



## Public Social Partnership: Low Moss Prison Prisoner Support Pathway

In 2012 the new Low Moss Prison opened with a capacity of 700 prisoners, mainly convicted short-term and remand prisoners. Reducing reoffending is a priority both locally and nationally. Low Moss Prison chose to engage with the third sector in a Public Social Partnership (PSP) through which the Low Moss Prison Prisoner Support Pathway was developed as an innovative approach to service redesign, resulting in a step change in the way reducing reoffending is tackled both in the prison and in the community.



### Background

The new Low Moss Prison opened in 2012 replacing the older prison accommodation that had previously occupied the site. It has capacity for 700 prisoners, with a population made up primarily of convicted short-term and remand prisoners from the North Strathclyde and Glasgow Community Justice Authority areas (CJAs) but with a significant number of prisoners from across the Central Belt.

Reducing reoffending is a priority both locally and nationally. As a result the Leadership within Low Moss Prison and the CJAs chose to engage with the third sector in a Public Social Partnership (PSP). With the support of Ready for Business through the Scottish Government's 'Developing Markets for Third Sector Providers' programme, the Low Moss Prison Prisoner Support Pathway PSP was developed. This represents an innovative approach to service redesign resulting in a step change in the way reducing reoffending is tackled both in Low Moss and in the community. Following the development of the Low Moss PSP, a further six mentoring PSPs were created through the Reducing Reoffending Change Fund.

### Scope and Focus

The Low Moss PSP was initiated following open discussion between leadership in the North Strathclyde and Glasgow Community CJAs, the Prison itself, and multiple third sector organisations. Turning Point Scotland was selected as lead organisation to drive the PSP forward.

There was awareness between all parties that reoffending had to be tackled, with national statistics for Scotland showing a reoffending rate of 53% for the short term prisoner population. The timely rebuild of HMP Low Moss presented the opportunity to look at the current services and to design a new way of working:

- A model of throughcare delivery which would improve prisoner outcomes by reducing the risk of recidivism after liberation.
- A model which would boost the level of beneficial contact prisoners had with relevant support organisations and mechanisms.
- A model which could introduce control, confidence and transparency into the prisoner throughcare pathway.

The partnership quickly reached agreement that any new service model would have to be appealing to all partners involved in delivering services to offenders. This would cover not only third sector

organisations currently engaged, but also the many supporting public bodies such as health, mental health, job support agencies and housing, who are all key to improving outcomes for the targeted service user cohort.

Based on this knowledge, the initiating leaders agreed that the PSP model would be the best route to achieve the following:

- Bring all the relevant organisations and stakeholders together
- Capture and evidence the challenge
- Commence and maintain robust partnership working
- Develop a service specification based on evidence and service user consultation
- Pilot and refine a service to ensure its effectiveness and build a detailed evidence base of the PSP's impact
- Develop a new sustainable service to be tendered competitively and which all providers could fairly bid for.

## Progress to Date

- **Detailed service design and piloting:** Piloting of the Prisoner Support Pathway is well underway. A detailed Service Design was developed, which coordinates the delivery of services to offenders from third and public sector organisations, supported by dedicated case workers and peer mentoring. The staff team are in place and most of the required systems, protocols and working practices are now embedded in the organization. Crucially, the PSP team is jointly staffed by third sector staff and prison officers, with third sector partners allowed significant access deep into the prison to engage and work with individuals – the duty system allows access into halls as late as 8pm. This has led to considerable change in the working relationships and culture of all of those involved. It should be noted that substantial financial support has been provided by the Scottish Government, the Robertson Trust and the Big Lottery Fund to enable the pilot to be carried out over 3 years.
- **Building an evidence base:** The PSP continually collects data from service users and

monitors outputs to ensure that the PSP is making progress and that there is a significant evidence base in place to drive future sustainability. This has been recently reviewed by external evaluators as part of an interim evaluation. The initial results suggest that the PSP is having a highly positive impact on the lives of those it works with. The PSP has delivered support to a far greater extent than was initially expected during the design phase.

- **Delivering beyond expectations:** As a snapshot, between April 2014 and February 2015, 571 referrals were received of which 206 received a full support package from the PSP and 365 received a brief intervention or duty support. As of 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015 the service had an active caseload of 198 service users of whom 104 were being supported in the community, 78 being supported within the prison, and 16 were in the process of assessment. 57% of referrals between May 2013 and June 2014 were self-referrals, clearly evidencing the impact the PSP is having on individuals' willingness to seek support.
- **PSP activities:** During the pilot period to date the PSP supports service users through a large number of different activities which include liaising with other agencies, information about dealing with substance misuse, family support, housing support, outreach, homelessness, recovery plan support, housing liberation support and pre liberation support. These activities are carried out on a personalized basis, providing a positive impact on service users.
- **Quality of Life outcomes:** The PSP also monitors and evaluates individual 'distance travelled' in relation to agreed service outcomes. Outcomes reviews are a joint process involving an individual and their key worker and are carried out at least monthly in prison and as often as possible in the community. Significant improvements have been seen in all quality of life outcomes measured: Criminal Activity, Engagement, Living Situation, Physical Health, Psychological Wellbeing, Social Functioning

and Substance Misuse. Social functioning represents the highest improvement rate of all outcomes at 55% and is defined in the PSP outcomes guidance as ‘improved capacity to participate and be valued in society ‘(i.e. how a person relates to others)’. This definition includes a person’s ability to participate in society via work, training or education and to form positive pro-social relationships.

## Key Challenges

There has inevitably been a number of challenges which the PSP partners have been required to address and overcome. These include:

- **Timescales** - The design group was required to baseline current provision and develop the new approach to managing and delivering throughcare services within tight timelines – approximately four months. This required strong commitment from all participants. However it also provided a key focus for the group and ensured continued progress.
- **Stakeholder management** - Due to the nature of services to prisoners, there were a significant number of stakeholders across the public and third sectors. This requires continued engagement through a variety of means face to face meetings, newsletters and stakeholder events have all formed part of a comprehensive communications plan which the PSP has developed and implemented to ensure there is constant focus on identifying and engaging with stakeholders who have an interest and/or influence on the PSP.
- **Partnership working** - Although working in partnership is by no means new to public and third sector partners, the PSP model was a new approach for many. The process of building an understanding of the model took time. However, this ultimately provided the foundation for maintaining progress throughout the project and it is clear that the Low Moss partnership is particularly strong with all partners bought into and focused on achieving shared values and outcomes.
- **Structural barriers** – the PSP has encountered many external barriers throughout the design and piloting process, for example whether this is housing support processes adopted in various local authorities, legislative implications or the impact of welfare reform. The PSP’s operational management and governance has sought to identify these barriers at an early stage and work to overcome or work around them wherever possible.
- **Sustainability** – the Low Moss Prisoner Support Pathway has been developed as a new service, which means that it has no clearly identified commissioning body to procure the service in future. While the PSP has clearly been focused on continued service development, significant effort has also been needed on the future sustainability and procurement of the service. In particular, the identification and ongoing engagement of potential funders has been resource intensive and has at times raised the possibility of distracting key PSP partners from ‘the here and now’. Clearly linked to this is the challenge facing potential public sector funders who, whilst recognising the preventative benefits of the PSP, must assess how funding can be identified and allocated to supporting the future delivery of the service.

## Outcomes

Use of the PSP approach has delivered a number of key benefits to those organisations involved in the PSP and, most importantly, those who have accessed support through the pathway. These have included:

- **A simpler, more innovative service** - The collective knowledge of the PSP partners provided key insight into offender needs and what the local community can provide to help eliminate ‘blockers’ in the existing service delivery model and to support the move towards more innovative service delivery.
- **Diverse provider market** - The PSP has provided a structure and control mechanism, which providers could engage with and freely

participate in developing a new service knowing that they had clearly articulated the boundaries of the relationships to ensure provider developed Intellectual Property was not at risk. Through this structured knowledge sharing and partnership working, it has increased the number of viable providers who are delivering beneficial services to Low Moss Prison and the depth and effectiveness to which they are providing it.

- **Positive impact on individuals** - The interim evaluation has shown that evidence of a positive impact on individuals is beginning to emerge. By the summer of 2014 those interviewed by the evaluators were able to provide some qualitative evidence and case study examples of early outcomes in terms of their own service provision. The service users themselves who were interviewed were also clearly able to discuss their own experiences in detail, and to provide their views of the impact of the PSP on them. There was a generally shared view that the PSP is beginning to make a positive difference to individuals' lives and to the means of service delivery across its operational area. Across all individual outcomes, as noted above, data suggests that more service users considered their circumstances to have improved than to have worsened.
- **Iteration through piloting.** The piloting phase of the Prisoner Support Pathway is allowing a robust period of testing before tendering. This means that the partnership is able to identify and address strategic, operational, and governance challenges in a safe environment, whilst ensuring that the pathway continues to develop to meet increasing demand and to effectively assist each individual to access and benefit from the range of supports they require.

### Critical success factors

There are a number of critical success factors which have underpinned the positive delivery of the model to date.

- **Third Sector driven** - The PSP activity was chiefly driven by the third sector, with Turning

Point Scotland as the lead organisation with strong contributions made by Alternatives WD, Families Outside, the Wise Group, Sacro and Action for Children. Being driven from the third sector potentially could have presented a challenge in having to effectively engage with service commissioners and funders within the public sector. However, the partnership quickly overcame this and used their detailed service knowledge to develop a strong service design and a robust business case which clearly evidenced the case for change.

- **Varied skills and knowledge** - The PSP journey required a blend of skills, including leadership, project management, service user engagement, and analytical skills. The partnership approach meant that various skills and knowledge pools could be drawn from when needed.
- **Open-minded and flexible approach** - This project was approached without pre-conceived ideas about the PSP model and what was not achievable through it. This meant that the new service model was approached with a blank slate, thereby allowing partners to table innovative approaches to reducing reoffending. In particular, it has been found that the support needs of each person are highly individual and so the approach adopted by the PSP team has been to flex and personalise their response so that it meets the needs of that particular individual at that particular time. This has been key to building trust between key workers and service users and has made a strong contribution to the success of the service to date.
- **Working to timescales** - The project has been reliant on accessing external funding sources for the pilot period, with each funder having its own timescales and evidential requirements to adhere to. This meant that the service design, pilot and any supporting funding proposals had to take account of the views and requirements of key external stakeholders.

- **Partnership working** - The shared approach of multiple organisations working together has meant that there has been a real opportunity to holistically consider how services are delivered to offenders, and to improve understanding of how relationships between providers operate. Consequently, partners were able to identify how they could improve service user outcomes by working collaboratively and introducing common and shared working practices such as information sharing protocols.
- **Focus on issue resolution** - At both the operational management and governance levels of the PSP, there has been strong commitment to proactive identification and resolution of issues which can affect the future delivery and success of the pathway. As an example, it was identified at an early stage that the housing support processes within individual authorities differed and in many cases did not allow service users to register for housing until they had been liberated from prison. This was having a substantial impact on individuals and as a result the PSP set up a housing sub-group to focus specifically on addressing these problems. Early evidence suggests that this approach is starting to bear fruit and is delivering benefits to the PSP and service users.

## Future ambitions

The PSP pilot is well underway, and work will continue to develop the service and gather evidence that the Prisoner Support Pathway delivers considerable benefits to service users and the partner organisations involved, and as a result has a positive impact on reoffending rates. This evidence will be used to construct a business case for the future sustainability of the PSP once funding for the pilot comes to an end. Therefore, the PSP leadership are now focused on identifying and engaging those stakeholders who benefit from the PSP's work and who may be in a position to fund the ongoing delivery of the pathway.

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