

# Volunteers can: Towards a Volunteering Strategy to Reduce Re-Offending

Consultation Document

May 2007



Foreword by  
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Minister of State for criminal justice and offender  
management.

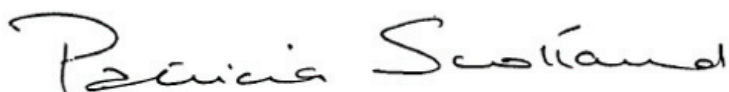
The Government recognises the huge contribution volunteers and mentors can make in many different areas, but in particular in helping build communities and a healthy civic society. Volunteering with offenders in prisons and the community is particularly important to the National Offender Management Service, and that is why in November 2005 I launched the three Reducing Re-Offending Alliances - Corporate, Civic Society and Faith and Voluntary Sector Alliance. Through both the Strategy and the alliances we can increase community cohesion, help to reduce crime, and building public confidence to the benefit of offenders and society as a whole.

Thousands of volunteers already work locally in prisons, through the gate and in the community. Whether the motivation is faith, a desire to contribute to their communities or to work specifically with offenders, volunteers bring additional skills and expertise to our work. Essentially, volunteering by offenders themselves can help build confidence and self esteem, and provide the skills and experience necessary to open avenues to future employment and law abiding lives.

We value the contribution these volunteers are making very highly, and we want to provide them with support and manage them better so that they can do more. We also want to increase the number and diversity of volunteers and the range of good quality opportunities on offer.

Through this draft Strategy, we are consulting widely and want to hear your views on the principles and proposals it contains. The consultation process runs for 12 weeks and full details about this are set out in Appendix 1. We aim to launch the strategy in summer 2007.

I very much hope that you will be able to find time to read the Strategy and send us your comments

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patricia Scotland". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

## Contents

<b>Contents</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
1.1 Volunteering in the context of 'Public Value Partnerships'	8
1.2 Towards a Volunteering Strategy	9
1.3 A mission to develop volunteering	11
<b>2. Context</b>	<b>12</b>
2.1 Current levels of volunteering	12
2.2 The potential of volunteering to reduce re-offending	15
2.3 The challenges facing volunteering to reduce re-offending	18
2.4 Opportunities for volunteering to reduce re-offending	19
<b>3. Increasing the Number and Diversity of Volunteers</b>	<b>21</b>
3.1 Defining volunteering	21
3.2 Levels and types of volunteering	22
3.3 Increasing the diversity of volunteers	22
<b>4. Becoming more Strategic in Volunteer Development</b>	<b>24</b>
4.1 Developing ownership and identifying leaders	24
4.2 Strategic fit for volunteering to reduce re-offending	25
4.3 Wider policies and agendas	26
<b>5. Improving Support to Volunteers</b>	<b>30</b>
5.1 Clear lines of responsibility for volunteer support and co-ordination	30
5.2 Quality standards in volunteer involvement	31
5.3 Resourcing volunteer management	33
<b>6. Establishing the Impact of Volunteering</b>	<b>35</b>
6.1 Building the evidence base	35
<b>7. Implementation and Review</b>	<b>37</b>
7.1 A framework for delivery	37
7.2 Timescale and review	39
<b>Appendix 1</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Appendix 2</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Consultation Questions and Response Form</b>	<b>44</b>

## Executive Summary

Our mission is to value, build, and support the unique role of volunteering in helping to reduce re-offending and building public confidence in the Criminal Justice system.

### **The definition of volunteering**

“Any activity within the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) that involves individuals willingly giving their time for the benefit of offenders, victims and the wider community. It can add value to the services provided and commissioned by NOMS and its partners and is distinct from other forms of unpaid work”.

This includes a wide spectrum of activities currently described as volunteering and/or volunteer mentoring within three broad categories:

- offenders as volunteers;
- other members of the community as volunteers;
- employees as volunteers.

### **Volunteering to reduce re-offending**

Volunteers are a key element of the Faith and Voluntary Sector Alliance as they bring valuable local knowledge, specialist skills and a fresh and innovative approach to working with offenders. They are also integral to the Corporate and Civic alliances. Thousands of volunteers work locally to support offender management in prisons, through the gate and in the community in the delivery of services that can help reduce crime and build public confidence. Their work complements the delivery of the reducing re-offending pathways through the provision of practical support, pastoral advice and mentoring, adding value in areas such as accommodation and employment, and working collaboratively to tackle the causes of social exclusion and criminal activity.

In England alone, the 2005 Citizenship Survey revealed that 20.4 million adults aged 16 or over volunteered regularly compared to 18.4 million in 2001<sup>1</sup>. Each year thousands of volunteers are involved in work in prisons and through probation areas, either directly or through partnerships with the VCS, and many more are drawn from the prison and probation service users themselves. It was estimated in 2003 that 6,000 volunteers were involved in prisons in England and Wales through faith-based organisations alone. In addition, approximately 5,000 offenders within prisons in England and Wales are involved in some form of volunteering and many offenders offer peer support in the community.

Volunteering therefore provides an opportunity for communities to help reduce re-offending, which is of benefit not only to offenders, but also to their families, victims and society as a whole.

The strategy, which builds on existing good practice in the voluntary sector and a long history of engagement in prisons and probation, will be delivered as an integral part of regional and local partnership plans to reduce re-offending and will be considered in the further development of commissioning arrangements.

### **Challenges and opportunities**

There are a number of challenges that should be addressed in order for volunteering with offenders to reach its potential. These include:

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<sup>1</sup> Kitchen, S., Michaelson, J., Wood, N. and John, P. (2006) 2005 Citizenship Survey: *Active communities topic report*, Department for Communities and Local Government: London.

## Volunteers Can: Towards a Volunteering Strategy to Reduce Re-Offending

- a rapidly changing environment, including the move towards NOMS as a commissioning body;
- fragmentation of the development of volunteering;
- barriers to participation of individuals;
- inconsistent leadership and resources for the support and development of volunteering;
- scarcity of robust evidence regarding the added value of volunteering.

Alongside these challenges, there are also a number of drivers for volunteering to reduce re-offending:

- enthusiasm and commitment for volunteering;
- development of the Offender Manager model of supervision;
- momentum towards partnership working and the development of the Faith and VCS Alliance;
- wealth of experience and local knowledge;
- conducive social and political environment.

### **The draft strategy**

The draft strategy identifies four key aims and a series of objectives and actions that should be worked towards in order for volunteering with offenders to develop strategically, achieve the strategy's mission and fulfil its potential. These are summarised in the table overleaf.

### **Timeframe and review**

This strategy is intended to have a five-year time span, and a framework for delivery will be developed following the completion of the formal consultation period. This will be a living document in recognition of the changing environment of NOMS and it will therefore be reviewed annually and updated in the light of any changed priorities. It is recognised that there are resource constraints and the aim is to deliver by best practice using the resources available.

## Volunteers Can: Towards a Volunteering Strategy to Reduce Re-Offending

Current situation	Aim	Objective	Actions
Whilst there is enthusiasm for volunteering, there is confusion around its definition and value; variation in the levels and form of volunteering; and a lack of diversity of volunteers.	To increase the number and diversity of volunteers	Developing a clear understanding of the definition of volunteering.	Providing guidance to NOMS and service provider staff on the definition and value of volunteering.
		Promoting widespread involvement of volunteers.	Collating and disseminating case studies and examples of volunteering in the correctional services Promoting volunteering and opportunities for engagement, including media coverage and developing partnerships with volunteering infrastructure to recruit new volunteers.
		Increasing the diversity of volunteers.	Undertaking a diversity impact assessment. Building links with organisations representing groups less likely to volunteer. Identifying opportunities to retain volunteers' interest whilst awaiting security and CRB checks. Disseminating good practice and case studies on overcoming barriers to involvement.
There is great potential for partnership working, yet the commitment to volunteering varies and there is inconsistent leadership. Inadequate co-ordination between policies and practices, and between prisons and probation, is also evident.	To become more strategic in volunteer development	Developing ownership and leadership of volunteering. Refreshing leadership	for volunteering at the national level. Encouraging all Regional Offender Managers (ROMs) to lead on volunteering. Encouraging local leadership through a named volunteer co-ordinator.
		Developing a strategic fit for volunteering	Ensuring volunteering becomes a key opportunity within the commissioning process. Encouraging prisons, probation, private and VCS organisations to work more closely together. Encouraging volunteering as part of regional strategies for reducing re-offending. Encouraging the inclusion of volunteering and mentoring in offender management plans. 'Volunteer proofing' future key strategies and policies.
		Developing a strategic link with wider volunteering policies and agendas.	Ensuring NOMS inputs into the development of national volunteering policies. Encouraging ROMs to make links on local partnership agencies and forums developing volunteering. Keeping those with responsibility for volunteer co-ordination informed of national and regional developments.
A long history of involving volunteers has resulted in numerous examples of good practice. Co-ordination of volunteering activities is not always evident and support and line management can be variable and inconsistent, with limited resources.	To improve support to volunteers	Developing clear lines of responsibility for volunteer support and co-ordination.	Encouraging volunteer co-ordination as a distinct part of job roles in prisons and probation areas.
		Adhering to good practice standards in volunteer involvement.	Facilitating the development of good practice in volunteer involvement. Promoting Investing in Volunteers and Mentoring Approved Standards. Establishing a recognition scheme for volunteers.
		Encouraging the provision of resources for volunteer management.	Working towards sustainable funding for volunteering. Encouraging service providers to implement an expenses policy.
The potential impact of volunteering to reduce re-offending is considerable, yet evidence is scarce.	To establish the impact of volunteering	Developing a stronger evidence base for the impact of volunteering.	Investigating opportunities for new internal and external research on the impact of volunteering. Identifying the lessons for policy and practice from research.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Volunteering in the context of 'Public Value Partnerships'

The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) has an ambitious target to reduce re-offending by 10% by the end of the decade. There have been improvements, but there is still much to do. Our programme of reform has commissioning at its heart because commissioning - separating out decisions about what services need to be provided from who is providing them - gives NOMS the ability to start from the basis of what we need to reduce crime and reduce re-offending and to contract from the best possible providers across the public, private and third sectors. This means that we can access the widest range of experience and delivery responses, giving us the opportunity to grow and strengthen activity such as volunteering and mentoring, and the other support provided by local people that is already making a significant contribution to offender management and rehabilitation.

The combination of commissioning and partnership work will enable us to focus service providers on the value of volunteering within a framework of good practice.

NOMS national and regional commissioning plans, published annually for consultation, will include commissioners' intentions, priorities and expectations of what can be achieved by volunteers working with offenders. The planning process will involve dialogue with providers and other stakeholders, acknowledge and seek development of the provision already in place, and may identify new approaches or expansion into areas where there is unmet or high levels of need - such as support for offenders with sentences of less than 12 months, young adult offenders, black and minority ethnic offenders, and women offenders.

National and regional partnership plans to reduce re-offending sit alongside the plans for commissioning. At the national level, an Inter-Ministerial Group has oversight of this agenda, and at a regional level and in Wales partners from a range of agencies meet to ensure that offenders have access to the resources they need to help them turn away from crime. Commissioners and partners will support and develop the NOMS Faith and Voluntary Sector Alliance and volunteering infrastructure. There will be a clear message about the added value of volunteering and the importance of drawing on the knowledge and experience of local communities. We want to use this consultation and new strategy to strengthen the understanding of volunteering, its management and outcomes. Commissioning and partnership plans will then need to describe what needs to be done directly to achieve change, including what they will require through contracts with prison and probation providers and partnership arrangements.

NOMS has a devolved commissioning system, with regional commissioners contracting with lead providers at the sub-regional level for offender management. Lead providers will form partnerships and contract with a range of other providers at local level and be accountable to the regional commissioner for their own performance and that of their sub-contractors. Expectations and requirements on volunteer outcomes will flow through the commissioning line. Specifically, through contracts with lead providers (and their sub-contracts with local providers) we will be able to require and measure progress on:

- the number and diversity of volunteers;
- improved engagement with the national, regional and local volunteering infrastructure;
- a more joined-up approach across prisons, probation and all providers, making use of local

- planning and commissioning structures including Local Strategic Partnerships to share learning and practice, minimise duplication and maximise impact;
- work towards good practice in volunteer promotion, recruitment, management and development, including the use of quality standards;
  - pro-active work with offender managers so that volunteering and mentoring is included in individual offender management plans as appropriate.

We will want to work with those partners providing services for offenders, e.g. in relation to offender learning and skills, to ensure that they are engaged in the volunteering strategy, add value to the delivery of such services and promote the merits and greater use of volunteering in delivering such services.

Not all volunteers working within the criminal justice system are helping to deliver interventions or services for offenders. Volunteers come from a variety of sources. Members of Independent Monitoring Boards are volunteers as are MAPPA lay advisers. Third sector organisations may manage volunteers working with offenders through other commissioned services or an independent funder. It is important that these diverse arrangements continue, but the introduction of commissioning in NOMS, including a greater role for third sector and local providers, gives us and our partners a real opportunity to make a step-change in the level and quality of volunteering.

## 1.2 Towards a Volunteering Strategy

NOMS was established in 2004 to protect the public and reduce re-offending. It brings together prison and probation services and a range of other partners to focus on the end-to-end management, rehabilitation and reform of offenders.

NOMS is committed to working in partnership in order to meet its aims and this has been reflected in many of its publications and strategies. For example, the 2005 National Reducing Re-offending Delivery Plan<sup>2</sup>, the 2006 five-year strategy for the Home Office's work on protecting the public and reducing re-offending<sup>3</sup>, the recent Home Office review of the Criminal Justice System (CJS)<sup>4</sup>, NOMS' current business plan<sup>5</sup> and Improving Prison and Probation Services: Public Value Partnerships<sup>6</sup> all emphasise the importance of developing new partnerships and of ensuring community involvement across the criminal justice system.

Alongside the publication of the Reducing Re-Offending Delivery Plan in November 2005, a package of other measures was launched to increase the public's engagement with the criminal justice system and help reduce re-offending. These included the three Reducing Re-offending Alliances – Corporate, Civic Society, and Faith and Voluntary Sector – and the NOMS and Youth Justice Board (YJB) Approach to Communities and Civil Renewal. The first of these aims to ensure the corporate, public, voluntary and community and faith sectors are actively engaged in helping offenders to integrate successfully into their communities. The second is part of the Government's 'Together We Can' action plan<sup>7</sup>, which aims to inform, consult, involve and engage local people and communities in the development and delivery of public services. Both of these measures will be delivered through integration into Regional Reducing Re-offending Strategies/Plans and other CJS and local partnership plans.

In June 2005, NOMS published a strategy on the 'Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in NOMS'<sup>8</sup> and an associated Action Plan. A Voluntary Sector Advisory Group has been established within NOMS and the voluntary and community sector (VCS) has been involved in the development

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2 NOMS (2005) *National Reducing Re-offending Delivery Plan*, NOMS: London.

3 Home Office (2006) *A five year strategy to protecting the public and reducing re-offending*, Home Office: London

4 Home Office (2006) *Rebalancing the criminal justice system in favour of the law-abiding majority*, Home Office: London

5 NOMS (2006) *NOMS Business Plan 2006-07*, Home Office: London

6 NOMS (2006) *Improving Prison and Probation Services: Public Value Partnerships*, Home Office: London

7 Home Office (2005) *Together we can: the government action plan to bring people and government closer*, Home Office: London

8 NOMS (2005) *Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in NOMS* Home Office: London

## Volunteers Can: Towards a Volunteering Strategy to Reduce Re-Offending

of regional reducing re-offending action plans and the commissioning process.

The governance arrangements ensure that all these strands are drawn together and that the voluntary and community sector agenda, including supporting and promoting the role of volunteers, is considered locally, regionally and nationally.

### **Governance Structure**

The Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) for Reducing Re-offending is responsible for ensuring the strategic alignment of departmental targets and PSAs to support crime reduction and the reduction of re-offending. The group is made up of Ministers from 11 Government departments and aims to ensure delivery of agreed cross-government plans and outcomes.

The National Reducing Re-offending Programme Board reports into the IMG, escalating strategic issues and blockages that affect the delivery of the reducing re-offending programme. The Board is responsible for setting and driving forward the overarching cross-government programme of activity to deliver a reduction in re-offending by 10% by the end of the decade. It is chaired by the Chief Executive of NOMS and its membership is drawn from key partners within NOMS, the wider Home Office and across government.

The work of the NOMS Voluntary and Community Sector Team (within the NOMS Partnerships Unit) is supported by the NOMS VCS Advisory Group and the Stakeholder Reference Group. Progress on this work and the Alliances is fed to the Programme Board through the Local Delivery Alliance Board.

Regional Offender Managers in England and the Director of Offender Management in Wales have worked closely with partners, including the voluntary sector, to produce regional plans to reduce re-offending with specific actions on the pathways which are designed to help offenders turn away from crime.

In the consultation exercise on the development of the NOMS and YJB Approach to Communities and Civil Renewal, most feedback on the volunteering and mentoring section related to how to encourage more people to volunteer. Other themes included the recognition that volunteers offered something significantly different from their professional colleagues; that voluntarily spending time with offenders provides a powerful message; and that volunteers need to be more representative of their communities. The main reservation expressed about volunteering was the cost of recruiting, training and supporting volunteers. There were also some concerns about the way volunteers and mentors had been linked together in the consultation document. It was pointed out that 'volunteer' refers to a relationship between the organisation and the individual, whilst the 'mentor' is a specific role within either an employee or volunteer relationship. Not all mentors are volunteers. This strategy is specifically about volunteers, including volunteer mentors but not mentors who are in paid positions.

A specific Faith Alliance strategy is being developed in order to promote, engage and encourage faith communities and faith-based organisations to work with offenders and ex-offenders. Realising the significant volume of work already being done by the sector (some 7,000 volunteers from 460 organisations) in helping resettle ex-offenders, NOMS has committed itself to creating lasting relationships with faith-based service providers. In addition to this the Alliance aims to work with the sector to expand the current provision and also to move aside some of the boulders that stand in the way of progress. This can only be done by working together with partners in NOMS, the Prison

and Probation services, and the wide range of voluntary sector organisations. The Strategy will be sent out for consultation to a range of faith-based organisations, faith leaders in local communities, and organisations (both statutory and voluntary) working in this area. The Faith Alliance Strategy is intended for publication later in 2007.

These strategies and initiatives have recognised the importance of volunteering to reduce re-offending. The Volunteering Strategy reinforces commitment to volunteering as an integral but distinct part of working in partnership and provides a framework for the future development of volunteering. It recognises that while the contribution of volunteers is already considerable, more could be achieved if volunteering was developed more strategically, more effectively, and within a more supportive environment. This strategy will address how this can become a reality. It is aimed at all levels of NOMS, the prison and probation services and its partners.

### 1.3 A mission to develop volunteering

This strategy's mission is:

**“To value, build, and support the unique role of volunteering in helping to reduce re-offending and building public confidence in the Criminal Justice system”**

Its aims are to:

- o Increase the number and diversity of volunteers.
- o Become more strategic in volunteer development.
- o Improve the quality of support provided to volunteers.
- o Establish the impact of volunteering.

The values underpinning the strategy are:

- o Ownership and leadership.
- o Diversity and equality of opportunity.
- o Quality of experience.
- o Impact and legacy.

This strategy sets the framework through which NOMS and its partners could work towards achieving this mission. It has been informed by a series of meetings with key stakeholders, including voluntary and community sector organisations, prison and probation staff and volunteers, undertaken by the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) on behalf of NOMS (see appendix 2 for further details).

## 2. Context

### 2.1 Current levels of volunteering

Volunteering is currently at record levels. The 2005 Citizenship Survey confirmed that in England alone, 20.4 million adults aged 16 or over volunteered regularly (at least once a month) compared to 18.4 million in 2001<sup>9</sup>. Each year thousands of volunteers come into prisons and work with probation areas either directly or through partnerships with the VCS, and many more are drawn from the prison and probation service users themselves. Exact figures are not available, but in 2003 it was estimated that 6,000 volunteers were involved in prisons in England and Wales through faith-based organisations alone<sup>10</sup>.

#### **CSV pre-release volunteering programme**

This project provides prisoners with a one-month residential placement with public and VCS organisations towards the end of their sentence. The programme has been running since 1984 and to date, 4,500 prisoners have been placed in a variety of social care and environmental opportunities, completing more than 720,000 hours. Ninety-eight per cent of those who take part in the programme go on to complete their placement<sup>12</sup>.

Offenders are also involved as volunteers in a range of activities in prisons and the community. In 2002, the Prison Reform Trust<sup>11</sup> found 7% of prisoners volunteered in activities that either benefited their peers or the wider community. Given the present prison population in England and Wales this would represent over 5,000 volunteers. Some probation areas involve offenders as volunteers, both as part of their resettlement and to add value to the services provided. The National Probation Directorate conducted a survey early in 2006 to identify and promote best practice in the engagement of offenders in the delivery and development of services provided by local probation areas. This led to the creation of an Offender Engagement Project Board to co-ordinate, develop and promote good practice on this work in the future.

A great many volunteers are engaged through the numerous VCS organisations that work within prisons or probation. Some get involved directly through prisons or probation areas while others are involved in partnership projects between the VCS, faith groups, statutory agencies, or businesses.

#### **West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy (WYCCP)**

WYCCP, a multi-faith chaplaincy working in a culturally and ethnically diverse area, now employs a Muslim and a Christian Community Chaplain and draws 50% of its volunteers from faith communities across West Yorkshire. The networking and partnership building role of the community chaplains has enabled them to embrace the diversity represented in the West Yorkshire area. They are working with Islamic, Sikh, Christian, Buddhist and Hindu faith communities across Bradford, Leeds and Dewsbury. They also have good working relationships with the Yorkshire and Humberside Faiths Forum as well as the more local Bradford and Leeds multi-faith forums. These communities provide the bedrock for WYCCP's work. WYCCP has raised the awareness of the difficulties faced by an ex-offender through the education of diverse faith communities, thereby maximising the input of these communities into transforming the lives of ex-offenders. This educational role of the project has gained them widespread support in a short space of time and shown that the faith communities working together in partnership are a massive resource for reducing re-offending.

<sup>9</sup> Kitchen, S., Michaelson, J., Wood, N. and John, P. (2006) *2005 Citizenship Survey: Active communities topic report*, Department for Communities and Local Government: London.

<sup>10</sup> Grimshaw, R. and Sanchez, L. (2003) *Mapping voluntary faith-based activity and organisations in prisons: a survey of Chaplains*, The Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, School of Law, Kings College London: London

<sup>11</sup> Prison Reform Trust (2002) *Barred Citizens: volunteering and active citizenship by prisoners*, Prison Reform Trust: London

<sup>12</sup> CSV (2003) *CSV Reports on Crime Reduction*, CSV: London

Volunteers get involved in a wide variety of activities supporting all categories of offenders, whether they are low, medium or high risk. It encompasses a wide range of volunteering:

- **Offenders as volunteers, including, for example:**
  - o peer support/advice work in custody and the community;
  - o mentoring;
  - o listener schemes; and
  - o community-based volunteering.
  
- **Other members of the community as volunteers (involved either individually or through partner organisations), including, for example:**
  - o Independent Monitoring Board members;
  - o MAPPA lay advisers;
  - o volunteer mentors and befrienders as part of offender management;
  - o faith-based volunteers involved in prison, 'through the prison gate', and in the community;
  - o Prison Visitors;
  - o prison visitor centres and children's area facilitators;
  - o appropriate and trusted adults;
  - o victim/offender mediation;
  - o volunteers engaged in work in the NOMS reducing re-offending pathways: Accommodation; Education, Training and Employment; Health; Drugs and Alcohol; Finance Benefit and Debt; Children and Families; Attitudes Thinking and Behaviour;
  - o student volunteers.
  - o support for women and Asian and BME offenders;
  - o work with high risk of harm offenders;
  
- **Employees as volunteers as part of the Corporate Alliance, for example:**
  - o employees volunteering in different areas, including prison and probation staff and core NOMS staff;
  - o employer supported volunteers/mentors;
  - o employees volunteering in their communities.

The diversity of volunteer roles is reflected in the case studies included throughout this strategy consultation document.

**Prison Advice Care Trust (PACT)**

PACT has set up a Mentoring Scheme at HMP Holloway as part of their Exodus Project. The aim of the initiative is to help released prisoners gain sustainable employment and so reduce the likelihood of re-offending. The project is based within the Resettlement Team at HMP Holloway and is run through a partnership with a mixture of Prison staff, specialist workers from VCS organisations and volunteer mentors.

Mentors assigned to the project work with prisoners inside HMP Holloway and on release in the community. They act as positive role models, helping offenders raise their levels of self esteem, confidence and motivation through developing their skills and abilities pre and post release. They help mentees to plan their release providing advice, guidance and encouragement and also assist them in the setting of realistic goals.

### **Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV)**

Volunteers, who are supported by their employer, either in work time or outside of work hours, take part in ESV. This may include being given time off during working hours to volunteer or offering opportunities for volunteering directly through the employee's organisation. It is a three way partnership between the employer, employee and the receiver of the volunteers. In 2003 in England 18% of employees worked for employers who had schemes for volunteers and of these 37% volunteered as part of these schemes. Currently, Home Office staff may take up to five days special leave to undertake volunteering when operationally possible.

NOMS is responsible for approximately 70,000 staff across England and Wales. In this context, there is huge potential for its staff to be given the opportunity to take part in volunteering themselves, either supporting the work of NOMS or of an organisation of their own choosing. ESV has the potential to help reinforce and embed a culture of volunteering at all levels throughout NOMS. As well as providing value to the organisation, ESV can help to increase awareness of volunteering and its contribution to active citizenship.

It is vital, however, that employees are able to volunteer in an environment of freewill, and are under no obligation to do so. More information on ESV can be found at [www.employeevolunteering.org.uk](http://www.employeevolunteering.org.uk).

### **Independent Monitoring Boards**

Every prison and immigration removal centre has an Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) responsible for ensuring prisoners and detainees are properly and decently cared for. An important part of a members' role is to visit and monitor different parts of their local institution and listen to the concerns and issues of prisoners and detainees. IMB members are unpaid volunteers and are appointed by Ministers. All are required to go through a thorough interview, selection and security clearance process and need to complete a training course in addition to on-the-job training from an experienced IMB board member.

### **Dyfed-Powys Probation Area**

A number of partnerships have been established between Dyfed-Powys Probation Area and voluntary sector organisations to deliver volunteering projects to support offenders. One such organisation is the Powys Challenge Trust which recruits, trains and supports volunteers on behalf of Dyfed-Powys Probation Area. Volunteers are involved in a wide range of roles including mentoring, befriending and providing offenders with transport to help them access services such as Job Centre Plus. For further information visit: <http://www.powyschallenge.org.uk>.

### **The Impact Project and Cheshire Probation Area**

The Impact Project is focused on improving the employment prospects of sex offenders who have offended against children in the North West of England. Mentors work alongside offenders when they are released from prison to help them set up their own small businesses. The mentors provide an advisory role, and receive training themselves in small business skills.

To prepare them for their role, mentors receive induction training on mentoring offenders within Cheshire, ongoing training on a variety of offending related issues and specific training in mentoring sex offenders. They then attend a two-day event based upon the training provided to those mentoring within a circle of support and accountability provided jointly by Prison, Police and Probation staff.

## 2.2 The potential of volunteering to reduce re-offending

Volunteering and mentoring has an impact on a range of different stakeholders: volunteers, organisations, service users and communities. Volunteering has the potential to contribute in a number of ways:

- adding value to both quality and quantity of volunteering, for example, contributing through the Alliances to each of the seven reducing re-offending pathways (**figure 1**), and helping to deliver the key stages of the 'change process' for offenders, as laid out in the NOMS Offender Management Model<sup>13</sup>, e.g. through gaining resources such as accommodation;
- improving the quality of life of service users, by providing practical support to offenders, their families and victims. For example: to offenders on release from prison through mentoring, by offering advice and guidance on matters such as debt and accommodation, or by helping to develop education programmes for offenders; to victims through providing emotional support, practical help and information; or by mediating discussion between victims and offenders to resolve conflict and repair harm through restorative justice;
- providing a route to change and progression for those offenders who get involved in volunteering. During custody, for example, peer support schemes or community-based projects can potentially develop skills to help resettlement as well as providing a stability factor between custody and reintegration into the community. On release, offenders can use their experiences, new skills and confidence to get involved in other volunteering initiatives which can help them in their personal lives and act as a conduit to employment, training or education (**see figure 2**);
- providing NOMS and other employees with the opportunity to develop personal and transferable skills through employer supported volunteering<sup>14</sup>;
- developing increased confidence, a sense of worth, and the acquisition of skills and experience for volunteers from the community;
- changing communities by engaging local people in developing local solutions to local problems, the central principle of civil renewal. This can help to increase understanding; challenge attitudes surrounding offenders and the wider Criminal Justice System; enhance accountability; and, increase wider public confidence;
- the Young Adult Offender Project, in place to make recommendations about the effective regime for this difficult to engage age group between 18 and 24, has identified volunteering, mentoring and reparative justice as key underpinning elements of any effective intervention.

### Offenders as volunteers – a route to employment

Nacro runs a drop in service in Birmingham for people who have recently been released from prisons in the area. They support them to find work, maintain their accommodation etc. They advise:

*"For around the last 6 months we have had a woman volunteering with us on day release from prison. She has a great rapport with the people using the service as she has had a similar experience to them and so can relate to their issues and problems. She has been so successful in her role that she has recently been offered a part time post to continue the work she has been doing. She will start in this post when she is released in January."*

<sup>13</sup> NOMS (2006) *The NOMS Offender Management Model*, NOMS: London.

<sup>14</sup> Volunteering England (2005) *Employer Supported Volunteering*:

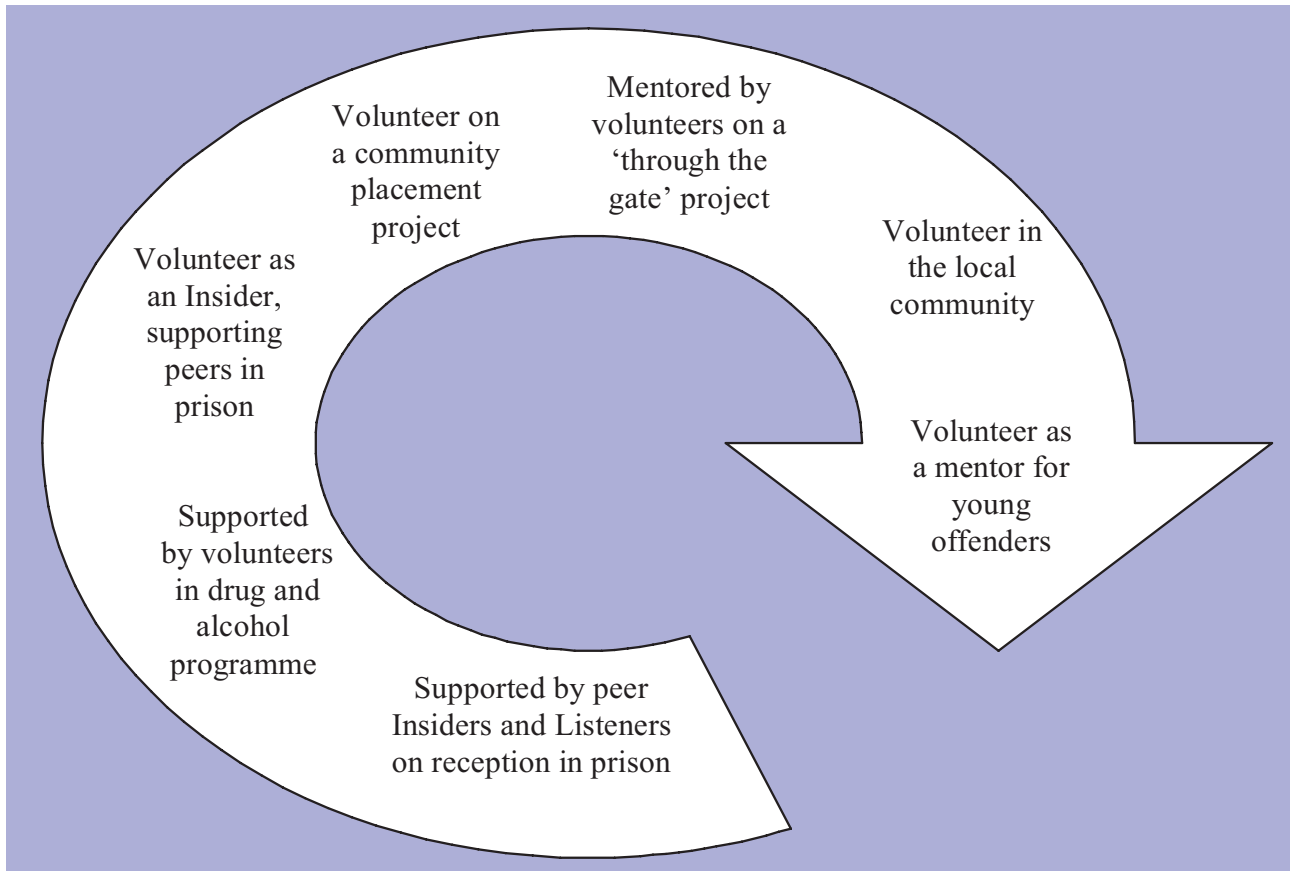
<http://www.volunteering.org.uk/managingvolunteers/publications/employersupportedvolunteeringtheguide.htm>

**Figure 1: Examples of the place of volunteering on the seven pathways<sup>15</sup> to reducing re-offending**

Pathway	Role of volunteering	Examples
Accommodation	Practical support and advice to offenders upon release from prison, including transport Advice and guidance to offenders within prison and the community on dealing with accommodation issues, including peer support schemes	Multi faith Community Chaplaincy Mentoring and befriending Peer advice work Referral Unit volunteering Education, Training and
Employment (ETE)	Development of offender skills within prisons, those released and those on non-custodial sentences to increase prospects of employment, education and training Enhancing access to job seeking support Work experience leading to direct routes into work Development of new employment opportunities through the Corporate Alliance	Mentoring Tutoring Community work placements for offenders Volunteer work placements in prisons
Mental and Physical Health	Support for offenders in custody, those released and those on non-custodial sentences Support to enable offender access to key services including health services	Peer support/Listener schemes Mentoring and befriending Provision of transport Drugs and Alcohol
Support and practical help for offenders in custody, those released and those on non-custodial sentences who are experiencing drug or alcohol misuse issues. Includes support in attending	drug treatment programmes, drug testing orders and workshops and lifestyle interventions through training and education	Peer support Mentoring and befriending Provision of transport
Finance, Benefit and Debt	Providing advice and support on finance, benefit and debt to those in prison, on release and on non-custodial sentences, including help in completing applications	Peer advice work Advice and guidance Mentoring and befriending
Children and Families of Offenders	Providing facilities and information to facilitate and enhance prison visiting Support and advice for offenders on relationships, children and families Support for families pre and post release	Visitor centres Crèche facilities Listener schemes
Attitudes, Thinking and Behaviour	Facilitating the resolution of conflict and reducing harm through restorative justice Developing relationships with offenders and the community to encourage rehabilitation Assistance with accredited programmes Providing vulnerable offenders with support to challenge damaging ways of thinking	Victim/offender mediation Multi faith Chaplaincy volunteers Prison visitors Mentoring and befriending Peer support services Circles of Support

<sup>15</sup> The pathways are set out in the National and Regional Action Plans for Reducing Re-offending and their delivery is supported and strengthened by the Alliances.

**Figure 2: Volunteering Progression for an Offender**



### **SOVA's Women into Work Programme**

SOVA's Women into Work programme explores the barriers faced by female offenders when seeking paid employment upon completion of their sentences. It involves female offenders as peer researchers, training them in research techniques such as running focus groups and managing the project.

Sarah<sup>16</sup> was a Listener at HMP Holloway and a peer researcher during her time at HMP Send and found these experiences invaluable in building her confidence and developing a skill set. As part of her volunteering, Sarah gained a BTEC in Professional Counselling at a local college and went on to be awarded an HNC in Housing Law. Towards the end of her sentence, she started volunteering at SOVA's offices in Sheffield and was presented with the 'Volunteer of the Year' Award.

For Sarah, the links to employment have been obvious. She felt the personal change came when she realised that as well as benefiting others, volunteering has clear benefits to the individual engaged in it. As she put it: "it was like crossing over from the inside world to the outside world".

### **Community volunteering at HMP Stanford Hill**

Joshua currently undertakes community work six days a week at a local care home working on the garden under the supervision of a staff member at the home. As part of the community work he is completing an NVQ in Horticulture and has been offered a full time paid job at the garden upon his release. Joshua feels that he has been well supported in his role, both within the prison and by the placement supervisor.

<sup>16</sup> All individuals have been given pseudonyms

### Giving to others

"You can use your life experiences ... one of the boys I help said "why are you helping me, you don't get paid for it?" I said that if my son was in that situation I like to think that someone was helping him ... they go 'wow'. A lot of people don't understand about volunteering ... you are giving something you've got to other people".

### The value of volunteer mentoring

*"I am 27 years old, and, six months ago, I was sentenced by the local magistrates court to a community rehabilitation order. Part of this order meant I had to undergo 12 mentoring sessions. If I'm honest today, to start with I was not very forthcoming and was unhappy about the situation.*

*My mentor came from a completely different background to myself but had a great deal to offer me, in the way of someone impartial to just listen or maybe offer advice on basic or more complex situations, which come up for everyone in day to day life, which I find hard to deal with or understand, due to a very lengthy drug addiction and unsettled way of life.*

*You see, what I am trying to say, is having a mentor to help me has made the difference between success and failure. Mentoring has had a massive effect on my life, how I think, act and from being on the other side of the fence gives a different outlook and belief"*

(Offender involved in a mentoring probation project)

### Chaplaincy at HMP Lewes

Lindsey volunteers with the Chaplaincy at HMP Lewes where she attends the weekly Catholic mass, has tea with the inmates, and shares her faith in a gentle, non-judgemental way. This also involves going in pairs into the wings to speak to individuals about any issues they would like to share. Lindsey feels that while her experience of talking to offenders has been frequently difficult and emotionally demanding, it has led to her challenging her own prejudices and allows her to understand human nature more fully: *"It's broadened my outlook and made me more tolerant of people"*

### Enhancing skills and employability through volunteering

"When I started doing volunteering, initially I got into it because I was looking for jobs ...my skills and experiences of life were quite slim. [It has helped me develop] my communication skills because you are talking to lots of different people not just the younger people ... you have the families, the organisation itself. You look at organising things for people, you speak to people you have never spoken to before".

## 2.3 The challenges facing volunteering to reduce re-offending

Developing this strategy has highlighted challenges that must be addressed if volunteering to reduce re-offending is to reach its potential. These are

- *Fragmentation* - Volunteering within the correctional services has frequently developed in the absence of overall leadership and co-ordination, which has led to variation in practice and the engagement of volunteers; confusion around the role of volunteering; and, among some, a perception that it competes with, rather than complements, paid work. A lack of robust evidence on the impact of volunteering has amplified the situation.
- *Barriers to participation* – Barriers exist which can prevent volunteers from getting involved. These are summarised in **figure 3**.
- *Assessment and management of high risk of harm* – Safeguards need to be integrated into work with volunteers, particularly given their involvement with high risk offenders. This includes consideration of the Offender Manager's risk of harm assessment; appropriate matching of the volunteer/mentor with the offender; and systems to support volunteers working with those that pose a higher risk of harm.

- *Lack of resources* - The level of support volunteers receive varies considerably. Financial pressures can restrict investment to develop volunteering and there is sometimes a lack of understanding of the resources required and of the returns that are to be gained.
- *A rapidly changing environment* – NOMS is relatively new and the Criminal Justice System is a rapidly changing environment. This can create feelings of uncertainty for staff, which can foster an environment in which volunteering is less likely to flourish. NOMS, as a commissioning body, will need to treat providers from all sectors equally, and local volunteering will need to adapt to these changes.

## 2.4 Opportunities for volunteering to reduce re-offending

Alongside these challenges for volunteering, there are also a number of drivers and opportunities. These can be summarised as:

- *Enthusiasm for volunteering* – Many employees are committed to the concept of volunteering, recognising that it adds value to existing work and services providing much needed skills, knowledge and experience, and that it builds vital links with local communities.
- *Momentum towards partnership working* – The move towards enhanced partnership working, outlined in *Improving Prison and Probation Services: Public Value Partnerships*, (2006:6), provides opportunities “for those willing to work with others and play to their strengths, those who can demonstrate effectiveness and impact, those who can draw in the skills of volunteers and community groups, those who want and are able to make a difference.” For example, the three reducing re-offending Alliances provide an opportunity to engage volunteers and to support its development (**figure 4**) and the commissioning process.
- *Wealth of experience* – The prison and probation services’ long history of volunteer involvement provides a wealth of experience and there are numerous examples of good

### Figure 3: Barriers to volunteering to reduce re-offending

- The perceptions and attitudes of some including concerns related to risk and security issues, and also to the value and professionalism of volunteering.
- Anecdotal evidence suggests that potential volunteers are being lost because of very lengthy security clearance and CRB checks.
- Negative perceptions of offenders, prisons and the probation service.
- A lack of awareness among the general public of the opportunities for volunteering across the Criminal Justice System as a whole.
- Policies that do not enable those with a criminal record to volunteer or require that their sentence be spent for over 12 or 24 months, thus limiting involvement by offenders.
- Capacity issues for some faith communities and also, for some groups, the stigma attached to a member of the community being in prison.
- Shortcomings in some volunteer management practices, including poor recruitment mechanisms and non-payment of expenses, limit the likelihood of diverse people getting involved. Limited resources for volunteer management exacerbate this issue.

## Volunteers Can: Towards a Volunteering Strategy to Reduce Re-Offending

practice in the management of volunteers which will be invaluable in delivering the aims of this strategy.

- Conducive environment – Many government initiatives focus on increasing the number and diversity of volunteers and the quality of experience.

This strategy is in itself an opportunity to embed volunteering work with offenders. The following chapters propose how.

### **Figure 4: Reducing Re-offending Alliances**

The Alliances provide another route to embed volunteering in the delivery of services in the seven pathways.

The Corporate Alliance focuses on increasing the numbers of offenders going into employment through encouraging more employers to take on offenders. Volunteering has an important role to play in the Corporate Alliance not least because volunteering and mentoring by employees can provide offenders with the skills and experience to help them become job ready employees.

The Civic Society Alliance supports NOMS relationships at a local level with local authorities, local organisations and local people. It aims to ensure offenders have equality of access to mainstream services such as accommodation and health, as well as to leisure facilities – sports, arts and music – to help keep them engaged in purposeful activities. Volunteers and mentors play an important role in supporting the delivery of these services and activities.

Faith and Voluntary and Community Sector Alliance aims to promote and build on the important role of faith groups and the voluntary and community sector providing support and guidance to offenders in areas such as accommodation, employment, drugs and alcohol, children and families and advice on benefits, debt and finance. Volunteers and mentors are central in the delivery of this support.

### 3. Increasing the Number and Diversity of Volunteers

Summary		
Current situation	Objective	Actions
There is enthusiasm for volunteering, although confusion around its definition and value exists. There is also variation in the levels and form of volunteering and a lack of diversity of volunteers. Increasing the number and diversity of volunteers would enhance the impact of volunteering.	Developing a clear understanding of the definition of volunteering.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing guidance to employees, stakeholders, partners and providers on the definition and value of volunteering.</li> </ul>
	Promoting widespread involvement of volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collating and disseminating case studies and examples of volunteering work with offenders.</li> <li>Promoting volunteering and opportunities for engagement, including media coverage and developing partnerships with volunteering infrastructure to recruit new volunteers.</li> </ul>
	Increasing the diversity of volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertaking a diversity impact assessment.</li> <li>Building links between NOMS and organisations representing groups less likely to volunteer.</li> <li>Identifying opportunities to retain volunteers' interest whilst awaiting security and CRB checks</li> <li>Disseminating good practice and case studies on overcoming barriers to involvement.</li> </ul>

#### 3.1 Defining volunteering

Based on the definition established within the Volunteering Compact Code of Good Practice<sup>17</sup>, volunteering to reduce re-offending could be defined as:

*“Any activity within the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) that involves individuals willingly giving their time for the benefit of offenders, victims and the wider community. It can add value to the services provided and commissioned by NOMS and its partners and is distinct from other forms of unpaid work”.*

The three principles of volunteering are that it is:

- undertaken of one’s own free will;
- unpaid;
- of benefit to others (as well as oneself).

In addition, volunteering to reduce re-offending:

- is value added; it is not replacing paid roles;
- is distinct from compulsory unpaid work as part of community orders;
- is distinct from paid work in the voluntary and community sector.

This definition of volunteering should be disseminated widely and embedded within NOMS and its partners. **This could be achieved by:**

- providing guidance to employees (at all levels) and stakeholders to explain the role that volunteers can play and the contribution they can make. This would make explicit the proposed definition of volunteering and how it is distinct from unpaid work and from paid roles.

<sup>17</sup> Home Office (2005) *Volunteering Compact Code of Good Practice*, Home Office: London. Quote taken from page 4.

We believe that providing a clear definition of volunteering would improve understanding of the place and value of volunteering across NOMS and its partners. This would reassure staff on how volunteering complements rather than competes with paid jobs. It would create a firm foundation for future developments in volunteering.

### 3.2 Levels and types of volunteering

There is a lack of consistency as to the nature and scale of involvement of the many volunteers working with NOMS and its partners. In general, there is a lack of understanding as to what would be appropriate opportunities to develop and efforts to recruit new volunteers are often limited.

Opportunities for engagement in volunteering should be expanded appropriately to reach across the service to help reduce re-offending and increase public confidence. **This could be achieved by:**

- collating and disseminating case studies of volunteering opportunities that contribute to each of the seven pathways and to other key areas of work, such as the Alliances. This would involve service providers submitting good practice case studies of offender volunteers, community volunteers, and employer supported volunteering. The case studies would be disseminated to provide guidance and inspiration to NOMS and its partners for the future development of volunteering;
- promoting the role of volunteering to reduce re-offending and opportunities for engagement. For example, by further dissemination of the What Can I Do? guide to volunteer opportunities; working with the media to promote positive stories and case studies about volunteering in prisons and probation areas, and in particular the contribution of offenders as volunteers; developing partnerships with the volunteering infrastructure, particularly Volunteer Centres at the local level, to recruit new volunteers.

Increasing the numbers of volunteers and the types of opportunities available could support its own aims and those it shares with partners of enhancing resettlement and reducing re-offending. Providing new opportunities for offenders to volunteer, particularly those who have limited social links, skills and experiences such as the Young Adult Offender group, could help to provide them with skills and experience to facilitate their reform and resettlement. Enhancing the opportunities for employer supported volunteering could enable employees to develop transferable skills and experience to be used in their workplace. Giving those in the community the chance to get involved in volunteering could bring skills and experience to better support offenders and the delivery of services.

#### What Can I Do?

*What Can I Do?* is a guide to volunteering opportunities in the Criminal Justice System. It includes information on the different activities volunteers can undertake, how to get involved, feedback from volunteers and signposting to volunteering projects and organisations. For a copy of What Can I Do? visit: [www.whatcanido.org.uk](http://www.whatcanido.org.uk)

### 3.3 Increasing the diversity of volunteers

We would expect the greatest impacts may be had when volunteers are as diverse as the communities from which they are drawn, or as the service users they support. While the diversity of volunteers working with offenders is growing, evidence suggests they do not reflect the make-up of the offenders throughout the country's prisons and probation areas. In general, Asian, black and minority ethnic groups, young adults and men appear to be underrepresented as volunteers working

with offenders. The barriers highlighted in section 2.3 of this strategy, are likely to affect 'hard to reach groups' more markedly.

A holistic understanding of diversity should be firmly established. It should foster an environment in which there is equal access to volunteering for people regardless of gender, ethnic and faith background, age, disability, socio-economic group or sexual orientation. This includes engaging offenders and past service users as volunteers, and recognising the value of doing so. Volunteers should reflect the local communities they support.

Volunteering to help reduce re-offending should value diversity and work towards inclusivity by challenging the barriers that exist to participation. **This could be achieved by:**

- undertaking a Diversity Impact Assessment to establish whether opportunities for volunteering are accessible and inclusive;
- building closer links between NOMS and volunteering infrastructure agencies and organisations representing those groups who are less likely to volunteer in order to raise awareness of opportunities for involvement and to facilitate engagement;
- identifying opportunities to retain volunteers' interest whilst awaiting security and CRB checks. For example, through identifying induction opportunities involving the wider criminal justice system, or providing training on "working with offenders";
- championing volunteering as an effective resettlement activity within the custodial estate, particularly those establishments holding Young Adult Offenders;
- disseminating good practice guidelines and case studies to illustrate how barriers to involvement have or could be overcome, particularly for 'hard to reach' groups.

We believe that ensuring a diversity of involvement in volunteering to help reduce re-offending would further enhance the services provided to offenders who themselves are drawn from diverse backgrounds, as there would be a greater understanding of needs and capacity to meet them. It would also help to ensure communities are better represented within NOMS' and its partners' work.

### **Volunteer Centre Bedford**

The Volunteer Centre Bedford works in partnership with a number of organisations (including the Ormiston Trust, Spurgeon's Childcare and Yarlswood Befrienders) to recruit volunteers for HMP Bedford and Yarlswood Immigration Detention Centre. In this way they are able to offer volunteers a range of opportunities, such as childcare roles, work in visitor centres, befriending and introductions to local Independent Monitoring Boards. The Volunteer Centre matches individuals to a volunteer role and organisation according to their interests and experiences. They also make clear to prospective volunteers the implications of working in a prison or probation environment, specifically highlighting the need for CRB and security checks and the amount of time that these procedures can take.

The Probation Service in Bedfordshire, in particular the Drug Rehabilitation team, also works closely with the Volunteer Centre referring offenders to them who they feel would benefit from volunteering opportunities.

## 4. Becoming more Strategic in Volunteer Development

Summary		
Current situation	Objective	Actions
There is great potential for partnership working to reduce re-offending, yet the commitment to volunteering can be variable with leadership often lacking. A lack of co-ordination between policies and practices, and between prisons and probation, is also evident. Becoming more strategic in the development of volunteering would maximise impacts and improve the quality of engagement.	Developing ownership and leadership of volunteering.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refreshing leadership for volunteering at the national level.</li> <li>Encouraging ROMs to lead on volunteering.</li> <li>Encouraging service providers to develop local leadership through a named volunteer co-ordinator.</li> </ul>
	Developing a strategic fit for volunteering to help reduce re-offending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting volunteering as a key opportunity within the commissioning process.</li> <li>Encouraging prisons, probation, private and VCS organisations to work more closely together.</li> <li>Encouraging volunteering as part of regional reducing re-offending partnership strategies.</li> <li>Encouraging the inclusion of volunteering and mentoring in offender management plans.</li> <li>'Volunteer proofing' future key strategies and policies within NOMS.</li> </ul>
	Developing a strategic link with wider volunteering policies and agendas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring NOMS inputs into the development of national volunteering policies.</li> <li>Encouraging links with and representation on local partnership agencies and forums.</li> <li>Keeping service provider staff with responsibility for volunteer co-ordination informed.</li> </ul>

### 4.1 Developing ownership and identifying leaders

Leadership is central to the strategic development of volunteering to reduce re-offending. In order for it to develop coherently, it needs to be taken forward by committed individuals who will champion its cause at every level, giving it the highest possible priority.

Commitment to the volunteering agenda is variable with sometimes inconsistent leadership resulting in volunteering being given a low priority or being developed reactively. This can lead to inconsistency of opportunity and uneven engagement.

Strong leadership and ownership of the volunteering agenda within NOMS and across its partners is required. **This could be achieved by:**

- refreshing leadership for volunteering at the national level within NOMS to ensure volunteering is kept on the agenda at the highest level, and assist its strategic development across all areas of NOMS' work;
  - encouraging ROMs to recognise volunteering as an integral but distinct element of their responsibility for partnership development with all sectors. This is being strengthened by the integration of all Alliances and pathways work in regional plans. Through the commissioning agenda, this would focus service providers on the value of promoting, supporting and encouraging volunteering;
  - encouraging service providers, including prisons and probation, to develop local leadership for volunteering through giving responsibility for volunteer co-ordination to a named member of their staff.

We believe that ensuring volunteering is driven by strong leadership would help ensure that it is linked strategically to other agendas within NOMS and that there is commitment to, and understanding of, the value of volunteering at all levels. Ownership and leadership of the volunteering agendas would also help to ensure that appropriate partnerships between the prison and probation services, private and voluntary sector are identified and established.

#### **HMP Lewes**

Within Lewes Prison the Head of Resettlement has responsibility for voluntary and community sector engagement and for volunteering. Since being in post there have been considerable developments made to the involvement of volunteers. This includes mapping their engagement with VCS organisations and volunteers across the seven pathways with the aim of developing further opportunities in a broader range of areas. The prison has been working with local partners to develop volunteer involvement, particularly through links with Councils for Voluntary Service and Volunteer Centres, which are now recruiting volunteers for the prison. Volunteers are involved in a wide range of roles including education, chaplaincy, bereavement counselling, prison visitors, visitors centre, also offenders volunteer as listeners.

#### **4.2 Developing a strategic fit for volunteering to reduce re-offending**

A lack of co-ordination of policies and practices means that some prisons and probation areas have worked in isolation from one another.

There is significant opportunity for the development of partnerships, particularly in terms of developing 'through the gate' activities. Responsibility for this improved strategic development lies both with NOMS and with its partners.

Volunteering with offenders needs to be developed strategically to ensure that it is planned for and delivered in a way that transcends boundaries within NOMS and beyond.

#### **This could be achieved by:**

- ensuring volunteering becomes a key opportunity within the commissioning process by promoting commissioner understanding of the value of volunteering and the potential contribution it can make to reducing re-offending outcomes. Commissioners should, where appropriate, consider the positive contribution volunteers can make to service development and delivery. When included, providers will need to address volunteer management, management overheads and the processes and procedures in place for involving volunteers;
- encouraging prison and probation services, and private and voluntary sector organisations, to work more closely together to become more strategic in their approach to volunteering, maximising impact and minimising duplication;
- encouraging volunteering as part of regional strategies for reducing re-offending to further embed volunteering within the reducing re-offending pathways, supported by the Alliances and to promote community engagement and civil renewal;
- encouraging offender managers to include volunteering and mentoring in offender management plans;
- 'Volunteer proofing' future NOMS key strategies and policies.

### 4.3 Wider policies and agendas

Volunteering to help reduce re-offending fits well with wider government policies and initiatives surrounding the development of volunteering (see figure 5). Many of these wider agendas for volunteering address similar issues and challenges to those outlined in this consultation document, and there is clear scope to link in more closely.

Volunteering to help reduce re-offending should be developed and supported within the context of wider government policies and initiatives to support and develop volunteering.

**This could be achieved by:**

- ensuring NOMS inputs into the development of national volunteering-related policies and initiatives;
- encouraging the links with and representation on, local partnership agencies and forums that are taking the volunteering agenda forward. This includes, for example, Local Strategic Partnerships and Regional England Volunteer Development Councils;
- keeping service provider staff with responsibility for volunteer co-ordination informed of developments in national volunteering policies.

We believe that linking volunteering to reduce re-offending more closely with other government policies would help ensure that it is developed alongside, and in relation to, other government policies and agendas, which may provide additional sources of support.

#### **West Mercia Probation Area**

Over 150 volunteers are involved in West Mercia through partnership projects between the probation area and voluntary sector organisations, such as SOVA, ASHA Women's Centre and Youth Support Services (YSS).

One such initiative is ACCLAIM, delivered through YSS. This project, which is focused on meeting the needs of prolific and other priority offenders (PPOs) over the age of 18, gives offenders the opportunity to work with a volunteer mentor as part of their court-imposed supervision plan. The offenders are given support to help meet their specific needs and fulfil court requirements through up to 20 mentoring sessions. Mentors might, for example, help them access training or employment opportunities.

To enable closer working, West Mercia probation staff have been seconded to the YSS. This not only facilitates the referral process of PPOs to mentors but helps both the YSS and probation staff to develop a better understanding about each other's role.

#### **Kent and Medway Resettlement Programme**

The Kent and Medway Resettlement Programme is a multi-agency initiative involving HMP Stanford Hill, HMP Canterbury, HMP Elmley, Kent Police, Kent Probation Area, local government and other agencies. The scheme provides assistance to offenders who are identified as needing additional support once they are released from prison. Following an initial meeting with the offender in custody, the relevant agencies meet to develop a strategy to help support the offender when they are released. A fully trained mentor will give the offender this help, providing assistance on issues such as benefits, housing or employment. The mentors work alongside Community Support Officers and are supervised through the Kent Mentoring Unit, run by Kent Probation Area.

**NOMS Safer Custody Group/Samaritan Partnership**

This partnership has been developed over 15 years and ensures that Samaritans are an ongoing part of HMPS' Suicide Prevention Strategy. There are regular partnership meetings: Samaritan Volunteer Regional Prison Support Officers attend HMPS Area Safe Custody Meetings and national meetings with Safer Custody Group to support and develop Samaritan and Listener work with both the Prison and Probation Services.

**Cheshire Probation Area and HMP Risley**

This project is focused on supporting high-risk offenders who have committed sexual offences against children. HMP Risley refers offenders in need of a mentor to the Cheshire Probation Mentoring Unit who then match a fully screened and trained mentor with a prisoner. Mentors need to have gained twelve months experience before being considered for this mentoring and attend a selection interview with the MAPPA Co-ordinator. They also receive specific training in mentoring sex offenders. Mentors meet the offender prior to them leaving prison and continue their relationship after release, providing support to help their re-integration into the community.

**Figure 5: Examples of Government policies and initiatives**

- **The Home Office's Public Service Agreement Six:** PSA 6 aims to 'increase voluntary and community engagement, especially amongst those at risk of social exclusion'. NOMS is well placed to help achieve this target, particularly through the engagement of offenders as volunteers, many of whom belong to the PSA6 target groups.
- **Volunteering for All:** The 'Volunteering for All' strategy led by the Office of the Third Sector in the Cabinet Office is a cross-government initiative, aimed at identifying and removing barriers to volunteering and promoting opportunities to potential volunteers. It aims to help address the PSA6 target in England.
- **GoldStar:** Launched by the Home Office in November 2005, the two-year GoldStar initiative aims to spread good practice on the recruitment, management and retention of volunteers, mentors and befrienders from the three PSA 6 target groups.
- **ChangeUp:** The ChangeUp programme is a cross government framework focused on improving the capacity and infrastructure of the voluntary and community sector. Strengthening the support and assistance available to volunteer involving organisations is a part of this work. From April 2006 ChangeUp is managed by CapacityBuilders, an agency at arms length to government, led by a board of sector experts.
- **'V':** The charity 'V' was launched in 2006 with the aim of engaging one million more 16 to 25 year olds in volunteering and community action by 2010. The organisation is tasked with taking forward the Russell Commission recommendations for youth action and engagement.
- **Criminal Justice System:** NOMS is working with the rest of the CJS through Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJB), using civil renewal initiatives, to raise public confidence. These include the LCJB demonstration site in Surrey where new approaches to crime and public safety are being pioneered in partnership with Crime Disorder and Reduction Partnerships and Neighbourhood Panels. In some cases panel members have applied to be justice volunteers as a result of criminal justice agency presentations.

- **Youth Justice Board:** The YJB recognises the role local volunteers can play in the provision of effective youth justice services – as appropriate adults, mentors and youth offender panel members. Existing areas of work in parallel with NOMS include NOMS and YJB reducing re-offending plans, civil renewal, and volunteering guidance. Further collaborative work is underway including joint regional plans.
- **Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs):** The LAA is a three year agreement that sets out the priorities for a local area agreed between central government and the local area represented by the Local Authority and the LSP and other key partners. The reducing re-offending agenda is largely covered under the Safer and Stronger Communities Block of the LAA. As well as the mandatory indicator to reduce re-offending, LAAs must contain a mandatory indicator; to “increase the number of people recorded as or reporting that they have engaged in formal volunteering on an average of at least two hours per week over the past year”. This further supports the important outcome for Local Authorities in the LAAs to empower local people to have a greater choice and influence over local decision making and a greater role in public service delivery. There will also be outcomes and indicators relevant to reducing re-offending in the other three blocks: Healthier Communities and Older People; Children and Young People's; and Economic Development and Enterprise.

#### **Prison clustering on the Isle of Sheppey**

HMP Standford Hill, Swaleside and Elmley on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent have recently been clustered in a strategic change to the management of the three prisons. This has seen the development of a new Voluntary Sector Co-ordinator post and increased priority given to volunteering within the three prisons.

An increased strategic overview across the three prisons has provided the opportunity to link volunteering and voluntary sector engagement into Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreements. The three prisons are seeking to increase the number and variety of voluntary sector organisations they work with. As part of this strategic change, they want to widen the engagement with the voluntary sector from the simple and traditional ‘meet and greet’ at the gate, to more proactive engagement. This involves the development of a community strategy which will be extended to prisons throughout Kent.

#### **The Assisted Community Engagement Programme**

Catholic Caring Services works with prisons across Lancashire running this charitable resettlement programme which works with over 50 volunteers to provide mentoring support to offenders six weeks prior to their release and post release. The resettlement programme focuses principally on securing accommodation but also provides support around training and employment during a particularly vulnerable period of the offenders’ lives.

The programme works closely with NACRO at the prisons which refers offenders to Catholic Caring Services, where they are matched with a volunteer mentor. This mutually beneficial partnership ensures that NACRO provides a continuum of support to the offender and the prison, and Catholic Caring Services have a supply of clients to work with and opportunities to fulfil the objectives of their charitable funders. Both organisations have consciously developed and modified their services to ensure that they meet the need of the prisons.

**Connect 2**

This is a European Social Fund partnership project between four probation boards and the prison service in the West of Midlands. By June 2007 the initiative aims to provide supported resettlement to 6,000 short sentence prisoners, with a particular focus on improving their employment prospects. Over 200 mentors are involved in Connect 2 through voluntary sector organisations and provide offenders with support to aid their resettlement.

This partnership working enables the mentor to support the offender through their transition period from prison into the community. The mentor agency meets each prisoner prior to release to go over their resettlement action plan, which is developed in the prison with Connect workers, and then makes arrangements for the provision of mentor support on release. Where necessary this can involve the mentor meeting the prisoner at the gate on release. Each prisoner is offered up to 12 hours of support post release to overcome barriers to employment and a third of released prisoners take up some form of ongoing contact.

## 5. Improving Support to Volunteers

Summary		
Current situation	Objective	Actions
A long history of involving volunteers has resulted in numerous examples of good practice. Co-ordination of volunteering activities is, however, lacking and support and line management can be variable and inconsistent, with limited resources.	Developing clear lines of responsibility for volunteer support and co-ordination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging the development of volunteer co-ordination posts at the prisons and probation level.</li> </ul>
	Adhering to good practice standards in volunteer management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitating the development of good practice in volunteer involvement across NOMS and its partners.</li> <li>Promoting Investing in Volunteers and Mentoring Approved Standards.</li> <li>Establishing a recognition scheme for volunteers.</li> </ul>
	Working towards the provision of resources for volunteer management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working towards sustainable funding for volunteers.</li> <li>Encouraging service providers to implement an expenses policy.</li> </ul>

### 5.1 Clear lines of responsibility for volunteer support and co-ordination

For volunteering to flourish it needs to be well co-ordinated across an organisation with individual volunteers receiving support from their line managers. Volunteers working with offenders can be supported directly by staff within a VCS or private organisation or by staff employed by the prison or probation area. Where the support comes from is highly variable. Moreover, the co-ordination of volunteering is often limited. As a result, volunteers receive inconsistent support and volunteering as a whole is often poorly developed.

As best practice, identified individuals should be given responsibility for co-ordinating volunteering at a local level. A volunteer co-ordinator would ensure a quality of support for all volunteers, regardless of whether they are managed by the service provider directly or by external organisations. They would help to ensure that volunteering develops in a coherent and co-ordinated manner within the prison or probation area, enabling different volunteering activities to complement one another.

The delineation of responsibility for volunteering, with inclusion of volunteer co-ordination in job descriptions is recognised as important to the development of volunteering. **This could be achieved by:**

- encouraging the development of volunteer co-ordination as a distinct element of a job role within prisons and probation areas. Holders of such posts would be responsible at the local level for the strategic co-ordination and development of volunteering and volunteers (including those managed directly by the service provider and those managed by external organisations).

We believe that creating volunteer co-ordinator posts would lead to better support for volunteers and facilitate enhanced partnership working with all stakeholders.

### **Community Chaplaincy at HMP Leeds**

In the past, HMP Leeds has experienced major problems with self-harmers, as well as seeing offenders repeatedly returning to the prison on further sentences. A Community Chaplaincy project was therefore established to develop a system of through-care and to improve the resettlement experience for offenders upon release. This has employed a volunteer co-ordinator for three years, and is led by a Muslim Chaplain. The project provides an intermediary between the prison and the community, developing support that is appropriate and relevant to the individual.

Volunteer mentors work to establish a relationship with the offender pre-release and then continue the relationship in the community. The role of the mentor is to encourage the offender to take responsibility for the issues which have been identified in an agreed action plan. The actions are ongoing and achievements are accumulated slowly, rather than simply a box ticking exercise, to ensure targets are met at the end of the scheme.

The project has funding for three years from the Invest to Save budget. Project leaders are hoping that any future funding bid for resources to ensure long-term sustainability will be undertaken jointly between the prison and the Community Chaplaincy.

### **5.2 Quality standards in volunteer involvement**

All volunteers must be well supported if they are to fulfil their potential. The appropriateness and quality of the support and management they receive is also closely linked to their satisfaction, commitment and, in the long term, their retention. This is particularly relevant to the unique context of volunteering with offenders where volunteers may work in a variety of capacities. Many people will not have had previous experience of the prison and probation environment. They will often be supporting vulnerable people, both victims and offenders, and may be based in high-risk environments and may be supporting high risk of harm offenders. It is therefore incumbent upon NOMS to encourage appropriate training and support for all volunteers and to ensure that risk management procedures are followed.

This is even more important where volunteers and mentors from faith and voluntary groups are engaged through prisons or in the community (such as in community chaplaincies) in the management of high risk offenders. This area of work requires special consideration, guidance and support from NOMS to ensure public protection. Issues to be addressed include recruitment and selection processes, specific training around high risk offenders such as safeguarding children, assessment and support, confidentiality, risk management and referral processes.

### **Circles of Support and Accountability**

'Circles of Support and Accountability' works with people who have sexually abused children and who are at a high level of risk of re-offending. 'Circles' volunteers offer their core member social and emotional support that complements the statutory provision. Reducing isolation and loneliness is believed to significantly reduce the risk of re-offending. Four pilot projects have been operating nationally and key features include: high level of training; strong inter-agency liaison; consistent supervision and support of volunteers; comprehensive sharing of information and effective communication processes. Greater Manchester Community Chaplaincy, a faith-based project that supports people of faith or of no faith, works in partnership with Greater Manchester Probation which has seconded a probation officer to co-ordinate 'Circles'. Almost 80% of their volunteers have come from the local faith communities.

### Delivering Services to High Risk Offenders

In June 2005 Clinks undertook a scoping exercise to determine the range of VCS services to high risk offenders. Findings which are also of relevance to volunteering include:

- a significant proportion of voluntary and community organisations include high risk offenders within their generic service provision;
- many voluntary and community organisations have a need for specific training in managing high risk offenders including knowledge of the assessment and management procedures of statutory agencies;
- there are a smaller number of voluntary and community organisations that specialise
- there is little consistency in determining the capacity of voluntary and community organisations to deliver services to high risk offenders;
- there is evidence of considerable expertise in the management of high risk offenders within the voluntary and community organisations and it would contribute significantly to the effectiveness of the criminal justice system if this knowledge and experience was routinely recruited by NOMS;
- the case examples implicitly identified the need to address diversity issues in respect of the management of dangerous offenders.

Many VCS organisations, prisons and probation areas provide exceptional support to their volunteers. However, while there are such examples of good practice, they appear to be rarely shared and, in other cases, the support provided can be inconsistent and of limited quality. Volunteers can often be involved in an ad hoc and reactive way, with programmes lacking co-ordination and planning.

For volunteering to develop properly, the consistent application of good practice in volunteer management is needed, ensuring a quality of experience and service delivery.

#### **This could be achieved by:**

- facilitating the development of good practice in volunteer involvement and risk management across NOMS and its partners, with special consideration for work with high risk offenders, from recruitment and selection through to induction, training, supervision and support. This could be achieved through the provision of training to staff with line management responsibility in volunteer management and through wider promotion of good practice materials, case studies and guides (**see figure 6**). Developing links with experts in volunteer involvement – including volunteering infrastructure agencies and volunteer-involving organisations – would reinforce this;
- promoting Investing in Volunteers (IiV) and Mentoring Approved Provider Standards as recognised quality standards in volunteering and mentoring (**see figure 7**), and identifying exemplar prisons and probations areas to work towards achieving them. Commissioners will have a role in working with providers to encourage the use of quality standards for volunteers, and where they do not exist, to encourage them to work towards achieving them;
- establishing a recognition scheme for volunteers, including a national Volunteer of the Year awards scheme specifically for volunteers.

We believe that volunteer management that met the necessary quality standards would help to improve the experience of volunteers and their ability to maximise their impact whilst minimising risk.

The consistency of approach would help to enhance levels of confidence amongst the public, volunteers, offenders, and across NOMS and its partners.

### 5.3 Resourcing volunteer management

Volunteering is freely given but it is not cost free. Ensuring volunteers are well supported through adherence to at least minimum quality standards will take effort and investment.

At present, there are few resources within the sector to facilitate or expand volunteering, something that is often seen as an add-on or luxury. At the local level, the full costs of recruiting, supporting and managing volunteers are frequently not fully recognised. Unless we better use the resources available, the long-term development of volunteering will not fulfil its potential, and its ability to meet the needs of more offenders and victims will be limited.

We need to work towards volunteering being better supported and resourced in service provision. **This could be achieved by:**

- working towards sustainable funding for volunteering with offenders. This would include ensuring that the commissioning process recognises volunteer management costs and legitimate budget lines. It would also include identifying alternative funding sources for the development of volunteering;
- encouraging service providers to have policies in place that cover, for example, reasonable expenses incurred by volunteers.

We believe that achieving a sustainable funding base for volunteering with offenders would ensure that volunteers are better supported, with positive impacts on both recruitment and retention rates. It would enable the development of partnerships and a more consistent and proactive development of volunteering.

#### Clinks Training Resource Packs

'Volunteering in Prison: A resource pack to support and train voluntary and community sector staff and volunteers (2004)'

'Volunteering in the Community: A resource pack to support and train voluntary, statutory and community sector staff and volunteers (2006)'

Clinks have produced two training packs, aimed at statutory and voluntary agencies to help them train volunteers who work in prisons and those that work with offenders in the community, including those on community sentences and those released from prison. The resource packs have a series of training modules and include supporting exercises and worksheets including role play scenario activities. The packs draw on case study examples and experiences from voluntary, statutory and community sector organisations which involve volunteers. For further information visit: [www.clinks.org](http://www.clinks.org)

### **Kent Probation Mentor Unit**

Established in 1999 and run by Kent Probation Area, the Kent Probation Mentor Unit involves 50 mentors in a number of different roles, including befriending, assistance on crisis referral teams and providing support to offenders on Drug Intervention Programmes (DIPs). All mentors must attend a three day training programme before getting involved in one-to-one activities with offenders, however mentors can work on supervised tasks before training has been completed.

The mentor initial training course is linked to the Community Justice Occupational Standards and includes training on: the criminal justice system and aims of the probation service; the role of befrienders and mentors, the system for referring mentors; and guidance on communicating effectively with offenders. Mentors have reflected particularly positively on the usefulness of the role play and case studies, on the value of the follow up training, and have highlighted the importance of additional 'on the job' and informal training. One mentor said:

*The informal training is the best training...the important thing is that you have a good developed relationship with the probation officers. Also, on occasions you meet psychiatrists and doctors, when you are invited to add to the dialogue [about the offender]. All sorts of things open up in that, all sorts of insights and that is really helpful. You get lots of background information and your sketchy picture is filled in with lots of colour...then you have a whole new dialogue that you can work on with your client.*

### **SOVA recruitment policy**

SOVA has over 2,000 volunteers working as mentors to deliver mentoring and befriending opportunities through a variety of local projects. There is a clear realisation that their volunteers will be working with some extremely vulnerable and excluded individuals with unique requirements. The time and commitment given to thoroughly examining the motives and personalities of the individual volunteers applying is considerable, and SOVA prides itself on the rigour of their selection process.

Prospective volunteers are asked to get security checked, after which they are provided with a comprehensive information pack. An hour long interview follows, and if successful they attend training courses totalling 28 hours. Assessment features throughout the training, and they have a final one hour long post course interview. By this time, a large number of original applicants have dropped out or have been asked to leave, ensuring that the group of volunteers working as mentors with SOVA are capable and ready to make a difference.

### **Listeners Initial Training with Samaritans**

As of 2006, 125 prisons in England and Wales have Listener schemes where prisoners listen and offer emotional support in complete confidence to fellow prisoners who may be experiencing distress or despair. At any one time at least 1,500 trained volunteer Listeners are available to offer support to other prisoners. Listeners are selected, trained and supported by the Samaritans. Samaritans have now updated their initial training for Listeners which will bring consistency in the training programme across prisons. It is mandatory that all Samaritan branches working in prisons use this programme to train all prospective Listeners. The course is structured into eight sessions, all of which run for two hours and covers issues such as the limits of the listener role, listening to people, exploring suicidal thoughts and intentions, and supporting people at risk. Samaritan trainers are encouraged to conduct one to one sessions during the period of training where they explore whether the volunteer is experiencing any problems with the training and where constructive feedback is given. As Listeners progress in their training they are encouraged to reflect on what they have learnt by completing a learning journal. The application of skills they have learnt is encouraged with the use of role play. Ongoing training is delivered as part of the regular support meetings Listeners have with Samaritans.

## 6. Establishing the Impact of Volunteering

Summary		
Current situation	Objective	Actions
The potential impact of volunteering across NOMS and its partners is considerable, but the evidence needed to inform policy and practice is lacking.	Developing a stronger evidence base for the impact of volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigating opportunities for new internal and external research on the impact of volunteering.</li> <li>Identifying the lessons for policy and practice from research.</li> </ul>

### 6.1 Building the evidence base

The development of volunteering requires an accurate evidence base in order that it is understood, valued and resourced in its widest possible context. Accurate information surrounding its impact is also a key component of the development of appropriate and comprehensive policies.

Anecdotal evidence collected by the Institute for Volunteering Research during the development of this draft strategy began to describe the notable contribution volunteers can make. In addition, a small number of studies have pointed towards the link between volunteer mentoring and, for example, reduced rates of re-offending<sup>18</sup> <sup>19</sup>and reduced rates of self harm<sup>20</sup> and suicide<sup>21</sup>. It is believed that Young Adults engage much more effectively with interventions and programmes when they feel they are able to attach legitimacy and trusted adult status to people guiding them. This is an important aspect of effective provision for this age group and an area in which volunteers and mentors are potentially vital.

A review of research conducted by Cambridge University has recently been published which provides some promising evidence on the effectiveness of mentoring<sup>22</sup>. Mentors in this study provided support and advice, in a paid or unpaid non professional capacity, acting as a positive role model (Jolliffe and Farrington, 2007). Whilst the results of this review are encouraging, it was found that more rigorous research designs tended to detect a smaller effect of mentoring on re-offending. This combined with the fact that most of the studies were from the US limits how far we can transfer these findings to the UK. It is possible that different results will be found in UK as the context in which programmes are implemented, the characteristics of the participants, and of the programmes, may all influence outcomes. The report is available from the Research Development and Statistics website:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs07/rdsolr1107.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Blanchard, B. and Brown, P. (2001) *Bedfordshire Mentors and Peers, an evaluation of the establishment and operation of the scheme – April 2000-September 2001*, De Montfort University: Bedford

<sup>19</sup> University of Luton (1998) *Evaluation of the Online mentoring scheme* University of Luton Vauxhall Centre for the Study of Crime: Luton

<sup>20</sup> Davies, B. (1994) 'The Swansea listener scheme: views from the prison landings' *The Howard Journal* (33) 2 pp. 125-135, in Farrant, F. and Levenson, J. (2002) *Barred Citizens, Volunteering and active citizenship by prisoners* Prison Reform Trust: London

<sup>21</sup> Farrant, F. and Levenson, J. (2002) *Barred Citizens, Volunteering and active citizenship by prisoners* Prison Reform Trust: London

<sup>22</sup> Jolliffe, D. and Farrington, D. (2007). *A rapid evidence assessment of the impact of mentoring on re-offending: a summary*. Home Office Online Report 11/07. London: Home Office.

## Volunteers Can: Towards a Volunteering Strategy to Reduce Re-Offending

What is lacking, however, is a comprehensive and structured evidence base on the impact of volunteering. Few projects have been able to assess the impact of specific volunteering projects, which are often part of a larger package of interventions or may be difficult to quantify.

The development of volunteering to help reduce re-offending relies on the creation of a strong evidence base in order to inform policy and practice and to build a stronger commitment to volunteering. This could be achieved by:

- identifying opportunities for new research on the impact of volunteering on NOMS and its partners, volunteers, offenders and the wider community. Resources permitting, this would include drawing together existing research and commissioning new research, as well as more generally stimulating interest in the research community to conduct new studies in this area;
- identifying the lessons for policy and practice from research and ensuring that it is disseminated, through for example, regional conferences, road shows and networking events. Dissemination would be targeted at policy makers and practitioners; it should also be targeted at employees and volunteers.

We believe that building a strong evidence base on the impact of volunteering would increase understanding about what works and what doesn't in relation to volunteering. This evidence would help to develop better-informed policy and practice within NOMS and beyond.

## 7. Implementation and Review

### 7.1 A framework for delivery

A number of individual actions have been identified in this draft strategy. We have summarised below the potential key priorities at the national, regional and local level along with suggested timeframes and resource implications. Many of these actions are deliverable through existing structures with relatively minor adjustments to activities and minimal or no resource implications. Together they form a possible framework for implementation of the strategy.

#### 7.1.1 National promotion: NOMS as promoter of volunteering

At the national level, NOMS' role is to bring together the work of all service providers to improve the management of offenders. It is at this level that volunteering should be promoted and championed. It is proposed that the priorities for NOMS at the national level are:

#### Priority actions:

Action	Timeframe	Resources
Refreshing national leadership of volunteering	Immediate	Low
Undertaking a Diversity Impact Assessment	Immediate	Low
Providing guidance to employees on the definition and value of volunteering	Year 1	Low

#### Additional actions:

Action	Timeframe	Resources
Promoting the role of volunteering to raise awareness of opportunities for engagement	Ongoing	Low
Identifying opportunities to retain volunteers' interest whilst awaiting security and CRB checks	Ongoing	Low
Collating and disseminating case studies of volunteering opportunities	Year 1	Low
Keeping staff with responsibility for volunteer co-ordination informed of developments	Ongoing	Low
'Volunteer proofing' future key strategies and policies within NOMS	Ongoing	Low
Input into the development of national volunteering policies and initiatives	Ongoing	Low
Promoting Investing in Volunteers and Mentoring Approved Standards	Ongoing	Medium
Establishing a recognition scheme for volunteers	Year 1	Low
Identifying opportunities for research on the impact of volunteering to inform policy and practice	Ongoing	High
If the above agreed, commissioning research	Years 1 & 2	High

### 7.1.2 Regional facilitation: The role of ROMs in facilitating volunteering

Regional Offender Managers will hold the budgets to commission services and interventions for offender management according to what is needed in their region. The ROM will therefore, to a large extent, dictate the priority given to and the resources allocated to volunteering and as such they will play a crucial role in its facilitation. It is proposed that the priorities for ROMs should be:

#### Priority actions:

Action	Timeframe	Resources
Leading on volunteering at the regional level	Ongoing	Low
Actively supporting the development of volunteering at the service provider level	Year 1	Low
Supporting volunteering as a key opportunity within the commissioning process	Year 1	Low

#### Additional actions:

Action	Timeframe	Resources
Facilitating the development of good practice in volunteer involvement including training for volunteer management	Ongoing	Medium
Initiating links on local partnership agencies and forums	Year 1	Low
Collating and disseminating good practice case studies and examples of volunteering, including those demonstrating how to overcome barriers to involvement	Ongoing	Low

### 7.1.3 Local delivery: The role of service providers in delivering volunteering

At the local level prisons, probation areas and other service providers will be responsible for delivering volunteering projects either through their own services or through outside organisations. It is at the local level that much of the change and practical delivery should take place if volunteering is to develop. NOMS, as the commissioning body, is not able to directly fund these initiatives or intervene in how volunteering is managed locally, but will recognise volunteer management costs and legitimate budget lines, where appropriate, in the commissioning process. NOMS will encourage service providers to put in place the following:

## Volunteers Can: Towards a Volunteering Strategy to Reduce Re-Offending

Action		
Giving responsibility for volunteer co-ordination to a named member of staff, especially in prison and probation settings	Year 1	Medium
Adhering to good practice in volunteer management	Year 1	Medium
Initiating partnerships that involve volunteers with other prisons and probation areas and other service providers	Ongoing	Low
Contributing good practice case studies	Year 1	Low
Introducing an expenses policy	Year 1	Low
Developing partnerships with local volunteering infrastructure including Volunteer Centres	Ongoing	Low
Establishing partnerships between service providers and VCS organisations representing groups less likely to volunteer	Ongoing	Low
Including volunteering and mentoring in offender management plans	Ongoing	Low
Developing and implementing training for staff members supporting and managing volunteers	Year 1	Medium

### 7.2 Timescale and review

The draft strategy will be reviewed and finalised following the consultation period. A framework for delivery will then be developed. This will be a living document in recognition of the changing environment and it will therefore be reviewed annually and updated in the light of any changed priorities.

## Appendix 1

### What do you think?

'Volunteers Can: Towards a Volunteering Strategy to reduce re-offending' sets out the principles we believe necessary for volunteering to develop and fulfil its potential. This consultation paper has proposed a series of actions to achieve this, and has suggested key responsibilities for NOMS, the ROMs, individual prisons, probation areas and other service providers.

This consultation paper will be circulated widely at national, regional and local level throughout NOMS and its partner organisations, including the voluntary and community sector, the private sector, and the public sector. The consultation questions are set out in Annex 3, in the form of a response sheet. We would also welcome your opinions on the wider focus of the strategy, or any additional areas you feel are not addressed by the consultation questions.

For convenience, you may respond electronically by downloading the response sheet at:

[www.noms.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-publications-events/publications/consultations/.](http://www.noms.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-publications-events/publications/consultations/)

Please email your response to [james.memmott@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:james.memmott@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

Alternatively, you may photocopy the response sheet or contact us for a Word version and return to us at the address below:

NOMS Partnerships Unit  
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4th Floor Fry Building  
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2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF

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email: [james.memmott@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:james.memmott@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

**We should be grateful to receive comments by Friday, 10th August 2007.**

## Appendix 2

### Research conducted to inform the strategy

This strategy has been informed by a comprehensive programme of research carried out by the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) on behalf of NOMS between April and June 2006. This included:

- telephone or face to face interviews with national stakeholders, including individuals from government, other public sector bodies and statutory agencies, voluntary and community sector organisations;
- face to face and telephone interviews with staff working within prisons and probation areas and union representatives;
- interviews and focus groups with volunteers across NOMS, including both offenders and members of the community.

All interviews and focus groups were completed in adherence to research standards and the data gathered was treated anonymously. Any names of individuals attributed to comments or case studies throughout the strategy have been changed from their original.

IVR is a specialist research and consultancy agency on volunteering and voluntary action. Established in 1997, IVR is an initiative of Volunteering England and the Centre for Institutional Studies, University of East London.



### Appendix 3

Consultation Response <b>Volunteers Can:                      Towards a Volunteering Strategy to Reduce Re-offending</b>				
<b>Name</b>				
<b>Position</b>				
<b>Organisation</b>				
<b>Address</b>				
<b>Telephone</b>		<b>Type of organisation ( ✓ )</b>		
<b>Email Address</b>		<b>VCS</b>	<b>Private</b>	<b>Public</b>

**We appreciate the time and trouble you are taking to contribute to this consultation, and recognise there are many questions. You may prefer to respond only to those questions of relevance to you.**

<b>Introduction, aims, challenges and opportunities</b>	
<p><b>Our mission :</b>                      “To value, build, and support the unique role of volunteering in helping to reduce re-offending and build public confidence”.</p> <p><b>The definition of volunteering:</b>                      “Any activity within the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) that involves individuals willingly giving their time for the benefit of offenders, victims, and the wider community. It can add value to the services provided and commissioned by NOMS and its partners and is distinct from other forms of unpaid work”.</p> <p><b>Sections 1 &amp; 2</b></p>	
<p>1. Do you agree with the strategy’s mission and aims for the development of volunteering?  <b>Yes/No</b></p> <p>Please can you say why?</p>	

Volunteers Can: Towards a Volunteering Strategy to Reduce Re-Offending

<p>2. Are there other ways in which volunteering can contribute to the Faith and VCS Alliance, reducing re-offending pathways, public protection and/or offender management? Please describe.</p>	
<p>3. Are there challenges, other than those stated in section 2.3, which need to be addressed before volunteering to reduce re-offending can reach its potential? Please describe.</p>	
<p>4. Are the barriers identified in Figure 3 the most significant? Yes/No</p> <p>If no, which other barriers are missing?</p> <p>How can we best work together to address these barriers?</p>	

<p><b>Increasing the number and diversity of volunteers</b></p>	
<p><b>Objective: Developing a clear understanding of the definition of volunteering</b> <b>Section 3.1</b></p>	
<p>5. Do you agree with the proposed definition of volunteering to reduce re-offending? <b>Yes/No</b></p> <p>Do you have any comments on the definition?</p>	

<b>Objective: Promoting widespread involvement of volunteers across NOMS</b> <b>Section 3.2</b>	
<p>6. Apart from the suggestions made in this section, how else should NOMS' providers recruit new volunteers?</p>	
<p>7. How can we encourage more offenders to volunteer as advisers, counsellors and mentors to other offenders both in prisons and in the community?</p>	

<b>Objective: Increasing the diversity of volunteers</b> <b>Section 3.3</b>	
<p>8. How can volunteers from diverse groups best be engaged? (e.g. BME, young adults and men)</p>	
<p>9. Are there any particular issues in attracting and engaging volunteers from faith groups working either in prisons or the community?</p> <p>How should we work with faith groups in the community?</p>	

<p>10. Given the length of time that security checks can take, how can we best retain volunteers' interests during the waiting period?</p>	
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<p><b>Becoming more Strategic in Volunteer Development</b></p>	
<p><b>Objective: Developing ownership and leadership of volunteering</b> <b>Section 4.1</b></p>	
<p>11. How should ROMs, as part of their commissioning, co-commissioning and partnership work, develop volunteering at a regional level?</p>	
<p>12. Is it important for local leadership for volunteering to be developed (e.g. in prisons and probation)? <b>Yes/No</b>  Please explain why</p>	

<p><b>Objective: Strategic fit for volunteering to reduce re-offending</b> <b>Section 4.2</b></p>	
<p>13. What are the key issues facing prisons and probation areas, VCS and private organisations seeking to work more closely together in their approach to volunteering to reduce re-offending?</p>	

<p>14. How can the regional reducing re-offending partnership strategies promote volunteering in their agenda?</p>	
<p>15. What needs to be done to encourage offender managers to include volunteering and mentoring in offender management plans?</p>	

<p><b>Objective: Developing a strategic link with wider volunteering policies and agendas</b> <b>Section 4.3</b></p>	
<p>16. Beyond those identified in the strategy, with which other structures and forums should NOMS and ROMs engage?</p>	
<p>17. How can volunteering to reduce re-offending be embedded at a local level e.g as part of wider CJS volunteering/ work on community safety?</p>	

<b>Improving support to volunteers</b>	
<b>Objective: Developing clear lines of responsibility for volunteer support and coordination</b>	
<b>Section 5.1</b>	
<p>18. Should providers include volunteer co-ordination as a distinct element of someone's job? Yes/No</p> <p>Please say why</p>	
<p>19. Given the resource implications of this, do you have any alternative ideas for volunteer co-ordination?</p>	
<p>20. Are there specific issues for volunteers working with young adult offenders as opposed to those working with adult offenders, whether in the community or prison? If different, how?</p> <p>How does this impact on the management of these volunteers?</p> <p>How can we ensure that young adult offenders remain engaged with the volunteers (eg through matching, training)?</p>	

<b>Objective: Adhering to good practice standards in volunteer management</b> <b>Section 5.2</b>	
<p>21. How can NOMS best encourage the growth of volunteering, and ensure good practice in volunteer management, within current resources?</p>	
<p>22. Are there special considerations around volunteering with high risk of harm offenders?</p> <p>Please consider</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk of harm to the volunteer</li> <li>• Specific skills required</li> <li>• Selection procedures</li> <li>• Special support/training needs on high risk issues eg safeguarding children</li> <li>• Referral information</li> <li>• Limits on confidentiality</li> </ul>	
<p>23. How else can NOMS ensure good practice in volunteer involvement?</p>	
<p>24. Are existing quality standards appropriate to volunteering with offenders or are additional standards required?</p>	

<b>Establishing the Impact of Volunteering</b>	
<b>Objective: Developing a stronger evidence base for the impact of volunteering across NOMS</b> <b>Section 6.1</b>	
25. What work/research on the impact of volunteering would be most useful to you?	

<b>Implementation - Section 7</b>	
26. Do you agree with the priorities set out in this section? If not, why?	

**Do you have any other comments?**

**Thank you for responding to this consultation document. Please send your completed form by Friday 10th August 2007:**

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