NOMS NEWS - Tagging on trial, NOMS roadmap, annual report and commissioning documents available now

ON THE FRONTLINE
Prison Officer and Probation Champion of the Year named, supporting offenders family relationships

WORKING WITH STAKEHOLDERS
NOMS and Revolving Doors Agency service user involvement project

NOMS ONLINE
Find out who’s who at NOMS and give feedback about Changing Lives Together
In the last edition of Changing Lives Together, we invited you to join in a campaign launched by Michael Spurr, NOMS Chief Executive Officer, celebrating the difference every team and individual working with offenders is making to help change lives.

Here is a selection of some of your responses.

Katy McCormick (below) is Head of Development at the Margaret Carey Foundation, which runs prison workshops where offenders recycle wheelchairs, mobility scooters, bicycles, artificial limbs, hearing aids and glasses, which the organisation donates to overseas aid charities.

She said: “In our workshops, offenders work hard to help others. They develop self esteem, gain useful skills and become better prepared for employment after release.”

The Foundation has set up recycling projects in seven prisons: HMPs Garth, Liverpool, Haverigg, Lancaster Farms, Everthorpe, Kirklevington Grange and Frankland.

Donna Turner-Kot (right) is Managing Director at n-ergy works, a social enterprise within the n-ergy consortium offering employment to ex-offenders. The organisation has contracts from public and private sectors to remove chewing gum and graffiti.

She said: “We employ suitable ex-offenders to deliver these community-based contracts offering them training, a chance for a more stable life and a future.”

If you would like to take part in the campaign, view our Helping to Change Lives video and look at our how I help change lives picture gallery and then let us know how you change lives using our online feedback tool.

NOMS 2011-12 Annual Report published

The Report, published in July, highlighted considerable achievement including a five percentage point improvement in the reoffending rate on which NOMS is measured.

Michael Spurr, NOMS Chief Executive Officer said: “This reflects not only the professionalism and dedication of all our staff working in demanding environments, but also the significant and increasing contribution made by our partners.

“I would like to thank you all for the important part you continue to play, and I look forward to working with you through the coming period as we continue in partnership to improve the service we provide for the public.”

The report is available on the Justice website here.
Competitions across NOMS continue

Community Payback winner
Serco has won the competition to manage Community Payback in London.

After rigorous evaluation, Serco’s bid – with London Probation Trust as a sub-contractor – was judged to offer best value for money and innovation.

Serco is due to take over Community Payback in October. As part of these new arrangements London Probation Trust will work as a sub-contractor with Serco having responsibility for the offender management of offenders with Community Payback and other requirements.

The new contract should save £25 million over four years, with innovations including offenders beginning their placements within seven days of sentencing and unemployed offenders working four days a week on projects.

The outcome of the Punishment and Reform: Effective Probation Services review will determine how the Community Payback competition in the rest of England and Wales is taken forward. For more information click here.

Offender Services update
The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has published an annual update about all current offender services competitions including prisons, electronic monitoring, Offender Learning and Skills and Prisoner Escort and Custody Services. The annual update is available here.

Tagging on trial
Martin Copsey, Senior Responsible Officer for the NOMS electronic monitoring competition has been trialling ankle tags personally.

There are four companies bidding for the hardware “lot”. Trial volunteers are testing out the electronic tags manufactured by each of them.

Martin explains: “We want to test the reliability and accuracy of the new equipment being offered up by the four bidders.

“The new tags use GPS real-time tracking technology, which enables us to see where the offenders wearing them are going when they move outside the restriction zones the courts have ordered they stay within, or out of. The old system simply enabled the detection of people when they moved out of their restriction zone, but couldn’t pinpoint exactly where they were.”

New Ministry of Justice ministers appointed

Chris Grayling is the new Secretary of State for Justice, following the cabinet reshuffle. He was previously Employment Minister at the Department of Work and Pensions.

In a message to the Ministry of Justice, he said: “We need to do more to make sure that offenders are properly punished, and that they pay back to their victims and the community. We also need to take further steps to ensure that fewer of these people then go on to reoffend.”

Jeremy Wright has been made Prisons and Probation Minister.
NOMS priorities for the year illustrated

Q1: April - June
- Prisons restructuring underway
- London Community Payback contract announced
- Prisons restructure underway
- Moving staff into the new workforce structures for HM Prison Service as part of the Fair and Sustainable proposals to deliver a more affordable and competitive public sector prison service.

Q2: July - Sept
- Payment by Results
- Commissioning of payment by results pilots in the community (Wales and Staffordshire and West Midlands Probation Trusts) and for public sector prisons at HMP Leeds.
- Electronic monitoring contracts awarded
- Driving savings and performance on £1 billion contract through expanded competition including small and medium-sized businesses.

Q3: Oct - Dec
- Prison contracts announced
- The outcome of the large-scale competitions underway to run eight prisons, with bids including payment by results, working prisons and drug-free wings – and future competition announcements expected.
- Local Police and Crime plans published
- Police and Crime Commissioners set out local commissioning strategies for crime reduction and partnership working.

Q4: Jan - March 2013
- Payment by Results innovation pilots
- Pilots with voluntary/social enterprise organisations and new forms of financing.
- Our eight priorities 2012-13
- Transform
  - Rehabilitation – Breaking the Cycle
  - Re-balancing capacity
  - Commissioning and Competition
  - Organisational Restructure
- Deliver
  - Deliver the punishment orders of the court
  - Security, Safety and Public Protection
  - Reducing Reoffending
  - Improving efficiency and reducing costs
- Accounts and budget planning
- Confirming in-year front line efficiency savings of three per cent and finalising 2013-14 budgets.

- Fair and Sustainable
- All prison staff working in new structures from April 2013.
Changing Lives Together

2013-14 commissioning round underway

NOMS’ 2013-14 commissioning round is now underway, with the publication of the Commissioning Intentions for 2013-14 Discussion Document, presenting initial thinking on priorities for offender services.

The commissioning round is the annual cycle of assessing the need and demand for custodial and community offender services, choosing how to meet those needs and then securing the right services at the right quality and price.

Following provider and stakeholder feedback, the final Commissioning Intentions document will be published next month. This will form the basis for NOMS to negotiate new Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and contracts for 2013-14 with prisons and probation trusts.

Stakeholders can now also see individual prison SLAs and Probation Trust contract schedules on the Justice website.

Ian Porée, NOMS Director of Commissioning and Commercial, said: “This is an important step towards greater transparency.

“Interested stakeholders and members of the public will get a better understanding of what we do and be able to give us useful feedback contributing to improvements in the future.”

Publication brings public prisons and trusts in line with private providers, where contracts awarded after 2011 are already published on the Business Link website.

Find out more about NOMS Commissioning on the Justice website here.

Closure announced as prison capacity under review

Kenneth Clarke, the then Secretary of State for Justice announced the closure of HMP Welllington earlier this summer.

The decision to close the prison was made because there are too many unfilled places within the estate. HMP Welllington, with 588 places, was selected after a thorough evaluation of all establishments taking into account age and economic factors, such as operating costs, outstanding maintenance issues, location and strategic function across the estate.

Announcing the decision Kenneth Clarke said: “While the prison population rose as a result of last summer’s civil disturbances, since April it has been falling. Coupled with new modern prison places at HMP Oakwood and HMP Thameside which began to come on stream earlier in the year, we now have an opportunity to close some more prison places.”

Michael Spurr, NOMS Chief Executive Officer, said: “We must continue to look at ways to operate as efficiently and effectively as possible. The prison population has settled at levels that mean we have headroom in the estate. The financial reality is that HMP Welllington requires up to £50m of investment to maintain operations at acceptable levels for an extended period.”

It is expected the prison will close without any compulsory redundancies.
Winning ways with work

Charlie Johnson, a Prison Officer from HMYOI Cookham Wood is Prison Officer of the Year 2012.

Charlie (left) took the top prize for his work transforming the use of release on temporary licence (ROTL) at his establishment. Through the Working Out scheme Charlie works with young males aged 15-18, arranging work placements for them. He says: “Finding work placements isn’t a problem. We use a mixture of cold calling and any contacts we already have. Any trade a boy wants to do when he leaves, we’ve got covered.

“For example one wanted a placement working as a chef. When one of our officers was out at a restaurant he asked the owner if he would take a boy on and train him as a chef? He said yes and we got a placement. We haven’t had any point blank refusals yet.”

The scheme is all focused around the young people in Charlie’s care. He says: “I see what the boys are interested in or what they’re studying within the Young Offenders Institution, and follow that route. If they get a qualification, say at the motor mechanics workshop here, then I’ll find them somewhere on the outside to continue that career pathway.

“I won’t have them sweeping leaves up or picking litter up – that’s no good for a juvenile – it’s got to be something to enhance their employability chances when they go out. That’s my focus.”

The Working Out scheme fits in well with Government policy on working prisons and the “rehabilitation revolution”.

“Employment has got to be the key to reducing reoffending. If you’ve got somewhere to live and a regular wage coming in then you’re off to a flying start, I think,” says Charlie.

Michael Spurr chose Charlie for the overall title saying: “Charlie has done a tremendous job over the last 12 months, transforming the way that young people in Cookham Wood are managed, promoting the use of ROTL and preparing difficult young people to undertake work and education in the community.

“The success has been outstanding, with over a thousand people released and only one failure, helping to change some really challenging young people.”
Public protection prevails

Nathalie Allard, a Probation Officer for Leicestershire & Rutland Probation Trust, has been named Probation Champion of the Year 2012.

She was first announced as winner of the Public Protection award before Michael Spurr, NOMS Chief Executive Officer, chose her as the overall winner from seven categories.

Nathalie (right) started her probation career in France before moving to England in 2001 where she has worked as a city-based offender manager since 2007 using her investigative skills to powerful effect.

A key case in her nomination was uncovering an extensive paedophile network within the family of one sex offender, where she identified adults of concern and children at risk. She said the complex case – in which she uncovered four generations of sexual offending in one family – gave her many sleepless nights.

As the convoluted nature of the case unfolded Nathalie drew up a family tree to keep track of the many perpetrators and victims from the same family and using this visual aid she eventually discovered the full extent of the history of sexual abuse.

Her methodical work on the case is already having an impact on others as her colleagues have started taking a similar approach as a result of Nathalie’s nomination.

Nathalie’s Chief Executive Officer, Helen West, said: “Nathalie, has made an outstanding contribution to public protection and truly goes the extra mile as a matter of course. She is able to work with complex and risky cases to rehabilitate and uses control effectively and proportionally to manage risk.”

Her reputation has also been recognised externally with Professor Hazel Kemshall, a founder of MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements), describing her case work as “exceptional”.

Explaining why he chose Nathalie as the overall winner Michael Spurr said: “What really impressed me about Nathalie was that she managed some really difficult cases balancing risk and control, and also looking to change behaviour in a really sophisticated and excellent way. It was a really impressive nomination for an offender manager who is doing everything she can to protect the public and prevent victims.”

Nathalie was presented with a certificate of her achievement by Crispin Blunt, the then Prisons and Probation Minister, at ceremony at Crewe Hall. She said: “Just to be recognised for the work that I’ve been doing is comforting - it’s going to help me to carry on working hard with similar cases.”
Family values

How do offenders’ family and personal circumstances impact on their offending and chances of reoffending? How important is it to help support their families and strengthen their relationships to help reduce reoffending, and even tackle intergenerational crime?

Sarah Davis, Head of the NOMS Social Justice Team explains: “While we are working to strengthen the evidence base, we know that many offenders share a range of characteristics and issues that may be related to their offending.

“Offenders are more likely than the general population to come from disadvantaged backgrounds, to have been a regular truant or excluded from school, to have suffered from harsh or neglectful parenting, to have been in care, and to have had parents who offended.

“Research shows us that prisoners’ childhood years tend to be difficult, featuring violence, abuse, and early contact with the criminal justice system. These problems continue through schooling and employment, right up to reception into prison.

“Despite this, the majority of prisoners successfully start their own families, and report that they value them. Prisoners with fewer early life and family problems are less likely to be reconvicted than prisoners with more issues.

“NOMS’ ambition is that all prisoners and offenders in the community can access services which enable them to address family welfare and support needs and is working to ensure this is reflected in the service level agreements of every prison and every probation trust contract.

“By supporting offenders’ families we can also help to break the cycle of intergenerational crime. The most recent estimate is that about 200,000 children were affected over the course of 2009 by a parent being in, or going to, prison.

“This work is being led by local authorities but prisons and probation have an important role to play in terms of joining with other local agencies to support these families.

“NOMS is also working very closely with Department for Education, the Welsh Government and third sector to develop such partnership approaches. This includes piloting custody based family support workers and raising awareness of the needs of offenders’ families through ‘hidden sentence’ training offered to a range of statutory and voluntary sector agencies.

The Butler Trust is holding a free sharing good practice workshop on maintaining prisoner/family relationships in prison on October 10 in Central London.

For more details contact Andrew@thebutlertrust.org.uk
Changing Lives Together

Barnardo’s builds a better future

Barnardo’s work with NOMS not only helps reduce reoffending, but aims to prevent offenders’ children becoming offenders too.

The charity works with offenders who have children, and undertakes follow-up work with visiting families as well as prisoners who need assistance in connecting with their families.

For example, Barnardo’s jointly funded a visitor’s centre opened at HMP Erlestoke providing a focus for engaging families and prison staff.

Tim Carter (left) of Barnardo’s South West says: “We welcome all families, helping them with any concerns or worries they may have, as well as signposting them to other services.

“We also carry out individual work with offenders who have concerns for their children or families. We run ‘Dads Play day’ workshops, play activities for children, and we organise play volunteers in the visits hall.

“We are not excusing the actions of offenders, but we must do what we can to help the children left behind serving their own ‘hidden sentence’.

“The social stigma is very real and they can suffer from isolation, depression and increased poverty which can have a negative impact on the rest of their lives.”

Probation Trust wins top prize in national competition

Staffordshire and West Midlands Probation Trust won first prize in a national competition to use Ordnance Survey data to improve neighbourhoods.

The trust won £40,000 of funding in the 2012 GeoVation challenge to develop a phone app for the public to nominate and track Community Payback projects they want offenders to work on to improve their neighbourhood.

Using the app, people can take a photo of a local eyesore they think needs cleaning up on their smart phone and then send it to the relevant probation trust at the click of a button. The geo-tag (geographical reference) on the photo will help the trust identify the location and assess the nomination for its suitability for Community Payback.

If the site is appropriate for a Community Payback project, the Probation Trust will arrange for the work to be done and send comments and photos – via the app – for the original nominator and others to see. The app will display an Ordnance Survey map with Community Payback icons that can be tapped to reveal photos and other information.
Probation shines in Howard League awards

Probation trusts won two out of five categories in the 2012 Howard League Community Programmes Awards – and a project run in partnership with probation won one of the other categories.

The Education Training and Employment award went to Leicestershire and Rutland Probation Trust’s (LRPT’s) Learning, Employment, Accommodation and Finance (LEAF) team. Working in partnership with other agencies, the team provides a two-day motivational and training programme, advice on CV and interview techniques, on-site training and an in-house café and two-week mentored work placements.

Carrie Peters, LRPT Director, said: “As part of our supervision and work with men and women on community orders, we know that enabling individuals to improve their chances of finding work and getting a settled home and lifestyle are central to avoiding crime and moving towards rehabilitation.

“LEAF team members Kathy Smith and John Hobbs with TV presenter Donal MacIntyre

“The LEAF team has a range of skills and expertise and we are delighted that their hard work and innovative approach has been recognised and that the team has received this national award.”

Northumbria Probation Trust won the Adult category for its Solo domestic violence programme.

Solo is a 12-session course delivered as a specified activity requirement on a one-to-one basis by specially trained probation staff. Offenders on the course are flagged on police systems and information on any police call outs or arrests is shared with the probation offender manager.

The course targets men who have been convicted of a domestic abuse offence, and works to reduce the likelihood of repeat offending and further harm. A partner link worker is offered to the partner or ex-partner of the participating offenders. This service is provided by Barnardo’s on behalf of Northumbria Probation Trust.

Nick Hall, Northumbria Probation Trust Chief Executive, said: “We are very pleased with the success of the Solo programme and delighted to have its contribution to reducing reoffending and protecting the public recognised by the Howard League award.”

Eden House, run in partnership with Avon and Somerset Probation Trust, in Bristol, won the Women category. It aims to be a one stop service that engages women in making positive changes to their lives.

It helps a range of women, from those with few to very complex needs, from young mothers shoplifting to support their families to those convicted of drug supply or arson.

Big Society Award for prison project

A shopping centre recycling project staffed by offenders from HMP Norwich has won one of the Prime Minister’s Big Society Awards.

The Chapelfield Custody & Community Project aims to break the cycle of reoffending by providing serving prisoners with practical work experience and training, then helping them find jobs.

Offenders run the recycling plant at Chapelfield Shopping Centre, in Norwich, as well as having the opportunity to join cleaning and maintenance teams and the customer service desk.

Latest statistics show that of the 118 participating prisoners, 82 have got full-time jobs as a result. The project was set up by Dave Damerell, a community liaison officer at HMP Norwich who was also the Guardian public servant of the year 2011.
Bettina Crossick (left), NOMS lead for mentoring, says: “Mentoring is not new – many probation areas have a long history of recruiting volunteers who befriend and provide support to offenders to support the work of probation officers and assist in the resettlement process. Mentoring is also used widely in prisons. Likewise, the voluntary sector and faith sector organisations have been involved in mentoring for many years.

“But now NOMS is starting to use mentoring as a specific intervention alongside more conventional offender management outcomes, to help reduce reoffending, build on the principles of localism and encourage local communities to take responsibility for supporting offenders. We want to extend mentoring and volunteering and build on the Government’s Big Society vision.”

NOMS is putting £1.4 million of grant funding into a project to increase volunteer mentoring involving offenders and ex-offenders.

The agency has provided money to eight voluntary and community sector organisations to develop a range of projects, including an online “mentoring hub” which will be a one stop shop for organisations, service providers, volunteers and offenders to identify mentoring opportunities, promote services and access resources.

Other aspects of the project include mapping mentoring services for offenders, identifying gaps, and developing a targeted marketing strategy to close them.

Funding has been provided to:

- SOVA, for mapping services, gap analysis and targeted marketing to fill gaps
- Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, with the Princes Trust and St Giles Trust, for development of a mentoring website/database of services and quality assurance arrangements for 200 mentoring providers
- Network for Black Professionals, the Together Women Project, the Female Prisoners’ Welfare Project and the Care Leavers Association for the development and supply of guidance and toolkits for engaging specific groups of offenders and/or volunteers
- The Prison Advice and Care Trust and Caring for ex-offenders for capacity building projects in four geographical areas

A NOMS steering group will coordinate learning from the eight grant-funded pieces of work and focus on developing the evidence base, understanding of current evidence and guidance for commissioners.
Changing Lives Together

Involve, engage, improve

NOMS is working with partners, including the Revolving Doors Agency, to improve offender involvement across prisons and probation.

Revolving Doors is a charity working across England to change systems and improve services for people with multiple problems, including poor mental health, who are in repeat contact with the criminal justice system.

Over the next two years, following an open competition, Revolving Doors will be working in partnership with NOMS to develop effective systems of service user involvement, replicable across a large number of prisons and probation trusts. The charity will work with two women’s prisons and the prisons and probation trusts in the East of England cluster. NACRO is also working on this project and have been contracted to work with two open prisons, beginning with HMP Ford.

There are many definitions of service user involvement; however the key elements are that service providers and commissioners work with people who currently, previously or may in the future use their services, in order to involve them in the shaping, managing and delivery of services.

Amarjit Kaur, Director of Service User Involvement at Revolving Doors, said: “There are a number of potential benefits for prisons and probation trusts of involving service users, which may include, contributing to the smooth running of the organisation and better staff/service user relationships.”

Service user involvement has existed in different forms, within prisons for some time. The Prison Reform Trust documented examples of prison councils in 27 establishments in a report published in 2004. Today many prisons and probation trusts have their own forms of service user involvement. Voluntary and community sector organisations such as User Voice also work to increase the levels of involvement.

Amarjit said: “This project will not look to reinvent the wheel. Our aim is to draw on good practice in service user involvement across prisons and probation trusts, and from other sectors, and develop guidance and toolkits to support a change management process. This will enable prisons and probation trusts to review their current practice, explore with other staff and service users the scope, aims and objectives for service user involvement, address the support and training needs of staff and service users and choose from a menu of tested involvement methods, that could be adapted to their particular needs.

“We look forward to working with NOMS as we develop this exciting project.”
NOMS is working with a charity to improve the experience of pregnant women and new mothers in prison.

Birth Companions works with pregnant women and new mothers in HMP Holloway, providing a weekly support service to pregnant women, in a group and on a one-to-one basis. This helps women to focus on their pregnancies and start to bond with their babies. It runs a weekly postnatal group on the Mother and Baby Unit (MBU) providing breastfeeding and parenting support to new mothers, as a result the prison has very high breastfeeding rates.

Annabel Kennedy, Birth Companions Director, said: “We are able to provide birth support to any woman who needs this and particularly to more vulnerable and isolated women. This means that no woman from Holloway ever has to give birth alone. This is a unique service and one which the women really value. Our trained and experienced volunteers provide emotional and practical support during labour and birth. We provide additional support to those mothers who will be separating from their babies.”

The organisation has now extended its work into the community, after service users attending a Birth Companions forum after their release said that leaving prison can be a difficult time, even if they are returning to a supportive family. It offers support to women leaving prison, either individually or through its new Bumps to Babies community group. The group is for women who have been in any prison during their pregnancy, birth or have been on an MBU. Women can bring their babies to a group, meet other women and talk about their experiences without fear of judgement.

Birth Companions has also been working in partnership with NOMS women’s team and contributed to the training for prison officers working with pregnant women and mothers who have been separated from their babies.

Annabel said: “These are very vulnerable groups and we were delighted to be invited to share our expertise on these issues with NOMS.”

We hope you have enjoyed reading this edition of Changing Lives Together. You can now subscribe to Changing Lives Together through the Justice website.

If you want to contact someone from NOMS, we have just updated our online guide, How NOMS Works, to include contact details of directors.

We have also published a new version of our organisational chart so that it is easier to understand the agency.

We are always interested in your feedback.
Do you have a comment to make about one of the stories?
Do you have a suggestion for future articles?
Would you like us to focus on your work with NOMS in a future edition?
Would you like to contact someone featured in this edition?

Please send any comments, questions or feedback to:
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