The Centre for the Study of Crime, Criminalisation and Social Exclusion

Liverpool John Moores University

Reducing Reoffending Research Project

Action Learning Set 4 – Liverpool, UK, 4th September 2014

1. Introduction

The agenda for Action Learning Set 4 was ambitious, forward-facing, and embedded in sharing and thinking about working practice. It started with an observation of the LifeChange Programme and ended with members of the Dutch delegation meeting with local Police and Security officials discussing approaches to tackling football violence and religious extremism, and in-between there was much detailed reflection on progress. With the project closer to its conclusion now than its commencement, as the day developed the emphasis really shifted towards the project outcomes, measures of impact, and the roles of partners in playing their part(s) in achieving these end goals.

Delegates arrived a day early and representatives from all three jurisdictions were taken to HMP Liverpool Prison to see the Life Change Programme being delivered in practice. This unique opportunity for delegates to sit-in on one of the MALS administered workshops and then to have the opportunity to talk to the men enrolled on the programme proved to be an excellent stimulus for collective learning. The first of the morning sessions on the day of the Action Learning Set focused on teasing out what delegates had taken from the experience and explored the potential for exporting the programme. In a thorough and highly interactive session where all participants engaged in providing feedback the emphasis was on establishing what works well, what areas are worthy of improvement and what, in practice, would be the likelihood of rolling out the model elsewhere.

With the delegates having themselves drawn up 6-month SMART plans of activity when we last assembled together in Turin in February 2014, the remainder of the morning session was taken up with presentations reporting on progress. These presentations also provided the opportunity for delegates to reflect upon and report broader changes and challenges that are being experienced.

The afternoon presentations saw a real shift in emphasis and began the process of galvanising participants for what now is the final run-in to the project's completion. From a reiteration of the key project outcome messages, to emphasising the importance of generating demonstrable impact, to stimulating national level discussions of what partners can and need to do to realise their own project objectives the emphasis was on capturing the impact of the project's industry. There have been, and remain, powerful external influences that have served to compromise the full realisation of the vision of the project (not least the fundamental shifts in the mechanisms of making and delivering criminal justice policy in the UK) but the afternoon sessions emphasised the need to keep focus on outcomes and objectives. The presentations and exercises sought to encourage attention

to be paid to what needs to be done to deliver on the original project ambitions and to consider how the impact of the project will be tangible at the end of project conference in November 2015.

2. Action Learning Activity: Reflections on the Prison LifeChange Programme Observation

This session was structured around a number of questions on the previous day's observation of the LifeChange Programme running in HMP Liverpool. The feedback from the groups is arranged by topic.

Programme features which make the LCP work well

- **Session leader**: Anthony's capacity to empathise and share experiences; his position as an ex-offender taking the lead in sessions rather than someone from an educational background; and the fact that he is approachable were all felt to be essential programme features.
- **The environment**: Being in a less structured environment without tables or barriers made the sessions feel informal and encouraged discussion; it also made for less of a teacher/student or lecture type environment which participants appear to appreciate.
- **The emotionally secure context**: The programme was felt to offer a safe place for participants to talk about their experiences with a clear emphasis on approach that encouraged 'no answers, only opinions to be explored'. The lack of formal 'barriers' to discussion topics and session leader engagement in the exercises were seen as crucial in facilitating honest and candid dialogue.
- **The interest/investment of others**: It was felt that having EU partners attend and take an interest in the programme boosted the confidence of LCP participants.
- **Group homogeneity**: The fact that the group members were generally young and white was felt to aid the smooth running of the programme. Concern was expressed that with more diverse and mixed groups participants may be less likely to share feelings for fear of making themselves vulnerable (early indications suggest this hasn't happen in Italy thus far).

Programme features which require further consideration in the LCP

- **Project vulnerability due to having one person as the key facilitator**: There was concern that this could result in difficulties as the programme grows and requires more staffing or should Anthony not be available. The suggestion was that more people with similar backgrounds to Anthony be trained to support future LCP provision.
- **The need to balance an acceptance of participant views as valid with challenging them to change**: It was felt that some participant's values had not changed during the programme, for example few of them mentioned work as a value in the 'Values and Beliefs' session and perhaps that such opinions should be taken up and worked on.
- **Tailoring the programme to individual needs**. There was a question about whether the LCP group should be broken into smaller sessions at times, to work on particular issues which meet the needs of specific offenders.
- **The need to be mindful of participants who might only pay lip service to genuine change**, for example one or two in the last group said they only took part in order to 'get their tag' (gain permission to leave prison and complete their sentence in the community under monitoring and curfew conditions).

Matters that surprised those observing the LCP

- Italian delegates identified that there were no **foreign nationals** in the prison whereas in Italy there are many different ethnic groups. Knowsley explained that the levels of ethnic homogeneity are due to LCP being run in a community prison i.e. prisoners represent the population of Merseyside which is predominantly white (and different to the demographics of prison populations found in other metropolitan cities).
- Both Netherlands and Italian delegates were surprised that **the UK LCP cohort are younger than prisoners in their home countries**. Again this proved to be due to prison 'selection bias' in that in HMP Liverpool there are fewer older age offenders because 'career criminals' tend to be moved on to other prisons, meaning that age 21-35 forms 60% of HMP Liverpool's population. Also the older cohort are not obliged to engage with programmes from age 50 (although they can choose to if they wish) as the prison classes them as 'retired'.
- Delegates reported surprise not only at the extent to which **LCP participants were directly challenged about their views, the offences they had committed** (and how these impacted on them and indeed others) but also at **the extent to which it was proven to be crucial to have an ex-offender running the LCP**.
- Italian delegates were surprised at **how old the prison was, in stark contrast to the purpose-built buildings in Italy**; the latter they felt made it easier to run activities.
- As course leader, Anthony was surprised at **the extent to which the participants had talked to and mixed with the EU group** despite them being at the start of the LCP (i.e. 6th session which is not even half way through). He felt that once participants got to know the EU group, they spoke quite freely, thanks not least to the informal rather than sterile environment.
- Netherlands delegates were surprised at **the length of the sentences the young men had in HMP Liverpool, where a 4 year sentence seemed commonplace**, whereas in their home country this would only be given in most extreme circumstances.

What the EU Reducing Reoffending group gained from observing the LCP

- **The programme was exceptionally well delivered**.
- **A highly motivated person is needed to deliver the programme**.
- **It is vital to partner with other agencies to ensure the programme is able to meet all the needs of participants, for example training and education and employment**. Italy has made some progress in this regard in that whilst in prison, offenders do work for a building company, albeit that once they leave prison they are no longer employed by them.

What the participants were felt to gain from attending the LCP

- **Confidence from the team environment** both from Staff (Anthony, MALS, the prison governor and staff) and from other offenders on the course.
- **An emotionally secure environment where participants were able and enabled to speak and explore emotions and memories freely** (i.e. many have disclosed abuse in the LCP environment having never spoken about it to professionals previously).
- **A sense of ownership and achievement, particularly for those who had completed the programme and become mentors**. The benefits of participation continue outside of the delivery

room in that when the men fully engage in the programme, they become better behaved at work and on the wing and are more respectful with staff. This makes them much easier for the prison to work with. It also means the participants get promoted within the prison and put into positions of trust.

The most memorable parts of the observation/discussion for the EU Reducing Reoffending group

- **The prison governor saying that he respected the men for attending the programme**, because that meant a lot to the participants and builds their self-esteem.
- **The similarity of the values of the UK participants to those identified by prisoners in Italy.** In particular the fact that money and respect were highlighted as values initially but after the talk with Anthony participants had progressed to valuing family and friends.
- **The older members of the group really wanting to change as they were 'ageing out' of criminality meaning that they would not tolerate/ were prepared to challenge the 'big boy' talk (hubris) of the younger men, which helped them to progress**. This finding has as also helped MALS develop the LCP as it highlighted the need for a session on respect i.e. getting offenders to respect themselves and others.
- **The young age of many of the participants, which suggested that with better care when they were younger they may have been diverted from crime**. Key triggers for crime initiation and attendant areas of support needed for young people were: Expulsion and being sent to pupil referral units; leaving care and undiagnosed dyslexia and dyspraxia. Each of these were seen as potential causes of disengagement, from which downward criminogenic cycles might begin.
- **The way that LCP participants were challenged about their offending histories and taught the need to change if they are to leave prison permanently**. Many participants were not on their first sentence. When they left prison last time, they had failed to follow their plans to rehabilitate. Anthony firmly challenges the explanations participants offer for this, by explaining that blaming others, upbringing, environment etc. has to be balanced with notions of self-efficacy and choice. For many this also involved a shift in world view to accept that not everyone lives a life of law breaking and that a future without this is possible.
- **The importance of peer support amongst the participants and the fact that this is facilitated by deliberately selecting the LCP group from one prison wing**. The result is that participants continue to talk and learn after the session finishes. Anthony sometimes asks a participant to speak to another when they are on the wing to get them to adjust their values. This is a useful tool for those who are not progressing or failing to change in the course of the programme.

The extent to which the prison was seen as the best location for the delivery of the LCP

- **Prison is the correct place as it has a captive audience, at a point when they have an opportunity to think and contemplate**. Rather than simply leaving the programme to return to normal life where lessons can be lost, it was felt that participants instead dwell on their learning and consider more fully how it applies to them.
- **Prison is the best place for the LCP as it is important that participants leave having had their views challenged whilst also knowing that there is support available on the outside**.
- **It was suggested that a community / voluntary basis for the programme would not work** and this is supported by Anthony's experience in the UK where participants quickly returned to chaotic lifestyles. Inside the prison it was felt that participants were more receptive and more likely to agree to take part.

- **New arrangements for probation input for those with less than 12 month sentences will mean a greater reliance on accredited programmes in the UK** and it was felt that the LCP had important lessons to offer to such programmes.

The extent to which the LCP could be imported into Dutch and Italian contexts

- **For Italy, having the LCP run outside of the prison context is important.** They have previously attracted 11 participants and have 10 signed up for the next course. The community context is more workable in Italy due to the lack of probation support post-prison. In this context, the LCP is a way for people to feel part of the community, an important means by which to access employment and to more meaningfully engage the community.
- **Italy has two mentors, one of whom is a Roma woman who is a young mother who has a lot to offer. Similar to the UK LCP, participants are respectful of each other and supportive.** Participants vary from first-time offenders to those with long criminal histories, with offences including stalking, drug use, violence and robbery. They present with a range of problems.
- **In Italy, the LCP groups are mixed gender and concerns were raised about this by the UK due to potential domestic abuse histories but Italy felt this was not an issue as sentences had been served.** The UK felt such a group should be risk assessed and Italy confirmed that they are.
- **In the Netherlands, prison programmes are currently being cut back, meaning that this is not the time to roll out the LCP there.** Also such a process was seen as requiring a volunteer group which they would struggle to identify/access.
- **Also in the Netherlands, programmes rarely go 'through the prison gate' (connect prison to community support).** Social services do visit prisoners in The Hague before release but only to deal with practicalities e.g. benefits and housing. For this reason it was felt that there were limited options in terms of people who could fulfil the role of changing the offenders' mind set. That said, delegates from the Netherlands did feel the LCP would be valuable in The Hague.
- **The mix of populations in The Hague was also suggested as an obstacle to running the LCP as it was felt that the cultures there would not be comfortable with expressing feelings in mixed ethnic and cultural settings, due to animosity between groups.** It was suggested that for LCP to work it may need homogenous groups with same racial profile as their LCP leader.

The extent to which the delivery of mentoring services should be structured and uniform

- **To match volunteers with offenders and complete risk assessments there is a considerable need for structure, however, there are elements of service provision which do need flexibility rather than uniformity.** Most importantly, the LCP sessions need to meet the needs of those being mentored and this requires a level of flexibility to tailor sessions to requirements.
- **It was felt that having the capacity to be unstructured and flexible was one of the key factors which secured MALS' engagement with difficult to reach populations.** As a third sector organisation, MALS are not subject to the same regulations as statutory services which allows both service tailoring and advocacy and means that participants do not feel threatened i.e. there is no threat of punishment and no threat of losing custody of children.

3. Action Learning Activity: SMART action plan from February 2014 update

The second session of the morning focused on the progress made by the Reducing Reoffending member countries on the individual SMART action plans which they developed at the end of ALS3.

IOM - Knowsley

- **The shared data management system is now online**. The new Police-owned software (CORVUS) went live across Merseyside in March this year and is running in all five boroughs. The boroughs can now see detailed data on one another's most criminal identified nominals.

- **The implementation of the shared data management system has been problematic**. The original intended software, MiCase, was side-lined as it did not provide the required functionality and proved too expensive. As an alternative the police hosted CORVUS database that uses a weighted matrix based on Police intelligence to identify those causing most harm/concern is going to be adopted. This should allow for individuals who are deemed problematic to be added manually to the IOM cohort. As a SMART target, this progress retains 'amber' status as the system has not yet got the IOM cohort recidivism data or pathways data.

- **Whilst the five areas are at least now able to communicate and monitor offenders who move around the boroughs, there are some ongoing difficulties with the data management system** including: diverse criteria for producing the scoring matrices (i.e. different areas prioritise different types of offences); inability of CORVUS to take in data from VOs such as MALS (not least because CORVUS entries have to be entered using the police network), meaning that MALS have had to construct their own data/monitoring system in order to demonstrate impact.

- **MALS is currently undertaking the third cohort of the LifeChange Programme (LCP) in HMP Liverpool** and will run one more by the end of December. Significant lessons have been learned from these cohorts, including the importance of ensuring that those on the course are those who are nearing release (i.e. within six months) in order that their learning is fresh in their mind when they re-enter community life. This programme criterion has been communicated through posters on all prison wings to clarify LCP eligibility.

- **Attempts to secure funding to support MALS sustainability are ongoing**. This has not been easy in the current climate of austerity and reduced funding. However, MALS secured new funding from the Head Start Programme for work that aims to increase resilience and prevent YPs being channelled in to Mental Health and Youth Offending Services. MALS have also received £5000 from the Police Crime Commissioner to work with victims of domestic abuse. In partnership with a number of smaller Voluntary Organisations (VOs), MALS are also applying for Youth Engagement Programme funding and have also employed a consultant to help with their business planning.

- **Lessons drawn from MALS funding experiences** include: The need for VOs to advertise themselves and be persistent; to be able to demonstrate impact (which this project should help); and the need to respond to new policy environments. To this end MALS have been negotiating with a number of the different providers bidding for the Merseyside CRC contract area packages. The successful contract signatories will be announced in November 2014 and these bidders will subcontract to a variety of agencies like MALS working in the tertiary/voluntary sector.

- **Thirty-two mentors who were already trained have now been engaged thanks to the securing of funding for their expenses**. The prior lack of funding in this area had meant MALS delivered almost all service themselves. The volunteers are all working towards Personal Development Plans and MALS are working towards an Accredited Mentoring Provision certification so they can offer their mentors more in return for their time. As of next week, the MALS team will also be

supported for ½ to 1 day per week by a representative from the Department of Work and Pensions who will help mentees with CV writing and gaining employment and training.

The Safety House - The Hague

- **The team are running behind in their action plan due to escalating geopolitical events and resultant additional responsibilities around terrorism in their home country**. Large numbers of non-Dutch residents (mainly Muslim) have migrated to the city, some of whom have taken on the principles of extremist culture. In 2007 the government gave all authorities money to help tackle this problem but this funding stopped in 2011. The civil war in Syria and Iraq created a proliferation of problems in the Netherlands amongst Muslim residents of The Hague and those from other countries who assemble there. Many people come back from Syria traumatised by war and there is potential for some to become terrorists and recruit new people from The Hague to their cause. Approximately 20 people have returned to Syria to be involved in such campaigns and many young girls are leaving the Netherlands for Syria to give birth to 'new generation of warriors'. Parents and schools and neighbours did not foresee this until it hit crisis point and a plane containing young women headed for Turkey had to be stopped.

- **The main issues for the Safety House have been the required changes to working practice from reactive to preventative**. They are accustomed to collaborating on individual plans for reducing reoffending, but have had to shift to preventative models of working since they were given responsibility for the extremism cases. This shift also requires the Safety House to work with those who are not convicted, meaning they do not have the weight of the law behind their activities.

- **One of the interventions the Safety House have been asked to provide is re-socialisation programmes**. These are not compulsory, but the services offered are almost the same as that offered to ex-offenders in that they are supported into a stronger position which should reduce their likelihood of (re)offending. The work has proved challenging in the need to confront entrenched religious convictions, albeit that some are easier to influence than others. It is anticipated that prevention work may also extend to providing schools and families with tools to help identify potential terrorist activity or migration to Syria for extremist purposes. There is also a possibility of getting members of the Islamic community to teach about their faith accurately in order to counter extremist principles.

- **Another difficulty in work preventing terrorism is the fact that criminality is not confined to The Hague, requiring the Safety House to work at a government rather than just local level**. Activism recruitment is spread through social media and there is not one specific leader - power structures are spread, meaning it is difficult to identify a core person or group to influence. Such communications cannot simply be stopped as this has implications for basic human rights.

- **Current planning has highlighted the importance of inclusion work to tackle terrorism** for example engaging young people through school, sports, and health-care services and so on.

- **A final difficulty with prevention work is planning the termination of interventions and measuring impacts**. Specifically, pinpointing the precise point at which point someone has 'desisted' and is no longer deemed a risk is impossible when working with those who are potential not current offenders.

Note: Prior to ALS4 members of the Dutch delegation had asked whether it would be feasible, on the occasion of their visiting Merseyside, to arrange a meeting where the approaches being taken by Merseyside Police to tackle the radicalisation of vulnerable individuals and the problem of football hooliganism and related acts of disorder could be explored. The Knowsley partners duly organised and facilitated this exchange of good

practice and the Dutch delegation had the opportunity to have a personal audience with 3 senior anti-terrorism officers from Merseyside Police's anti-terrorism and football policing units; a representative from the National Crime Agency, and Knowlsey Borough Council's Community Cohesion officer. The meeting was attended by and minuted by Lol Burke from the LJMU Research Team and a report of that meeting has been produced.

European Research Institute - Turin

- **The first target had not been met in terms of testing the LCP with ten young people as the drop-out rate was so high; the group began with seven participants but six left before the programme finished**. The group felt this was due to the programme running after prison; a time when young people were averse to participating in something structured which felt either like a return to prison or indeed to a school environment. Also, young people were said to leave prison and immediately return to their old groups of friends, meaning that they felt little need for the social contact provided by the LCP. Additionally the programme was undertaken on a one-to- one rather than group basis, a context in which both young people and mentors found it difficult to undertake the LCP activities. For now a decision has been made not to do further work with young people but at a later date it is hoped that this target will be undertaken with those just about to leave prison (i.e. whilst still inside). However, such programmes are unusual in Italy meaning that getting the prison to support such a venture is proving a long and complex process.

- **Instead of young people, the LCP focus has turned to the adults and the creation of mentors.** This is easier as the LCP is much more comfortable in a group setting with adults and it has proved easier to recruit mentees from this group. The participants are older and more isolated so they appreciated the opportunity to talk and be amongst other people.

- **The group aimed to involve at least one adult in LCP, but they managed to engage ten people through a combination of group- and one-to-one work**. Half the participants were male and half were female, two of these were a couple. All of them were volunteer attendees who were identified by social services due to their legal status. Most had very basic needs i.e. employment, food and company as they are isolated and live on the fringes of society. They do some sessions similar to Anthony's teaching sessions but also sessions where they go out into local enterprise to help their participant find employment, for example in furniture stores. They are teaching mentees to respect those who spend time with them and to give something back. CV writing sessions have also been undertaken and in the one-to-one sessions they individually tailor learning strategies and identify opportunities for that person.

- **The group are forming a partnership with the Agrarian of University Turin to help the LCP participants to learn to read as well as to help them to create a garden project which will help them gain employment** by growing and selling their produce to buy more food as they have nothing in terms of benefits. This will also help to reduce their isolation as most of the Italian LCP client group are completely alone. This meets their target of improving and empowering their network, as does the involvement of a social centre (social services) from Turin and two municipalities.

- **The group have surpassed their target of recruiting one ex-offender mentor by bringing two onto their team; one Roma female and one local male, although they are not yet trained**. Roma participants in LCP have been most engaged hence the selection of a Roma mentor. Mentor training will begin this September in two subgroups, one mentor in each, to help them to learn the LCP and develop training activities. A Skype call will take place in October so that the mentors can 'meet' Anthony online.

- **Additionally a Spanish group of lawyers have requested information on the Italian LCP project.** The group felt the enquiry was due to the fact that Spain, like Italy, exercises common law.
- **The main transferable lesson from Italy's learning so far is 'always ask'** as sometimes there can appear to be obstacles to progress which, with further questioning, can be removed.

4. Action Learning Activity: 'Taking Stock, Looking Ahead'

The afternoon session began with Louise Thomas (Project Co-ordinator for KIOM) delivering a presentation called 'Taking Stock and Looking Ahead'. With the project now closer to its completion than its commencement this presentation was seen an important moment to re-emphasise the project goals and to start establishing what needs to be done to a) achieve these objectives, and b) to start identifying and challenging obstacles to realising these aims. For this reason Louise started with a re-iteration of the overall project objective;

> *'To reduce crime rates by reducing reoffending through the coordinated targeting of resources at those offenders whose criminogenic needs require additional intervention and support'*

The more specific 3 core objectives will see the project deliver;

- *Multi-agency approach to improve offenders' self-worth, self-motivation, desire to change and willingness to engage, and increase their opportunities to receive education, training and employment opportunities;*
- *LifeChange Programme with the voluntary sector, to assist with mentoring, re-integration through access to the 7 pathways out of reoffending, and improving public confidence that reoffending rates are reducing; and,*
- *Targeted intervention work with over 250 offenders across the EU*

In order to deliver on these objectives Louise explained that the original plans had set out 4 key strands of work that needed to be developed. Firstly, in order for the project to actively respond to the specific needs of individual offenders **250 12-month long Individual Life Change programmes** were both to be delivered across Italy and the UK during the 3-year duration of the Project (December 2012-Decemeber 2015). Secondly, to provide comprehensive support to ex-offenders the project was to establish **a 24-hour helpline** in Knowsley that users would utilise in moments of stress and vulnerability. A third strand of work was the organisation and delivery of **6 Action Learning Sets**, one every 6-months, for the 3 year duration of the project where the partners would come together to share best practice and engage in collective learning about how best to reduce reoffending.

The final area of work was the commissioning of IT services to enable **the development of a Case Management System** for the Knowsley based Integrated Offender Management Scheme to help focus attention on the pathways in and out of offending and to facilitate improved exchanges of information at local, regional and trans-national levels. This final area of investment was seen as crucial to providing quick, accurate information; to avoid duplication of effort/information; and to support the gathering and approval of additional information across multi-agency partners. The

ability to drill down and identify the different interventions used and to establish their impact should also help future planning and resource decisions.

At this point of the presentation Louise explained that the software package that had been lined up for purchasing - MiCase - was not, for reasons of cost and full capability, followed through and to date (September 2014) no bespoke case management system has been purchased. Instead the Knowsley based Integrated Offender Management project has had to use Merseyside Police hosted IT systems - most recently CORVUS - that whilst being able to offer increasingly detailed intelligence on individual's offending/anti-social behaviour has lacked the detailed assessment of individual's changed employment, training, relationship, housing and health status that it was hoped a project funded case management system would deliver.

With the attention on the original ambitions of the project, Louise then reminded participants of what the defined outcomes of the project were, namely;

- *a reduction in crime and reoffending rates;*
- *over 250 ex-offenders across Europe will have significantly increased access to advice and key services which meet their criminogenic and social needs;*
- *ex-offenders will be empowered to make positive life choices, reducing their risk of offending and improving their quality of life;*
- *increased (sustainable) involvement of the host community in enabling ex-offenders to re-settle effectively and lead positive crime-free lives;*
- *number of offender management practitioners accessing the Life Change training resource*

Louise then presented the following table identifying the expected results and providing a RAG (Red-Amber-Green) rating on progress where Red is not meeting target, Amber indicates more work is required to reach the targets set, and green where the project remains on course to achieve target.

Expected results	What has been delivered so far	Commentary
Reduction in re-offending rates/crime rates	Amber - Ongoing work trying to establish baselines for the cohorts	Progress needed in terms of case management system to help analysis
Increase in information sharing amongst EU and local partners	Amber - Regular contact and information sharing between partners	Increasing evidence that partners are exchanging ideas internally but locally partnership work being stifled by changing criminal justice landscape(s)
6 ALS with a minimum of 16 at each event	Green - 4 ALS to date	Dates have been agreed and set for ALS 5 and ALS 6
6 reports based on the ALS in 3 languages	Green - 3 ALS reports produced to date	ALS 4 Report being translated at time of writing
1 life Change Programme Guide produced in EN, IT, and NL	Green - Completed and being tested in Italy	The manual has been produced and is guiding practice
1 End of Project best practice LCP training guide produced	Amber - To be completed November 2015	To be written closer towards the end of the project
1 End of Project Conference with 250 people from across the EU	Amber - Thursday 19th November 2015	A venue has been booked and draft outline of the day has been developed

7000 mentoring sessions	Green - 5059 mentoring sessions delivered to date	The project is on course for meeting the targeted number of sessions
25 Life Change programmes delivered	Green - 17 LCP delivered	With Italy now delivering the LCP and MALS working in the prison progress is good
263 offenders mentored	Green - 135 offenders mentored	Just over half the number of offenders to be mentored have been so progress is sound
180 hours of volunteer mentoring training	Green - 90 hours of training delivered	The training of mentors has continued throughput the delivery of the LCP
Installation of case management system	Green - CORVUS Case management system implemented in March 2014	The adoption of the police hosted system should begin to help the case management of individuals

Having established *'Where we are?'* Louise's next slide shifted the focus to look at *'What needs to be done in the next 12-months'*. This slide pinpointed key performance measures and identified the partners responsible for their delivery. This exercise was designed to feed into and act as a catalyst for the national cluster activity that followed later in the afternoon where partners explored what they needed to do to complete their contribution to the project's realisation.

Action	Lead	Timescales
Establish baseline Reducing Reoffending/Crime Rates on the IOM cohorts	KMBC/LJMU	December 2014
Provide evidence of the increase in information sharing amongst all partners	ALL	November 2015
1 Life Change Training guide produced on Best Practice	MALS/LJMU/ERI	October 2015
7000 Mentoring Sessions delivered	MALS/KMBC	November 2015
25 Life Change Programmes Delivered	MALS/ERI	November 2015
A further 129 Offenders mentored	MALS/ERI	November 2015
180 Hours of volunteer mentoring training delivered	MALS	November 2015

A further stimulus to the group activity was Louise's final slide where she identified what she saw as the barriers to the project being completed. Drawing heavily upon the Knowsley experience, Louise identified 3 significant issues that are influencing the operation of MALS, in particular, to deliver mentoring services;

1. The **devolving of probation services in England and Wales has had a significant impact on the number of people being referred** through to MALS from the IOM. Under the changes instituted through the Transforming Rehabilitation agenda the bulk of probation work (the initial estimates were 70% of the probation workload) is being transferred from the publicly funded Probation Trusts into newly established Community Rehabilitation Companies -

privately funded organisations that will be paid for the results they achieve in terms of ensuring individuals complete their community based sentences and don't reoffend. The most serious and high risk of harm offenders will be supervised by the newly configured National Probation Service, an organisation that will remain in public ownership. The split in probation services took effect on the 1st June 2014 and the most profound change in the history of probation services is continuing to reshape the criminal justice landscape in England and Wales in ways that haven't fully been established and settled yet. The issue for MALS is that the pace and scope of change has led to uncertainty over who can/should refer clients into MALS and whether MALS work as partners or alternatives to the CRC, particularly in respect of providing mentoring services. Whatever the specific reason might be there has been a reduced number of people being referred into MALS throughout the calendar year and there's still a fair degree of uncertainty throughout local IOM projects about the impact of the split of probation services;

2. The splitting of probation services on the 1st June 2014 was the first step in the process of the devolution of offender management services. The second step will be **the announcement in November 2014 of which bidders have been successful in securing the contracts to provide services across the 21 CRC areas**. These prime providers have been liaising with local criminal justice/social policy organisations throughout the summer to identify the services they may look to commission on winning the contracts. MALS have been approached and entered into discussions with some of the bidders for the Merseyside CRC contract package area but it won't be known until November 2015 if who've they been speaking to have been successful;

3. As a small organisation reliant on often small and short-term injections from funding sources the challenge of keeping MALS finically sustainable is, and has, been one the organisation has had to respond to for some time. With the market for providing services becoming even more inflated and reductions in spending from main stream sources **the organisation is operating within a challenging and financially compromised climate**. As well as meeting the demands of delivering services now and meeting the short-term requirements of the Reducing Reoffending project, the organisation continually needs to assess longer-term prospects and ambitions. Such a balancing act is time and resource intensive as well as being stressful for those involved.

5. Action Learning Activity: Context, Mechanisms and Outcomes of Reducing Reoffending

A significant part of the afternoon session was spent on a group learning and sharing activity structured around a set of key questions. These tailored questions (reproduced below) asked the participants within their national groupings to reflect upon the context, mechanisms and outcome of their interventions. The following brief summaries capture the messages from the feedback session.

Knowsley

Briefly describe the ambition(s) and membership of the Reducing Reoffending Partnership
The Knowsley Reducing Reoffending Partnership centres on the integrated offender management scheme (IOM). This is made up of statutory agency partners such as probation, mental health agencies, Merseyside Police, employment agencies, HMP Liverpool and non-statutory agencies which includes housing providers, MALS and the CAB.

How did your partnerships come about and to what extent are these relationships formalised?

The partnership came about in 2011 following a review of procedures and a partnership planning day between Merseyside Police, probation and Knowsley which mapped out an offender's journey from custody to community and in so doing sought reassurances and agreements from the various partners about what they could provide by way of support services. The formalised partnership has been signed off at senior management level and an information sharing protocol facilitates data transfer.

Are your partners public, private or third sector and, with lessons for international partners in mind, to what extent do those partnerships help you to reduce reoffending?

Partners are public, private and third sector and this is seen as the only way forward in an age of declining resources. 'Working within silos' is not the way forward whilst working in partnership reduces duplication in services, helps to reduce reoffending by adding value collectively and using resources in a better way. Knowsley reiterated the Reducing Reoffending Project goal of sharing best practice across international jurisdictions citing lessons being taken from The Hague and the transfer of ideas from Knowsley to Italy.

To what extent is rehabilitation acceptable to/supported by the public in the UK?

The question of whether rehabilitation is supported by the public was hotly debated within the Knowsley cluster. It was felt that much depended upon the offence in question. Some sections of the community call for more punitive responses to crimes committed and argue that pumping money and resources into rehabilitation takes revenue away from sections of the local community who haven't committed a crime but require support for employment and housing etc. Sensationalised crime reporting in the media also exacerbates public calls for more punitive measures. On the other hand, if nothing is done to support rehabilitation, criticism for inaction is levelled at agencies.

What is the current criminal justice policy context in the UK and to what extent is *rehabilitation* built in to the UK policy (please give examples if possible)?

The current criminal justice landscape in the UK is at a pivotal stage and the outlook is extremely challenging. The Knowsley feedback drew attention to press coverage surrounding the prison system, for example, where a critical point has been reached. Staffing levels are at a crisis point and the potential for mass unrest is high. The Knowsley group felt that whilst government rhetoric is stressing transforming rehabilitation as the watchwords, the real subtext of the emerging policies was more a matter of control, resource stripping and lack of investment in support measures which could make a difference to the lives of ex-offenders.

How successful do you feel your organisation currently is at reducing reoffending and how do you demonstrate this effectiveness and to that end do you make use of computerised case management systems?

Within Merseyside, a case management system, CORVUS, has recently been adopted. The implementation of this system and design of its data capture parameters has been much slower than expected and hence its effectiveness has been blunted somewhat. Knowsley perceive themselves to be above the national average when it comes to reducing reoffending and this is a reflection of the effective partnership working in place. However a significant level of uncertainty lies ahead in the short to medium term with regard to partnership working.

Highlight some of the key emerging issues in terms of partnership working within the changing criminal justice landscape?

Some of the massive changes to the criminal justice landscape impact upon the probation service, a key partner in the Knowsley Reoffending Partnership. Significant uncertainty surrounds how the new prime contractor which will take control of the monitoring of low and medium risk offenders will operate and what working practices they will institute.

<u>The Hague</u>

Please describe the ambition(s) and membership of the Safety House.
Safety House is a publicly funded body that has been in existence for 5 years. It is an aphysical entity made up of different organisations working under one roof. These organisations include police, CPS, probation, child protection board and psychiatric organisations work together under one roof. Other organisations are also invited to the Safety House on a needs basis such as housing companies. Most of these organisations are publically funded but some are also private with public subsidies. Hence the Safety House is greater than the sum of its parts (i.e. the organisations that meet together and share information to make a plan are the key ingredients of the Safety House approach).

To what extent do those partnerships help you to reduce reoffending and what might other countries learn from the way that your partnerships operate
Partnership working is assisted by the operation of a single specially designed computer system for case management with bespoke portals for the different agencies to submit their relevant data. Data sharing and collaborative working agreements are in place between organisations. The Safety House organisations work in a coordinated fashion with a shared vision to develop a plan to support complex 'problem' individual or family and seeks to tackles the multifarious needs that have been identified (e.g. housing, domestic violence, children, drugs dependency). More straightforward cases are not processed through the Safety House. An outcome of the Safety House conference is that one organisation will ultimately take the lead for co-ordinating the help and interventions detailed in the plan for that particular family or individual.

What is the current criminal justice policy context in the Netherlands and to what extent is rehabilitation acceptable to/supported by the public?
Recent changes to the criminal justice and organisational landscape in the Netherlands means many organisations are evolving and in transition. These transitions are designed to bring more power to local people through devolving powers to the city municipalities. The Safety House operates within three guiding pillars (heath-care pillar, criminal pillar and the mayor's pillar). City mayors in the Netherlands are very different to mayors in the UK. Fundamentally the mayoral system in the Netherlands has delegated powers. Hence the mayor has considerable powers within the criminal justice sphere and can enact, for example, spatial restraining orders on perpetrators of persistent anti-social behaviour.

To what extent is rehabilitation built into criminal justice policy
Rehabilitation is seen as a fundamental goal in the Netherlands and is publically acceptable. Prison is the last resort after the use of intervention programmes. But it is felt that the interventions do work and are effective.

How successful do you feel your organisation currently is at reducing reoffending and how do you demonstrate this effectiveness?
Success is measured by a case study evidence based approach and the continued popularity of the Safety House among organisations who value the approach to seeking resolutions through co-

operation for wide ranging issues such as spikes in the burglary rate within particular areas to rising levels of Islamic radicalisation.

Highlight some of the key emerging issues in terms of partnership working within the changing criminal justice landscape?
Responding to young Dutch people involved in extremism is a priority for the Dutch.

<u>**ERI**</u>

Please describe the make-up of the ERI - public (taxation funded), private (for profit) and/or third sector (charity) - and the extent to which organisations works in partnership to reduce reoffending?
The ERI is a private not for profit entity. In tackling reoffending, the ERI works with two city councils as well as a social service which is not affiliated with any particular municipality.

How do your relationships with partner organisations function and are they formalised
Local enterprises and other third sector organisations such as psychologists are partners to the ERI. The ERI takes the lead on relevant agendas of the partners and the sequencing of this arrangement sees the ERI speaking with the municipalities. In turn the municipalities contact social services who then invite ex-offenders to work with the ERI. It is then entirely the decision of the ex-offender if they want to participate. The ERI stresses the voluntary nature of this participation as a key ingredient for the ex-offender staying the course. Formal contracted relations exist between the partners.

To what extent do those partnerships help you to reduce reoffending?
The link between partnership working and reducing reoffending is an important one. The city councils provide the physical spaces within which ERI LCP activities operate whilst social services assist with the pre-selection of potential programme participants.

What might other countries learn from the way that your partnerships operate?
The ERI suggested that perhaps the involvement of private enterprises in the community setting might be a lesson that can usefully be adopted by other international partners.

To what extent is rehabilitation acceptable to/supported by the public in Italy?
Rehabilitation is accepted in Italy but has minimal support.

What is the current criminal justice policy context in Italy and to what extent is rehabilitation built in to Italian policy (please give examples if possible)?
There are limited budgets to support the rehabilitation agenda and there is a general feeling that the landscape of criminal justice Italy is overly complex and opaque wherein high profile corruption and the misuse of wealth and power provides another layer of obscurity in trying to understand the terrain. In addition, new laws created in 2014 such as 'Legge svuota carceri' involves the release of a significant number of low-risk prisoners in order to counteract prison overcrowding but without the required levels of support for rehabilitation in the community this law is likely to prove problematic.

How successful do you feel your organisation currently is at reducing reoffending and how do you demonstrate this effectiveness?
In measuring the success of the LCP in addressing reoffending, the ERI pointed to the 100% attendance of participants at the 8 sessions to date and even when the programme was complete, participants still continued to contact the ERI for advice and support such as accommodation advice.

Do you make use of computerised case management systems and how effective are these?
A computer system is in place to record information but this is primarily used by the ERI. The other partners have access to it but there use of it is quite limited.

Highlight some of the key issues in terms of partnership working within criminal justice landscape?
ERI identified the lack of information about offenders. The lack of co-ordinated joined up practice and information sharing between social services and the prison system is an important emergent issue. ERI is sometimes asked to negotiate between organisations as a result. Given the importance of information sharing in the new climate of criminal justice services, these communication blockages are a major obstacle to true and effective multi-agency working.

6. Key Issues for Partners/Delegates to Consider

There would appear to be a few enduring issues it would be helpful for delegates to consider;

- **The need to try to retain a focus on the Reducing Reoffending objective(s) within a particularly volatile and changing policy context**. As the Action Learning Sets have developed it has been noticeable how difficult it has been for the partners attending to keep a clear and coherent focus on the specific project aims of the project. For UK and Dutch partners, much more embedded within institutional structures than their Italian counterparts, the impact of shifting political priorities/agendas has been especially pronounced. In the UK the on-going and far from complete impact of the Transforming Rehabilitation agenda has had a significant impact on the devolving of probation services, and prior to that the development of the role of Police and Crime Commissioners has meant fundamental changes in local criminal justice commissioning practices. In the Netherlands the recent shift in focus towards responding to the threat posed by the rise in numbers of people engaged in extremism and associated with Islamic fundamentalism movements has clearly seen a gear change in the priorities of local and national government agendas. In both cases the challenges are 1) to try to ensure that a focus on the project outcomes remains constant, but that 2) there is a well versed ability to articulate and contextualise the impact of the changing policy landscape in making the realisation of these aims possible.

- **A concern with the longer-term and structural stability of the working practices the project is endeavouring to develop**. Due in part to the shifts and changes happening at a macro political level, but often influenced by micro level funding concerns the challenges of sustaining the models of working this project has developed are considerable. Securing funding for MALS is crucial to their on-going ability to innovate and deliver the Life Change Programme, ensuring the integrity of the Safety House model of working amidst the on-going plans to roll the model out regionally, and finding ways for the ERI - as a social enterprise – to keep connected in with statutory bodies are all sources of concern. The continued operation of LCPs (in the UK and Italy) and emphasising the value of maintaining multi-agency working (and the open/active information sharing between partners that underpins Integrated Offender Management and the Safety House) are shaping up to be the project's defining contributions. However, ensuring these messages/impacts endure is going to be difficult.

- **The need to think about, and develop the ability to demonstrate effectiveness and impact of intervention work**. The project is now nearer its completion than its commencement and the mood towards the latter half of the Action Learning Set shifted towards a real concern with meeting the project objectives and generating project outcomes. Gauging the impact of change and innovation is

going to be essential to illustrating how useful the exercise of sharing good/best practice has been. The workshops have continually identified the on-going issues with IT systems and case management tools, and how case studies are often much more illustrative than difficult to compile and define quantitative data but across the project there is need for partners to think about and start articulating ways to measure impact. The ability to produce evidence of impact and to pull out results will make the claims to modify practice, based on the project's experience, much more compelling and coherent.

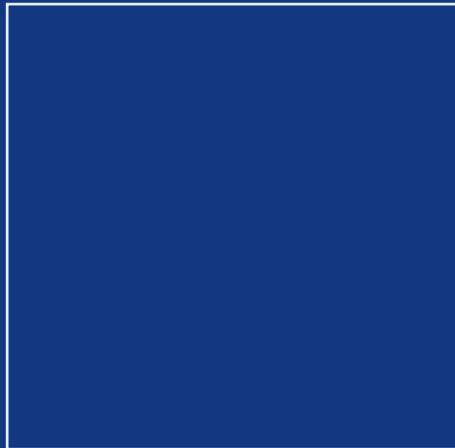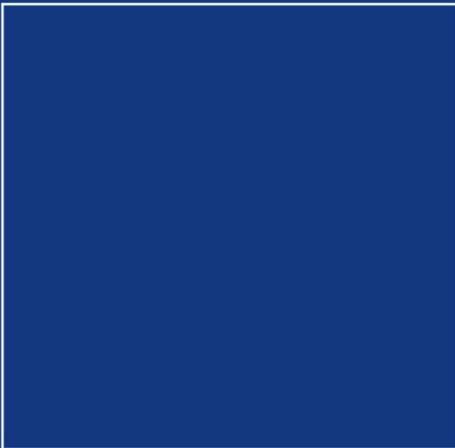- **The need to plan for, think about and promote the end of project conference in November 2015**. The date for the end of project conference has been identified and the venue has been set. This event will showcase to a wider audience the lessons and emergent issues that are to be taken in terms of sharing and delivering innovative criminal justice policy; using mentoring interventions to reduce reoffending; and to explore the challenges for agencies/organisations working in constantly shifting and complex social and political landscapes. It is important that delegates give thought now to the messages they wish to deliver at this event.

7. Appendix 1: Participants

All participants in the Action Learning Set were provided with information sheets about the European Reoffending Research Project and consent forms were completed.

Morning session attendees were:

- Hans Metzemakers – Department of Public Order and Safety, The Hague
- Sjoerd van der Luijt - Safety House , The Hague
- Heidie Pols - Safety House, The Hague
- Iskender Forioso – Researcher, European Research Institute, Italy
- Federico Floris – Practitioner, European Research Institute, Italy
- Enrico Audenino – European Research Institute, Italy
- Paula Sumner – Manager of Community Safety Services (including KIOM and Domestic Violence Victim Groups), Knowsley Borough Council, UK
- Louise Thomas – Area Community Safety Manager (Prescott and Halewood), Knowsley Borough Council, UK
- Yvonne Mason – Temporary Project Coordinator, Knowsley Borough Council, UK
- Paul Mellor – Head of Learning and Skills, HMP Liverpool, UK
- Paula Funston – Partners of Prisoners (POPS) Manager, HMP Liverpool, UK
- Rosie Goodwin – ACO, Merseyside Community Rehabilitation Company, UK
- Peter Hughes – Probation Officer, Merseyside Community Rehabilitation Company, UK
- Clare Donohue - MALS manager (Mentoring offenders who leave prison and delivering the Life Change Programme), Merseyside, UK
- Anthony Evans – MALS, Merseyside, UK
- Leah Gorry – MALS, Merseyside, UK
- Giles Barrett, Helen Beckett Wilson, Matthew Millings and Lol Burke, Liverpool John Moores University, UK

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Contact Us

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