

Joint Seminar 25th September 2013

Transforming Rehabilitation

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Probation Trust (CPPT)

Institute of Criminology (IoC) Centre for Community, Gender and Social Justice

The purpose of this seminar was to bring together practitioners, policy makers, managers and academics to discuss the implications of the Government's Transforming Rehabilitation agenda for the Probation Service.

The seminar took the form of a number of short presentations followed by debate and questions. Presentations were given by John Budd and Ali Hancock (CPPT), Sharon Ahmad (Herts Monitoring Project SOVA), Sue Rex (NOMS), Prof Loraine Gelsthorpe (IoC) and Jane Dominey (IoC). Slides from these presentations are attached below.

Reference was made to a number of policy documents and other papers, including

- NOMS Target Operating Model (TOM) <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/rehab-prog/competition/target-operating-model.pdf>
- NOMS proposed payment model for the rehabilitation programme <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/rehab-prog/payment-mechanism.pdf>
- A critique of this payment model (from the Social Market Foundation) highlighting ways in which it may not encourage providers to reduce re-offending http://www.smf.co.uk/files/7413/7603/8981/20130808_PBR_paper_FINAL.pdf
- Ministry of Justice summary of evidence on reducing reoffending http://www.smf.co.uk/files/7413/7603/8981/20130808_PBR_paper_FINAL.pdf

The discussion in the seminar was wide-ranging. A number of themes were highlighted, including:

- The timescale for the winding up of the existing Probation Trusts and the creation of a new National Probation Service (NPS) and Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) is ambitious. This is a huge programme of change. It is causing uncertainty and anxiety for all staff. Complex and controversial consultations about new arrangements and conditions of service are underway. All this needs to be delivered whilst 'business as usual' continues.
- Risk assessment and risk management are critical issues. Many questions about the interface between the new NPS and the CRCs remain unanswered. Risk is dynamic. It can increase, decrease and increase again over a short period of time. When and how will cases move between agencies, what role will supervising staff play in this, what will be the financial consequences for providers?
- Concern was expressed that the new arrangements would fail to meet the needs of service users – who would find themselves caught up in something confusing, fragmented and incoherent.

- Volunteer mentors play an important role in supporting offenders in the community. They bring a wide range of skills and life experience. Ex-offender peer mentors can be very effective. However, it is important to remember that there are costs involved in recruiting, training and supporting volunteers. It was agreed that volunteers complement the work of professional staff; they can not be a replacement. There is no clarity about the extent to which CRCs will make use of volunteers under the new arrangements.
- Staff need appropriate training to ensure that they are delivering services which are likely to reduce reoffending and protect the public. It was a point of concern that CRCs are not required to use the PQF (i.e. the current training programme for probation workers). New providers will, though, need to be able to show that they are employing competent staff. Looking ahead, there will need to be changes to the arrangements for training and qualifications to reflect the changes to the probation service.
- To help maintain the quality of future practice, SEEDS (Skills for Effective Engagement, Development and Supervision) (the NOMS model for effective engagement with offenders) will be licensed and shared with new providers. The Probation Inspectorate will also have a quality assurance role in the new arrangements, expanding its work to inspect CRCs.
- Positive work with women offenders in the community (including the women-centred services developed following the Corston Report) could be at risk under the new arrangements. Will CRCs make work with women offenders a priority? Will women's needs be side-lined on the basis that women are seen as relatively low risk of re-offending? The NOMS Target Operating Model makes no specific mention of work with female offenders and there is no suggestion that budgets for work with women will be ring-fenced, although there is awareness that work is ongoing to make sure that the positive steps in the last few years are not reversed. But there are huge concerns about payment for results, and how this might work out for women - if a simplistic binary model of measurement is used to assess the impact of interventions.
- Extending statutory post-custody supervision to everyone leaving prison is a key part of the new arrangements. When enacted, new legislation will mean that all prisoners will be supervised in the community for at least 12 months after release. As a result, the impact of a 3 month prison sentence increases significantly from a few weeks in prison to a few weeks in prison plus 12 months community supervision. This supervision period extends beyond the end date of the prison sentence.
- Working with this new group of involuntary clients, particularly in the context of austerity and limited resources, was seen as a real challenge for the new CRCs.