

## *Reducing Re-offending in London: Phase Two of the London Resettlement Strategy*

### CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

**Please acknowledge this reply**

Responses to this consultation exercise will be used by the London Resettlement Board to inform a Reducing Re-offending Strategy for London which we will publish in the New Year. They will also be used by the Regional Offender Manager to inform his commissioning priorities for next year.

In line with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, all information contained in the response including personal information may be subject to publication or disclosure.

**Thank you for taking the time to respond to this consultation.** The attached proforma lists the questions from the consultation questions for ease of reference.

Completed proforma and other responses should be sent to the address below by **5<sup>th</sup> January 2007**.

**Send by e mail to:** ResettlementStrategy@gol.gsi.gov.uk

**Send by post to:** London Resettlement Team, Government Office for London, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Riverwalk House, 157-161 Millbank, London SW1P 4RR

If you have any queries, please contact the London Resettlement Team on 020 7217 3087.

We have drawn up this proforma to help structure your response and to help us to analyse the responses.

Your comments are sought on all aspects of the consultation document – but in particular please give consideration to the following questions:

**Cross-cutting Questions:**

**1a.** Are the priorities identified in this Strategy the right ones?

Yes they are, though attention should be given, to the accommodation and general resettlement needs of short-term prisoners particularly given the seeming demise of Custody Plus.

It would also make sense to facilitate provision of accommodation for those prisoners who are remanded because of no/an unsuitable address. This would reduce pressure on the London prison estate, reduce the number of prisoners transferred elsewhere, improve resettlement outcomes and same prisons transport and associated costs

**1b.** How can delivery on these priorities be ensured?

Priorities should be SMART and progress reviewed on a monthly basis using Project Management software. The review should include a meeting of those responsible for the delivery of each priority.

**1c.** Are the priorities for offenders from different equalities backgrounds accurately reflected in the Strategy?

There are particular and growing issues around recent EU accession state citizens who are not entitled to benefits in the UK. After a prison term they receive a discharge grant but are not entitled to any other money and will almost certainly re-offend if they do not have an existing UK support network

The needs of those with learning difficulties who do not qualify for statutory support and the very many who suffer from a personality disorder do not appear to be reflected in the strategy

Though PPO's and their generally much higher level of needs are identified in 3 "The changing context" and mentioned briefly in the accommodation pathway under 9.11 and 9e there are no actions proposed to meet the needs of this group – this group is 95% male and 88% white and seem to have been missed out for comprehensive consideration in this plan regarding engagement whilst in custody, this is particularly surprising as they account for 0.5% of offenders and 9%

*Dominic Raffo, Group Manager, St Mungo's Offender Services*

of all crime.

Foreign Nationals who are being held for deportation should have separate provision so that the 2200 places they occupy may be allocated to prisoners from London who would otherwise be released from all over the country

### **Diversity and Equality: Women Offenders**

- 5a.** In your experience, what are the specific problems that women offenders face in accessing services?

Accommodation – mothers released from custody can find it very difficult to obtain accommodation that enables them to seek custody of their children – this can be a catch 22 situation

- 5b.** A high percentage of women serve less than one month. How can we work differently with this group of women?

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- 5c.** What do you think the objectives for the Women's Reference Group should be, and how can we measure outcomes?

### **Diversity and Equality: BME offenders**

- 6a.** In your experience, what are some of the difficulties faced by BME offenders in accessing services?
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Language difficulties, poor education, a lack of understanding of services and how they work, cultural resistance, family and community rejection, a lifestyle that pays little heed to punctuality/keeping appointments, being misunderstood by service providers, the ghetto like concentration of some groups in tight geographical areas that can make it very difficult to avoid a return to former behaviours on release from custody

- 6b.** What are the knowledge gaps in terms of the needs of BME offenders? For example, are there newly arrived or smaller BME groups with particular needs that are not yet recognised?

Though they have often been here for many years refugees from some of the wars, particularly in north Africa have significant issues around PTSD, self medication and mental illness. Many serve repeated short sentences and do not engage with services on release

- 6c.** How do you think that service delivery to BME offenders can be improved?

Develop pilot services to address the needs identified and undertake qualitative and quantitative research to learn from successes and failures – secure commitment to roll out and develop real successes

### **Diversity and Equality: Other Groups**

- 7a.** What are the difficulties faced by disabled offenders in accessing services?

- 7b.** What are the difficulties encountered by lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transgender offenders in accessing services?

- 7c.** Is there any existing data or research on the needs of offenders with a disability?

- 7d.** Is there any existing data or research on the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender offenders?

**Implementation of the London Resettlement Strategy:**

- 8a.** Even if there were resettlement wings in all London Prisons, an enhanced resettlement service would only be delivered to around 10% of released Londoners. What form should provision take for others? How should resettlement provision be shared amongst London prisoners?

Surely we should change the way the system is managed to enable challenging and incremental growth to be achieved and not accept that 90% of prisoners would not benefit from enhanced resettlement services.

- 8b.** Is there a need for further dedicated projects, or is there a better way to ensure resettlement services for London's prisoners?

Yes – for example we are developing socially cohesive services for prisoners from a Muslim background and there is a really significant amount of work being undertaken around relationship building and developing trust based on mutual respect with communities and faith representatives. It is clear, even with Muslim staff and expertise in place that there is a huge gulf to bridge in order to improve understanding and the resettlement outcomes for many short-term Muslim prisoners.

There are many other other numerically less significant groups who could benefit from a more tailored and focused approach.

*Dominic Raffo, Group Manager, St Mungo's Offender Services*

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- 8c.** As London prisoners are dispersed in prisons throughout the country, how should resettlement into London be facilitated from all other establishments? Not all prisoners will need to return to London to enhance the response to their resettlement needs; some may not benefit from being 'closer to home'.

If people are not going to return to London how will they be supported to secure accommodation elsewhere in the country and how will this be funded?

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- 8d.** What provision should there be for the many people released from court, either because they have been found not guilty or because of time already served?

Pilot a comprehensive court based service in a busy court that is served by Wormwood Scrubs so that the many of the benefits of the resettlement pilot may be offered to those who regain their freedom from court

- 8e.** Could this model of access to services for released prisoners have relevance for those on community sentences?

The model could certainly be used though I doubt many people would want to return voluntarily to a court setting. Perhaps more specialist services could be offered from probation offices

- 8f.** Given that resource constraints mean it is unlikely that a premium service can be offered to all prisoners pre-release, how should we prioritise prisoners, and what kind of minimum service should we be aiming for?

PPO's, MAPPA, the vulnerable (including people with MH problems that are not "severe and enduring" and those with little or no identified needs other than an accommodation issue

### **Accommodation Pathway:**

- 9a.** Have we set the right objectives and identified the right priority areas for improving access to and maintenance of accommodation for offenders in London?

Nothing for short-term offenders – serious consideration should be given to continuing and extending the Exodus ESF programme being delivered in a number of London prisons

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- 9b.** What more can be done to prevent offenders becoming homeless as a

result of being placed in custody?

In 2002 the SEU proposed extended eligibility for housing benefit for sentenced prisoners from 13 to 26 weeks but their recommendation (along with several other cost sensitive issues) were removed before the final version of their report was allowed to be published – this provision could be trialled in a resettlement pilot prison.

There should also be a recognition of the illfit between an EDR and availability of a hostel or other temporary accommodation bed when it is occupancy of the accommodation that triggers housing benefit payments for the provider. There is a disincentive for hostels to hold places as each day a bed is unoccupied equates to a loss of revenue. There should be provision for voids to enable hostels and others to be more flexible when considering the needs of soon to be released prisoners

Fund guaranteed cross borough provision that sits outside the SP pot thus removing need for local connections – this could mean a prisoner would know well in advance where he may be living on release and this would enable appropriate support plans to be put in place

- 9c.** What are the specific accommodation needs of women offenders, and how might these be addressed through the regional pathway?

- 9d.** Is it realistic or desirable to work towards ‘needs-led mobility’ for offenders so that they can move away from areas where they may be more vulnerable to re-offending or relapsing into to drug use?

This is a problematic issue as very often someone moved to “another area” merely takes a few hours or days to engage with the drugs providers in the different area. Careful and expert assessment should be conducted when considering this approach

- 9e.** What further measures can be taken to enhance public protection by ensuring PPOs and MAPPA offenders have access to suitable accommodation?

Provide a wide menu of supported accommodation according to need and risk

- 9f.** Are there steps that can be taken to reduce the use of remand for homeless offenders?

See 1a

- 9g.** If use of private sector accommodation for offenders is to increase, what are the specific support needs offenders will have and how can landlords be encouraged to make properties available to this group?

This will depend upon a needs led assessment. Landlords want to have a secure income and a well managed property with minimal neighbourhood problems. A varying menu of floating support and accommodation based support could reassure landlords

Use the EHA to access and renovate empty properties for use by ex-offenders

**Education, Training and Employment Pathway:**

- 10a.** Have the right objectives been set and the right priority areas identified for improving the way offenders' education, training and employment needs are managed?

Nothing specific for PPO's. Develop and properly support a range of social enterprises to give real and valuable work experiences. St Mungo's have a number of excellent examples such as our Furniture Workshop and Putting Down Roots whose members renovate and maintain green spaces

Workshop provision in prison should be linked to local economic need. In many prisons workshop activity is a profit generator to support inadequate prison budgets so there is little incentive for Governors to change work activity that may benefit the prison but not the community

- 10b.** Would OLASS in London provide an effective platform for the Campus Model as identified in the Green Paper, and who might its stakeholders be?

- 10c.** How can the role of the Job Developer be seamlessly aligned with OLASS, and particularly with the new IAG function of the service?

- 10d.** What should be expected of the new Employer Engagement and Voluntary and Community Sector groups that form part of the new OLASS service, and how might these groups link into the emerging Alliances?

- 10e.** How can mainstream provision and other funded activities complement core OLASS work?

- 10f.** What type of pre and post-placement support, if any, should be provided to employers who are willing to take on ex-offenders?

Training, familiarisation, real life examples of success, insurance cover, ongoing support, financial sign up incentives that build over a sustained period of employment.

The action needed to produce significant change is legislation – this was how sex, racial and disability discrimination was tackled – the same approach is needed with offenders

- 10g.** Should the main employer engagement focus be securing more job opportunities for ex-offenders at any level, or identifying specific local labour market needs and jobs and tailoring individual's skills for specific employers in a demand-led model?

See 10a

## Health Pathway (including Alcohol):

- 11a.** Have the right objectives and priority areas been identified for improving the way offenders' health and alcohol related needs are met?

GP registration cannot be achieved unless it is known in sufficient time where in a borough a prisoner will be living on release. PCT's make it difficult for ordinary people without an NHS card and full details of their former doctor to register – the situation for ex prisoners is even more challenging.

- 11b.** What is the best way to help offenders in the community address their physical health needs? What barriers do offenders face accessing existing services in the community? Are separate services for offenders in the community needed above and beyond mainstream services? What might these look like?

See 11a. These services should not be separate but staff would need to be trained. It is wholly insufficient for the NHS to say there is an effective Doctor registration system in place – this assertion should be "mystery shopped" across all London boroughs and the results published

- 11c.** What should be the core elements of a training package on Offender Health for staff across the Criminal Justice System?

The 7 pathways

- 11d.** How can NOMs and London's agencies best meet the needs of offenders with alcohol problems? What type of services and support would be most appropriate?

Access to alcohol services in prison should be separated from CARAT drug provision. A 1% levy on the gross profit of alcoholic drink manufacturers should be channelled directly into developing effective and efficient needs led services

- 11e.** What role can the voluntary and community sector play in supporting offenders' health problems?

## Attitudes, Thinking and Behaviour Pathway:

- 12a.** What kind of Offender Programmes should be offered to offenders

through the prison gate? What life skills or subject areas should be covered?

Broadening the use and understanding of English vocabulary so people are better able to explain their difficulties, problems and challenges.

Budgeting, Respecting your neighbours and community, keeping appointments, managing time, forward planning, impulse management, anger management, good citizenship, an understanding of English and Welsh culture and traditions

- 12b.** What are the barriers to working through the gate? Can part custody / part community programmes be delivered efficiently?

Whether or not it is compulsory for the prisoner to engage with services on release, unexpected transfers, release from court, gate arrest, further charges relating to crimes allegedly committed before their most recent sentence, making programmes relevant, interesting and life skills enhancing

- 12c.** How can diversity be mainstreamed in the development of programmes for offenders?

By drawing in a wide range of representatives from each group – professionals to labourers, community consultation, better educating the public

- 12d.** How can a robust process of informing sentencers about programme effectiveness be ensured?

By delivering sharp and clear training supported by a high quality and actively managed and upgraded range of programmes. Provide feedback on effectiveness and build the measurement of effectiveness into the programme from the outset. Listen and respond to the knowledge, experience and expertise of sentencers

- 12e.** How can offenders - particularly high-risk offenders such as sex offenders – be motivated to attend relevant programmes?

- 12f.** How can the needs of offenders serving shorter sentences be met, who do not have adequate time to complete the accredited offending behaviour programmes?

See other replies

### **Drugs Pathway:**

- 13a.** Have the right objectives been set and the right priority areas identified for improving services for drug-using offenders in London?

Supply reduction activity – generally and specifically in prisons – this would require significant investment in a range of prison measures to counter smuggling and reduce trafficking of one type or another. Much stronger action to be taken against those smuggling drugs into prisons

- 13b.** How can service users be encouraged to continue with treatment?

By maintaining continuity of services and having more flexible and accountable detox services. Having provision for those who are evicted/excluded/leave rehab

Too many prisoners use prison as their detox – more community based programme should be developed

- 13c.** How can members of BME communities be better engaged with drug services?

See earlier answers

### **Finance, Debt and Benefit Pathway:**

- 14a.** Have the right objectives been set and the right priority areas identified for improving the way offenders' finance, debt and benefit needs are met?

A prisoner does not benefit from NI payments during a sentence – for many repeat offenders this will have a significant and negative effect on their state pension entitlements – people ought to be given the opportunity to regain lost NI credits by improvements in their behaviour and an avoidance of re-offending over a sustained period

What has been developed to address the attitudes of a dealer who has always had huge amounts of cash – what is the incentive to avoid a

return to this lifestyle – a deep and comprehensive educational programme is needed

- 14b.** How can understanding of the finance, debt and benefit needs of offenders be improved?

- 14c.** What kind of support or interventions would you like to see provided to offenders in custody and the community, to help address their financial problems?

Simple access to basic bank accounts, the opportunity to earn real wages in prison, a requirement to save a minimum proportion of earning to pay for post release requirements and needs. The opportunity to earn interest on savings

Teach people how to shop for food and eat a nutritionally balanced diet on a tight budget – this should be undertaken through workshops in prison as well as ongoing support in the community for those who need it. Thinking for more than just the hour or day ahead

- 14d.** What additional services or support could be made available to offenders to ensure they have sufficient funds to live on following release from prison?

See earlier answers

### **Children and Families Pathway:**

- 15a.** Have the right objectives been set and the right priority areas identified for improving services and support for the children and families of offenders?

- 15b.** Which mainstream / statutory agencies should contribute to the development of support services for the children and families of offenders? What is the best way of engaging these agencies?

**15c.** If you could see one pan-London development that would improve support for this group, what would it be?

**15d.** What should be the core elements of a training package for education and welfare professionals who work with children to help them understand the problems faced by a child whose parent is in custody?

**Young offenders:**

**16a.** What should be the priority areas for youth resettlement developments over the next year?

Much statutory provision and support stops when a teenage offender reaches 18 – the needs of 18-21 year olds should be given significant consideration – we need to stop a new generation of PPO and MAPPA clients emerging from our juvenile and young adult establishments

**16b.** Resettlement for young people is ultimately about ensuring speedy access to mainstream services on release. How can this be made to happen more effectively for young people in London?

Many thanks for your response.



## List of Stakeholders Consulted

London Probation	
London Area Office (Her Majesty's Prison Service)	
London Prison Governors	
London Resettlement Board	
Resettlement Pathway members	
Partners in Reducing Re-offending	
List all VCS?	
London Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Chairs	
London Drug and Alcohol Action Team Co-ordinators	
London Drugs Intervention Programme Co-ordinators	
London Prolific and other Priority Offender Panels	
London Borough Chief Executives	
London Borough Leaders	
London MPs	
London Borough Commanders	
London Borough Community Safety Managers	
JobCentre plus London offices	
London Learning and Skills Council	
London Strategic Health Authorities	
London Primary Care Trusts	
London Housing Associations	
Department for Communities and Local Government	
Department for Education and Skills	
Department of Health	
HM Treasury	
Private Sector Landlords	

Please contact us if you think that there are other stakeholder groups not on this list who may wish to contribute.