

April 08, YH NOMS External Communication

TO: YH NOMS Regional and Local stakeholders

Date: April 08

Subject: NOMS reorganisation, Lead Provider meeting, Women's Service Review, Attorney General's Office visit to TWP, Bail update, Integrated Offender Management, Service Level Agreements update, Staffing update & NOMS presence at Government Office.

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NOMS website: www.noms.justice.gov.uk/noms-regions

We hope you enjoy reading the April briefing which as promised contains a standing update about progress towards integration between NOMS and the Prison Service as well as much more.

NOMS REORGANISATION

On April 1, the new NOMS organisation officially started, bringing together prison and probation into one overall organisation, and integrating NOMS and prison headquarters structures. The new streamlined HQ organisation will create greater join up of the work of prison and probation. The Chief Executive is Phil Wheatley and the Directors are confirmed (details on the NOMS website.) Formal approval of Agency status is expected shortly.

There is a strong unity of purpose to protect the public and reduce re-offending, which already binds the two services and forms a solid foundation to build upon. Both services do this by ensuring that the sentences of the courts are properly carried out and by working with offenders to tackle the causes of their offending behaviour. Staff achieve impressive results in challenging circumstances.

The evidence is clear that community sentences have a generally more positive effect in reducing re-offending than short custodial sentences. The prison population has recently reached concerning levels and the underlying trend in longer term imprisonment is upwards. Although there is a programme to build and open new prison accommodation quickly, the balance between available accommodation and population remains tight.

Probation staff are continuing to focus resources and efforts on dangerous and prolific offenders, and help to ensure that only those offenders who really do need to go into custody are recommended to do so to the courts and parole board.

At a regional level, the regional ROM team and HMPS Area team will become an integrated regional team over the next year to 18 months. National work on the design of regional teams is underway, with Wales and London regions being “early adopters.”

We have started an integration programme which is being jointly managed by Howard Mills (Deputy ROM) and Daniel Mills (HMPS Business Manager), with a number of workstreams (mapping current roles and posts, joint business planning and risk management, integrating financial systems and budgets, location) and we will use the monthly bulletin to keep you updated.

The key message for our partners and stakeholders is that the reducing re-offending partnership agenda remains pivotal to our success in achieving safer communities in the region. Our commitment to the RRAP pathways, and to the local delivery agenda through LAA and joint commissioning arrangements, as well as Multi Agency Public Protection arrangements is absolute.

We will shortly be clarifying single points of contact within the new regional team for all the pathways, and for LAA agenda.

Within the NOMS provider family, the Regional Offender Manager will continue to manage the Service Level Agreements with the Probation Areas, and the new contract with Humberside Probation Trust. For the time being, the contracts with HMP Doncaster, run by Serco, and HMP Wolds, run by GSL, will remain with the ROM. The HMPS SLA will now be managed by the Area Manager.

LEAD PROVIDER MEETING

We have established a lead provider forum, bringing together public sector prisons and probation, contracted prisons, and third sector and private sector organisations commissioned to deliver offender services by NOMS nationally and regionally. This is co-chaired by ROM and Area Manager, and our early focus is on joining up our efforts across sectors and across providers on reducing pressures on the prison population.

WOMENS SERVICE REVIEW

We are delighted to announce that Jackie Lowthian (NACRO) and Anne Mace (NACRO Council) have agreed to jointly chair the review of services to women offenders in the region which I commissioned. Together, Jackie and Anne bring a wealth of knowledge and experience in criminal justice and issues affecting women offenders. Jackie and Anne are deciding on how they want to best manage the review process and will be meeting with us again in April. The final report is due in September 08.

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE VISIT TO THE TOGETHER WOMEN PROJECT (TWP)

In February, representatives from the Attorney General's office met with NOMS, TWP and colleagues from West Yorkshire Police at TWP Leeds to discover how the centre works and discuss how women's centres may form a part of conditional cautioning for women. The meeting was successful and provided the visitors with an insight into the potential challenges and benefits associated with involving women's centres in conditional cautioning. Following the visit a report will go to Ministers and some areas may be identified to progress as test sites.

BAIL UPDATE

Ensuring the courts can safely remand defendants to bail accommodation and support schemes and avoid a custodial remand is a high priority for the Ministry of Justice. In Yorkshire and Humberside we are fortunate to have in operation two such schemes, and stakeholders are working together to ensure these are successful.

The NACRO Bail Support Partnership scheme is led by a regional VCS consortium, including SOVA and Foundation Housing. It operates in 4 of the Region's largest Courts (Sheffield, Leeds, Bradford and Hull) and in rural courts in North Yorkshire. The scheme currently has a case load of 85 service users, two thirds of whom are subject to a bail support condition, the remainder with a condition to reside at an address provided by the scheme. A multi agency task group is currently meeting to consider how the scheme can be sustained beyond the end of the current funding at March 2009. The Nacro scheme is funded by the Treasury Invest to Save pot.

The ClearSprings (BASS Bail Accommodation and Support Scheme) is a first and second appearance scheme (i.e. operating in courts and in custody) and it accommodates and supports bailees in all those areas not covered by the NACRO scheme. In addition ClearSprings also provide accommodation and support for prisoners released on Home Detention Curfew licence across the whole region. The scheme has been building up its stock of available accommodation and an additional 20 bedspaces are about to be made available bringing the total to 45 across the region. The Regional Offender Manager chaired the first multi agency steering group on 3 April to which all key stakeholders were invited. The Clearsprings contract was let nationally, and is managed regionally by the ROM .

All four Probation areas are in the process of implementing a pro active bail information service in Courts and local prisons in the region continue to provide a pro active 2nd appearance bail service.

Further information about either of these schemes can be obtained from Val.Mcnerney@justice.gov.uk.

INTERGRATED OFFENDER MANAGEMENT (IOM)

This initiative is moving quickly ahead, under the stewardship of the multi-agency team based at Millgarth Police Station. Neighbourhood policing terms are in place across West Yorkshire, and officers are driving forward the “Prevent and Deter” workstream.

A tactical toolkit detailing resources and interventions linked to support and enforcement is being populated, and will provide a valuable point of information. District level multi-agency hubs to address Resettle and Rehabilitate are progressing, Leeds is likely to be operational in the near future. Over the next 12 months arrangements will build from existing DIPS, and involve additional partners.

Targeted initiatives are already planned, addressing the resettlement needs of women prisoners, and a health engagement pilot at Leeds Bridewell. This work will take account of lessons learnt from the Christmas resettlement initiative which operated out of HMP Leeds.

This pioneering development is attracting considerable interest from local, regional and national partners, and the national IOM strategic group will be held in West Yorkshire on 5 June, offering an opportunity to further disseminate the vision and galvanise the commitments already made.

NOMS Partnership Unit in the Ministry of Justice has commissioned the development of a “Route map” to Integrated Offender Management, which will provide some guidance and good practice examples to support further development. It is clear that much can be achieved through co-ordination of efforts, and the commitment made by many organisations already offers a strong basis from which to move on together.

Louise Gartland, from the ROM team, has started a 12 month secondment to IOM, to further support the partnership with a key focus on the Reducing Re-offending pathways and engaging the third sector.

STAFFING UPDATE

We are pleased to announce that Jenny Bowles has recently been successful in recruitment to a new post within the team, Commissioning Manager (Partnerships and Joint Commissioning). Jenny will commence this post in April 2008. Arrangements are being made to fill the post responsible for the Together Women Project and the broader Women Offender’s agenda. This post will be managed by Jenny.

In the next monthly bulletin we will send an updated team chart, showing all the posts in the ROM team and Area Prison team.

NOMS PRESENCE AT GOVERNMENT OFFICE FOR YORKSHIRE & HUMBERSIDE

From April a number of the ROM team will work out of Government Office (GO) in Leeds. The Deputy ROM, Howard Mills, the new Commissioning Manager (Partnerships and Joint Commissioning), Jenny Bowles, and Rachael Sykes will primarily work from GO. I intend to spend time working from GO as will other colleagues. Email addresses will not be affected and telephone numbers will be confirmed shortly.

This is a positive step forward as we continue to integrate the Reducing Re-Offending agenda across relevant directorates within GO, supporting the crucial Local Area Agreement agenda.

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