering the project objectives.”

The single point of contact mentoring referrals co-ordination approach across a city therefore works, is wanted and can be delivered, but needs a concerted three year effort to run a fully resourced and evaluated pilot.

The New Hope Mentoring Programme believes that this co-ordinated approach to resettlement mentoring is the way forward. There needs to be a clear route enabling mentoring referrals to be made across a region between locations, between locations in separate regions; a new bottom-up referrals infrastructure needs to be put in place.

It is our contention that the way forward is to put in place a three year regional mentoring referral pilot based on the partnership model of the Birmingham Resettlement Mentoring Forum. Ideally this would be based in the West Midlands region (which is predominantly urban) and in one other region (preferably more rural in nature) in order to understand the different challenges of this work.

PART 1 – BACKGROUND TO “FROM HERE...TO THERE”

Introduction

The New Hope Mentoring Programme called the “From Here...To There” conference due to concerns over how the resettlement mentoring field is evolving. Voluntary work with prisoners and with prisons is always going to be challenging, and yet the system sometimes feels set up to make our work, the volunteer-based support of offenders and ex-offenders returning to the community, even more difficult.

To begin with simply working with any given prison can be hard work. When a project is based outside the prison, maintaining a working relationship with the prison that ensures a ready stream of referrals is challenging; on top of this getting volunteers in to see mentees is also fraught with difficulties.

With the prison system as it is now so near capacity that a prisoner can be “shipped out” to another establishment with little or no warning, further layers of complication and difficulty are added. It is not uncommon to turn up for a visit and find that the person you are visiting is simply not in the prison; this is not only frustrating but an enormous waste of precious time (of volunteers and staff) and often very scarce resources.

What makes all this so frustrating is that we know that mentoring works, in the words of Clive Martin (CLINKS) “Mentoring: it’s a no-brainer!” Up and down the country in almost every sphere of activity mentoring supports individuals as they grow into new roles, jobs and skills. In politics the priest Peter Thompson mentored Tony Blair whilst he was at Oxford. In football Sir Alex Ferguson is widely recognised as a mentor to David Beckham. In the world of music Neil Aspinall mentored an up-coming band called the Beatles. And finally a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away a young Jedi knight called Luke Skywalker was mentored by Obi Wan Kenobi.

In his foreword to **“Side by Side: a report setting out the Council on Social Action’s work on one-to-one (CoSA, 2008)”** the Prime Minister Gordon Brown says **“Across the country, in every sector and setting, I have seen the power of one-to-one relationships to make a difference to people’s lives and help them to solve their own problems. In fact, all our great challenges – drug rehabilitation, teenage vandalism and young offenders, troubled children in and coming out of care, the adult unemployed, the lonely pensioner – have one thing in common: that they need and can benefit from one-to-one care, attention and mentoring.”**

Likewise the political think tank the Centre for Social Justice in their recent reports **“Dying to Belong: An In-depth Review of Street Gangs in Britain (CSJ, Feb 2009)”** and **“Locked up Potential: A strategy for reforming prisons and rehabilitating prisoners (CSJ, March 2009)”** recognise the effective impact a good mentoring relationship can have on a mentee. In *Dying to Belong* the author says **“Mentoring, delivered properly, can have a profound and transformative impact on children and young people and is of particular**

value for those at risk due to their circumstances and/or behaviour. A well matched mentor not only provides a positive role model, but also helps the child or young person develop essential life skills, both practical and emotional.” Whilst Locked up Potential recognises “...that mentoring, when done well by trained and experienced mentors, is also a tool of great potential effectiveness in the prevention of re-offending.”

Literature Review

That mentoring works is therefore recognised by both sides of the political divide, with both the government and opposition seemingly keen to actively encourage mentoring. Report after report has been published talking up the effectiveness of mentoring and examining the ways in which mentoring of offenders, young offenders and those at risk of offending can be improved across the sector.

These include:

- **Volunteers Can: Towards a Volunteering Strategy to Reduce Re-Offending** (NOMS Consultation Document, May 2007). This report recognised that mentoring and befriending can impact an offender across six of the seven pathways to reducing re-offending and recommended that work is carried out to increase the number and diversity of volunteers; strategically develop volunteers; improve support to volunteers; and establish the impact of mentoring.
- **Mentoring for offenders in the community: A regional approach – a report for East of England LSC** (Tribal, March 2008). This study aimed to map the mentoring support available across the East of England, identify good practice, highlight key features and identify barriers contributing to quality and effectiveness, and finally to make recommendations towards a more joined-up approach for mentoring offenders in the community.

Findings from the study detailed various mentoring provisions across the region which divided into either projects initiated by local probations services and YOTS, or community-based projects, provided by voluntary and charitable organisations. One of the general findings is particularly of note, **“Most of the voluntary organisations do have links with other agencies, such as social services, housing providers or the criminal justice system. However, there is no central system for referring and monitoring offenders.”**

Recommendations were made around the three themes of “Collaboration”, “Good Quality”, and “Sustainable”. Again these reflected recommendations made elsewhere and included a database of support services; better co-ordination of service provision; quality standards; and the provision of long-term funding/contracts. However there was one recommendation that stood out:

- making sure provision is well signposted for practitioners and offenders; providing a central point of contact for offenders and

ensuring that offenders leaving custody are made aware of support that is available. Offenders benefit from having key helpline numbers or contact details. Alternatively a central helpline number that enables them to access other support services may be an answer.

- **Making the Case: One-to-one support for young offenders** (Prince's Trust, June 2008). Recommending partnership networks; working to collective minimum standards; providing robust training and ongoing support for volunteers; gathering consistent evidence; increasing the involvement of former offenders.

- **National Offender Management South West: A Scoping Exercise of offender mentoring schemes in the South West** (MoJ, July 2008). Concludes that it is vital that mentoring schemes do not succumb to the growing scepticism surrounding the effectiveness of the intervention, and co-ordinate themselves into an efficient group of interventions, with the ability to clearly demonstrate the impact that mentoring has on reducing re-offending. The report goes on to make a number of recommendations themed by Evaluation, Sharing Best Practice and Strategic Planning. Most of the recommendations echo those outlined above with one exception: Recommendation 5 under the Strategic Planning theme states that **“the SW regional and local tiers of prison and probation management and mentoring providers should work together to improve access to mentoring schemes”**, and that **“it should include a plan to encourage the development of mentoring schemes in a way that is targeted at identified needs, rather than opportunistic developments leading to unequal spread”**.

- **Working with the third sector to reduce re-offending: Securing effective partnerships 2008-2011** (MoJ and NOMS, Oct 2008). This paper makes a number of very good points, identifying the challenges that mentoring organisations often face such as the need for effective management and ongoing investment, both of which can be very variable. It also recognises that there is often no dedicated resource for support within the NOMS/Prison/Probation structures in spite of the ongoing involvement of thousands of volunteers.

To address this the MoJ and NOMS have commissioned CLINKS for three years to set up a Reducing Re-Offending Volunteering and Mentoring Network. Its goals include:

- support volunteer training and development;
- promote and develop good practice;
- provide volunteer project management team guidance and training;
- develop policy around the use of ex-offender volunteers;
- support financial development through guidance on commissioning;
- **“make use of mapping being undertaken to identify ways of ensuring that mentoring can be more consistently offered to offenders upon release”**.

- **Side by Side: a report setting out the Council on Social Action’s work on one-to-one** (CoSA paper number two, Nov 2008). This report underlines the government’s commitment to the concept of mentoring and its potential for making a real difference in the lives of young people who might otherwise have been let down by their community and society generally. The report identifies three areas in which mentoring (or one-to-one) projects need support. These are:
 - Money; mentoring schemes are good value but not cost free.
 - Understanding; potential funding partners often fail to understand the value of mentoring and befriending projects
 - Volunteers; many projects struggle to retain good (male) mentors

As a result of these identified areas CoSA identified the following areas in which they felt they could offer advice and support to one-to-one projects in the UK.

- Starting Young; Exploiting Technology; Developing Mass; Incentivising and Sustaining; Investing in Growth; Learning and sharing the lessons; and Moving to another level.

These areas are all important and address problems that most mentoring projects face at some point or another: management, finances, volunteer training, support and supervision. This report however has a different thrust to the others discussed here, since it is a review of one-to-one projects generally across the UK. As such the work it details tends to be that with children and young people in or on the edge of schooling.

- **Volunteering across the Criminal Justice System** (Baroness Neuberger, March 2009). Whilst Baroness Neuberger’s report was not directly about mentoring within the CJS, mentoring is an increasingly important facet of the voluntary work being undertaken. As such Neuberger’s recommendations are generalistic for the whole voluntary sector and amongst others they include:
 - a ministerial champion to identify where volunteering could add value, increase volunteering opportunities and best practice dissemination, and advocate for volunteers within the CJS;
 - improved investment in volunteering and volunteer management;
 - guidance to improve how Local Criminal Justice Boards understand the impacts of volunteering and improve commissioning opportunities for projects;
 - improve involvement of ex-offenders in voluntary work across the CJS.
- **Dying to Belong: An In-depth Review of Street Gangs in Britain** (CSJ, Feb 2009)”. Whilst this report examines the much wider context of supporting those at risk of involvement and those involved in street gangs. It recognises that mentoring can have a profound effect on the lives of potential gang members as part of a range of interventions and support. It goes on to make several recommendations about important aspects of the mentoring provision and what the mentoring relationship should look like. These include training and supervision of mentors; relationship structure; and a clear outline of expected outcomes and objectives.

- **Locked up Potential: A strategy for reforming prisons and rehabilitating prisoners** (CSJ, March 2009). This report is an in-depth review of the many challenges that face prisoners as they resettle back into the community following a custodial sentence. As such there are many areas that are covered by the report of which mentoring is one. “Locked up Potential” does make several recommendations for the future support of mentoring within the criminal justice system including:
 - a high priority at both national and local levels should be given to expansion and training for community mentoring schemes for pre-release and released prisoners.
 - a kick start fund from the MoJ (of approx £20 million) to fund new schemes specifically targeted at 18-25 year olds who are serving sentences of less than 12 months.
 - a plan providing for sustainable expansion of the existing voluntary mentoring provision based on principles of good practice identified by scheme evaluations.
 - particular areas in which mentees should be offered support including employment, accommodation etc.
 - the use of paid mentors.

The challenge of “From Here...To There”

Throughout the 9 reports examined above there are several themes which appear and reappear. Broadly speaking these can be divided into recommendations supporting the financial and ongoing stability of mentoring projects, recommendations supporting the successful management of a voluntary (resettlement) mentoring project, and recommendations supporting the improved recruitment of appropriate and diverse pools of volunteers to be mentors.

Each of these areas of recommendation are completely valid, they highlight key needs throughout the mentoring sector yet as such they are recommendations that could with the same justification have been applied to mentoring projects in schools, with older people or in mental health. Further it is true that New Hope Mentoring has had to grapple with some of the issues raised at various points during the life of the project. However it is our contention that as a result of these many obvious and important challenges a very large and important challenge to the resettlement mentoring field has been missed. It is, if you like, the mentoring equivalent of “the elephant in the room”.

Simply put our elephant is “Mentees”, without whom no mentoring project will function. Mentoring projects are not set up to use government and charitable funding (even though they do); they are not set up to provide a proving ground for the growing skills of mentoring project co-ordinators and managers (even though they do); nor are they provided to develop ingenious routes back into training, employment and qualifications or even improved self esteem for volunteers (although, again they surely do this).

Mentoring projects are set up to provide support to individuals who are struggling to engage with the structures of the community and society, and who need to develop the skill set to do so. Mentoring projects need to exist and function with the primary goal that they are there to support their mentees and enable them to move on. Good finances, project management and volunteer training and support are key to achieving this, yet if the focus becomes finances, management or volunteers, then the mentoring project will be in danger of becoming less able to help its mentees.

With two exceptions the reports above make recommendations aimed at improving project structure without giving much thought to how mentees end up linked with a mentor working for a particular project. They give relatively little space to the particular challenges faced by community resettlement mentoring projects trying to engage with offenders within the criminal justice system. How does an offender in prison gain access to any of a selection of through the gate support? Do they self-refer; do prison or probation staff make the referral and if they do, how long do staff spend phoning different providers to identify the support best suited to the offender? How does an offender access these services when he is returning to a community other than the one in which he is incarcerated (e.g. in prison in Manchester but returning to Birmingham or London)? How does a (probably small) community mentoring project get its work highlighted across the probable range of prisons who will be returning offenders back to their geographical area so that offenders and prison staff make the referrals? How can this challenge be met?

PART 2 – “FROM HERE...TO THERE” – THE CONFERENCE

The 1st New Hope Mentoring Programme Networking conference ran on the 14th May 2009 at the Tally Ho Conference Centre, in Birmingham.

The meeting was chaired by Mr Paul Slatter, CEO of the Chamberlain Forum and speakers were invited to address the general question “What future for mentoring in the criminal justice system?” Each speaker was then invited to discuss the work they were involved in at either the strategic level or the local level and to address the following questions:

- What resettlement mentoring provision is there already?
- What are the gaps in the existing resettlement mentoring provision?
- What are the most pressing needs for resettlement mentoring amongst mentees?
- Who should be meeting those needs?
- How can such needs be met up and down the country?

Throughout the conference we also had input from 3 mentees who have been supported by a mentor. Since the conference sought to address better ways in which mentoring could benefit mentees, we felt it was important to include their experiences in our conversations – mentees are at the heart of what we do after all.

Mentees

Gavin and Natasha both came and spoke for themselves, whilst Charlotte was represented by her mentor Chris.

- **Gavin** gave a very honest and comprehensive overview of his journey since being referred to New Hope Mentoring in 2005. This journey has included being mugged, a further conviction, a near fatal heroin overdose, alcoholism, detoxification, rehabilitation, re-entry into employment and more recently a foreign holiday with his new partner and a successful joint mortgage application. Gavin’s story is one of unravelling addiction, deeply ingrained lack of self-worth, a history of letting everyone down and is one that has been played out over many years.

Gavin says, **“New Hope Mentoring have helped me throughout the last 3-4 years, they have always been there for me and have never given up on me. I don’t believe I would be where I am today if they had not helped me!”**

- **Natasha** performed four poems she had written reflecting different points of her journey. The first....

Focussed told us where she is now, that she knows what she is trying to achieve, and has aims that she is going after.

Prison Years spoke about her time of incarceration, what it was like and the positive impact that it had on her.

My Beautiful KIS spoke of her pregnancy, the feelings and emotions of a new life growing within her, of her experience of giving birth and of her first meeting with her son, her beautiful KIS.

The Year of Separation was the last poem performed by Natasha. When her son was born he was removed by Social Services and placed in foster care. Throughout this time she had almost daily contact, but it was a time of “you can touch but you can’t have”. Unsurprisingly this was a time of extreme emotion, of pain of separation, and yet it was a time when Natasha found her inner strength, determination and ultimately the success of regaining her son from Social Services.

All of Natasha’s poems can be read in Appendix 2.

- **Charlotte** having recently become a mum again was unable to attend “From Here...To There”, but was represented by her mentor Christine.

Charlotte’s story is one typical of many female offenders having got to the age of 15 and fallen for an older man who then got her hooked on drugs. As a result of this Charlotte was soon absent from schooling and gained no qualifications; lost touch with her family; was using illicit and prescription drugs and alcohol heavily, she rarely ate unless it was stolen; she lost a son who was taken by Social Services and put up for adoption. She describes herself as fearless, out of control and homeless, she was a persistent, prolific offender who was arrested 46 times. Charlotte says she lost all faith in mankind, lost her second child, a daughter to Social Services care, and finally ended up in prison and served 18 months. **During this time she began to reflect and started the process of change, and she also found God.**

After her release Charlotte realised that she needed support and started to work with the support various agencies (including NHMP) offered, and worked well with the Probation Officer, her housing officer and her mentor. She has worked incredibly hard to regain custody of her daughter, finally succeeding in 2008 with her daughter being signed off the child protection register and was allocated a flat in the outer ring area of Birmingham. She did some basic skills training at a local college, re-established relations with her mum and family. Within all of this Charlotte had a relapse having got in with the wrong person again and ended up in a refuge. **She had to get clean all over again, but this time it was whilst looking after her daughter.**

Charlotte has now been re-housed in a 2-bed flat in a nice area, has lovingly decorated, equipped and furnished the flat with the help of friends, family and a local church congregation, she has just had another baby (boy) and attended all of the appointments whilst pregnant. She has passed her driving test on the first try and owns an entirely road-legal small car. Charlotte has undertaken some paid employment and has found herself taking responsibility

for money, customers and premises. This whole progress was recently recognised when Charlotte and Chris were invited to 10 Downing Street for a Mentoring and Befriending event hosted by Sarah Brown, the Prime Minister's wife.

Charlotte still has challenges not the least of which is managing her finances, but has received huge support. She says that her help has come from her family; her mentor who has been a friend she can trust, a sounding board, and a source of good advice on parenting issues; her trust in God who has answered prayer; from financial support to set up home (various allowances and a generous church congregation); and finally from her own strength and determination in the face of overwhelming odds.

The National View

The conference heard the national view about the future of resettlement mentoring from Sharon Barrett, the Deputy Head of the NOMS Reducing Reoffending Unit; Clive Martin, the Director – CLINKS; and from Steve Matthews, the CEO of the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation.

What resettlement mentoring provision is there already?

All three spoke of the good mentoring projects out there working with offenders. These included peer mentoring schemes based in prisons providing motivational support in education, health care, and for Asian Female prisoners. Other projects include volunteer mentors working with offender managers in support of offender resettlement, and others provide support to dads in prison, helping them to learn better parenting.

It is thought that whilst there are currently around 1,600 projects working directly with offenders, many of them are very small with limited remits, and most do not provide mentoring support; they include prison visiting schemes, educational support, housing support, and employment support, etc. etc. Further, according to the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation there are around 3000 mentoring projects in the UK, of which only 200 knowingly target offenders.

Clearly whilst it is almost impossible to quantify the exact number of voluntary projects providing mentoring support to offenders, the consensus appears to be not very many! Using the numbers given above about 12.5% of voluntary projects working with offenders provides mentoring support. Whilst this number is probably a conservative estimate, there are likely to be other, as yet unidentified projects providing mentoring, it is clearly worrying that something which has such potential to help offenders plays such a small part in supporting their effective rehabilitation.

What are the gaps in the existing resettlement mentoring provision?

With such a small number of mentoring projects supporting offenders nationally, gaps in mentoring provision for offenders are inevitable. The three speakers identified several areas in which there is a significant challenge for the field; they are:

- Lack of consistency across the country; there is no guarantee that a mentoring provision in one location will be provided in another making continued support of the resettlement process of offenders very difficult when moving between the prison location and the resettlement location.
- A challenge to the long-term effectiveness of mentoring once the mentoring relationship has come to an end. Studies of mentoring with youth offenders found that whilst re-offending was reduced throughout

the mentoring relationships, however once the relationship had finished re-offending began to increase again. This challenges the short-term nature of some mentoring relationships and should provoke us to consider either more long-term (but still time-limited) outcomes based mentoring provisions.

- Projects have focussed on mentoring provision for youth offenders, for female offenders and BME offenders, however there has been much less focus on mentoring for young adult males. The challenges involved in impacting this group are huge; however the potential benefits are equally huge. For instance, anecdotally in Birmingham it is recognised that the majority of Prolific (PPO) offenders are aged 18-33. If these individuals who are mostly male can be targeted successfully then the effects on re-offending and the subsequent reduction in crime would also be huge.
- A lack of best practice. This can include problems with the effective matching of mentors and mentees; appropriate mentor recruitment, training, and supervision; lack of male mentors.
- Comprehensive evidencing of impact and cost effectiveness of mentoring offenders. Given that the average cost for the provision of a mentor are approximately £700 - £800 a year and the average cost of imprisoning someone for the same period is approximately £38,000, an evidence based cost effectiveness should not be too hard to develop, yet because mentoring so often deals with very “soft” outcomes, getting “hard” quantitative data has been extremely challenging. What evidence there is tends to come from the USA and so lacks context for the situation here in the UK.

What are the most pressing needs for resettlement mentoring amongst mentees?

Some of the most pressing resettlement needs for mentees are the obvious ones. They include simply someone to be there as; a supporter and motivator; a role model of a successful life; to provide feedback and praise; and to support the formation of new positive networks.

Other more hidden needs include the disproportionately large issues related to BME offenders. These offenders are more likely to be imprisoned or be given tougher sentences by the courts, and once convicted are also less likely to take up mentoring services that might be provided.

On top of these needs mentoring projects themselves often then find that their mentoring relationships with offenders are seen negatively by statutory service providers who can see mentors as interfering with offender management rather than augmenting it.

Who should be meeting these needs?

Volunteering has been at the heart of the probation service since the London Police Courts Mission (LPCM) appointed missionaries to work with magistrates. They developed a system which released offenders on the condition that they kept in touch with the missionary and accepted guidance.

Over the years the criminal justice system has seen an ebb and flow of voluntary organisations involved in supporting offenders. Currently the government is seeking to understand just what the voluntary sector is providing and is looking to the Third Sector in order to provide support to the statutory sector. It recognises that the public see voluntary organisations as more trustworthy and more efficient than the public sector; all of which has resulted in the massive growth of the voluntary sector. The voluntary sector is now in the position where much of the funding it receives derives from government grants rather than charitable grants.

The choice we seem to have is to allow the state to take over the services that are offered, as was the case with the London Police Courts Mission, or to retain volunteer projects which are paid by the state to provide services. The challenge of the former is that large agencies appear with reduced capacity for flexibility and increased bureaucracy, the challenge of the latter is that smaller organisations can become dependent on government funding and are then very vulnerable to changes in political whim.

How can these needs be met up and down the country?

The government is beginning to realise that some services are best delivered by the Voluntary and Community Sector. As such NOMS will increasingly be specifying the services that they believe are required but will leave what they look like to each regional Director of Offender Management (DOM).

NOMS will also be completing a directory of interventions that will include both accredited and non-accredited projects. At present they need to use the networking capacity of the sector to find out who will be delivering what services, to whom, and at what cost.

These projects need to be developed and supported with a view to complementing provision nationally, yet in such a way as to encourage local provision and local support networks. These national/local networks are beginning to develop: at the national level the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation provides the Approved Provider Standard (APS) providing guidance on best practice and quality of provision, as well as regional networks for training, development and support. CLINKS is also providing training for those volunteering with offenders and are developing a Volunteering and Mentoring Network for voluntary projects working in the CJS.

The Local View

Having heard the national view regarding the future for resettlement mentoring in the UK, the conference heard from 5 projects who work on the ground with different groups of offenders, some quite specific, others more general. Each speaker painted a picture of the sort of work that they were involved in and sought to answer some of the questions outlined above.

What resettlement mentoring provision is there already?

Mentoring is increasingly being built into a range of interventions for a wide variety of target groups. With resettlement mentoring in particular, organisations that specialise in providing mentoring seem to be unusual, but two good and quite different examples are the Trailblazers Project and the New Hope Mentoring Programme.

Trail-Blazers were the first through the gate specialist mentoring project to be based within a prison in order to work with young offenders. Trail-Blazers have been operational at HMYOIs Feltham and Aylesbury for some years and have recently started a third project at HMYOI Brinsford in the West Midlands. Within each prison Trail-Blazers seek to support around 60 clients each year through mentoring provided by around 25 volunteers.

Mentors are trained to use a structured approach which uses several “Tool Sets” to examine different aspects of their lives and help them find a way forwards. The first tool set for example encourages the young offender to look at their own journey from birth to prison and establishes mile stones for the offender to work towards. As a project they aim to support their clients with their awareness, their self esteem and their thinking skills in order to reduce the clients’ risk of re-offending.

The New Hope Mentoring Programme (NHMP) is a community based project that was set up to provide young adults (18-25 years old initially, but now 18-35 year olds) who had been convicted of acquisitive crimes with a volunteer mentor. Many of these offenders also have significant substance misuse problems and have never had any serious, positive adult relationships. Mentoring is for many of them a first taste of someone who believes in them, will encourage them and build them up.

NHMP’s mentors work with clients in prison and through the gate as well as in the community following community sentencing. Mentors provide individualised, action plan based support with the issues that the mentee identifies along the NOMS identified “Seven Pathways to Reducing Reoffending”. They provide support with whatever (within reason) the mentee wants help with, e.g. accommodation, ETE, health, family etc. NHMP finds that mentors who can be responsive, and who treat mentees with care and respect see more productive mentoring relationships. As Gavin Mills put it “New Hope never gave up....”

In contrast to Trail-Blazers and NHMP there would seem to be a trend for outreach projects to incorporate mentoring as a key part of their overall service provision. Three such projects include the Anawim Project, the North Staffordshire Community Chaplaincy and Learning Curve in Birmingham.

The Anawim project in Birmingham provides a range of services to women who have a range of vulnerabilities; these can include offending, prostitution, and domestic violence as well as other vulnerabilities. Anawim have been at the forefront of the development of support services for vulnerable women and have recently been confirmed among the first tranche of Women's One Stop Shops nationally as recommended in Baroness Corston's report in March 2007.

Anawim provide; support clinics at their centre run by various support services (JCP, Drug support, Housing, etc.); a women-only unpaid work package as part of community payback; specified activities in partnership with probation; direct outreach work to sex workers, rough sleepers and other chaotic women; a peer based through the gate mentoring provision; and in-reach work into HMPs Eastwood Park and Drake Hall.

The North Staffordshire Community Chaplaincy (NSCC) is a community based resettlement project which provides accommodation to mostly adult male prisoners following release from Shrewsbury, Stoke Heath, Featherstone, Stafford and Foston Hall prisons. In the 5 years since the project started they have helped 260 people, housed 158 of them and seen only 78 (30%) returned to prison. All of the houses are provided by landlords who lease the houses to NSCC who then runs the tenancies, taking all responsibility for maintaining the properties and placing new tenants appropriately.

As a project the community chaplains provide in reach onto the wings of the prison where they build relationships with the prisoners. They then meet prisoners at the gate, provide a lift to Stoke and get all the appointments, shopping and tenancy details sorted out. The next day the community chaplains are able to follow up the previous day's activities and then can provide on-going support at the project office, and through opportunities within the project for volunteering and employment.

NSCC finds that by providing "real" tangible help in the form of a house or flat in which to live, they are also able to provide ongoing mentoring and support to the various individuals who become their tenants. In a very real sense providing accommodation enables mentoring to take place where it is required.

Learning Curve are a community based organisation in Birmingham who provide specialist outreach support to young people in schools and the community, particularly around the issues of guns and gangs. Their work, through the Anti Youth Violence project concentrates on providing a reality check to the glamour associated with carrying weapons (guns and knives in particular) and seeks to raise up young leaders in communities and schools who will be examples and role models for the other young people around them.

Learning curve are able to impact young people “On Road” showing them the destructive outcomes from seemingly innocuous decisions by using innovative multimedia presentations, workshops and youth mentoring.

What are the gaps in the existing resettlement mentoring provision?

As each speaker spoke, various gaps in mentoring provision were highlighted; these included two of the obvious ones:

- Funding – particularly from NOMS
- Actual mentoring provision for clients – currently a bit of a postcode lottery

As well as several of the equally obvious ones which are perhaps less talked about:

- Standardisation of mentoring quality and training
- Guns and Gangs are not just a black issue nor is it just a youth issue
- “Diversionary” activities are not enough
- A failure of the sector to “keep it real” and bear in mind the realities of everyday life for the people we work with
- Difficulties in making referrals to the relevant organisation
- Difficulties co-ordinating interventions when client/mentee is in prison

What are the most pressing needs for resettlement mentoring amongst mentees?

Whilst there are obvious gaps in terms of how and where mentoring is offered, there are equally gaps in the support that mentees/clients get. Sometimes some of their most pressing needs can be impacted by mentoring support, and even then there is still a paucity of support in these areas. Needs that remain pressing include:

- Benefits – mentees can wait for up to 6 weeks before receiving their money. Waiting for this long does not break the cycle of re-offending.
- Mental Health – many offenders have mental health problems yet are unable to access ongoing mental health support.
- Accommodation
- People who care

Who should be meeting these needs and how can they be met across the UK?

Speakers on the whole addressed the gaps in service provision and the needs of their clients and so little comment was made about who should be meeting the various needs identified, and in what fashion.

Whilst these questions were not perhaps addressed directly, the work that each project is involved in and the manner in which it is delivered provides some answers.

Anawim are working in partnership with a myriad of projects to deliver a one-stop-shop solution for women caught in chaotic life styles. They work in partnership locally for their clients' direct benefit and nationally with the other women's one-stop-shops to develop the outcomes from the Corston Report.

As a prison based mentoring project Trail-Blazers have developed an effective, tried and tested, structured mentoring intervention for use with young offenders, giving hope not only to the young men they work with, but also to other smaller projects working with young offenders. There really is something that works for young offenders out there.

By identifying accommodation and targeting the provision of good quality housing specifically for offenders, the NSCC has demonstrated that it is both safe (from the point of view of a local community) and in fact desirable for offenders to be supported in shared houses and flats around a community. The figures from the NSCC show a return to prison rate of 30%, substantially lower than the national re-offending figures. This model is clearly one that should be rolled out across the UK; given that houses are available everywhere; the lower than expected risks; the fact that it is a financially sound way of providing accommodation; requires no initial investment; and makes effective supported housing interventions an ideal basis for resettlement support including mentoring.

The Anti Youth Violence project's emphasis on the need to "keep it real" and so maintain a realistic connection to the context in which young (potential) gang members live, grow up, offend and reform in is key. Too many projects have the expectation of unrealistic (but well meaning) outcomes for the young people they work with that do not take into account the challenges of life on "The Road". "Diversionary Activities" are not the answer; activities (including mentoring) which challenge a young person's values and concepts of citizenship will make a much more significant impact and will ultimately affect them for the rest of their life.

Mentees' needs are being met therefore through a range of interventions which include significant partnerships (between the voluntary and statutory sectors), with clear goals, methods and outcomes and the provision of tangible (quantifiable?) support, whose long term goals are about life change rather than simply diversion.

Put simply what needs to be done is already happening in places, the experience is out there, and now needs to be brought together to fill in the many, many geographical gaps that exist for these services.

Questions

“From Here....to There” was advertised as a networking conference with the intention of providing delegates with both an opportunity to network with other delegates and to ask the speakers questions. In the event there was not enough time to give the questions the attention they deserved and so we include the questions asked here.

Broadly speaking the questions fell into 3 main categories, the first dealing with policy issues, the second the practical issues involved in running a mentoring project, and the third questions on Partnerships.

Policy Questions

- 1) Steve Matthews - Talked about starting in prison and through the gate mentoring. Did not mention **stopping** people going to prison at all and the importance of working with the **majority** of offenders who are in the community. – Comments Please

Much of the discussion throughout the day did focus on the challenges of through the gate mentoring, a lot of the work discussed deals with breaking the cycle of prison and re-offending, rather than preventing those at risk of falling into offending ending up in prison for the first time. That said Learning Curve does provide specific services designed to work with “at risk” young people as well as those already caught up in the criminal justice system, whilst NHMP and Anawim work with clients referred from community sources (i.e. the probation service, the police and through other outreach work).

Practical Questions

- 2) Accreditation for volunteers? Would this be a requirement? Might it put off good potential mentors?
- 3) How can we work towards developing an accredited training package for mentors that specifies working with offenders and ex-offenders? Any NVQ training – or other training (accredited) does not cover our field of work adequately.

Training accreditation can be a sticky issue and needs careful thought. Different options are to simply run an in-house un-accredited training programme, run an accredited training course but not require volunteers to gain a qualification, or to require that all volunteers gain an accredited qualification. Work to develop a field-specific set of training is being carried out by the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation.

- 4) Most of the speakers have mentioned a lack of knowledge as to how well mentoring can work. Little has been said about how organisations plan on changing this.

The issue of gaining credible statistics on the efficacy of mentoring within the UK context is an urgent one for the field. Work is ongoing across a number of different projects using a variety of similar tools (e.g. Outcome Stars and Spider Assessments) to develop effective means of putting hard numbers onto what are essentially “soft” outcomes.

- 5) How big a problem/obstacle is it for volunteers and mentors not to feel “swallowed up” or “becoming part of the establishment” in their own eyes and the eyes of those they are mentoring?

Mentoring projects need to work hard to ensure that their volunteers (and clients) do not feel that they are being taken for granted. This is all part of the effective management and supervision of mentors that existing projects need to maintain and new projects need to develop.

- 6) What experiences have been had regarding impact of volunteer mentors and their Job Seekers Allowance? G Beech NSCC

When volunteers are not in work there can be complications regarding their benefits allowances depending on the amount of time each week they are volunteering. Broadly speaking a volunteer on JSA can work in their voluntary capacity for an unlimited period each week without it affecting their benefits claims as long as they can continue to evidence availability for work and continued attempts to find work. They are required to declare voluntary work using the form “Voluntary Work 1JP” and will also need a letter from the voluntary agency confirming the work.

Problems might arise when an individual has been unemployed for a certain period of time and then they are moved onto what is now called Flexible New Deal which is more intensive than simple JSA. This can mean that a volunteer might be required to attend compulsory full time training. It can also mean that failure to attend appointments or training might result in benefits being stopped.

Partnership Questions

- 7) Resettlement fairs in prisons are a useful way to network and learn about other projects. If mentoring projects all know about one another, they could help and advertise one another’s services and even do assessments for another project. How do we activate this and move liaising work forward especially in women’s prisons?
- 8) Working in partnerships with other organisations helps spread the burden of limited resources, time etc. Can this be done effectively i.e. sharing information, training, feedback and keeping all agencies ‘in the loop’ when there is a variance in priority?

- 9) How can projects be promoted better, making the best use of what we already have so that everyone knows 'we' are here and what 'we' do?" I ask this mainly because there are many of us here today who never knew the others existed.
- 10) How can we work together better to the same end, building better knowledge of each other's work/services using our limited funding and resources more creatively and innovatively to reach more mentees and have an ultimately bigger impact?
- 11) Thinking about the sustainability and fact that reoffending frequently occurs when mentoring comes to an end: How can we work in partnership to provide consistent support over a long period of time. E.g. Offender working with a Probation Mentor and then completing their order – can we then hand this over to other organisations to continue?

The five questions above all ask a similar question; how can we work more closely together to share good practice, reduce project isolation, and improve the accessibility of our services to the offenders/clients we all work with? This is a big question which I hope will have some answers by the end of this report. Here in Birmingham there has been some partnership work developed to address just this issue, an evaluation of which can be found at http://www.widerimpact.com/news/docs/brmf_evaluation_report.pdf. The work consisted of several elements, the main aspect of which was to develop a single point of mentoring referrals for the pilot project partners enabling effective direction of mentee referrals to appropriate mentoring providers with only one phone call on the part of the referring agency.

- 12) How can you (NOMS) help us overcome resistance from prison regimes to establishing mentoring schemes inside prisons? (quotes 'too much else going on...', 'no space/facilities for a project worker') No monetary contribution asked from prison.
- 13) How can we address the current funding situation during this economic crisis? It has never been harder to secure funds to deliver essential services that have a direct impact on community and government targets.

Finally the last 2 questions address the role that HM Prisons and NOMS have to play in the mentoring field. Clearly there is a desire for this kind of work by those in power at Westminster; however it does not come for free. NOMS needs to make its message much clearer, firstly to the governors of HM Prisons "MENTORING WORKS!" and then to enable and encourage the DOMS holding the purse strings to actually pay for mentoring support. The financial argument alone for this work is compelling and could save the criminal justice system significant amounts of money through reduced re-offending.

Conclusions

That there are organisations providing the support that government and NOMS recognise as necessary is both exciting and very encouraging. The gaps in terms of services actually provided are very few. Accommodation projects, women's one-stop-shops, youth leadership, and young/adult offender projects all exist, both in Birmingham and around the UK. Some of these projects are specialist mentoring providers and some are projects that include mentoring as part of a wider provision of services.

What is missing is the consistent replication of these services throughout the UK. There is no guarantee that niche interventions (women, BME, sex offenders) or more generalist interventions (adult mentoring) are available in a given locality in the UK. This makes consistent support as an offender moves between locations very difficult to achieve. Whilst offering consistent support across the UK for niche groups of offenders might be more difficult, it should be recognised that a more widespread provision of general resettlement mentoring interventions could well be more straightforward. Given that there is significant experience, good practice, recognition of the need for effective evaluation and an increasing commitment to partnership, an effective role out of resettlement mentoring, both niche and generalist, should be achievable.

A further gap in the mentoring of offenders is again linked to the geographical spread of mentoring. With so few mentoring projects providing support to offenders, it is often difficult for statutory agencies to find the support they want and with prisoners being released across a region or often to another region this task becomes more and more difficult. Because of this mentoring projects also find it difficult to maintain referral sources and to then co-ordinate mentoring relationships, particularly whilst the mentee remains in prison.

The needs then of our clients remain very diverse. There are some very common problems that have been raised, these deal with basic problems of self belief and a need for basic day to day support. However many other problems stem from the system which tends to: hand down harsher sentences to female and BME prisoners; which struggles to provide a seamless transition into the benefits system once leaving custody; which releases 70% of prisoners with some sort of mental health problem (anxiety and depression mainly); and which struggles to provide accommodation places to prisoners on release.

The question of who exactly should be meeting some of these needs is fraught with difficulty. There are many who say that the statutory agencies should be providing much of this support for prisoners, they should be providing mental health support (and medication), they should be providing better linkage to accommodation on release, and perhaps most importantly a solution to the large delays in getting their benefits payments sorted out – it should take hours or days, not weeks and weeks.

It is all very well saying that the statutory sector should meet these needs; however the fact is that often the government agencies are unable to be as

flexible or as dynamic as our mentees need them to be. It therefore falls to the voluntary sector to support these men and women, helping them whilst they bridge the gap between prison and the community. The voluntary sector is able to bring flexibility and innovation (e.g. North Staffordshire Community Chaplaincy's housing project), and can provide niche provisions which the statutory sector simply cannot do. The danger that exists however is that as small charities grow and become successful at what they do, they too start to lose the very flexibility and innovation that made them effective in the first place. The challenge therefore to both the voluntary and the statutory sectors is to work together in such a way as to retain the vibrancy of smaller projects but cultivate more widespread provision of mentoring services and input.

The challenge across the UK is to develop both partnerships between the voluntary and statutory sectors as well as developing partnerships across the voluntary sector. The challenge of the former is that historically voluntary/statutory partnerships have tended to be between the commissioning body (probation etc) and one large organisation, and the process of commissioning such services has tended to disqualify smaller projects. The challenge of the latter is that smaller projects do not have reliable income streams and so forming partnerships together can feel counter-intuitive, after all the other partners are often the very projects you are competing with for funding and profile.

However if partnerships of smaller projects could be made to work then contracts between the voluntary sector and the statutory sector might look very different, potentially providing the flexibility and innovation that smaller projects bring whilst allowing the statutory sector to purchase the services they require through larger partnerships.

This approach will need considerable effort to get these partnerships off the ground; further money aimed at developing a novel type of infrastructure would be required. This funding would enable partnerships to consolidate; put in place staff to co-ordinate the work; promote client referral across regions; and develop project capacity. This sort of infrastructure development would be very "bottom-up" and would call for the voluntary projects to actually work together.

To date the emphasis of the government promoted infrastructure initiatives has been to make organisations more structurally sound, bring better quality standards and improve volunteer supervision. These are very valuable aims; of the 13 questions asked by delegates 5 related to networking, sharing of best practice, and quality standards. However 7 more questions asked how exactly projects on the ground can work in partnership more effectively together or with the statutory agencies. How can limited resources be used to the maximum effect in the lives of our clients?

In short 54% of those asking questions were interested in how they can work more closely together. Whilst this is not a particularly scientific sampling, this concern should be noted and more effort given to infrastructure interventions that target the needs of mentees/clients as their primary focus, rather than those which focus on the (valid) needs of the projects themselves.

It is the view of the author of this report that the overriding concern of the conference was not the various infrastructure initiatives that have been put forward by the government and other interested parties, although these are extremely helpful as the sector seeks to grow, but that it was a concern to see the sector working more effectively in partnership with each other for the benefit of our clients. As NOMS and the government seek to use ever more voluntary interventions, the voluntary sector will have to work more smartly to deliver results in the lives of our clients. Therefore thought must be given to what those partnerships will look like and what they will deliver, and to date this challenge has not been adequately addressed.

Our conclusion therefore is fourfold:

- 1) The voluntary sector is already delivering the interventions that NOMS and the Government require.
- 2) The voluntary sector needs to roll out these interventions to ensure an even geographical spread around the UK.
- 3) The voluntary sector should develop local working partnerships aimed at sharing resources, expertise and clients.
- 4) In order to deliver this coverage the voluntary sector needs financial support from NOMS and Government to develop working partnerships and roll out coverage.

A Way forward

Currently there are a number of resettlement mentoring infrastructure projects running. The obvious ones are the CLINKS Volunteering and Mentoring Network and the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, whilst NOMS are also providing third sector infrastructure support themselves.

The CLINKS Volunteering and Mentoring Network has been set up with an Infrastructure Grant received from the Criminal Justice Group of the Ministry of Justice. This network has been set up to support organisations working with offenders; to provide resources, up-to-date news, and a chance to get opinions heard.

The Mentoring and Befriending Foundation on the other hand has been funded through the Cabinet Office and aims to ensure that mentoring and befriending are at the centre of current and future national volunteering strategies. The Foundation aims to provide a quality experience for the volunteer and a successful outcome for service users by promoting standards and the provision of a range of support structures and services.

NOMS meanwhile are developing, as announced by Sharon Barrett; a directory of interventions (any projects wanting to be included need to contact her); are taking stock of the services they use so that they can specify interventions for the DOMS to commission; developing a third sector action plan; and seeking to work with charitable trusts to sponsor growth of the sector.

Additionally there has also been third sector capacity building support from the government in form of the Capacity Builders programme providing capital grants to voluntary sector support agencies.

As outlined in the pages above the delegates who attended “From Here...To There” felt that whilst this infrastructure development was good, what they really wanted an answer to was the question, “How can we (small projects) work better together?” It was our intention to try and answer this question during the conference with a case study of some partnership work that New Hope Mentoring has been involved in over the last 3 years, however time defeated us and this was not possible on the day.

The Birmingham Resettlement Mentoring Forum (BRMF)

During 2006 Rainer Foundation (now Catch 22) staff employed at HMP and YO1 Swinfen Hall as part of the RESET project funded by the EQUAL stream of the European Social Fund realised that there were several Birmingham based projects working into the prison all of which provided mentoring as part of their services (Prison Link – part of the United Evangelical Project; BEST – Birmingham Ex-offender Service Team; and NHMP. After a short amount of discussion it was decided that the managers of these projects and staff at the

prison should get together and look at ways in which they could work more effectively with one another.

Initially this partnership looked at ways of sharing training and best practice, however over time it was recognised that the mentoring co-ordinator at the prison was finding it difficult to know who exactly to refer mentees to. As such some referrals simply could not be fulfilled because there were no known projects or mentors who could support the mentee. It was felt that the projects on the ground were likely to be well placed to close this gap in knowledge and that we should try to develop a shared mentee referral process using a single point of contact.

The informal partnership became more formalised and the Birmingham Resettlement Mentoring Forum was born. BRMF then developed a partnership funding bid for work which aimed to provide a single point of referral for mentees requiring resettlement mentoring and funding was eventually found through the West Midlands Next Steps (Test Bed). By the time that the funding was released to us there were 7 months remaining on what had been an initial bid for 12 months of work, and had to include an independent evaluation.

In his evaluation of the work (for a hyper-link to the document please see [click here](#)) Mr Edwin Lewis of Wider Impact Consultancy states “an effective collaboration of third sector organisations (BRMF) has been formed and is proving that they have the skills to work together for the benefit of prisons / mentees” (Wider Impact Consultancy, April 2009). More specifically the evaluation noted that the use of a mentoring referrals co-ordinator “enables links with participating prisons”, with prison staff noting that BRMF “as a collaboration... are delivering what we want, and most importantly what our prisoners require – no matter what faith, ethnic background or age....We like what the collaboration is offering – one phone call and support from an experienced co-ordinator. The Pilot saves us time and resources – at a time when budgets / resources are being cut.”

In short the BRMF partnership found upon evaluation that:

- The concept of a single point of contact mentoring referrals co-ordinator worked.
- Prisons and probation services want this sort of service.
- The voluntary sector can deliver this kind of partnership.

However the evaluation also found that:

- “Whilst the pilot has provided evidence of useful ‘best practice’, six months is too short a period to pilot such an initiative. It is our view that rather than being a pilot, the project has been a ‘test bed’ that indicates that a fully funded / resourced, minimum three year pilot is required to explore the benefits of delivering the project objectives.”

The single point of contact mentoring referrals co-ordination approach across a city therefore works, is wanted and can be delivered, but needs a concerted three year effort to run a fully resourced and evaluated pilot.

The New Hope Mentoring Programme believes that this co-ordinated approach to resettlement mentoring is the way forward. There needs to be a clear route enabling mentoring referrals to be made across a region between locations, and between locations in separate regions; a new bottom up referrals infrastructure needs to be put in place.

It is our contention that the way forward is to put in place a three year regional mentoring referral pilot based on the partnership model outlined above. Ideally this would be based in the West Midlands region (which is predominantly urban) and in one other region (preferably more rural in nature) in order to understand the different challenges of this work.

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Appendix 1 – Speaker Biographies

Paul Slatter – Director, Chamberlain Forum

Paul is a Director of the Chamberlain Forum, the neighbourhood ‘think-and-do’ tank based in Birmingham. He has worked for Shell and Westinghouse and in a number of voluntary organisations specialising in policy, communications and learning. Before setting up the Chamberlain Forum, he set up and managed the Birmingham Community Empowerment Network and funded a number of mentoring initiatives. He has also worked to develop shared learning and mentoring through Chamberlain Forum’s Resident University programme. Chamberlain Forum also undertakes social accounting and is working with a number of local authorities and others in the region to find new ways of enabling public agencies to listen to citizens and the communities they serve and to involve them in decision making. The Forum organises Chamberlain Lectures, study visits and seminars, speakers at which have included David Cameron, David Blunkett, Hazel Blears, Sir Paul Scott Lee, Archbishop John Sentamu and Mike Whitby. Paul is a member of the Strategic Planning Society. He lives in Birmingham with his wife and children. paul@chamberlainforum.org

Sharon Barrett – Deputy Head, Reducing Re-offending Policy Unit, NOMS.

Sharon trained as a nurse at Charing Cross Hospital, London from 1982-1985. Her health care career encompassed working within both medical and surgical contexts and latterly specialising as a gerontology nurse at a senior level in the private sector. Here she developed a strong interest and breadth and depth of experience in the education and training of nurses and support staff, holding national roles with both Westminster Health Care and Ashbourne Health Care as Training Manager. Whilst studying for a Masters Degree in Education and Training, Sharon developed a strong desire to transfer her skills to an entirely different context and in September 2003 she joined the Prison Service as Head of Learning and Skills at HMP Standford Hill on the Isle of Sheppey.

During her time at Standford Hill, Sharon implemented strategies to encompass learning both formal and informal throughout all regime activities. Her projects included Peer Mentoring schemes and the development of Learning Support Assistants to compliment traditional approaches to the development of Basic Skills.

In May 2005 Sharon joined the Sheppey Improvement Team, to develop the Education, Training and Employment improvement proposals for the three Sheppey prisons. She never returned to her former role. Within the new structure on Sheppey she initially held the post of Head of Interventions, taking a strategic lead across the 7 Reducing Re-offending pathways and in the delivery of Induction and Information, Advice and Guidance services. In November 2006 Sharon joined the Sheppey Senior Management Board as Head of Reducing Re-offending.

Sharon joined the NOMS agency in August 2008. Her current role involves oversight of national policy development in respect of Third Sector, Children and Families of Offenders, Finance Benefit and Debt and Accommodation pathways.

Clive Martin – Director, CLINKS

Clive is Director of Clinks, the national body that supports the work of the voluntary and community-based sector that work with offenders and/or their families. Clinks membership numbers several hundred and includes large national organisations as well as small local providers. Clinks' current priorities include promoting the work of the Black and other Minority Ethnic (BME) voluntary sector as well as promoting the role that service users have to play in the development of policy.

He is a graduate of KwaZuluNatal Technikon and London University. Prior to joining Clinks he was a Senior Lecturer in Community Education. He has managed various initiatives, including European and national projects aimed at the social inclusion of offenders. He is also a member of the NOMS External Stakeholder Forum and an executive member of the National Body of Black Prisoners Support Groups.

He conducted the pilot study Community Organisations and Four Prisons in England. He is also the author of The Good Practice Guide: Prisons and the Voluntary and Community-based Sector published jointly by Clinks and HM Prison Service (2001). Along with Bryans and Walker he edited 'A Bridge into the Community' published by Waterside Press. He writes and speaks regularly on the topic of the voluntary sector and criminal justice.

Steve Matthews – Chief Executive, Mentoring and Befriending Foundation.

Steve is Chief Executive of the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (MBF) and was appointed to this position in March this year. He has worked for MBF for over five years, previously as Deputy Chief Executive and played a key role in helping to transform the organisation from its early days as the National Mentoring Network into its current role as the national strategic body for mentoring and befriending and strategic partner of the Office of the Third Sector.

He has recently overseen a major review of MBF's quality standard for mentoring and befriending, the Approved Provider Standard, which remains unique in its focus on assessing and assuring the quality of mentoring and befriending provision.

Before joining the MBF, Steve was a further education tutor working with students with learning disabilities and he continues to teach adults in basic IT, literacy and numeracy. He has also been a head of training in the Police Service and has a background in training and development.

Joy Doal – Project Manager, Anawim

Joy manages Anawim, a women's development project in Birmingham. They have two bases, one in Balsall Heath, a one-stop-shop as recommended by Baroness Corston (March 2007), and a second small base in Handsworth for more chaotic women.

Anawim undertakes prison visiting at HMP Drake Hall and HMP Eastwood Park; they also have an unpaid work package and have just been recognised as a specified activity by the National Probation Service. Anawim also runs a mentoring scheme matching volunteer and peer mentors with the women who attend. Anawim aims to provide a viable alternative to custody for women.

Joy has been at Anawim for 6 years, before this she ran a safe house for Asian women fleeing forced marriage and domestic violence.

Roger Howarth – Community and Prison Chaplain (HMP Featherstone).

Prior to Chaplaincy, Roger worked for 30 years in the IT industry in particular during the heady times of the development of the personal computer in the 1980s.

Roger was Managing Director of a £20m division of Apricot Computer Plc., before leaving to establish several smaller software development companies.

In 2002, Roger was called to a career change and became a part time employee of HMP as a prison chaplain, a position he still holds. He took the final step away from the commercial world in 2005 by joining the North Staffordshire Community Chaplaincy. He is a qualified counsellor.

Roger is married to Delphine, also a counselor and minister, and they have become active grandparents! Roger clings to youth as his golf handicap states he can still break 80.

Mieke Vrijhof – Chief Executive, Trailblazers

Mieke was born in the Netherlands and brought up with a strong awareness of social issues by parents who were not only active in the Labour movement in Holland, but were probably the first environmental activists in the country – resulting in her joining her first environmental demonstration against Europort in approx 1968.

Her career in the voluntary/charitable sector started as a volunteer in Holland where she organised and participated (!!) in music events for the youth sector of a socialist environmentalist organisation. This then developed into a paid career and she has worked in youth venues, community centres and shelters.

Mieke moved to the UK in 1974 where, as well as bringing up her two children she led a campaign against nuclear waste disposal; was Director of the Library Campaign; worked for the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England, was a

Wildlife Trust Director for over 6 years, followed by being the CEO of a homelessness charity for over 4 years and has currently been employed as CEO of Trail-Blazers for almost 3 years.

Raymond Douglas – Anti-Youth Violence - guns, gangs, postcodism and conflict resolution

Raymond Douglas is an activist, prolific motivational speaker, social entrepreneur and visionary. He learnt quickly that thinking and “acting” outside of the box is the win-win solution in tackling community and street conflict.

By pioneering numerous successful intervention programs engaging hard to reach young people he has the knowledge to translate negative situations into positive opportunities, at both a grassroots and strategic level.

Today he has touched over 500 young people with his motivational and transformational workshops in response to those at risk of life-threatening behaviour involving guns, gangs, community conflict and drugs.

Raymond is also an accomplished film producer but not for entertainment’s sake, and has produced several short documentaries and films to his credit including ‘on road’ which portrays the realities of inner city youth culture and was nominated for best British short film.

He continues to lecture at schools, colleges and universities throughout the UK.

Richard Stunt – Project Manager, New Hope Mentoring Programme

Richard has been the manager of the New Hope Mentoring Programme since its inception in 2003. Richard’s background is in research science, specialising in Immunology (the study of the immune system) after completing his first degree. Half way through his PhD he discovered that people were more interesting than test tubes and started to get involved in voluntary work in the Balsall Heath Area of Birmingham.

In 2002 whilst completing his PhD thesis Richard worked with the new NHMP steering group in order to help draw ideas together and prepare the first funding bids. These bids were successful, as was the PhD and the New Hope Mentoring Programme was able to start in the January of 2003.

The New Hope Mentoring Programme provides one-on-one mentoring support to offenders aged 18-35 from within Birmingham. Having set the project up in 2003 Richard has grown the project from 6 volunteer mentors to around 45 volunteers and 2 staff. In this time NHMP have supported more than 200 clients and have seen many lives turned around.

Richard lives in Balsall Heath with his wife and 2 small children.

Appendix 2 – Poems by Natasha Solomon

These poems are the intellectual property of Natasha Solomon and are reproduced with her permission.

Focussed

Aint nothing gonna stop me,
As I'm a true contender,

This battle and race I'm in,
Coming down like deep thunder,

Whatever's next we shall see,
I'm left here to wonder what will be,

What will truly be my destiny,
Hoping that it comes easily,

Writing rhymes is a true spiritual moment,
Touching my tats help me stay focussed,

As its all for my beautiful K.I.S
Damn my boy sure good for me,
The right remedy,

Staying true is how I will prosper,
Come correct is how I will go further,

Act twice as nice as I am nice,
Flip it up like rice,

Damn my lyrics are tight,
I flow just right,

And keep you up all night,
With the talented explosion that is me!

Laugh now, but you shall see,
I ain't no nobody, trust me,

And I'm proud of what the good Lord gave to me

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Prison Years

Thinking back on your teens years,
If only you had a slighter older shoulder,
To cry on, to lean on and to take it as far as to depend on,

Oh how differently you would have had those days,
Instead of sitting in a cell in a daze,

Learning to conquer your demons and keep up a front,
The battle inside of a world in a world,
Had you wanting to kick up a stink,

But knowing you had to keep yourself in check,
Or reap the consequence,

Dealing with the racial negligence,
Keeping up a pretence,

Acting like you'll sleep alright on the nights,
Knowing it's not nice,

Screws up your face and you wanting to bite,
Waiting to tote on a spliff but not wanting to get stitched,

So you pick up the pen and paper,
And you write a little script,

You reminisce on good old days,
And think about future ways to get paid,

Focusing on your release date and oh what a date,
A date of celebration,

A real case of achievement,
Walking away knowing your characters built,

And installed with real survivors characteristics,
Cause you never ended up slashing your wrists,

So yo,
Drink coffee, smoke G.V tune into Eastenders,
Because you know one day you'll be free.

© **Natasha Solomon**

My Beautiful K.I.S

(K.I.S are the initials of Natasha's Son)

Giving birth to you was an incredible experience,
The rib wrenching pain was an emotional deliverance,
Holding you in my arms was a real connection,
Upon not hearing you cry was a real question,
Having you taken to be weighed was a real problem,
Not wanting to be apart from what just grew inside me.

Alone, me, my empty belly,
The placenta slid right out of me,
Gas and Air got me high already,
Damn right I'm happy to be a mommy,
Our next encounter was at my left breast,
Damn I'm impressed,
Your beautiful face,
No contest,
Having you suckle I felt no stress,
This is coming from my heart,
Can't you guess,
To my beautiful K.I.S,
Who will live life to the best!

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The Year of Separation

Thinking about a certain year and what I went through,
The desperation and separation but yeah,
Look now I've come through,
Able to walk head high,
And back straight too,
Fixed up my game and now know what I gotta do,
Thanking the most high as I know it's his work on display,
Unsure if I would have made it,
I got my beautiful K.I.S to prove it,
Now all I gotta do is sustain,
With my heart fully repaired and each beat just like a drum,
The thought of being without you keeps me tip toed,
As I don't ever wanna end up back down that road,
As without you,
I'm like a fish out of water,
Can't breathe, no air,
I can confidently say I won't get caught up once again,
I won't be no fly trapped up in a spiders web,
Use my knowledge, talent and wisdom,
And fly right past the web,
My stronger mind and character will see me do good,
Believing in myself and having faith is what I thrive on,

And no doubt will survive on,
Loving this journey I'm on,
And don't ever wanna be anything but strong.

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Appendix 3 – Delegate List

Name	Position – Organisation
Kevin Armstrong	Community Chaplain - Futures Unlocked
Annamarie Balram	Director/Fundraising coordinator - Fresh Start New beginings
Jane Barkes	Manager - The Footprints Project
Sharon Barrett	Deputy Head, Reducing Reoffending Unit - NOMS
Graham Beech	Support Worker - North Staffs Community Chaplaincy
John Bentley	Leader - ABC Project
Carol Buckland	Strategy Lead - Ministry of Justice
Kelly Buswell	Project Manager - SOVA Mentoring/Appropriate Adult Scheme
Mary Causer	Project Director - Greater Manchester Community Chaplaincy
Fernando Charith	Director - Sunella CIC
Caroline Cunnington	PPO Offender Manager - West Midlands Police
Joy Doal	Project Manager - Anawim
Raymond Douglas	Manager - Learning Curve
Sarah Downer	Project Officer - Trail Blazers
Christine Ellis	-
Annice Evans-Cole	ETE Coordinator - National Probation Service
Jane Gallagher	Co-Chair - Halow (Birmingham)
Jez Green	Freedom Project Coordinator - Mustard tree
Louise Hadley	Employment Engagement Manager - HMP Hewell
Georgina Homer	Volunteer Mentor - West Bromwich Probation
Roger Howarth	Community and Prison Chaplain - HMP Featherstone
Amjad Hussain	Development Manager - Sova
Ivy Johnson	Admin Officer Resettlement & Volunteers - HMP Stafford
Alan D Keeton	Co-ordinator - SOVA
Dave Kennedy	-
Colleen Laing	Youth Worker - Church of God of Prophecy
Jonathan Laing	Youth Worker - Church of God of Prophecy

Name	Position – Organisation
Roger Lynch	Community Worker - Riverside Church
Nathan Marriott	Support Worker - North Staffs Community Chaplaincy
Clive Martin	Director - CLINKS
Steve Matthews	Chief Executive - Mentoring and Befriending Foundation
Louise Miceli	Mentor Coordinator - New Bridge Foundation
Gavin Mills	-
Matthew Morrison	Volunteer mentor - National Probation Service
Dave Nicholson	Director - Ex-Cell Programme
Fiona Nixon	Volunteer Mentor - New Hope Mentoring
Amanda Parker	Mentor Co-ordinator (Female Lead) - New Hope Mentoring
Lesley Parry	Mentor Coordinator - New Bridge Foundation
Mark Phillips	Outreach Worker - The Foot Prints project
Janet Plumme	Team Manager - DRR Team
Charlotte Powells	-
Lesley Pymm	District Manager - National Probation Service
Mekenen Reid-Finnikin	Volunteer Mentor - National Probation Service
Reena Sangar	Volunteer Mentor - National Probation Service
Rachel Simpson	Lead Mentor Co-ordinator - New Hope Mentoring
Paul Slatter	Director - Chamberlain Forum
Natasha Solomon	-
Richard Stunt	Project Manager - New Hope Mentoring
Norma Thorpe	Volunteer Mentor - New Hope Mentoring