

## **The Changing Landscape –Stronger Together**

### **1. Introduction**

**Annette Hennessy**

**CEO of the Merseyside Community Rehabilitation Company  
( part of Purple Futures an Interserve led partnership)**

When this project started we were called the Merseyside Probation Trust, an arm's length single agency delivering a public probation service to courts, prisons and communities. We are now called the Merseyside Community Rehabilitation Company and the change of name is a microcosm of the way in which public services, criminal justice and the delivery of probation has changed in the space of less than three years. The policy change was brought in through a series of consultations culminating in the Transforming Rehabilitation – a strategy for reform in 2013, the main principles of which were enacted by the Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014. As a result of this, probation is now delivered by two separate services, one a national service delivering a high risk service within a government agency, NOMs, and the other delivering a rehabilitation service to medium to low risk offenders in the contract package areas owned by the private sector. As a result of this process, and the competition, the whole landscape and environment has changed. It has not been easy and there are still challenges to work through , but from where I stand it's looking positive and hopeful. Major changes for us are:-

- Move from public sector to private sector - although it is a joint venture agreement with 3SC, P3, and Shelter (Purple Futures), it is an Interserve led partnership.
- Delivery of a public service by private, third and voluntary sector - in common with other areas of public service.
- A move to a focus on rehabilitation - although public protection remains critical for us.
- The delivery of a service to those serving under 12 months in prison.
- A more flexible approach to community sentences.
- Payment by results on reducing reoffending.
- A move from an organisational led service design to a more collaborative approach with those with lived experience of criminal justice system.

*Having read the report it looks like Knowsley MBC, The Hague and the ERI, in conjunction with MALS, were ahead of the policy change in the UK!*

### **2. More Explanation of the Landscape –**

**John Quick**

**Head of Operations for the Merseyside Community Rehabilitation Company**

I would like to take this opportunity to cover some of the operational challenges and the opportunities to work with service users to enable change and build a service focused on rehabilitation.

Annette has described how the agenda of Transforming Rehabilitation has led to the formation of the National Probation Service and the Community Rehabilitation Companies. Merseyside CRC is one of 21 CRCs operating alongside the Northwest Division of the National Probation Service.

The fact that these two organisations have successfully come in to operation hides a story of some significant challenges:-

- assigning staff from the Trust to the most appropriate organisation; and
- considering some of the more practical arrangements such as the use of buildings.

The creation of two organisations delivering probation services meant that it was necessary to bring it back together so that key processes are followed to ensure some of the most critical points in the service user journey are managed safely.

In the new landscape - the 'interface' has become an important aspect of making the system work - predominantly associated with the interface between the CRC and the NPS, but not exclusively, as prisons, electronic monitoring providers and others are equally important, particularly when Through the Gate Services are taken into consideration

- How we are working together at interface?
  - Local interface meetings – tackling some local processes.
  - Regional interface meetings – stakeholder and public protection agreeing protocols about key public protection issues and sentenced engagement.
  - Service Integration Group – a meeting which is part of the contract management review process, bringing together a wide range of organisations including prisons, electronic monitoring providers and others.

In the main most issues can be resolved locally, but there are some issues that, unless resolved, will impact negatively on the service user experience and contract delivery and, as such, these are issues that must be elevated to remedy.

Locally, we have maintained and nurtured strong working relationships with our partners and, in my view, this is in part due to our strong history of collaboration at an operational and strategic level.

This is perhaps evidenced through shared strategies addressing some of the most complex issues, e.g. reducing reoffending, domestic abuse and hate crime strategies, supported by a strong governance framework under the Merseyside Criminal Justice Board.

Undoubtedly, Through the Gate or Resettlement Services are a welcome addition to the service delivery landscape – allowing service users to access support in prison and on release. The fact that all those sentenced to custody are now released on licence ensures that even those who have received short sentences benefit from rehabilitative services.

Those sentenced to short sentences require targeted services, not only in relation to thinking and behaviour, but other areas such as alcohol and drug dependency, emotional and mental health issues, and finance. A focus on this group will impact on offending levels. This is a challenge, given that many of those in this cohort are the most hard to reach and provide challenges for many organisations.

- If I may I would like to focus on the CRCs contribution to rehabilitation and reducing reoffending.

The core service delivery model is known as the Interchange Model. It is built on the principles of desistance, a strength based approach, to enable change.

The model is predicated on three core activities:

- (i) Interact – assessment and sentence planning , evaluation.
- (ii) Intervene - interventions which support change and deliver the sentence.
- (iii) Integrate - activities designed to engage service users with their community and access resources

Service User engagement and co-design of their plan is integral to success and modules are designed to engage service users, develop hope and motivation, and provide interventions or access to services which make a difference. The IT which will support the model will enable operational staff to spend more time with service users, which will support increased engagement and better outcomes.

The CRC has the benefit of working with other providers:

- Shelter - delivering resettlement services.
- P3 - providing intensive support for service users with complex needs.
- 3SCC - assisting the CRC in accessing services through the development of a directory of services, informing commissioning decisions, building confidence in 3<sup>rd</sup> sector supply chain.

The CRC has more freedom and will work with others to grow, innovate and bring added value. This may show itself through strategic alliances to further develop the business, or by further developing the supply chain.

We have a strong history of using other providers in women's services - PSS and TWW – and we are increasing our use of other providers. Some examples include:

- MALs – life change programme in conjunction with local authorities
- Intuitive Thinking – addressing drug and alcohol misuse (people with lived experience).
- Anthony Walker and Michael Causer foundations – tackling hate crime and incorporating an RJ approach.

The service user experience, and their experience and subsequent challenges, provide a vehicle for change. The video you are about to see highlights the power of the service user voice.

### **3. Conclusion and Way Ahead**

#### **Annette Hennessy**

What do I see as the way ahead as CEO and someone who is about to depart after 37 years of doing this work, and what can be learnt from this story for criminal justice, rehabilitation, and leadership, and elsewhere? It is time for a different leadership narrative about rehabilitation. It is too important to be left to the state, statutory and criminal justice agencies. The re-identity and development of our offenders is something that is better done together, better done in partnership, and better done inclusively.

Working within the private sector – some interesting signs:-

- Already seen the opportunities, CEO of a global company speaking in support of rehabilitation on his global video blog to an audience of 80,000 employees, using an extract of this video rehabilitation becomes a respectable acceptable message.
- Also used in a presentation of yearly report to financial and business analysts in the city – message is reaching people we could never have reached and delivered by a CEO of a credible international company.
- It is significant that, for example. their values are concordant with the work, everyone has a voice, do the right thing, take pride in what you do, bring better to life.
- Part of the problem has been the inability of offenders to create a new identity, they are excluded from work, accommodation, and contact with those who are part of their development.
- If we can join up the dots with their core businesses and our clients in terms of work and jobs and influence – how powerful would that be.

Working with the VSCE sector:-

- Working in an organised way with Shelter, 3SC, P3 is beginning to work. They can do the things we were not good at, e.g. contract management. Also provides a more rounded service. It is early days, but capacity is now developing through services for Through the Gate, and with those with complex needs.

#### Working with partnerships:-

- Strong collaboration with partners in the room and CSPs. In fact, as a result of the work done at Knowsley, the LCP has now extended across all the boroughs with MALS being commissioned by the boroughs and the CRC for those serving under 12 months in Liverpool Prison. The benefit of the learning is happening in real time across Merseyside.

#### Working with individuals with lived experience of the criminal justice system:-

- The report and the research demonstrates the power of working alongside individuals who have been through the criminal justice system. It evidences that credibility of the programme was improved and that they were able to have very different conversations with those people attending. Consequently the potential for rehabilitation was vastly enhanced.
- Our experience has been similar with peer mentors working alongside our offender managers to help enhance progress on supervision. We also run a Service User Council with User Voice, which I chair. This goes further still and we work alongside our colleagues in User Voice to improve the organisation and help us to deliver a real joint approach to rehabilitation. It has had some very real impact on the CRC, our staff and the wider partnerships.

For me it is ultimately about leadership and choices. For me transformation and rehabilitation will happen when we see real recognition of how to not only collaborate with others, but specifically with those who have lived experience of the criminal justice system. Part of that will be when we realise and respect what potential there is in the individuals we work with and what they have to offer us as leaders, so for example:-

- How do they overcome the tremendous barriers?
- How do they cope with having to prove themselves all the time when the goal posts become higher and higher and alter continuously?
- How do they find resilience and motivation when there is tremendous pressure to change and they are under scrutiny and assessed continuously?
- How do they succeed when it is so hard to access the resources that will lead to real sustained change?

These are the questions I ask myself at the end of 37 years, and I truly admire the endeavours of many that I have met over the years. You have seen some of this for yourselves on our User Voice video and you will go on to hear more stories today. We are all a 'work in progress' and we cannot expect anything less of ourselves than we do of the people we work with. I believe that genuine transformation in how we do rehabilitation will only come when we are truly open to collaboration and learning with individuals and, more importantly, from them.