

Birmingham
Resettlement Mentoring Forum

Mentoring Referrals & Co-ordination Project

Independent Evaluation
April 2009

“what if. . .?”



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Consultant's Statement

Wider Impact Consultancy is delighted to present this report, evaluating the Birmingham Resettlement Mentoring Forum (BRMF) Mentoring Referrals and Co-ordination pilot project.

Our findings are extremely positive and we take note of the fact that the project has been delivered by third sector organisations that have utilised impressive skills and experience to train and support volunteer mentors to provide high quality mentoring support to mentees – some of whom are prolific persistent offenders (PPOs) recently released from prison.

We are concerned to learn that on the whole, agencies such as the Police and Probation Service do not appear convinced about the value of the third sector / volunteers mentoring prolific / ex-offenders. This is short sighted and needs to be addressed. Hopefully this report and in particular, our highlighted case studies will help to make some progress in this area.

As highlighted by a recent report by Baroness Neuberger (*Volunteering Across the Criminal Justice System*, Baroness Neuberger, March 2009), the third sector has a significant role to play in supporting the Criminal Justice System. Our recommendations are in line with those of Baroness Neuberger and this is a unique and important opportunity for Birmingham based agencies (and, we suggest, the United Kingdom) to take advantage of this innovative and successful **Test Bed initiative** delivered by the BRMF and funded by the Learning & Skills Council (LSC).

Edwin Lewis, Wider Impact Consultancy Limited
April 2009

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Report Commissioned by

The New Hope Mentoring Programme on behalf of the
Birmingham Resettlement Mentoring Forum

Delivered by

Wider Impact Consultancy
www.widerimpact.com

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1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

Wider Impact Consultancy has been commissioned by the Birmingham Resettlement Mentoring Forum (BRMF) to independently evaluate the BRMF Mentoring Referrals and Co-ordination pilot project.

Funded by **West Midlands Next Steps (Test Bed)**, and led by the **New Hope Mentoring Programme (NHMP)**, the BRMF is piloting a co-ordinated mentoring referrals service for specified prisons working in and around the Birmingham area.

1.2 Project Aims

Aims include ensuring that clients requiring mentoring services will be allocated an appropriate mentor from one of the BRMF's signatory agencies depending on the individual agencies own referrals criteria.

Agencies currently involved in delivering the pilot include:

- NHMP
- Prison Link
- The Birmingham Ex-offender Service Team (B.E.S.T)
- Birmingham City University
- BroSis
- HMP Swinfen Hall

1.3 Project Objectives

1. Co-ordination with Prison Resettlement Teams for the purposes of “through the gate support” at HMP Birmingham, HMYOI Brinsford, HMP Featherstone, and HMP and YOI Swinfen Hall.

2. Pilot the **Offender Mentoring Toolkit** and report on the outcomes of the pilot activity.
3. Pilot the **Spider Assessment Tool** developed and provided by HMP Swansea and provide data, using mechanisms of the Spider Assessment Tool, on the impact of the mentoring provision delivered within this contract.
4. Draft and present at least 5 comprehensive case studies, with an aspiration to produce a total of 10 case studies, detailing the partnership's work with the individual offenders and the effectiveness of mentoring as an intervention.

1.4 Project Timescales / Funding

The pilot project was scheduled to run from July 2008 to March 2009, however unavoidable funding related delays resulted in the project actually starting **September / October 2008** (ending March 2009). Total funding for the project from the LSC is **£38,000.00**, which has been awarded to the New Hope Mentoring Programme, as Managing Agent for the project. Funding has been utilised to support additional staff costs of delivering the pilot and expenses to support mentors meeting / supporting mentees.

1.5 Project Delivery

Led by **Dr Richard Stunt**, the New Hope Mentoring Programme (NHMP) has acted as 'Managing Agent' for the pilot. Chaired by Dr Stunt, a number of well attended forum minuted meetings have taken place. The Project Co-ordinator has successfully liaised with participating prisons, mentees, partner mentoring organisations and mentors.

1.6 Summary of Findings

Understanding that there are a further two months outputs to take account of, and the fact that launch of the project was delayed due to funding issues, outputs and outcomes are impressive (see **8.0**). For example:

- Led by the NHMP, Birmingham based third sector organisations have successfully collaborated to deliver high quality and professional mentoring support to recently released prolific offenders (mentees), who have made the decision to halt their offending behaviour
- **38** new volunteer mentors have been recruited and trained by the BRMF
- **30** mentees have been referred to the BRMF
- **7** are PPO category offenders
- **6** are BME offenders
- **3** have been referred / engaged into training or education
- **3** have been referred / engaged into employment
- **3** have been referred / engaged with accommodation support

Sight should not be lost of the importance of engaging with offenders who are prolific and responsible for large amounts of crime. By nature their lives are chaotic and engagement is often an achievement in itself.

As is demonstrated by this report and, in particular, the case studies highlighted at [Appendix D](#), successful and fruitful links have been made with committed mentors and grateful mentees.

Findings have included an understanding that:

- Offenders may reach a point in their lives when they realise that, '**enough is enough**'
- Offenders reaching this point require / demand wide ranging multi-agency and family support, linked to the 7 Pathways to Reduce Re-Offending if they are to succeed in their objective of halting their offending behaviour
- Traditional support agencies (e.g. Probation Service) are not in a position to provide the intensive [mentoring] support required / demanded by offenders – due to issues such as roles / responsibilities / time constraints and / or limited budgets / shortfalls
- Linked to the Offender Management Model, a trained volunteer mentor is often the most appropriate person to provide the 'through the gate' and 'into the community' support most valued by offenders

- The mentee / mentor relationship needs to be 'open ended' and not time limited
- The mentee / mentor match is important to both parties and must be carefully thought out if the relationship is to succeed and mentees' objectives are to be achieved

We are impressed with the energy and commitment of all those involved with the pilot, which is not a surprise to us, based on the fact that the third sector organisations concerned are committed to supporting vulnerable people. 'Good practice' of note includes:

- An **innovative multi-agency partnership** has been created, involving agencies such as the LSC, the Probation Service, Police, Prisons, Tribal and the third sector mentoring organisations
- Under the **leadership** and guidance of Dr Richard Stunt (NHMP), an effective collaboration of third sector organisations (BRMF) has been formed and is proving that they have the skills to work together for the benefit of prisons / mentees
- **Evidence** that mentoring has a significant role to play in preventing re-offending and supporting ex-offenders into training / work and off benefits
- '**Value for money**', in terms of a relatively small amount of funding (**£38,000**), facilitating such impressive outputs and outcomes that have the potential to save many thousands if the mentees continue to be supported in their objectives to halt their re-offending behaviour
- '**Added value**', in terms of providing mentoring support that is helping ex-offenders into training / work and contributing to the Birmingham economy – rather than a drain on public services / funding
- The BRMF is proving a **unique** and **valued service** that is '**adding value**' to the services prisons are able to offer to inmates who require mentor support to change their offending behaviour, and take advantage of training / development opportunities
- Membership of the BRMF is 'adding value' to each of the participating organisations, in terms of:

- Leadership and direction
 - One 'voice' with potential to include pan Birmingham mentoring organisations - to support the objectives of strategic bodies such as the **Birmingham Strategic Partnership** (LSP) and the **Safer Birmingham Partnership**
 - Capacity, opportunity and **potential** to support delivery of mentor support to those who require it across the Birmingham area
 - Enhanced training / development opportunities for volunteer mentors
 - Confidence / skills / experience / knowledge gleaned from each of the participating organisations
 - Time / resources as the Co-ordinator (Rachel Simpson) enables links with participating prisons
 - Networking – between the organisations and mentors as individuals
 - Opportunities to develop, grow and increase capacity
 - Potential to deliver joint (large) funding applications
 - **'The whole being greater than the individual parts'**
-
- Whilst the organisations are working collaboratively, they are able to maintain individual identities and continue to support their unique client bases

1.7 Lessons Learnt

1. Whilst the funding provided by the LSC is generous and valued, the pilot would have been enhanced by sufficient funding to support a full-time team to deliver the pilot. Both Dr Richard Stunt and Rachel Simpson (NHMP) have been required to support the functions of their own organisation (NHMP) as well as the pilot.
2. Whilst the pilot has provided evidence of useful 'best practice', 6 months is too short a period to pilot such an initiative. It is our view that rather than being a pilot, the project has been a **'test bed'** that indicates that a fully funded / resourced, minimum **3 year pilot** is required to explore the benefits of delivering project objectives.

1.8 Recommendations

Based on our research, we are pleased to make the following recommendations concerning the delivery of this project and potential future direction:

1. All those involved in the development and delivery of the pilot should be thanked and congratulated. This should include volunteer mentors and most importantly mentees.
2. Consideration should be given to enabling / funding a **3-year pilot**, aimed at co-ordinating offender mentoring services across the Birmingham area.
3. Such pilot should inform development / delivery of similar Mentoring Forums / collaborations in every area of the United Kingdom. Evidence gained from this 'test bed' indicates that this is a service / resource that will be greatly valued by the Prison Service.
4. Resources for the Birmingham based 3-year pilot should include:
 - Third sector managing agent – funding management / line management support / monitoring / evaluation
 - Two full-time posts (with experience of delivering mentoring support to offenders / ex-offenders) – Project Manager, and a Project Co-ordinator
 - Premises / office support
 - A website
 - A Multi-Agency Partnership Board / Steering Group involving for example, representatives from agencies such as Prisons, the Probation Service, the Birmingham Strategic Partnership (LSP) and the Safer Birmingham Partnership
5. The role of the 3-year pilot should include the following, enabling:
 - Strategic linkage with multi-agency partnerships such as the Birmingham Strategic Partnership (LSP) and the Safer Birmingham Partnership
 - A 'one stop shop' for agencies / individuals requiring mentoring support / looking to volunteer as a mentor

- Building the capacity of third sector organisations delivering mentoring in the community
- Quality / consistency – with linkage to the **Mentoring & Befriending Foundation** (<http://www.mandbf.org.uk>)
- Networking / conferences promoting information exchanges between agencies / individuals delivering mentoring
- Strategic / localised funding to support mentoring in the community

6. The pilot should include joint use of:

- The Offender Mentoring Toolkit
- The Spider II Assessment Tool

7. Linked to the 3-year pilot, funding should be sourced to support fully resourced research into the effectiveness / value of mentoring offenders / ex-offenders.

1.9 Conclusions

We are pleased to present this report, which we trust, helps to make a case for mentoring. Based on our experience of evaluating similar mentoring based projects aimed at supporting offenders / ex-offenders, we are surprised that on the whole, key agencies such as the Police and Probation Service do not seem to fully appreciate the value the role of mentoring can play in reducing offending.

The reader should be aware of the recent report by Baroness Neuberger (***Volunteering Across the Criminal Justice System***, March 2009); in particular a number of key recommendations highlighted within this report.

It is our view that the BRMF is, and has the potential for, providing a pan Birmingham mentoring service that demonstrates:

- **An innovative partnership approach**
- **Third sector leadership**
- **Evidence** that mentoring has a role to play in reducing re-offending and supporting ex-offenders into training / work and off benefits
- **'Value for money'** – harnessing the third sector to deliver innovative services that makes best use of scarce resources
- **'Added value'** – delivering mentoring services to agencies such as the Prison Service that values and supports mentoring and the support that the BRMF has provided during the pilot
- **Opportunity** to support the aims and objectives of Birmingham strategic bodies such as the **Birmingham Strategic Partnership** (LSP) and the **Safer Birmingham Partnership**.

We are delighted to commend the project and thank those who contributed to this report.

2.0 Acknowledgements

Wider Impact Consultancy would like to thank the following for their time and effort in making this report possible:

Inspector **Kevin Borg**, West Midlands Police / Safer Birmingham Partnership

Simeon Clarke, B.E.S.T

Ricky Dehaney, Prison Link

Vanessa Geffen, Catch 22

Janine Harrison, Featherstone Prison

Gurmit Heer, Birmingham City University

Chris Horton, Learning & Skills Council

Roger Howarth, North Staffordshire Chaplaincy Project

Prem Masih, Prison Link

Jay Muggeridge, Swinfen Hall Prison

Sonia Petford, Featherstone Prison

Lesley Pymm, West Midlands Probation Service

Mentees – names changed to ensure anonymity

Mentors – from all organisations

Rachel Simpson, New Hope Mentoring Forum

Richard Stunt, New Hope Mentoring Forum

Jenny Tyrell, Prison Link

Julie Welch, Tribal

Contributions have included data, information, time and most importantly honest feedback on the impact of the production of this report.

3.0 Terms of Reference

The terms of reference of this independent evaluation, which has been commissioned by the Birmingham Resettlement Mentoring Forum (BRMF) are to establish if:

1. The Birmingham Resettlement Mentoring Forum (BRFM) Mentoring Referrals & Co-ordination Pilot has achieved objectives agreed with the principal funder (Learning & Skills Council (LSC)).
2. Based on research findings, make recommendations on whether the pilot should be extended beyond the initial pilot period.
3. As appropriate, make recommendations on how the extended pilot should be delivered.

4.0 Methodology

The brief has been delivered in three sections:

1. Desktop (Secondary) research, accessing:
 - Data and information supplied by members of the BRMF
 - Reports:
 - *Working with the Third Sector – securing effective partnerships* 2008 to 2011, Ministry of Justice, October 2008
 - *Volunteering Across the Criminal Justice System*, Baroness Neuberger, March 2009
 - *Mentoring for Offenders in the Community – A Regional Approach*, Tribal, March 2008
 - *Swansea Community Chaplaincy Evaluation*, Dr Joanne Portwood, April 2005
 - *North Staffordshire Chaplaincy Evaluation*, Wider Impact Consultancy, September 2006
 - *New Hope Mentoring Programme Evaluation*, Wider Impact Consultancy, May 2007
2. Primary research, including:
 - Face to face 'case study' interviews with **3** project clients
 - Follow up client case study (*New Hope Mentoring Programme Evaluation*, Wider Impact Consultancy, May 2007)
 - Meetings / telephone interviews with:
 - Representatives of the BRMF
 - Representatives of participating prisons
 - Key agency representatives
 - Shadowing the BRMF Co-ordinator
3. Submission of this final report drawing together the findings of the above two sections.

5.0 Background to Mentoring / Third Sector Support to Reduce Re-Offending

5.1 Introduction

The Ministry of Justice report, ***Working with the Third Sector – securing effective partnerships - 2008 to 2011*** is clear about the role of the third sector in supporting offenders:

The third sector has unique and positive attributes that are different from the public and private sectors, and working together we can achieve more than government and any one sector can achieve alone. We need the help of third sector and other partners, particularly at local level, to create the right policies, access mainstream services for offenders, and transform services to reduce re-offending.

Our vision is of a thriving, independent and diverse third sector, playing a full role in supporting the effective management of offenders, helping us in the delivery of both the Government Public Service Agreements and the Ministry of Justice's Departmental Strategic Objectives to reduce re-offending, protect the public, and contribute to making communities safer.

The third sector has a critical role to play as advocates of service users and communities, as partners in strategy and service development, and as service providers. We value their role as enablers of effective community engagement, **volunteering and mentoring**.

Key Commitments include:

- To increase compliance with the Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in relation to funding and procurement, consultation, and partnership working.

- To transform services by:
 - Reviewing and refocusing work and resources on achieving agreed priorities and the outcomes needed
 - Selecting the best providers through competition and creating a 'fairer playing field', actively reducing barriers to diversify third sector involvement
 - Strengthening joint commissioning, and the involvement of all sectors in designing as well as delivering services
 - Using grant funding alongside commissioning, where this better delivers outcomes
 - Providing clarity on commissioning opportunities and undertaking 'Best Value' reviews of probation services
 - Working in partnership to strengthen the evidence base and to agree and demonstrate outcomes
 - Strengthening user engagement in service design and review

New strategic funding from the Ministry of Justice – to Clinks, Action for Prisoners' Families, the Development Trusts Association, and a new Reducing Re-offending Arts Alliance – are strengthening the role of diverse front-line, third sector organisations. Investment supports representation and voice, communication and partnership working, capacity building and volunteering, with a particular focus on meeting the needs of black and minority ethnic, faith-based, women's, and small community-based organisations.

Our vision is of a thriving, independent and diverse third sector, playing a full role in supporting the effective management of offenders, reducing re-offending and protecting the public – as advocates of service users and communities, partners in strategy and service development, service providers, and enablers of community engagement, volunteering and mentoring.

5.2 Volunteering Across the Criminal Justice System

We bring to note findings from Baroness Neuberger's recent report, *Volunteering Across the Criminal Justice System*, March 2009:

'It has become increasingly clear that there is a more general cultural problem with the involvement of volunteers in the public sector. The voluntary sector has its own issues with volunteer management, often due to scant resources. The problems within the public sector, however, seem to go much deeper. Although there are many people within the CJS who do champion and support volunteering, volunteerism is often seen as irrelevant or even viewed with suspicion. If volunteers are to be integrated into the CJS more successfully, then deep cultural and attitudinal barriers need to be tackled.

There are three main mindsets that need to be overcome: the suspicion that volunteers will be used as a means of job substitution; the related belief that volunteering is a free resource; and a widespread culture of risk aversion.

1. Suspicion of Volunteering as a Form of Job Substitution

Where volunteers are engaged in public service delivery, there is always a very real risk that they will be used as a form of cheap labour. This should not be allowed to happen. Volunteers should be used to add value, such as providing an independent or user voice, which paid staff can not provide.

They should not be used as a means of cutting costs, not least because volunteers are in no way a free resource. This is an undertaking of the Compact Volunteering Code, which states that Government and the Third Sector should "recognise that voluntary activity should never be a substitute for paid work". Agencies that attempt to use volunteers as a form of cheap labour will ultimately provide benefits to no one: the volunteers will feel exploited, staff will feel threatened and demoralised, and ultimately service-users suffer. Not only that, but the volunteers will leave and may decide not to volunteer again in any way at all.

2. Presumption that Volunteering is a Free Resource

The presumption that volunteering is cost-free is related to the belief that volunteers are an economic resource who can be used to save money. This is not the case. If they are to work effectively, then they need to be invested in. Volunteers require payment for out of pocket expenses (in particular this enables a greater diversity of volunteers, including people on lower incomes), the same line-management, and nearly all of the same HR support services as paid staff, with the exception of a salary. This presumption has two serious consequences: firstly, it means that volunteers within statutory services do not receive adequate management, and, secondly, that third sector organisations which involve volunteers do not receive adequate funding from the CJS, which believes that the volunteers can perform this role cheaply. It is within this second group that many volunteers within the CJS sit, and there is a considerable risk, in some of these organisations, that the passion and dedication of the volunteers is taken for granted by statutory services.

A lack of investment in volunteer management inevitably results in volunteers having a bad experience. During the course of my research I have come across many cases of volunteers who have had a negative experience, as a direct result of poor investment in their management. This is more common where a statutory volunteer role is new.

3. Culture of Risk Aversion

There are undoubted risks associated with involving volunteers in the delivery of public services. Professional staff are under a statutory obligation to provide a contractual service. Volunteers, on the other hand, have no obligations under any legal contract. Their relationship is fundamentally different, and this inevitably carries risks, as well as benefits.

So there is a fine balance to be struck. But this should not mean that volunteers need to be excluded from the delivery of public services. With the correct risk-management, and some considerable imagination, volunteers can still be involved in adding value to a service provided by statutory providers. The tight legal situation emphasises even more the need to

ensure that volunteers are not a cheap form of labour used to perform statutory roles, but add value and bring different perspectives.

The importance of proper risk-management also highlights the need for a joined-up, coordinated approach to volunteering from senior directors within agencies. Without their leadership, it would be very difficult for the professionals on the ground who deliver services to include volunteers in their work without leaving themselves seriously exposed.

Lack of leadership on volunteering within the CJS

In conducting my second review of public services, it has also become abundantly clear that there are considerable differences between the involvement of volunteers within the CJS and what happens within the health and social care system. One of the most striking differences has been the lack of **clear leadership** and **coordination** across the CJS on volunteering, both at a Government policy level, and within local settings.

At a local level, the involvement of volunteers is patchy. Many prisons, courts and forces are packed with well trained, enthusiastic volunteers, whilst others are bereft. Within these agencies, however, it is noticeable that volunteers often operate without a central volunteer manager, an issue that should be addressed. Within the health service, it is the norm for every hospital to have a named volunteer manager, yet many prisons operate without having a manager who has even nominal responsibility for volunteers. Those volunteers who are managed well often exist within established volunteer schemes run by charities such as the Samaritans' Listeners scheme.

The integration of volunteers seems to depend largely upon the enthusiasm of key individuals within agencies, such as prison governors, regional offender managers, and police authorities. Leadership and guidance from the centre is the most obvious means of making the case to these key individuals. Central government departments and agencies have made great efforts to promote volunteering in recent years, although these efforts have often been hampered by a lack of ring-fenced resources. In addition, there has never been

any coordinated effort by Government to champion volunteers across all parts of the CJS, with the result that efforts to promote volunteering are far more advanced in some areas than others.

Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs) could be a means of promoting volunteering in local agencies. LCJBs are made up of the senior officers of local CJS agencies who are responsible for improving public confidence through the local delivery of an effective and efficient CJS. They are currently developing their community engagement strategy, so they could have a key role in promoting volunteering by working with Crime and Disorder/Community Safety Partnerships and building relationships with local Volunteer Centres. They are supported by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform, which provides advice and guidance on how they might achieve those targets. There is currently no guidance for LCJBs on how they might use volunteering to achieve their local objectives.

It is vital that more research is done on the effect that volunteering schemes can have on reducing offending and increasing public confidence in the CJS. However, I would suggest that placing such a huge emphasis on evidence that schemes are achieving these specific goals is also a tad hypocritical.

The small voluntary organisations that are funded by our CJS are often referred to as 'experiments' that are yet to prove their worth. But nearly all the agencies of the CJS themselves began life as experiments staffed by volunteers. Many of those systems have themselves not delivered, in terms of the narrow objectives of reducing re-offending and improving public confidence. If Governments were to apply the same burden of proof to the penal system that they require for volunteering schemes, then with recidivism rates of 41.6%, such a system would have been abandoned long ago.

Schemes may find it difficult to prove that they have an immediate impact on re-offending, but agencies that invest in them can usually rest assured that they are receiving value for

money in terms of the services they receive from volunteers, as demonstrated by many of the case studies in this report.

They will also be securing wider benefits for Government social policy. I have already stated that **volunteer management needs to be invested in** and that it is not a free resource, but the VIVA tool has shown very clearly that investment reaps serious returns’.

5.3 Baroness Neuberger’s Report Recommendations

Appendix A lists report recommendations. Recommendations of note, in relation to [volunteer] mentoring include:

- The agencies of the CJS on the ground should invest in volunteering and **good volunteer management**. - *It is clear that, if volunteering is to be a success, it should not be imposed on local agencies by top-down central Government. Volunteering flourishes where it has an enthusiastic and influential local champion, not where it is implemented by a tick-box exercise*
- Most of my recommendations are aimed at central Government, but a direct plea is needed to the agencies of the CJS that operate on the ground – to courts, police authorities, prison governors, Probation Boards and Trusts, Regional Directors of Offender Management and local authorities. **All departments and agencies should have a targeted plan to involve volunteers to enhance their services**
- Guidance should be produced for commissioners in the CJS on how to consider the **involvement of volunteers when commissioning services**
- Government departments and their partners should work to develop a sustainable **funding model for victims’ organisations**, where volunteers are clearly providing a vital service that is not being provided by statutory services. *It has become clear that volunteers are often stepping into the unfilled gaps left by statutory victims’ services. This is despite the efforts of Government to provide some core funding to victims’ organisations and to encourage the commissioning of services at a local level. This recommendation does not refer to organisations that have specifically chosen to use a service-delivery model that engages volunteers, such as Victim Support.*

Organisations such as these understand the key strengths of volunteers, and the value-added they can bring, in exactly the way that I would advocate. Instead, it refers to organisations that receive little or no core funding, where volunteers fill in for key management roles or professional counselling services.

6.0 Mentoring Offenders in the Community – A Collaborative Approach

6.1 Introduction

We are grateful for access to a report by the Tribal organisation, *Mentoring for Offenders in the Community – A Regional Approach*, March 2008.

‘Mentoring is a one-to-one, non-judgemental relationship in which an individual voluntarily gives time to support and encourage another. This is typically developed at a time of transition in the mentee’s life and lasts for a significant and sustained period of time.’

Resettlement Mentoring Operations Manual. A guide for professionals. RESET 2007

There are many definitions of mentoring. The interpretations and application of the concept are also numerous, however, there are some features that seem to define the process:

- It is a one-to-one relationship
- It is supportive and often occurs at a time of transition in the mentee’s life
- The mentoring relationship is about making changes and helping a person to take control of this process
- The mentor brings knowledge and first hand experience to the relationship
- The period the relationship lasts is usually finite and known.

‘Mentoring is therefore a process which involves the passing on of knowledge and experience and is built on mutual respect and trust. The mentor acts as a role model and is someone a mentee can build trust with, who will listen to their concerns and make time for them. A key part of the mentoring process involves encouraging the mentee to take more responsibility for themselves and their behaviour.’

Resettlement Mentoring Operations Manual. A guide for professionals. RESET 2007

The principle aim of mentoring offenders is **to reduce the risk of further offending**. This is central to the resettlement process in which it is hoped that offenders will start to make informed decisions about their own behaviour and actions.

Mentoring is effective in supporting people to make positive life changes. This is particularly relevant for offenders who, whether they wish to reintegrate into society after being in prison or are serving a community-based sentence, may need significant help to move away from offending, to find work (or possibly more meaningful work) and sustain a different lifestyle.

Supporting someone to make these changes is challenging but important work since when someone re-offends it has far-reaching and serious consequences for the individual, his or her family and the community as a whole. It is crucial therefore that mentoring organisations which work, or plan to work, with offenders can demonstrate that they understand and can effectively support the particular needs of offenders and ex-offenders and are linked to other organisations offering complementary services and progression routes.

Collaborative Working - A 'silo' approach to mentoring provision can result in a level of service which is variable and fragmented. Mentoring organisations have their own identities and remits to address particular issues. Working more collaboratively within an agreed framework would provide a more joined-up approach to supporting offenders in the community.

This collaborative approach will support a more effective referral system, increase opportunities to share training and good practice and extend the reach of mentoring support to ensure equality of opportunity. Some common principles of what constitutes a good mentoring service include:

- A quality service, well managed
- Adequate funding over a period of time in order to create better stability and continuity
- Well-trained mentors – whether paid or voluntary

- Partnerships and opportunities to work with other services and agencies in order to be more effective at addressing individual's needs without the costly effects of overlapping and sometimes competing provision
- An acceptance that in many cases the achievement of 'hard targets' (whilst they do provide measurable outcomes and perhaps some necessary rigour at times) is not the only measure of the effectiveness of mentoring. 'Soft outcomes' which can generally only be observed and even evaluated many months on from the mentoring relationship, are sometimes the only measure of the effectiveness of the support given and should be valued.

7.0 About the Birmingham Resettlement Mentoring Forum (BRMF) Mentoring and Co-ordination Pilot Project

7.1 Introduction

The **Birmingham Resettlement Mentoring Forum (BRMF)** is made up of three principal Birmingham based providers of mentoring services:

1. **New Hope Mentoring Programme (NHMP)**
2. **The United Evangelical Project – Prison Link**
3. **The Birmingham Ex-offender Service Team - B.E.S.T**

7.2 New Hope Mentoring Programme

The **New Hope Mentoring Programme (NHMP)** began in early 2003 following growing concern from police and other community groups that crime prevention strategies in south Birmingham were failing to target repeat offenders aged 18-25.

A police sergeant working in Balsall Heath decided to approach some of the local churches and mosques to identify ways in which they could work together to tackle this problem.

Inspired by the success of a similar programme in Boston, USA – which has seen police and churches work together to dramatically reduce re-offending rates over the past 20 years – a group of police officers and volunteers came together to form NHMP.

The programme aims to specifically target offenders committing acquisitive crime - who are very often sucked into a life of crime from a young age and tend also to be involved in drugs and gangs in some way. By training committed volunteers, predominantly from local churches, NHMP has developed a large pool of mentors who are willing to spend time with ex-offenders - befriending them, providing them with life-skills training and being a source of moral and emotional support as they look to re-integrate into society and leave a life of crime behind.

By developing good relationships with a number of local prisons, NHMP staff and volunteers are very often able to begin the process of mentoring while the offender is still behind bars. This relationship continues outside of prison, where mentors meet regularly with ex-offenders in informal settings such as public parks and Pizza Huts. The project also provides mentors with dedicated mobile phones, so that they can be contacted directly by their mentee.

7.3 The United Evangelical Project – Prison Link

Established in 1985, due to the uprising in Handsworth, **Prison Link** was set up to support African Caribbean, African Black British, dual heritage offenders and more recently Asians serving a prison sentence. Services include:

- Assessing offender needs after sentence
- A befriending / mentoring service with the use of volunteers
- To develop an 'action plan' ready for the release date
- To assist in providing accommodation, training, or employment on release
- To liaise and support family members where necessary
- Delivery of a Basic Training in Prison Work (BTPW) course for delegates who want to work / volunteer in areas linked to criminal justice / rehabilitation

Support for ex-offenders is delivered by:

- 3 months of intensive one to one work carried out in prison, preparing the offender for release and setting realistic goals
- Post release, client is collected at the prison gate and escorted back to Birmingham
- Sign posting is carried out and 4 weeks intensive work is done to support the client in the rehabilitation process, i.e. benefits, housing, training and employment
- 3 months or more of one to one work is carried out until the client is rehabilitated

7.4 The Birmingham Ex-offender Service Team (B.E.S.T)

Based in Handsworth, **B.E.S.T** is a Birmingham based ex-offenders service team that works with ex-offenders and their families in developing ways of reducing re-offending statistics. This is achieved by supporting ex-offenders into education, employment and training and providing a mentoring service.

The organisation, which is run by volunteers, will work with anyone, regardless of their ethnic background. Services to clients include:

- An education and employment service for ex-offenders and anyone who is at high risk of re-offending
- A service for ex-offenders who need support in knowing what services are available to them
- A mentoring service to ex-offenders, young people, victims of crime, community groups and schools
- A programme that will help to build community cohesion and also help reduce crime and community tension
- A confidential and private service in accordance with the DATA protection Act, 1998
- Help with CV writing, job searches, filling in application forms and help with interview skills
- Restorative measures, working with victims of crime and ex-offenders, to reduce re-offending behaviour and understand the impact and pain of the crime on the victim

7.5 Partnership Development

The collaboration is currently working in partnership with three other organisations that provide mentoring services to ex-offenders:

- Birmingham City University
- BroSis
- HMP Swinfen Hall

7.6 Joint Services

Table 1 outlines the services NHMP, Prison Link and B.E.S.T offer to mentees and most significantly what services they offer as a collaborative organisation.

Table 1 Breakdown of Mentoring Services – NHMP / Prison Link / B.E.S.T

Service	NHMP	Prison Link	B.E.S.T
Geographical Area	Birmingham & Chelmsley Wood / Kingshurst & Castle Bromwich	Birmingham & Sandwell	Birmingham
Ethnicity	All	Afro Caribbean / Asian	All
Drug Support	Yes	Yes	No
Alcohol Support	Yes	Yes	No
Benefit Support	Yes	Yes	Yes
Training	Yes	Yes	Yes
Family Issues	Yes	Yes	Yes
Specialist Work	MAPPA 1 Collect from prison	Will go to family home. Covers 7 pathways	Connections at all levels. Will go to family home. PPOs, MAPPA 1 / 2/3. Schedule 1. Working with gang culture. Family interventions
Exclusions	Over 35s. MAPPA 2 / 3. Sex offenders	Whites. Less than 12 months custodial sentence	Sex offenders
How Long	As required	3 months pre-release 3 months on release	1 year / phone calls after 1 year

7.7 About the Pilot Project

Funded by **West Midlands Next Steps (Test Bed)**, and led by the NHMP, the BRMF is piloting a co-ordinated mentoring referrals service for specified prisons working in and around the Birmingham area. This service will ensure that clients requiring mentoring services will be allocated an appropriate mentor from one of the BRMF's signatory agencies depending on the individual agencies own referrals criteria.

Once a mentee from or returning to Birmingham has been successfully linked with a mentor from one of the BRMF signatory agencies, the mentor will continue to work with the mentee wherever they are in the prison estate (even if they are moved to prisons not participating in the Resettlement Mentoring Forum Pilot Project) and once they have been released.

Should a mentee subsequently move outside of Birmingham BRMF partners will be expected to link the mentee to a suitable support project in their new location, wherever possible.

7.8 Project Aims

The BRMF aims to establish a Birmingham-wide network of Resettlement Mentoring agencies, linking pre-existing projects together and supporting the establishment of further initiatives in the provision of resettlement mentoring services.

7.9 Project Objectives

1. Co-ordination with Prison Resettlement Teams for the purposes of "through the gate support" at HMP Birmingham, HMYOI Brinsford, HMP Featherstone, and HMP and YOI Swinfen Hall.
2. Pilot the **Offender Mentoring Toolkit** and report on the outcomes of the pilot activity.
3. Pilot the **Spider Assessment tool** developed and provided by HMP Swansea and provide data, using mechanisms of the Spider assessment Tool, on the impact of the mentoring provision delivered within this contract.

4. Draft and present at least 5 comprehensive case studies, with an aspiration to produce a total of 10 case studies, detailing the partnerships work with the individual offenders and the effectiveness of mentoring as an intervention.

7.10 Project Outputs

Appendix A lists in full, 14 delivery outputs agreed with the principal funder. In summary:

1. BRMF will recruit, train and support an additional 30 volunteer mentors.
2. Ensure that pre-release contact with the mentees will be put in place for up to 6 months before release and last for at least 3 months.
3. BRMF partnership mentors will support referred mentees as they develop post-release action plans, targeting work around the Seven Pathways to Reducing Re-offending.
4. BRMF will establish a Birmingham-wide network of resettlement mentoring agencies and will provide a support network for those organisations engaged in resettlement mentoring within the Birmingham area.
5. BRMF will promote partnership working amongst the signatories to the partnership agreement particularly in relation to the commissioning of services from the Prison and Probation services and in due course from NOMS.
6. BRMF will set up regular mentee referral surgeries at the 4 prisons in the West Midlands Region.
7. Mentees referred through this process will be referred onwards to the most appropriate of the BRMF partner agencies or to other as yet unidentified mentoring providers in the Birmingham Area.
8. Where appropriate mentees will be encouraged to engage with the Virtual Campus and curriculum project being implemented at the prison involved.
9. BRMF partners will provide volunteer life skills mentors to referred mentees and will act as sign posts to relevant agencies as identified in each mentee's post release action plan.
10. In piloting the Offender Mentoring Toolkit BRMF will:

- a. Distribute the Offender Management Tool kit to all active volunteer mentors within the partnership.
 - b. Obtain feed back on the Offender Mentoring Toolkit from those mentors in receipt of the Toolkit listed under (a) above at regular intervals as required by software developers at the Tribal Group.
11. In piloting the Spider Assessment Tool, developed and provided by HMP Swansea, BRMF will implement the Spider Assessment Tool in collaboration with the resettlement team at HMP Swinfen Hall.
 - a. Wherever possible, subject to individual prisoner's release dates, three impact assessments for the mentoring interventions will be carried out with each prisoner. The first within the 6 weeks period prior to release; the second within the 6 weeks period after release; and a third, 20 weeks after release.
12. The BRMF will document and present 5 comprehensive case studies, whilst aspiring to delivery of 10 case studies, detailing the partnership's work with the individual offenders.
13. BRMF will be overseen by the BRMF Working Group to be made up of one representative from each of the Partnerships' signatory agencies and key funding stakeholders.
14. Evaluation: The BRMF will carry out ongoing evaluation and monitoring as integral aspects of a voluntary project and will commit to regular evaluation of the work. The BRMF will pilot a new partnership approach to mentoring provision within Birmingham.

7.11 Project Outcomes

Appendix B highlights project outcomes agreed with the principal funder

7.12 Project Timescale / Funding

The pilot project was scheduled to run from July 2008 to March 2009, however unavoidable funding related delays resulted in the project actually starting **September / October 2008** (ending March 2009). Total funding for the project from the LSC is **£38,000.00**, which has been awarded to the New Hope Mentoring Programme, as Managing Agent for the project. Funding has been utilised to support additional staff costs of delivering the pilot and expenses to support mentors meeting / supporting mentees. Funding distribution is as follows:

- **NHMP** £22,000 (which includes funding the independent evaluation of the pilot)
- **Prison Link** £10,000
- **B.E.S.T** £6,000

8.0 Research Findings

8.1 Introduction

We are grateful to those who have contributed to this section of the report, which includes quantitative and qualitative data and information.

8.2 Outcomes

Led by **Dr Richard Stunt**, the New Hope Mentoring Programme (NHMP) has acted as 'Managing Agent' for the pilot. Chaired by Dr Stunt, a number of well attended Forum minuted meetings have taken place.

Rachel Simpson (NHMP) has acted as Project Co-ordinator, liaising with participating prisons, mentees, partner mentoring organisations and mentors. The Co-ordinators key role is enabling mentees to be linked to appropriate mentors.

To date **2** prisons are actively supporting the pilot:

- Featherstone
- Swinfen Hall

Negotiations are on-going for a further two prisons (Birmingham and Brinsford) to support the pilot. It is anticipated that these prisons will be hosting referral clinics by the end of **March 2009**.

To date **6** mentoring organisations are actively supporting the pilot:

- NHMP
- Prison Link
- BEST
- Birmingham City University
- BroSis
- HMP Swinfen Hall

Training to mentors has included:

- Training to be a Mentor
- Offender Mentoring Toolkit
- Drug Awareness
- CJS Awareness

8.3 Outputs

Table 2 highlights outputs achieved as of the **31 January 2009**.

Table 2 Outputs (31.1.2009)

Output	Total
New Volunteer Mentors	38
Mentees Referred for Support	30
Mentees PPO Category Offenders	7
Offenders Referred and Engaged	23
Offenders Referred / Engaged and into Training or Education	3 (2 PPOs)
Offenders Referred / Engaged and into Employment	3
Offenders Referred / Engaged with Accommodation Support	3
Offenders Referred / Engaged with Virtual Campus	0
Offenders Referred / Engaged and Supported on Release	0 (0 PPOs)
Offenders Referred / Engaged from BME Community	6 (1 PPOs)
Referred and Engaged Mentees Self-Reporting Reducing Offending	3 (2 PPOs)
Organisations Participating in the BMRF Network	6
Referral Surgeries Held in Participating Prisons	6
Offender Mentoring Toolkit Distributed to Mentors	23 (4 organisations)
Spider Assessment Tool	18 clients

8.4 Comment

Understanding that there are a further two months outputs to take account of, and the fact that launch of the project was delayed due to funding issues, the above outcomes are impressive. Sight should not be lost of the importance of engaging with offenders who are prolific and responsible for large amounts of crime. By nature their lives are chaotic and engagement is often an achievement in its self. We are confident that over a short period of time, agreed outputs highlighted at **Appendix C** will be achieved.

As is demonstrated by the case studies (8.8), highlighted at **Appendix D**, supported by the BRMF Project Co-ordinator, Rachel Simpson, **successful** and **fruitful links** have been made with committed mentors and grateful mentees.

8.5 Offender Mentoring Toolkit

As highlighted within **table 2**, 23 mentors from 4 participating organisations have received training in use of the Toolkit. We have had access to a client's notes and are impressed with structured outcomes that include **mentee action plan setting**, linked to the Ministry of Justice, National Offender Management Service (NOMS), **7 Pathways to Reduce Re-Offending**:

- Accommodation
- Education, training and employment
- Health
- Drugs and alcohol
- Finance, benefit and debt
- Children and families
- Attitudes, thinking and behaviour

Due to the lack of wide scale usage of the Toolkit by BRMF, it is too early for us to make a valued judgement on its effectiveness, although we see no reason why it will not play a **significant role** in supporting ex-offenders and see value in the BRMF continuing to use / pilot the tool.

8.6 Spider II Assessment Tool

We have had access to the tool at two points:

- With a Prison Link Co-ordinator (assessment of Case Study 2 / [Appendix D](#))
- Within the NHMP offices, as co-ordinators of the pilot.

We are most impressed with the tool and how it is being utilised by the BRMF. Feedback from participating organisations indicates that training has clearly been high quality and thorough, and as highlighted within [table 2](#), it is being utilised to support 18 clients.

Six assessments are being carried out of all mentee referrals in custody at:

- Point of referral
- 6 weeks prior to release from prison
- During the week of release from prison
- 6 weeks after the release from prison
- 26 weeks after release from prison
- 52 weeks after release from prison

The Spider II assessment tool is similar to the Offender Mentoring Toolkit, in that it assesses mentee progress, linked to the 7 Pathways to Reduce Re-Offending. However, rather than a tool directly for mentees (see [8.4](#)), the Spider Tool, is being utilised by the BRMF to track the effectiveness of **mentor's support for mentees**. Linked to the Offender Mentoring Toolkit, the Spider Assessment Tool is an innovative, effective and efficient tool that has potential for the BRMF and other organisations to:

- Ensure mentees receive support commensurate to their needs – linked to the 7 Pathways to Reduce Re-Offending
- Track and measure individual mentee progress
- Track and measure quality of service / support being delivered to mentees by individuals and organisations

8.7 Qualitative Research

We have utilised a number of research tools that include:

- Client case studies
- Interviews with key agency members
- Shadowing / Observational Studies

8.8 Client Case Studies

Appendix D highlights client case studies and we are indebted to mentees, who have 'opened up their lives' to provide what we believe are honest and straight forward accounts of the journeys they are on. As will be noted, we have included follow up research with mentors, the NHMP and West Midlands Police to verify information provided by the mentees. Linked to previous research¹, we have noted predictable outcomes from the case studies that include:

- Offenders may reach a point in their lives when they realise that, '**enough is enough**'
- Offenders reaching this point require / demand wide ranging multi-agency and family support, linked to the **7 Pathways to Reduce Re-Offending** if they are to succeed in their objective of halting their offending behaviour
- Traditional support agencies (e.g. Probation Service) are not in a position to provide the intensive [mentoring] support required / demanded by offenders – due to issues such as roles / responsibilities / time constraints and / or limited budgets / shortfalls
- Linked to the Offender Management Model, a trained **volunteer mentor** is often the most appropriate person to provide the 'through the gate' and 'into the community' support most valued by offenders
- The mentee / mentor relationship needs to be 'open ended' and not time limited
- The mentee / mentor match is important to both parties and must be carefully thought out if the relationship is to succeed and mentee's objectives are to be achieved

1. *Swansea Community Chaplaincy Evaluation*, Dr Joanne Portwood, April 2005
North Staffordshire Chaplaincy Evaluation, Wider Impact Consultancy, September 2006
New Hope Mentoring Programme Evaluation, Wider Impact Consultancy, May 2007

8.9 Interviews with Key Agency Members

We have taken opportunity to meet / interview with the following to ensure that we obtain a balanced view of the project and opinions on the way forward:

Participating Mentor Organisations

- Simeon Clarke, BEST
- Ricky Dehaney, Prison Link
- Gurmit Heer, Birmingham City University
- Prem Masih, Prison Link
- Rachel Simpson, NHMP
- Dr Richard Stunt, NHMP
- Jenny Tyrell, Prison Link

Participating Prisons

- Janine Harrison, Featherstone Prison
- Sonia Petford, Featherstone Prison
- Jay Muggeridge, Swinfen Hall Prison

External Agency Members

- Chris Horton, Learning & Skills Council
- Inspector Kevin Borg, West Midlands Police / Safer Birmingham Partnership
- Lesley Pymm / Emma Talbot, West Midlands Probation Service
- Julie Welch, Tribal
- Vanessa Geffen, Catch 22

8.10 Participating Mentor Organisations

Feed back from all involved in the project has on the whole been extremely positive. As a group, the organisations have been meeting regularly and all meetings have been structured and minuted. Dr Richard Stunt has acted as Chair of the group and issues addressed have included:

- Aims and objectives of pilot
- Referrals
- Links with participating prisons
- Links with other mentoring organisations / growth of partnership
- Training
- Offender Mentoring Toolkit
- Spider Assessment Tool
- Networking – including mentors from each organisation
- Funding / development opportunities
- Annual conference

It is clear the pilot is proving beneficial to the collaborating partners as a whole and individually as organisations, for example:

- *We can deliver a more rounded service for our customers across most of Birmingham*
- *We have direction and leadership*
- *We are able to plan strategically*
- *We are becoming focussed in our plans and objectives*
- *Each of us has strengths that we are bringing to the collaboration*
- *Whilst we are working collaboratively, we are keeping our individual identity, uniqueness and strengths*
- *We are avoiding duplication and replication of services*
- *We are networking and exchanging good practice*
- *We are supporting each other in areas such as capacity building and knowledge*
- *We now have access to high quality training for mentors*
- *Mentors are benefiting from meeting and networking with each other*
- *We are becoming more professional – utilising tools such as the Offender Mentoring Toolkit and Spider Assessment Tool*
- *We are beginning to be taken seriously by organisations such as the LSC, Probation Service and the Police*

There are however a number of issues that should be noted:

- BRMF Co-ordinator Rachel Simpson feels that it is fortunate that only two of the four planned prisons (see 8.2) have so far committed to supporting the pilot – *'I just would not have had time to provide the level of service we are providing to HMP Featherstone and Swinfen Hall. This will prove to be a full-time job and will require a full-time team if the pilot is to continue'*
- Whilst the NHMP has been awarded the Approved Supplier Standard, by the **Mentoring & Befriending Foundation** (<http://www.mandbf.org.uk>), other BRMF mentoring organisations currently have not achieved / applied for such standard.
- Apart from the Spider II Assessment Tool, there are no terms of reference / standards set regarding the quality / standard of mentoring service delivered to mentees.
- BRMF Co-ordinator Rachel Simpson is also concerned about organisations / mentors over-reaching themselves, *'I do sometimes feel we have lost control once a mentee has been referred to a mentor from one of the other organisations. For example, one of the newer partners is willing to mentor a sex offender. I know we (NHMP) do not have mentors trained and skilled to do this, and I am not sure they do either'*.

8.11 Participating Prisons

Feedback from staff representing participating prisons (Featherstone and Swinfen Hall) has on the whole been positive, for example:

- *We are very supportive of mentoring*
- *We value and respect each of the organisations that are contributing to the collaboration*
- *As a collaboration, they are delivering what we want, and most importantly what our prisoners require – no matter what faith, ethnic background or age*
- *The service is high quality and professional*
- *The service 'adds value' to what statutory organisations are delivering to support prisoners*

- *'Through the gate' support is very important to prisoners, many of whom would have no one to support them on such a one to one basis as they return to their homes / communities*
- *We like what the collaboration is offering – **one phone call and support from an experienced Co-ordinator***
- *The pilot is saving us time and resources – at a time when budgets / resources are being cut*
- *We see the Co-ordinator as part of our team – ideally becoming a 'key worker' within the 'Offender Management Model'*

Concerns / issues were however raised on a number of issues:

- *We would value mentoring for **all** of our prisoners who require it. Unfortunately, the pilot only covers the Birmingham area. This can mean up to **70%** do not benefit. It would be ideal if the project at least covered the whole of the West Midlands*
- *We would like to work with other / similar projects across the United Kingdom*
- *We would like to see more of the Co-ordinator. We understand her role is currently only part time*
- *It would be useful if she could meet with all prisoners who may be open to mentoring – in groups and as individuals*
- *We would like to see the Co-ordinator actively marketing mentoring within the prison*
- *We would like to see more formal and structured links within the management structure of the prison*

8.12 External Agency Members

We have taken opportunity to meet with / interview a number of external agency members, with particular reference to how the BRMF can support Birmingham multi-agency strategies, aims and objectives.

8.13 Chris Horton, Learning & Skills Council

The West Midlands is a pilot region for a new personalised skills assessment initiative in prisons and in the community to identify offenders who would benefit from employment focused skills training funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

The *Next Steps* scheme is designed to significantly reduce re-offending by opening up new pathways to vocational learning opportunities and employment.

Under this system, selected offenders receive personalised information, advice and guidance and are offered a range of training based on skills needs identified in their training. Training includes opportunities to gain literacy, numeracy, language and IT skills, employer-led vocational skills, business skills for self-employment, work experience and trials and voluntary work with skills training. **Chris Horton** is pleased with the potential for the BRMF to support offenders into training / employment and linked to LAA objectives, sees this as a key focus of mentoring support in Birmingham.

8.14 Inspector Kevin Borg, West Midlands Police / Safer Birmingham Partnership

Inspector Borg is well aware of the value mentoring and support from the third sector can bring to reducing crime and improving the lives of offenders, their families and the wider community (see 7.2). Based on this understanding, he makes particular note of how the BRMF can support the aims and objectives of the **Birmingham Strategic Partnership (LSP)** and the **Safer Birmingham Partnership (SBP)**.

8.15 Birmingham Strategic Partnership

LAA Strategic themes:

- Economic
- Safer
- Children & Young People
- Health & Wellbeing

- Housing
- Environment
- Culture & Sport

Inspector Borg makes particular reference to **LAA strategic objectives** that the BRMF can play a key role in supporting:

- **Objective 4** Increase employment and reduce poverty across all communities through targeted interventions to support people from welfare into work
- **Objective 6** Improve Birmingham's educational attainment and skills base to meet the economic needs of the city now and in the future
- **Objective 7** Reduce the most serious violence, including tackling domestic violence, gang and gun related crime, and violence in public places
- **Objective 9** Reduce re-offending through the improved management of offenders and effective treatment of drug and alcohol using offenders

8.16 Safer Birmingham Partnership (SBP)

Six Pan-Birmingham priority Groups have been established to tackle 6 main community strategies:

- Birmingham Reducing Gang Violence
- Community Engagement & Empowerment
- Offender Management & Drug Treatment
- Safer & Clean Neighbourhoods
- Violence & Vulnerability
- Young People

Inspector Borg feels that the BRMF can support the SBP achieve its goals, and can see benefit in exploring how the SBP can support the work of the BRMF.

8.17 Lesley Pymm / Emma Talbot, West Midlands Probation Service

We note that the West Midlands Probation Service is delivering high quality mentoring to offenders in the community and also deliver mentoring training. We took the opportunity to forward Probation Service mentoring material such as a process map, process document, application / referral forms, mentee agreement and training and assessment documents to Dr Richard Stunt, Co-ordinator BRMF, in order that comparisons could be made to NHMP / BRMF material.

It has been encouraging to note that there is similarity with regard to the material and the NHMP / BRMF will benefit from 'good practice' learnt from accessing the Probation Service material. Our only concern is there is a risk of duplication of effort and replication of services if organisations do not take opportunity to freely and openly work together and exchange such good practice and lessons learnt when developing and delivering services such as mentoring support.

On a positive note, **Lesley Pymm** stated the Probation Service would be interested in joining a Birmingham wide mentoring collaboration, **providing** mentoring could also be provided to offenders who are not within the prison system.

Lesley Pymm also commented that in her view a third sector organisation such as the **BRMF** would be an ideal organisation to deliver a Birmingham based mentoring pilot collaboration project that could be responsible for co-ordinating:

- A 'one stop shop' for agencies / individuals requiring mentoring support / wanting to volunteer as mentors
- Building the capacity of third sector organisations delivering mentoring in the community
- Quality / consistency – linked to the **Mentoring & Befriending Foundation** (<http://www.mandbf.org.uk>)
- Mentor training
- Networking / conferences / information exchanges between agencies / individuals delivering mentoring
- Funding to support mentoring in the community

8.18 Julie Welch, Tribal

We are grateful to **Julie Welch** for providing access to a Tribal data base of Birmingham based organisations delivering mentoring in the community and as highlighted at [6.1](#), access to Tribal report, *Mentoring for Offenders in the Community – A Regional Approach*, March 2008.

It has been noted that the Tribal data base indicates there a **14** organisations delivering mentoring in the Birmingham area (including BRMF member organisations).

We are encouraged by Tribal's involvement in the pilot. We feel this is an excellent and encouraging example of inter-agency support and co-operation, which we are delighted to cite as 'good practice' that other areas could benefit from.

8.19 Vanessa Geffen, Catch 22

As will be noted in the report *New Hope Mentoring Programme Evaluation*, Wider Impact Consultancy, May 2007 **Vanessa Geffen** has wide experience of developing and delivering mentoring support to offenders. It should also be noted that she has played a role in the formation of the BRMF. It is encouraging to note that she remains supportive of the BRMF and is pleased to note how the pilot is progressing. She also agrees there is merit in a third sector organisation such as the **BRMF** co-ordinating Birmingham wide mentoring, as outlined at [8.17](#).

9.0 Summary of Findings / Best Practice / Lessons Learnt

9.1 Introduction

We are confident we have gained sufficient evidence to make comment on how the BRMF has delivered agreed objectives and outputs and offer recommendations on the way forward in relation to co-ordinating mentoring services in the Birmingham area.

9.2 Objectives

1. Co-ordination with Prison Resettlement Teams for the purposes of “through the gate support” at HMP Birmingham, HMYOI Brinsford, HMP Featherstone, and HMP and YOI Swinfen Hall. **Partially achieved** – negotiations in hand to link with HMP Birmingham and Brinsford.
2. Pilot the **Offender Mentoring Toolkit** and report on the outcomes of the pilot activity. **Ongoing** – too early to offer a valued judgement on the effectiveness of the Toolkit. Evidence to date indicates there is merit in continuing to utilise the Toolkit.
3. Pilot the **Spider Assessment Tool** developed and provided by HMP Swansea and provide data, using mechanisms of the Spider assessment Tool, on the impact of the mentoring provision delivered within this contract. **Ongoing** – evidence to date indicates the tool is already effective and there is merit in continuing to utilise the tool.
4. Draft and present at least 5 comprehensive case studies, with an aspiration to produce a total of 10 case studies, detailing the partnerships work with the individual offenders and the effectiveness of mentoring as an intervention. **Ongoing** – 4 case studies delivered as part of this evaluation.

9.3 Outputs

As highlighted at 8.4 there are a further two months outputs to take account of, and the fact that launch of the project was delayed due to funding issues, the above outcomes are impressive. Sight should not be lost of the importance of engaging with offenders who are prolific and responsible for large amounts of crime. By nature their lives are chaotic and engagement is often an achievement in its self. We are confident that over a short period of time, agreed outputs highlighted at Appendix C will be achieved.

As is demonstrated by the case studies (8.8), highlighted at Appendix D, supported by the BRMF Project Co-ordinator, Rachel Simpson, **successful** and **fruitful links** have been made with committed mentors and grateful mentees.

9.4 Best Practice

We are impressed with the energy and commitment of all those involved with the pilot, which is not a surprise to us, based on our experience of monitoring / evaluating similar projects and the fact that the third sector organisations concerned are committed to supporting vulnerable people. Best practice of note includes:

- An **innovative multi-agency partnership** has been created, involving agencies such as the LSC, the Probation Service, Police, Prisons, Tribal and the third sector mentoring organisations
- Under the **leadership** and guidance of Dr Richard Stunt (NHMP), an effective collaboration of third sector organisations (BRMF) has been formed and is proving that they have the skills to work together for the benefit of prisons / mentees
- **Evidence** that mentoring has a significant role to play in preventing re-offending and supporting ex-offenders into training / work and off benefits
- **'Value for money'**, in terms of a relatively small amount of funding (**£38,000**), facilitating such impressive outputs and outcomes that have the potential to save many thousands if the mentees continue to be supported in their objectives to halt their re-offending behaviour

- **'Added value'**, in terms of providing mentoring support that is helping ex-offenders into training / work and contributing to the Birmingham economy – rather than a drain on public services / funding
- The BRMF is proving a **unique** and **valued service** that is **'adding value'** to the services prisons are able to offer to inmates who require mentor support to change their offending behaviour, and take advantage of training / development opportunities
- Membership of the BRMF is 'adding value' to each of the participating organisations, in terms of:
 - Leadership and direction
 - One 'voice' with potential to include pan Birmingham mentoring organisations - to support the objectives of strategic bodies such as the **Birmingham Strategic Partnership** (LSP) and the **Safer Birmingham Partnership**
 - Capacity, opportunity and **potential** to support delivery of mentor support to those who require it across the Birmingham area
 - Enhanced training / development opportunities for volunteer mentors
 - Confidence / skills / experience / knowledge gleaned from each of the participating organisations
 - Time / resources as the Co-ordinator (Rachel Simpson) enables links with participating prisons
 - Networking – between the organisations and mentors as individuals
 - Opportunities to develop, grow and increase capacity
 - Potential to deliver joint (large) funding applications
 - **'The whole being greater than the individual parts'**
- Whilst the organisations are working collaboratively, they are able to maintain individual identities and continue to support their unique client bases

9.5 Lessons Learnt

It is to the credit of those involved in the pilot that they have been so candid in offering information about 'lessons learnt' and 'what could be done better', if full value is to be gained from the pilot. Lessons learnt include:

1. Whilst the funding provided by the LSC is generous and valued, the pilot would have been enhanced by sufficient funding to support a full-time team to deliver the pilot. Both Dr Richard Stunt and Rachel Simpson (NHMP) have been required to support the functions of their own organisation (NHMP) as well as the pilot.
2. Whilst the pilot has provided evidence of useful 'best practice', 6 months is too short a period to pilot such an initiative. It is our view that rather than being a pilot, the project has been a '**test bed**' that indicates that a fully funded / resourced, minimum **3 year pilot** is required to explore the benefits of delivering project objectives.
3. Whilst not experts in mentoring, we are concerned that there is evidence of a lack of control over issues such as the quality of service provided to mentees by a number of the organisations involved in the pilot. It is our view that all organisations involved in delivering mentoring should be 'approved' by the **Mentoring & Befriending Foundation** (<http://www.mandbf.org.uk>), and should receive support / funding to achieve such approval.
4. We have also noted concern that agreements such as when, where and how mentees receive support from mentors were not in place.

10.0 Recommendations

10.1 Introduction

Based on our research, we are pleased to make the following recommendations concerning the delivery of this project and potential future direction:

1. All those involved in the development and delivery of the pilot should be thanked and congratulated. This should include volunteer mentors and most importantly mentees.
2. Consideration should be given to enabling / funding a **3-year pilot**, aimed at co-ordinating offender mentoring services across the Birmingham area.
3. Such pilot should inform development / delivery of similar Mentoring Forums / collaborations in every area of the United Kingdom. Evidence gained from this pilot indicates that this is a service / resource that will be greatly valued by the Prison Service.
4. Resources for the Birmingham based 3-year pilot should include:
 - a. Third sector managing agent – funding management / line management support / monitoring / evaluation
 - b. Two full-time posts (with experience of delivering mentoring support to offenders / ex-offenders) – **Project Manager**, and a **Project Co-ordinator**
 - c. Premises / office support
 - d. A website
 - e. A Multi-Agency Partnership Board / Steering Group involving for example, representatives from agencies such as Prisons, the Probation Service, the Birmingham Strategic Partnership (LSP) and the Safer Birmingham Partnership
5. The role of the 3-year pilot should include enabling:
 - a. Strategic linkage with multi-agency partnerships such as the Birmingham Strategic Partnership (LSP) and the Safer Birmingham Partnership
 - b. A 'one stop shop' for agencies / individuals requiring mentoring support / looking to volunteer as a mentor

- c. Building the capacity of third sector organisations delivering mentoring in the community
 - d. Quality / consistency – with linkage to the **Mentoring & Befriending Foundation** (<http://www.mandbf.org.uk>)
 - e. Networking / conferences promoting information exchanges between agencies / individuals delivering mentoring
 - f. Strategic / localised funding to support mentoring in the community
6. The pilot should include joint use of:
- a. The Offender Mentoring Toolkit
 - b. The Spider II Assessment Tool
7. Linked to the 3-year pilot, funding should be sourced to support fully resourced research into the effectiveness / value of mentoring offenders / ex-offenders.

11.0 Conclusions

We are pleased to present this report, which we trust, helps to make a case for mentoring. Based on our experience of evaluating similar mentoring based projects aimed at supporting offenders / ex-offenders, we are concerned that key agencies such as the Police and Probation Service do not seem to fully appreciate the value the role mentoring can play in reducing offending.

Understanding how busy most people are, we suggest that the reader makes sure he / she reads the case studies at the rear of this report ([Appendix D](#)). We feel that those who are benefiting from the service provided by the BRMF and mentoring in general make the strongest and most informed case for mentoring.

The reader should also be aware of the recent report by Baroness Neuberger (***Volunteering Across the Criminal Justice System***, March 2009) highlighted at [5.3](#); in particular a number of key recommendations:

- The agencies of the CJS on the ground should invest in volunteering and **good volunteer management**. - *It is clear that, if volunteering is to be a success, it should not be imposed on local agencies by top-down central Government. Volunteering flourishes where it has an enthusiastic and influential local champion, not where it is implemented by a tick-box exercise*
- Most of my recommendations are aimed at central Government, but a direct plea is needed to the agencies of the CJS that operate on the ground – to courts, police authorities, prison governors, Probation Boards and Trusts, Regional Directors of Offender Management and local authorities. All departments and agencies should have a targeted plan to involve volunteers to enhance their services
- Guidance should be produced for commissioners in the CJS on how to consider the involvement of volunteers when commissioning services
- Government departments and their partners should work to develop a sustainable funding model for victims' organisations, where volunteers are clearly providing a vital service that

is not being provided by statutory services. - It has become clear that volunteers are often stepping into the unfilled gaps left by statutory victims' services. This is despite the efforts of Government to provide some core funding to victims' organisations and to encourage the commissioning of services at a local level. This recommendation does not refer to organisations that have specifically chosen to use a service-delivery model that engages volunteers, such as Victim Support. Organisations such as these understand the key strengths of volunteers, and the value-added they can bring, in exactly the way that I would advocate. Instead, it refers to organisations that receive little or no core funding, where volunteers fill in for key management roles or professional counselling services.

It is our view that Baroness Neuberger makes a strong case for our recommendations highlighted within **Section 10**.

In conclusion, it is our view that the BRMF is, and has the potential for, providing a pan Birmingham mentoring service that demonstrates:

- **An innovative partnership approach**
- **Third sector leadership**
- **Evidence** that mentoring has a role to play in reducing re-offending and supporting ex-offenders into training / work and off benefits
- **'Value for money'** – harnessing the third sector to deliver innovative services that makes best use of scarce resources
- **'Added value'** – delivering mentoring services to agencies such as the Prison Service that values and supports mentoring and the support that the BRMF has provided during the pilot
- **Opportunity** to support the aims and objectives of Birmingham strategic bodies such as the Birmingham Strategic Partnership (LSP) and the Safer Birmingham Partnership

We are delighted to commend the project and thank those who contributed to this report.

Appendix A

Volunteering Across the Criminal Justice System, Baroness Neuberger March 2009. Report recommendations:

1. A ministerial champion should be established for volunteering across the CJS.
2. The agencies of the CJS on the ground should invest in volunteering and good volunteer management. - *It is clear that, if volunteering is to be a success, it should not be imposed on local agencies by top-down central Government. Volunteering flourishes where it has an enthusiastic and influential local champion, not where it is implemented by a tick-box exercise.*
3. All agencies of the CJS should have a strategy to engage the skills and time of ex-offenders, to deliver those services alongside professionals.
4. Most of my recommendations are aimed at central Government, but a direct plea is needed to the agencies of the CJS that operate on the ground – to courts, police authorities, prison governors, Probation Boards and Trusts, Regional Directors of Offender Management and local authorities. All departments and agencies should have a targeted plan to involve volunteers to enhance their services.
5. Employee volunteering should be rolled out throughout the CJS
6. The Office for Criminal Justice Reform should produce guidance and a toolkit for local criminal justice boards on how volunteering can help them meet their objectives.
7. Guidance should be produced for commissioners in the CJS on how to consider the involvement of volunteers when commissioning services.
8. Examine how more specific schemes for offenders (and ex-offenders) who want to volunteer could be extended across the country.
9. Unemployed people in contact with the Criminal Justice system should be signposted to volunteering opportunities as a stepping stone to entering the labour market.
10. Government departments and their partners should work to develop a sustainable funding model for victims' organisations, where volunteers are clearly providing a vital service that is not being provided by statutory services. - *It has become clear that volunteers are often*

stepping into the unfilled gaps left by statutory victims' services. This is despite the efforts of Government to provide some core funding to victims' organisations and to encourage the commissioning of services at a local level. This recommendation does not refer to organisations that have specifically chosen to use a service-delivery model that engages volunteers, such as Victim Support. Organisations such as these understand the key strengths of volunteers, and the value-added they can bring, in exactly the way that I would advocate. Instead, it refers to organisations that receive little or no core funding, where volunteers fill in for key management roles or professional counselling services.

11. A coordinated cross-Government initiative to encourage employer support for voluntary roles.
12. Joint guidance, by the trade union movement and Volunteering England, on the use of volunteers within public services should be published.

Appendix B

Delivery Outputs

1. In addition to the existing 50 Volunteer Mentors already available to the BRMF partnership for this programme, BRMF will recruit, train and support an additional 30 Volunteer Mentors to work with mentees.
2. Ensure that pre-release contact with the mentees will be put in place for up to 6 months before release, subject to the projected and actual release date of each individual offender, in order to firmly establish mentoring and support, so that post-release relationships with each individual offender last for at least 3 months. The partners' engagement date with each offender; the projected and actual date of release of each offender; and the disengagement date of each offender will be documented as part of the monitoring data provided to the LSC.
3. BRMF partnership mentors will support referred mentees as they develop post-release action plans, targeting work around the Seven Pathways to Reducing Re-offending. The specific Pathways support provided to each offender will be documented as part of the monitoring data provided to the LSC.
4. BRMF will establish a Birmingham-wide network of Resettlement Mentoring agencies and will provide a support network for those organisations engaged in resettlement mentoring within the Birmingham area and will ensure a continuous high quality of resettlement mentoring service provision across the city. The range of this support to named organisations will be documented and reported to the LSC as part of the quarterly Monitoring schedule.
5. BRMF will promote partnership working amongst the signatories to the partnership agreement particularly in relation to the commissioning of services from the Prison and Probation services and in due course from NOMS. BRMF will establish a Birmingham wide network of Resettlement Mentoring agencies. A list of the organisations benefiting from the partnering work, including those engaged from across and outside the West Midlands region, will be documented and attached to a qualitative report summarising the outcomes of this partnership-working. This will be submitted quarterly to the LSC as part of the monitoring schedule.
6. BRMF will set up regular "Mentee Referral Surgeries" at the 4 prisons in the West Midlands Region piloting the Test Bed Virtual Campus and Curriculum project during 2008-09. These surgeries will be run through the Prison Resettlement departments and if possible, in collaboration with the Prison Chaplaincy. Attendance lists at each of these will be documented and reported quarterly.
7. Mentees referred through this process will be referred onwards to the most appropriate of the BRMF partner agencies or to other as yet unidentified mentoring providers in the Birmingham Area. These referrals will be documented and reported quarterly.
8. Where appropriate mentees will be encouraged to engage with the Virtual Campus and Curriculum project being implemented at the prison involved. These referrals will be documented and reported quarterly.
9. BRMF partners will provide volunteer life skills mentors to referred mentees and will act as sign posts to

relevant agencies as identified in each mentee's post release action plan. These referrals will be documented and reported quarterly.

10. In piloting the Offender Mentoring Toolkit BRMF will:
 - a. Distribute the Offender Management Tool Kit to all active volunteer mentors within the partnership. The distribution list will be documented and reported quarterly.
 - b. Obtain feed back on the Toolkit from those mentors in receipt of the Toolkit listed under (a) above at regular intervals as required by software developers at the Tribal Group. This feedback will be documented and reported quarterly to the LSC.
11. In piloting the Spider Assessment Tool, developed and provided by HMP Swansea, BRMF will implement the Spider Assessment Tool as of the 30th June 2008 in collaboration with the resettlement team at HMP Swinfen Hall.
 - a. Wherever possible, subject to individual prisoner's release dates, three impact assessments for the mentoring interventions will be carried out with each prisoner. The first within the 6 weeks period prior to release; the second within the 6 weeks period after release; and a third, 20 weeks after release. For those mentees engaged on or after October 2008, and who will therefore not reach the 26 weeks milestone review, an impact assessment will be carried out in March 2009 as an end of programme review.
 - b. The impact data will be documented and reported quarterly to the LSC and a final report will be submitted on the aggregated impact data by March 31st 2009.
12. The BRMF will, by March 31st 2009, document and present 5 comprehensive case studies, whilst aspiring for delivery of 10 case studies, detailing the partnership's work with the individual offenders (mentees referred from the participating prisons) and the effectiveness of mentoring as an intervention. Case studies will include base line convictions, changes in their situation, and current outlook of their future. Where possible each case study will draw on information derived from the Mentoring Tool kit and from the Spider Assessment tools.
13. BRMF will be overseen by the BRMF Working Group to be made up of one representative from each of the Partnerships' signatory agencies and key funding stakeholders. Partnership meetings will be held quarterly and will provide oversight and steering for the partnership. Any partnership staff undertaking work on behalf of BRMF will be required to give account of their activities at these meeting. BRMF will provide copies of the Minutes of these quarterly meetings to the LSC on request.
14. Evaluation: The BRMF will carry out ongoing evaluation and monitoring as integral aspects of a voluntary project and will commit to regular evaluation of the work. The BRMF will pilot a new partnership approach to mentoring provision within Birmingham.

Appendix C

Project Outputs Agreed with Principal Funder

Outcome	Requirement
New Volunteer Mentors	30
Mentees Referred for Support	60
Mentees PPO Category Offenders	18
Offenders Referred and Engaged	30
Offenders Referred / Engaged and into Training or Education	8 (3 PPOs)
Offenders Referred / Engaged and into Employment	2
Offenders Referred / Engaged with Accommodation Support	2
Offenders Referred / Engaged with Virtual Campus	3
Offenders Referred / Engaged and Supported on Release	6 (2 PPOs)
Offenders Referred / Engaged from BME Community	14 (3 PPOs)
Referred and Engaged Mentees Self-Reporting Reducing Offending	12 (3 PPOs)
Organisations Participating in the BMRF Network	6
Referral Surgeries Held in Participating Prisons	
Offender Mentoring Toolkit / Directory Distributed to Participating Organisations	
Impact Assessment Data from piloting the Spider Assessment Tool	
Case Studies	9

Appendix D

Client Case Studies

Case Study 1

Damion (Name changed to ensure anonymity)

Damion is 29 years of age and is local to Birmingham. He lives with his partner, who is 3 months pregnant with their first child. He left school at 14 years of age with no qualifications. He played truant as lot. He has only ever had one job – as a car cleaner when he was 15 years old. It was a job his grandmother found for him, but as he says, '*I only stayed there for two weeks as I got bored*'.

He started offending from **aged 14**. He is subject to MAPPA 1 (Multi-Agency Public Protection) and is also classed as a Prolific and Priority Offender (PPO).

He says, '*I got in with the wrong crowd and started smoking cannabis. Most of my crime was petty, stealing from cars and stealing them. It was a rush and I was making money – up to £200 per day. I lived with my parents, but we kept moving house and nothing was settled.*

*I got in with older people by the time I was **15** and my crime really stepped up. I guess I got away with **400 to 500** crimes before I got to court. I was sent to Brinsford (Young Offender) and that was it really. That didn't stop me and when I was **16**, I got addicted to heroin. I remember it. I woke up one day with pains in my stomach and asked my friend what was going on and he said – you're hooked now.*

*I guess I got sloppy after I was addicted. I just didn't care, so long as I got money for the drugs. If I saw a laptop in an office window, I would throw something through the window and take it. I may have sold it for £30, even though it could have been worth hundreds. I would get cut and the police would find me through my blood. I just didn't care and must have been in prison over **50 times** in my life.*

*My nan has always stood by me and believed in me. She got ill and died. I was proud to help carry her coffin and it was around that time while I was in HMP Risley that I began to think about my life. One day I grew up and thought **enough is enough** and decided that that would be it when I got out.*

*I was last in prison on the **29th August** 2008 and have been clean of drugs since then and have not stolen anything. I have a flat with my girl friend, who has also been addicted and she is pregnant with our first child. **We are really trying to be normal** and want a decent life for the baby and us'.*

Damion and his partner are not finding things easy. His home has been burgled and he was beat up during the burglary.

He is subject to the PPO project and feels he should be receiving more support. *'We should be getting food parcels, but they are always late. **They just don't seem interested in me now I am clean.** When I was an addict I got a flat, a loan, food parcels and loads of support. Apart from my mentor, I just feel we are on our own now.'*

He met his mentor from B.E.S.T for the first time during our meeting and it was clear both were excited at the prospect of meeting. As his mentor points out, *'It has proved difficult to meet with Damion as he lives so far from our base and we don't have the resources to travel across Birmingham. We have however kept in touch by telephone and I have helped him on 12 occasions with issues such as the late food parcels and his entitlements for grants and the like. It is still early days and now he has come here we can get on and start to build up an action plan and help him to help himself'.*

Damion is praising of his mentor, *'She is positive and great. It has been good to have her there on the end of the phone, helping me to sort things out. I could tell that she cares and knows her stuff. Now we have met, we are going to get things going and sort things out now. **I no longer feel alone and have someone on my side who cares**'.*

When asked what he requires to get his life in order, Damion is clear, *'Help and support. Somewhere better to live. I need to get away from people who know me for what I was. I don't want to be pushing my kid out in the push chair and some smack head come up to me to ask how he can score. I also need training so I can get a job, so we can support ourselves.'*

Case Study 2

Zahid (Name changed to ensure anonymity)

Zahid is 25 years of age and is local to Birmingham. He is single and lives with his family. He has an eight year old daughter, who he currently has little contact with. He left school with no qualifications.

He is subject to MAPPA 1 (Multi-Agency Public Protection). **Prior to being supported by the project he was also classed as a Prolific and Priority Offender (PPO).** This has recently been removed.

He began offending aged 16 years and has been in and out of young offender institutions and prison numerous times until his last spell in prison. His record shows numerous offences, including fraud / kindred offences, theft, drugs and use of firearms.

Zahid is pragmatic about his life to this point. *'I was OK at school and kept my head down. Then my Grandfather died and some other things happened and I just went off the rails. I got in with a bad crowd. I got convicted for something I did not do and just went for it after that. I was into everything. Robbery, theft and took hard drugs. I even stole from my family. I am not talking small amounts, more fifteen to twenty thousand pounds to support my life style.'*

I went to young offenders aged 17 and since then I have been in and out of prison loads. My last sentence was for 5 ½ years and I served 4 years because I took drugs and got into fights and stuff. They sent me to an open prison, but it was not for me, as I kept getting into trouble, so they sent me back to a secure prison.'

It is apparent that a significant event occurred at his last prison, Swinfen Hall, which seems to have halted his life in crime. *'I got into a serious fight with another inmate and injured him. The police were called, but did not want to get involved. A magistrate came to the prison and told me that if I had of been on the outside, I would have received a sentence of 6 years. That rocked me and made me think. I just said to myself, **'enough is enough'**.'*

At this point he was offered access to a mentor by a member of prison staff in preparation for his release and took up the offer. He was interviewed by the Birmingham Resettlement Forum Co-ordinator and later allocated his mentor **Amar**. Zahid says, *'Amar is brilliant, he is my friend. He came to see me in prison and has stayed with me ever since. I was released on the 21 July 2008 and have not been in trouble since.'*

This is the longest period I have kept out of trouble and it is down to Amar and my family, who have stuck by me. I meet with Amar once a week now and have been for meals and done things like going to the gym, bowling and have gone to the cinema.'

He listens to me and gives me advice when I need it. He is always there when I need him and knows things about training courses.

Since being released from prison Zahid took up employment in Lichfield for a while, but was unable to keep the job due to it being too far away from home. He now works in his Uncle's shop and is '*learning the trade*'. '*When I have learned about running a shop, my father is going to support me, so I can run my own shop. I will work all the hours I can and be self-sufficient. I know it will be hard work, but this is better than crime. I have moved on now*'. With the support of his mentor, Zahid is exploring enrolling on a number of courses, to '*expand my knowledge and give me a number of options in life*'.

Asked what are the key factors in helping get his life in order, Zahid is clear, '*My family, who have stuck by me, my mentor, Amar and me. **I knew when enough was enough, but without my family and Amar, I know I would have struggled.** I look at my friends now, and when they are high on cocaine, think, 'that was me' and aim never to be in that place again*'.

Asked where he will be this time next year, he is clear, '*Owning my own shop, working hard and looking forward to a nice life, so I can retire early*'.

Zahid's mentor Amar, a Sessional Youth Worker, fully understands the challenges Zahid has faced. As a young man he was involved in minor crime and has built up a bond of trust and understanding with Zahid. As he points out, '*Like me when I was younger, he got in with the wrong crowd and there is a great deal of peer pressure to conform to what your friends are doing*'.

*What most impressed me about Zahid when I first met him with the Mentor Coordinator was the fact that **he wanted to change** and has realised that what he was doing before was pointless.*

He lives within a close community and those who he was involved with before live just around the corner and it could be very tempting for him to get back in with them. In the first few weeks following his release from prison I met him two or three times a week to give him something to do. We went to a gym, where he is able to release his frustrations and help control his anger.

Amar understands the importance of a '**Plan B**' if Zahid's plan to open a shop does not come off. '*I have enrolled myself at a local College, to gain a trade and Zahid can see the value in this. I will be helping him complete his enrolment forms and he is very keen to build up his qualifications and skills in an area such as plumbing, mechanics or electrical*'.

Amar only meets Zahid once a week now and is mindful there are pitfalls ahead, *'As I have pointed out Zahid's old friends live in his area and it is clear they are jealous of what he has achieved so far, and he is aware they could try to knock him off the rails. We have discussed this and he has an action plan to deal with it'.*

Amar is proud of being a mentor and wants to *'put something back and help others learn from my mistakes, and what I have done through education, to keep my life on track. It is good that mentees such as Zahid respect me and are willing to listen and learn'.*

He is also extremely praising of the New Hope Mentoring Programme, saying, *'The training is first class and the team is always there to support you if you don't have the answers.*

The idea of a forum is a good one, as mentors can meet and discuss what we do. We can learn from each other. For example, they asked Zahid and me to deliver a presentation to mentors undergoing training about our relationship and how well Zahid is doing'. We both enjoyed that and it is clear the other mentors learnt a great deal. I only wish I had become a mentor sooner'.

Case Study 3 (Source: NHMP)**Simon (Name changed to ensure anonymity)**

Simon and his mentor Richard were linked at HMP Swinfen Hall and started to discuss Simon's impending release. Because of Simon's relative youth and the fact that he had not managed more than approximately 7 days between release from custody and re-arrest and imprisonment it was decided to get straight into the meat and drink of the mentoring relationship. Simon and Richard were able to discuss both the mentoring agreement (and sign it) and agree a personal action plan. The action plan was aimed at helping him to stay out of trouble in the few days immediately following his release, and to then move forward into work.

In his action plan Simon identified a number of goals that he would like to work on. Short term Simon identified any work as a priority, whilst he also identified longer term aims for working either within the music industry or within the substance misuse field. Simon agreed he would take responsibility for finding short term employment, whilst Richard agreed to work on some of the longer term aims by identifying educational or voluntary opportunities for Simon.

Simon was met at the gate by his father who was realistic about Simon and his previous behaviour. Whilst Simon was not going to live in the family home they remained determined to support him where they could. On the day of release Simon was taken by his father to probation and to the hostel and was helped to settle in.

Whilst in prison a number of appointments were made for Simon, including drug support with the DIP, and ETE support with PeopleServe. These all fell during the 7 days after Simon's release and Richard was able to attend the PeopleServe appointment with him, as well as participating with a probation meeting at his hostel.

In his action plan Simon identified several factors that might hinder his progress, these included alcohol and cannabis use, and later also included his hostel and his relationship with his probation officer. These related to Simon's frustration with his licence conditions and his perception of the officer concerned. On several occasions these frustrations boiled over to genuine rage and anger; 6 days after Simon was released he phoned Richard in the evening stating that he was sick of the hostel, and was on the drive and was just going to leave. After a long phone conversation Simon did decide to go back into the hostel and stay, had he not he would have been in breach of his licence conditions and would have been returned to prison.

Over the next few weeks Simon found himself work, and started to settle into more of a routine, whilst Richard continued to identify courses and make enquiries. The two best opportunities for him were with a music industry course and with the Princes' Trust, however both of these started in Jan 09; Simon would have to stay out of trouble for nearly 3 months before either of them started.

Whilst Simon was working he had less time to meet with Richard and in spite of challenges and warnings of the risks involved was taking out mobile phone contracts for phones that he could not afford, usually whilst under the influence of alcohol. Eventually over the Christmas period Simon left his job (he left before they could sack him!), and after having Christmas at home with his family for the first time in years, he then failed to return to the hostel shortly before the New Year. This was in clear breach of his licence conditions and his probation officer had no option but to return him to prison.

Simon recognises that he has not helped himself with a number of his actions and also understands that he should have gone back to his hostel – to the extent that he eventually handed himself into the police voluntarily, and knows that he could have done it. This was particularly evident when Richard informed him that both the Princes' Trust and the Music Industry Training had phoned to say he could start.

Simon has many issues to face, it will not be easy for him, but he now knows that he was able to stay out of prison for 8 weeks when before he had not managed one. This is some success; we hope that it breeds more down the line.

Case Study 4

Clare (Name changed to ensure anonymity)

Clare's case study is delivered in two parts – **Part 1**, which is her case study May 2007 (*New Hope Mentoring Programme Evaluation*, Wider Impact Consultancy, May 2007); and **Part 2**, which is her case study as of April 2009.

Part 1

Clare is 22 years old and a resident of Birmingham. Her mentor is Lovina aged 29 years.

Clare's life was OK until she left school at 15 to live with a 19-year-old boy. *'My mum was not happy about it', which looking back, helped me to justify what I did – I was rebelling'.*

It took Clare a while to realise he was taking hard drugs in front of her, *'I hadn't got a clue what he was doing when he smoked heroin in front of me. I just knew he was a nicer person when he did, so I joined in. I never really understood what I was doing – I was so naïve. I suppose I became his drugs partner.'*

'I had a good job earning us £100 a week, but by the time I was 16, I was addicted to heroin and had to let the job go. Looking back I now realise how bad he was. He broke into my mum's house and I never believed it until now. I had to go shoplifting for money for the heroin and he used to hit me a lot. I ended up in prison by the time I was 17, which gave me the shock of my life. The trouble was he was always at the gate asking me to forgive him. It was easier to go back to him, because I had nowhere else to go.'

It was madness, I was besotted with him and we ended up on the streets when his mum kicked us out. I had been in and out of prison 7 times for shoplifting and each time he would be waiting for me when I got out. I ended up as a prostitute in an effort to break his hold over me. That way I could sleep over at punter's homes and have a roof over my head for a while.

Finally when I reached 20, a really nice punter told me about a women's refuge place, so when I was last in court I told my solicitor I wanted a 3 month sentence, so I could get off the shit and sort myself out. I went on methadone and when I got out, I went straight around to the refuge place and they took me in and fixed me up with my mentor, who really understands what I am going through.

*I was free of him at last and started to sort myself out properly. My mentor has been great, as has everyone else who has helped me, **because it is almost impossible to do it on your own. You need a team around you.** No one seems to understand how few places there are for women who want a fresh start; or the type of support and help we need to break away from bad men like mine.*

I have got my own place now and no longer need to shoplift. I do slip back sometimes and smoke heroin, but always feel so guilty about it. I have a new partner who is a much better man than my last one. He knows that if he ever smokes heroin or hurts me, he will be out of my life! We have just brought a car and can get about.

*I would like to tell Mr. Blair how important it is to have somewhere to go to and someone to support you when you first come out of prison. **Everyone who leaves prison should have access to a mentor like mine.** I feel like a real citizen now and we are paying our bills. By next year, I want to be in college; and when I am over everything that has happened to me, I want to get a job. One day I would like to be a mentor, so I can help someone like me.*

Part 2

Clare is now **24** years old and is still a resident of Birmingham. She is still in contact with her mentor; however they only meet every 6 months or so now.

She is still in the same relationship and she is proud of this, *'It has been good to be able to sustain a meaningful relationship for so long'*. She is also proud of other achievements, *'I have been **drug free for 2 years** now and am **training to be a full time Drug Worker** with a Birmingham based drug support agency. At the moment I am a **voluntary worker** and support drug addicts and sex workers. I go to College and have passed basic English and Maths tests. I am also receiving training in areas such as presentation skills, needle exchange, drug / alcohol abuse and risk assessments. There will be some full-time Drug Support Worker posts coming up and I plan to apply for one.*

Clare has no doubts that her mentor and others have helped her get to where she is now, *'I could not have done it without them. My mentor and Drug Worker have been brilliant, and although it has taken **over 4 years** to get here I **now feel normal** – whatever that is! They have always been there for me and I will never forget them. Most recently, I got support filling application forms to begin Drug Support Worker training and had help preparing for the interviews. **I would not have got this job without that support.** Which is why I am doing what I am doing now - I am putting something back.*

Asked what she has achieved since we last met Clare says, *'I am drug free. I don't commit crime. I have a lovely home, which I am proud of. I have a job. I am in a stable relationship and **I feel good!***

Asked what her goals are now, she says, *'To get full time work. Get off benefits. Continue to help others and put something back into society.*

Appendix E

And Finally – A Poem

I'm Falling

I'm falling I can't get up

I'm falling I've got to get up

Just black around me.

Is it ever going to end the falling, man?

Yeah this falling it's like a black hole

I feel like a man with no soul

Like life's tearing me a big black whole.

I pray for the wings, I need to learn how to fly

No more falling out of the sky

In to this black hole with no idea where it ends

Probably like a man with no friends.

So get me the hell out of this hole and give me a light in my soul

Stop this feeling deep inside

Give me these wings I can fly up into the blue sky.

No more falling

I'm fighting to get to the top

Like a caged animal trying to get out

Yeah now I'm feeling good.

I'm falling I can get up.

By Stewart McInness (Mentee)

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