



Case Study:

Sefton CVS & HMP Kennet Partnership

Project: Supporting Offenders

Area covered: Sefton, Merseyside

Effective working between the third sector and Prison Service

In the summer of 2007, Sefton CVS and the North West Prison Service developed a dynamic new partnership with the newly opened 350-bed male prison, HMP Kennet, Merseyside. The partnership identifies methods that enables the effective involvement of the third sector in delivering services to offenders within the prison.

The specific aims of the project include:

- establishing frameworks/ systems relating to quality assurance, outcome-based approaches and evaluation/ monitoring;
- developing real and meaningful community engagement approaches to maximise strong and positive relationships between the prison and neighbouring communities;
- supporting the development of multi-faceted and comprehensive approaches to equality and diversity practice within the prison and third sector service delivery approaches;
- enabling the development of transformed and flexible commissioning, procurement and tendering approaches, maximising the potential contribution of the third sector; and
- identifying opportunities to share experiences learnt through this partnership across the north west region, and seeking sustainable resources to ensure the partnership is given sufficient time to mature and significantly improve third sector and prison engagement.

Brief overview of progress to date

Paula Atherton is the Sefton CVS's HMP Kennet Liaison Officer, who works within the prison. The initial focus of the project was around establishing relationships with key prison staff, developing a strong operational knowledge of prison culture, engaging existing and new third sector service providers, liaising with statutory service providers, setting up offender service user groups, offering training, and working to strengthen engagement with local communities. Paula has also worked with Kennet staff to identify, and meet, gaps in services to offenders, and to enhance Kennet's service planning processes.

The project also works directly with third sector and statutory service providers working



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within Kennet to improve monitoring feedback and to establish a clear outcomes-focused analysis, which enhances Kennet senior management understanding of the impact of third sector (and statutory sector) services within the prison.



Future developments

The Sefton CVS/ HMP Kennet partnership has been a constructive and positive experience. Not without its challenges, particularly in terms of understanding the working practices within a prison, there is clearly significant potential to further enhance the partnership and strengthen third sector involvement in HMP Kennet and support the NOMS Reducing Re-offending Strategy.

One of the key areas of development which will be targeted in 2008-09 is analysing the prison's strategic commissioning and procurement approach to ensure there is flexibility to maximise the involvement of third sector service providers (both commissioned and non-commissioned) in delivering services both within the prison and 'through the gate'.

Sefton CVS and the North West Prison Service believe that this innovative model has the potential to positively change the culture of prison and third sector engagement and to support the government's aim to maximise third sector contribution to reducing re-offending.

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