



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

Liverpool John Moores University

## EU PREVENTION OF AND FIGHT AGAINST CRIME



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### European Reoffending Research Project

#### Action Learning Set 2

**Knowsley, Merseyside, 6th June 2013**

#### 1. Introduction

Given its location in The Hague, Action Learning Set (ALS) 1 was built around the showcasing of the Safety House model used in the City and then broadening the focus to reflect on how other partners operate similar systems of multi-agency working in their efforts to reduce re-offending. The presence of practitioners who work within the Safety House structure in the afternoon discussions – themed around families and domestic violence; juvenile and youth crime; the resettlement of offenders; and, working with prolific offenders - allowed international partners the opportunity to engage directly with individuals involved in front-line service delivery. For staff from the Safety House these discussions allowed them to explore and question how differently service provision is delivered in the partner jurisdictions. Throughout the day the emphasis was very much on delegates learning about the different interventions and multi-agency approaches used to tackle re-offending.

The objectives of the Knowsley based ALS 2 were threefold; firstly, for partners to reflect on emergent questions from the previous ALS; secondly, for hosts Knowsley to showcase the work of local criminal justice partners; and, thirdly to focus specifically on the (potential and real) use of mentoring and of the work of MALS (Mentoring Achieve Learn Support) Merseyside in particular. As a consequence the morning was taken up by presentations from representatives of each international partner - ensuring delegates were able to get a clearer sense of the respective offending profiles of the three areas - whilst a series of detailed insights from representatives from Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Merseyside Police, and Merseyside Probation Trust identified some of the partnership and innovative work to tackle re-offending being conducted in the Knowsley area. Electronic copies of these presentations are available and paper copies were produced for those in attendance, for this reason the commentary provided in this report (*section 2*) will summarise their key themes and identify the issues raised from the floor.

The third objective of the ALS – to explore the potential of mentoring schemes – shaped the afternoon session(s) and emerged as the key theme to define the day’s learning/discussion. A presentation by the MALS team outlining their organisation’s origins, aims, and ambition(s) bolstered by drawing upon case studies to highlight tangible challenges in the delivery of mentoring provision gave the ALS real focus. In summarising the MALS presentation and drawing together the different strands of the wide ranging and stimulating questions/discussions that followed, *section 3* of the report provides delegates with a snapshot of working practice to explore, reflect upon, and engage with. The presentation gave a real momentum to the discussion groups that followed that had as their aims the potential for exporting the MALS model to International partners and of then exploring the dilemmas and challenges raised by using such innovative interventions. *Section 4* analyses and orders the emergent themes from these discussions and *Section 5* teases out the very explicit questions for partners to confront. By way of conclusion *section 6* of the report maps out some of the themes that have emerged from the first two ALSs that our next ALS will need to engage with.

## 2. Presentations

The first run of 3 presentations saw representatives from each of the three partner nations deliver talks that a) updated the group on progress being made in efforts to tackle reoffending, and b) in addressing one of the emergent issues of ALS 1, gave more of an idea of the current structural responses to tackling reoffending and of the offending profiles of the partner areas (such that delegates could contextualise and determine the scope for importing/exporting good practice).

### Justin Thompson (Director of Social Inclusion) and Paula Sumner (Head of Safer Communities), both Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, UK – Progress Report

- Justin, as Director of Social Inclusion for the Council, and Paula, as Head of Safer Communities explained their roles and areas of responsibility within Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council. They mapped out for delegates **how responsibility for the social/criminal justice policy themes of community safety; youth offending service provision; stronger families, youth service, and social growth initiatives, are dispersed, funded, and held to account at local and national levels**. In doing so both speakers were at pains to stress how during this period of austerity in British politics the level of cuts being made in public services (and within that crime reduction strategies) can be as high 50% for some departments;
- In terms of the *Reducing Reoffending Project* Paula reported on a number of national and regional developments impacting on the work in Merseyside. Amongst a series of major policy changes in respect of criminal justice the current coalition government has, in the last 12months, introduced Police and Crime Commissioners in 42 of the 43 police force areas of England and Wales, and have more recently announced significant changes in how offenders are managed and supervised on their release from custody. The election of Commissioners has a number of consequences for how criminal justice services are purchased and managed regionally. They are responsible for developing and overseeing five year plans to reduce crime and that **offender management is one of the Merseyside commissioner’s priorities** is seen as a positive

development. In respect of *Transforming Rehabilitation* the now statutory requirement to supervise and rehabilitate all offenders leaving prison (not just those serving more than 12 months) and to ensure that this support is developed 'through the gate' and prior to release replicates the (in hindsight pioneering) **ethos of reducing reoffending that underpins this project**. However, the opening up of the market of service providers to deliver these interventions has led to uncertainty over the partners and organisations who will be involved and the roles they will have, particularly in respect of the role probation officers will assume;

- In terms of **very specific developments within the project** Paula identified Yvonne Mason as the new Project Manager, identified that case management software had now been purchased and should be rolled out soon, and that progress is being made with the development of the Life Change Programme manual (which will in time shape the delivery on mentoring provision used by the Italian partners).

#### **Laurence van der Broek and Teun de Frel, both from The Safety House, The Hague – Progress Report**

- The presentation was able to report on **the continuing positive development of the work being conducted under the auspices of the Safety House**. Both Tuen and Laurence work within the Safety House infrastructure and they were able to point out that increasing numbers of cases are being referred to the project and that if these cases meet the required criteria - of offenders evidencing multiple problems, incidents involving multiple participants, or if they involve people belonging to special/vulnerable groups - they are being taken on. Once taken on the Safety House team has become increasingly adept at quickly establishing the level of intervention required and in formulating action plans for the individuals involved, with clear identification of the agencies and/or organisations who'll take responsibility for the steps to be taken. It is this feature of the multi-agency working of the project that is seen to be functioning most effectively with increasingly stream-lined FOCUS meetings firstly analysing the case and then determining whether it needs to be the role of the Safety House staff, local multi-agency platforms, or specific partner's job to take the case forward;
- The screening of cases can often now be done in 15 minutes and that the number of partners sat round the table has decreased significantly since highs of 20 is seen as a sign of the ease with which partner agencies work with each other and have knowledge and respect for each other's role/expertise. Moreover, that all Safety House partners are using the same computer system means **communication channels are open and data exchanges are frequent and up-to-date** (in the discussion that followed members of the UK delegation remarked how the delays in getting the case management system up and running in Knowsley was still leading to the 'double-keying' of agencies entering and keeping often duplicate records/files on people);

- Teun used a case study to illustrate the contribution The Safety House is making and how, in practice, the partners are working together to address individual client needs. The man – a 40-year old known to police due to cannabis use - occasionally lived with his grandma who gave him food and shelter, during which time he didn't offend. When his grandma dies he is allowed to stay in her house and as a result of his friends increasingly visiting the address and using/dealing once there, the neighbours complain to the housing corporation, they take no action. Having been repeatedly called to the address the police, with the council, unsuccessfully try to get the housing corporation to evict the man with the judge declaring that there is insufficient information to stop his right to a home. At this point the Safety House is called in to facilitate discussion, rather than directly delivering the intervention themselves. Together housing, psychiatric, inclusion and drug services come together to help develop a solution to a problem that was impacting upon multiple people in the neighbourhood (one of the criteria for Safety House involvement). The man agrees to a hospital based detox programme and whilst there the Housing Department cleaned his house (something above and beyond what they would usually do). The use of **the Safety House is what drives people to solve the case and that is what makes partners go the extra mile**. The man is still in treatment and the neighbours have been appeased so results so far are good;
- Amidst this reflection on the strides being made the Safety House Teun and Laurence also offered notes of caution;
  1. Firstly, **the information used to inform the screening process is not always as robust and detailed as staff would like**. Inevitably offending behaviour is informed by a whole series of factors that impact on individual's lifestyles and forming a complete picture of people's lives - to help inform intervention decisions - is challenging.
  2. Secondly, whilst offender/client engagement with the Safety House plans is generally good it is inevitably the case that some clients fail to adhere to what they've signed up to and that means then **partners need to agree on collective actions/decisions about how to handle the individual** which can be contentious (I.e. deciding to use prison as punishment and then to return to work with the individual at a later date).
  3. Thirdly, (as other partners have reported) the multi-agency context inevitably brings agencies with different working philosophies and approaches together - amongst others, those partners driven by crime control objectives, those from health, those from a welfare perspective - and reconciling these can be difficult in collective interventions. **Negotiation and dialogue is required to enable agreement and compromise to be found in both the working practices and working ethos of the partners**.
  4. Fourthly, and a further dimension of multi-agency working involves determining offender progress and establishing the respective roles of partners. Inevitably the action plans will involve multiple partners and whilst identifying milestones and progress points are the result of extensive discussion and analysis, so too is the retrospective gauging of the impact the partners have made upon particular cases. This uncertainty means **pinpointing what interventions work (and why) is difficult and that can have implications for future planning and resource allocation**;

- The questions and discussion that followed saw the UK partners in particular echo the concerns around evidencing the impact of interventions and observe how, in the absence of robust statistical data to pinpoint the impact being made, securing outside agencies support is challenging. Whilst both UK and Dutch delegations highlighted the contributions case studies could make to capturing the good work they feel is taking place there was recognition that there are **real difficulties in untangling which interventions specifically are working (and how)** and establishing what has been the contribution of specific agencies/inputs in the process.

### Iskender Forioso and Federico Floris, The European Research Institute, Italy – Progress Report

- The presentation continually made clear just **how difficult the prevailing economic conditions have made life in Italy and the knock on effect the presenters believed this was having on offending behaviour**. At different points the rates of suicide and the frequency of domestic violence offences were highlighted with rises of 45% and 70% respectively in their occurrence in the last year alone (from 2012 to 2013). Moreover, with further data being presented that appeared to show links between offending behaviour and the likelihood of a family member having been convicted previously, household size and histories of substance misuse the need to offer new interventions to tackle reoffending was made explicit;
- The presenters were pessimistic that the situation (in respect of being proactive in tackling offending behaviour) will change as politically and socially they felt that the impetus just isn't there currently. **Offending was not, from the perspective of the presenters, considered to be a key area of government spending** and whilst there is recognition that more needs to be done to address the apparent increase in juvenile offending, education and other child-related services were seen as insufficiently able to cover prevention work. Socially and culturally the presenters expressed their concerns at what they saw as the promotion and celebration of materialistic values over and above that of the collective good. They pointed to the creation of footballers as role models and of the emphasis placed on quick income generation – legally and illegally – as encouraging increasingly selfish attitudes and in fuelling the significant increases in the numbers of people gambling. In terms of offending behaviour the growth in the incidence of corruption, robbery, and individuals partaking in national and international crime organisations is seen as a further, albeit extreme, development of the quest of individuals to make money;
- In trying to offer a more positive outlook the presenters identified that it is **crucial that young people are engaged positively and that an alternative voice and lifestyle is presented to them** than the highly damaging perspectives portrayed in the mainstream media. So, the group want to encourage the development of a 'set of activities dedicated to protect minors at risk of becoming offenders or victims' and to promote this peer-to-peer work through (social) media communication tools. The extreme rates of joblessness and the increasing number of three generation households all bring their own tensions for young people to deal with. However, working with schools and sports centres the presenters were convinced that it would be possible to encourage young people to resist drifting into criminal behaviour and later in the day they recognised the role that mentors (similar to those utilised by MALS) could play within this;



- A further dimension to the difficulties faced in the delivery of mentoring services was **the challenges of working with foreign prisoners**, a group who make up a healthy proportion of the inmate population in Italy. Not only are these prisoners who often leave the country on their release (and hence make 'through the gate support' difficult) but they are a group that the presenters feel there is little government enthusiasm for providing financial support for.

The next three presentation summaries concern the showcasing of working practices offered by statutory partners in Knowsley. All three presentations used extensive and detailed slides and whilst this section of the report attempts to draw out some of the themes covered by each the limited space available here means that revisiting and/or accessing the original presentation materials is highly advised. In turn the presentations were firstly, *Integrated Offender Management Scheme: A Multi-Agency Approach* given in turn by Jamie Brougham (Merseyside Police) and Nick Kayani (Merseyside Probation Trust); *Children and Young Persons Tactical Response* given by Tami Garvey-Jones (Merseyside Police) and Kevin Rigby (Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council); and an *Overview of Youth Justice in Knowsley* given by Justin Thompson (Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council).

#### **Integrated Offender Management Scheme: A Multi-Agency Approach - Jamie Brougham (Merseyside Police) and Nick Kayani (Merseyside Probation Trust)**

- The presentation outlined **the organisation and working practices of the Knowsley Integrated Offender Management Scheme (KIOM)**. The KIOM brings together representatives from the core criminal justice agencies of Merseyside Police and Merseyside Probation Trust, representatives from Knowsley Borough Council concerned with crime prevention and community safety, with non-statutory services like MALS Merseyside and Knowsley Integrated Recovery Service (KIRS) who offer specialised intervention provision. The work of the KIOM consists of four strands;
  1. Prolific Priority Offenders (PPOs)
  2. Local Cohort of offenders who continually get sentenced to prison sentences of less than 12months and the recall rate in the area is high
  3. High risk offenders where there is a requirement for multi-agency information sharing - Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) cases
  4. Offenders subject to the Drug Intervention Programme (DIP)
- The scheme works with individuals reaching the end of, or having recently completed, a custodial sentence and where the likelihood of the individual re-offending is assessed as high. In practice this means that the scheme currently works with an exclusively male cohort aged between 19 and 28 years old who routinely present with the following top 3 needs; firstly help with education, training and employment; secondly to work on their lifestyle and the associates they deal with; and thirdly, to work on aspects of an individual's attitudes towards crime and (anti)social behaviour. The majority report cannabis use at their point of entry to custody with a third reporting current problematic alcohol use and in general **the KIOM routinely works with a particularly problematic cohort with many laying claim to extensive criminal histories**;

- In terms of the management and governance of KIOM weekly team meetings take place to monitor emergent issues with individuals, and these are bolstered by monthly intelligence reviews and inputs from weekly Organised Crime Group meetings. Partners on the IOM meet as a Joint Action Group (JAG) to consider client referrals and nominations (registration of new offenders) and to de-register those who are no longer considered a risk or who have re-entered custody. The JAG meetings are **an important multi-agency information sharing platform that encapsulates the coordinated joined-up working and multi-agency ethos of the KIOM;**
- In terms of the interventions used the KIOM the following services are used and their diversity evidences the growing use of statutory partners within the joined-up working;
  1. **Offence Focused Interventions** – individual and/or group work such as thinking skills programme, addressing substance related offending, anger management programmes;
  2. **Victim Focused Work** – individual work tailored to offender to enable them to understand the impact of his/her actions;
  3. **Alcohol Use** – referral to KIRS, Probation support and advocacy;
  4. **Drug Use** – referral to KIRS, Probation support and advocacy;
  5. **Education, training and Employment** – referral to Job Club, Job Centre, and other training and education providers;
  6. **Lifestyle and Associates** – referral to Family First, explore options with housing officers, one-to-one individual work with Probation. Probation and Police-led intelligence work to challenge associates and lifestyle;
  7. **Attitudes** – victim focused work, offence focused work, challenging thinking skills, individual mentoring/support through Probation and MALS

### **Children and Young Persons Tactical Response - Tami Garvey-Jones (Merseyside Police) and Kevin Rigby (Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council)**

- The presentation showcased the increasingly multi-agency and joined-up intervention work taking place between the Council and Merseyside Police in **tackling juvenile delinquency and the increasingly problematic anti-social behaviour of urban street gangs in Knowsley.** Informed by the Merseyside Police Youth Crime Strategy children and young person's meetings take place monthly at a neighbourhood level and are chaired by the neighbourhood policing Inspector. A range of personnel from different levels of the police, council, fire service and representatives from housing providers meet to review youth crime and anti-social behaviour and to develop early intervention measures;
- The overall aim of this body is to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and to reduce the entry of young people into the criminal justice system through;
  - **Challenge** – by developing interventions that divert young people away from organised street gangs and frustrate those who seek to recruit new gang members the approach seeks to challenge the existence and development of gangs;



- **Support** – by supporting young people away from the pathways into criminality that gang membership is seen to bring the approach looks to support young people and their families through school, housing and parental intervention(s);
  - **Behavioural Changes** – coercively through using acceptable behaviour agreements or more informally through utilising commissioned interventions (from such sources as training and education providers) to help engineer behavioural changes;
  - **Lifestyle Changes** – through being challenging yet supportive the approach used is about bringing about tangible challenges in young people's lives such that the likelihood of them drifting into criminality is reduced.
- The presentation laid out why early intervention is so important given the belief that low level criminal behaviour and **belonging to problematic peer groups has in the past led to a graduation into more serious forms of criminal behaviour**, firstly through more coherent Urban Street Gang (USG) structures and then into Organised Crime Groups. The presentation detailed the estimated current number of operational USGs (18 groups with over 180 people involved) and identified the 'pathways' ways into offending. It was argued that it isn't just organised crime gang membership but other violent crimes such as domestic violence that gang members are shown to be extensively involved in;
- **The process of intervention** begins with the mapping and identification of Urban Street Gangs, gathering input and intelligence from multi-agency partners. Individual and specific gangs are given risk scores with a lead agency then appointed to oversee the intervention effort for those groups that qualify. Interventions ranging from mainstream service provision of the main partners (Merseyside Police and the Council) to commissioned services (that offer alternative support, diversionary, employment and education/training inputs are then used). The presentation then proceeded to document the data that suggests that interventions are having some impact with critical incidents, anti-social behaviour, and burglary of dwellings seeing reductions from 2012 to 2013 of 53%, 10% and 28% respectively (the last figure is 2011 to 2013);
- The joined up working also stretches to **focus attention on victims**. Operationally, working with victims helps identify who offenders are in a locality and through analysing the crimes people fall victim to lessons can be learned to ensure current and future potential victims are supported with target hardening, rehousing, CCTV, and tenancy enforcement/mediation. Focusing on the plight of victims can also be used to help raise awareness amongst young people of the damage and harm anti-social behaviour can have on residents.

- To deliver service to victims and to local residents of areas that experience anti-social behaviour **great emphasis is placed on communication and restorative justice practices**. Residents can sign up to a community messaging service which not only informs them about arrests that are made and convictions that have been secured, but also publicises police community engagement events/strategies. In terms of restorative justice interventions as a condition of their community payback people on community orders have also been engaged with to clean up communal spaces that have been routinely vandalised. Such efforts are part of the 'broken windows' inspired approach of trying to combat the signal crimes and early signs of urban decay before associated and graduating social problems develop. It follows that failure to tackle these forms of problematic anti-social behaviour will lead to rises in crime and falls in levels of public trust and confidence in criminal justice institutions.

### Overview of Youth Justice in Knowsley - Justin Thompson (Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council)

*Justin's highly informative presentation included a number of slides that graphically depicted (amongst other things) the organisation of the delivery of youth justice services nationally and in Knowsley; a number of tables of statistical data capturing the trends in youth offending; and the framework for delivering risk based interventions. To avoid unnecessary duplication the level of detail and clarity these offer make them essential reading and this commentary does not seek to explain what they so constructively capture in illustrative form.*

- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires local authorities, the police, probation, and health (Primary Care Trusts, and once the Health and Social Care Act 2012 is implemented, Clinical Commissioning Groups) to set up and provide representatives for youth offending teams (YOTs) to work with children and young people offending or at risk of offending. YOTs must also include representatives from education and children's services. YOTs continue to have **responsibility for children and young people sentenced or remanded to custody**;
- Another feature of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the youth justice framework provision it established was the **introduction of the Youth Justice Board (YJB)**. The YJB is an executive non-departmental public body with its board members are appointed by the Secretary of State for Justice. Its role is to 1) oversee the youth justice system in England and Wales, 2) work to prevent offending and reoffending by children and young people under the age of 18, and, 3) to ensure that custody for them is safe, secure, and addresses the causes of their offending behaviour;
- The YJB works with YOTs nationally to share good/best practice; disseminate effective research and practice; facilitate peer-to-peer support between youth justice partnerships; and to provide workforce development opportunities. The YJB also **analyses local performance data in line with the national performance indicators** of 1) reducing reoffending by young people in the criminal justice system; 2) reducing the number of young people entering the criminal justice system for the first time; and 3) reducing the numbers of young people entering custody. The analysis of YOT data focuses on both excellence and under performance and where appropriate the data will be combined with other relevant information e.g. inspection outcomes or identified effective practice, to inform broader support/deployment of YJB targeted support resources;

- The changes to youth justice provision outlined above were driven on one hand by **the moral imperative to try and keep young people out of custody and the desire to reduce the costs of both juvenile crime and keeping young people in penal institutions** (Justin talked about costs potentially reaching £70,000 per year to keep some young people in some institutions). National Standards in Youth Justice define the minimum required level of service provision consistent with ensuring; delivery of effective practice in youth justice services; safeguarding of children and young people subject to supervision by youth justice services; and, protection of the public from the harmful activities of children and young people who offend. The implementation of National Standards and their definition by the Secretary of State for Justice makes explicit how crucial, politically and prescriptive, the administration of youth justice has become;
- The presentation then proceeded to give an outline of how, within the local context of Knowsley, the above systems of youth justice governance and delivery are administered. Justin provided detailed commentary on the profile of the young people currently passing through the criminal justice system locally and identified the interventions currently being used to address their anti-social/offending behaviour. One of the key themes to emerge from his analysis was to encourage the recognition that **many of the offenders are victims and or vulnerable people themselves and that there is a need to work with and beyond criminal justice orientated interventions to tackle many of the underlying root causes of their behaviour**. To that end the multi-agency working that underpins KIOM and other initiatives like 'Stronger Families' and 'ending gang violence' is considered vital to bringing about lifestyle and behavioural changes in individuals and their families.

### 3. MALS - Origins, Structure and Ambition(s)

This section of the report draws extensively from the afternoon presentation given to the group by members of the MALS team (Claire Donohue, Leah Gorry and Anthony Evans) and seeks to explore the structure, ambition(s) and experience of the mentoring project they deliver. Devoting time and space to the operation of MALS in this way helps reassert in delegate's minds who the organisation is and should 1) lead to a more informed assessment of their (potential and real) impact; and 2) allows the reader to clearly pick out the logistical and practical difficulties of establishing such innovative forms of offender engagement. The discussion here looks to sift through key aspects of the very thought-provoking, self-effacing and candid presentation of their work by the MALS team and the lessons they are learning about the delivery of mentoring service. The questions inspired by the presentation that followed were similarly as thorough and stimulating and helped open up the discussion to explore the potential for ideas/knowledge exchange and they too have helped shape the analysis below.

### **MALS Project Origins and Structure**

Through their involvement with the Knowsley Integrated Offender Management scheme, MALS Merseyside delivers an offender mentoring programme to provide focused support and mentoring opportunities for offenders. Though by no means exclusively, much of their work is focused on incarcerated offenders and working with individuals throughout the fraught period of their transition from prison back into their communities. Intervening at this point is seen as crucial to 1) help individuals overcome the particularly acute difficulties faced by prisoners reintegrating into mainstream society, and 2) to help mediate the influences of problematic peer groups and of other aspects of the individual's social environment(s) that contributed to their offending behaviour.

The MALS model is premised on partnership working that sees individuals referred to MALS through the KIOM joint action group, or (under the auspices of the KIOM and working in unison with probation partners) sees MALS workers proactively engage individuals within the prison setting several weeks before the offender is due for release. In both cases a MALS worker visits the client in order to build trust and to gain a better understanding of their client's needs so that they can then develop an individual action plan. It is important to stress that at this earliest point of intervention MALS are able to establish that whilst they work in partnership with criminal justice agencies (and by extension the organisation secures the gravitas of being a partner agency and secures the access opportunities this grants them) they retain their independence and their own professional integrity in working with individuals.

Each individual is then matched with a mentor who will support their mentee through (amongst other things) the provision of emotional support, as well as practical support around seeking workplace opportunities, accessing housing, education, and training. The mentors are all volunteers (some of whom have been offenders themselves in the past, though the majority have not) and they all commit to the programme for a minimum of 12 months. The mentors all undertake training and throughout their time with MALS are expected to be available at least twice a month for face to face mentoring sessions and to be flexible as regards telephone and email contact with their clients.

### **MALS Project Ambition(s)**

As the presentation made clear, in respect of their contribution to the *Reducing Reoffending in the EU* project, the MALS definition of their role is;

*'to engage Knowsley offenders with support services designed to help them to integrate into their community, reducing their criminogenic behaviour...through Mentoring and the Life Change Programme'*

Mentoring is understood by the organisation as **the development of trusting relationship(s) with individuals where the objective is to rebuild the client's life in a way they are comfortable with**, at a pace, and on terms, they are at ease with. The presentation emphasised that it is crucial that mentees understand that the mentoring is proceeding on the basis of *their* needs and of working towards *their* own individually agreed goals/objectives rather than those defined by authority figures/agencies (something the lead mentor made clear would compromise client's engagement with the process). The provision of a manned 24-hour helpline is seen as a commitment to the

client-centred approach they take that impresses on individual's the commitment they are prepared to make in them.

What form and how long the mentoring input takes is unique to each individual and, organisationally, that makes defining settled mentoring inputs challenging. An individual mentoring session could last half an hour but could similarly stretch to a full afternoon/evening, likewise **clients may need only one or two mentoring inputs lasting a couple of weeks whereas others may require more sustained and intensive input over a series of months**. Mentees may only respond or need the input of one mentor volunteer whereas others may need multiple inputs from different people and different organisations. The fluidity of the nature and (in)consistency on the input(s) required makes resourcing and planning decision difficult and as the workload of MALS builds the more embedded it becomes within the KIOM inevitably the sharper the focus on the approaches used in mentoring commitments.

Moreover, what also needs to be bore in mind is that those clients involved in mentoring schemes (in general) routinely have chaotic lifestyles and securing their engagement, particularly in the absence of coercive powers to galvanise participation, is challenging for organisations. That the clients MALS deal with are often prolific offenders with a complex range of criminal, social, and psychological biographies who have often tried and been unsuccessful with alternative interventions complicates matters further. It is this dealing with individuals towards the more extreme end of the offending spectrum that sets MALS apart from other comparable third sector mentoring service providers who often engage offenders with much less developed offending profiles and who work within much stricter boundaries and to more finely defined targets. Anecdotally, the group's non-discriminatory policy of accepting clients, their clearly stated desire 'to do whatever it takes' ethos with those they encounter, and the use of experienced and skilled lead mentors in the initial engagement appears to pay dividends. The presentation identified MALS successfulness in terms of recruiting clients during prison visits and they pointed to claims from prisoners that **the demeanour and engagement strategies make MALS workers more approachable than alternative service providers**.

As a way of bringing about a more structured form of intervention and of developing in the individuals being worked with the necessary skills to moderate and manage their behaviour, the Life Change Programme (LCP) is a curriculum of pre-planned workshops with individuals made possible through the *Reducing Reoffending in the EU* Project. Across the below list of 8 sessions the LCP seeks to encourage clients to think laterally and to develop the ability to understand the broader implications of their actions and behaviours on others. **The focus is not purely on the client's own offending profile and instead a much broader series of themes are worked through** exploring (amongst others) how individual's manage their emotions, self reflect on their decision-making, and the extent to which they seek out opportunities for personal and professional development;

<i>Day 1</i>	Introduction: Making a Change, Values and Beliefs
<i>Day 2</i>	Why we offend? Victim Impact
<i>Day 3</i>	Communication
<i>Day 4</i>	Anger Management/Domestic Abuse
<i>Day 5</i>	CV and Interview Techniques
<i>Day 6</i>	Team Building and Evaluation
<i>Day 7</i>	Placement
<i>Day 8</i>	Placement

During the course of the EU project MALS will be expected to mentor over 200 clients and will be expected to have recruited and trained over 50 volunteers to support the work they are delivering. At this stage (June 2013), very much in the project's infancy, only a small handful of people have completed the LCP with a further cohort following through behind them. The feedback sheets completed by the mentees thus far unanimously report positively on their engagement with the programme and speak of the reflection on their actions the LCP has encouraged them to engage in. Taking time to consider the wider consequences of their criminal behaviour has allowed the offenders to understand the damage and harm they have caused to others. The emphasis placed on personal development has encouraged engagement with the LCP and instilled in the mentees a belief that the programme is trying to support them and take seriously the challenge of changing their troublesome lifestyle.

Whilst these feedback sheets and the anecdotal evidence presented by the MALS team inform a sense of how well the project is working **the presentation was quick to recognise the need for more definitive measurements of success and keen also to stress the difficulty of defining such criteria.** Re-offending rates are the obvious headline figures that can be used and the monitoring of individuals made possible through the case management efforts of the KIOM team do allow for individual's and their officially recorded criminal activity to be tracked. However, it is dangerous to use reoffending rates in isolation and without making some effort to contextualise the data being produced. So, that may mean exploring whether the frequency and gravity of offence patterning has changed, measures that will be significant given that many of the individuals being processed by the KIOM are prolific and long-term offenders.



To formulate criteria against which to judge the impact/successfulness of the MALS project it is worthwhile revisiting the founding commitment to mentoring made within the *Reducing Reoffending* project proposal. That document cited supporting research evidence that recognised that factors contributing to sustaining criminal careers are wide-ranging and that it is necessary to drill down further into individual's lifestyles to tackle underlying root causes/influences. Mentoring was deemed capable of offering innovative forms of engagement to improve offender's self-worth, self-motivation, and their desire to change through making them more willing to engage with sources of support. Focusing on these 'softer' measures recognises slower, incremental changes are often required in lifestyle rather than a sudden desistence in offending altogether. So it is that the pathways out of (re)offending below were identified in defining the operational objectives of KIOM and so too now does gauging mentee's experiences/engagement with each provide criteria for measuring success and impact;

1. Accommodation
2. Employment, Training and Education
3. Mental and Physical health
4. Drugs and Alcohol
5. Finance, Benefits and Debt
6. Children and Families
7. Attitudes, Thinking and Behaviour

Given that tackling these issues impacts on the likelihood of an individual reoffending it is vital that progress and developments are recorded. For MALS and partners this can be achieved through MALS keeping records of interactions (and any changes in individual's attitudes), recording completion rates of mentees on the LCP, and MALS openly communicating with KIOM partners to share intelligence/observations/feedback on individual's progress. The planned rolling out of case management systems should allow for the bringing together of these strands of evidence to allow for a more coherent set of measures and an accompanying narrative of developments to compliment the hard re-offending data.

### **MALS Project – Emerging Lessons**

Future Action Learning Sets will offer more detailed commentary on the numbers of people being engaged and will attempt to gauge some more tangible impact on the reoffending behaviour of those who have been through the LCP. However, it is useful at this juncture to **draw out the on-going lessons being learned in delivering mentoring service provision made possible by focusing on a client case study**. The example case being used here is an abbreviated version of that that was used in the presentation and to protect anonymity names and personally identifiable information have been changed. The commentary that runs alongside the developing case study is in large part shaped by questions/observations generated by the audience in the wide-ranging discussion that flowed from the talk. It is being used as a learning tool by virtue of its ability to tease out a series of challenges and dilemmas faced in delivering mentoring services that partners can constructively explore together.

## Case Study – Peter

Peter's offence was manslaughter of his best friend. He had previously been involved in gang culture.

MALS first involvement with Peter came when they along with partner agencies attended a MAPPA meeting to discuss Peter. It was decided that MALS meet Peter at the hostel he was staying as a condition of his licence...having initially met Peter with probation officers present the MALS worker then met Peter again by himself 3 days later.

Peter had a number of conditions on his licence; to reside where instructed by probation; not to engage with named associates and he was also excluded from the Knowsley area. Peter was experiencing problems at the hostel by virtue of his smoking cannabis, arguing with staff, and returning late back to the hostel. Having declared to the MALS worker he was bored. Following discussions and discovering that Peter had an interest in working out the mentor and mentee starting attending a local gym together, this would last a number of months and built a strong relationship between the two of them.

Being the other side of the City to where he had been brought up Peter was keen to move nearer his parents. The MALS worker was able to use their contacts to arrange an interview with an organisation who work with clients who have been released from custody. He successfully secured a room there and attended regular sessions, sometimes attending twice a week and he kept attending the gym with his mentor. His cannabis use declined and he was engaging his probation officer (who reserved special praise for MALS in creating the initial engagement).

Having been complying with his licence, engaging with MALS, and with his probation officer deeming there no longer to be any risk, by the time of his next MAPPA it was decided that Peter could live with his mum, dad and sister. Peter was beginning to feel the confidence to tackle his dyslexia so an assessment appointment was made for him.

Unfortunately Peter didn't attend the appointment and the mentor heard through other mentees that Peter was mixing with people he'd met whilst in custody and that he was now engaging in troublesome behaviour with his new peer group. Having missed a further appointment with MALS Peter was arrested for breaching his exclusion zone order and in due course absconded. Whilst on the run Peter called his mentor to inform him that he would hand himself in but prior to doing so he was caught riding in a stolen car.

This is a reminder of the type of clients MALS work with and the context from which many are drawn. This creates issues not only for the level of mentoring input required but also it does draw attention to the need to consider mentor's welfare and potential implications that may flow from their involvement in the project

This is a good example of not only the importance of multi-agency working, but of MALS being viewed as offering an alternative/ specialised input

The MALS worker's experience and discretion - to determine that the dynamic of the initial meeting wasn't working and that a second one-on-one meeting was required – ensured the client engaged

Although a point more pertinent to the second case study in the presentation but still relevant here, it is useful to dwell on this episode. The evolving relationship has seen the mentee confide candidly about their feelings in a way more thoroughly than other interventions are picking up or are geared towards recognising (the second case study saw the client reconciling their violent behaviour with their own witnessing of domestic violence and mental health tensions). The issue raised from the floor was to stress that it's important mentors have a platform and the confidence to feedback both the client specific information and the general client 'needs' being routinely identified with a view to help address apparent gaps in service provision

The emotional and time investment being made here by the mentor to develop this relationship is extensive. Whilst this looks to be paying dividends here (and should be praised) it does again encourage reflection on the demands placed on volunteers and the challenges of resourcing and planning provision

The probation officer concerned was quoted directly in the presentation and was clear that they believed the individual would not have engaged as meaningfully and for as long as they have but for the intervention of MALS. Moreover Peter was not involved in criminal/anti-social behaviour for a period of months whilst being mentored. Both appear to be clear evidence of success but recording and quantify this impact is difficult

Thinking again of the mentors - their well-being and training needs - at work here are issues of client confidentiality in terms of handling tales about their mentee and of the dilemma of reporting criminal behaviour. Similar to the challenge of managing and processing intelligence on individuals fed through the KIOM structure there is a great responsibility on the mentor to use their discretion and professional integrity

That the mentor hears about Peter's behaviour from other mentees and that Peter rang his mentor whilst 'on the run' implies relationships of trust have been built. Having engaged with the extensive mentoring input and having seen a suspension of offending behaviour the intervention 'worked'...but it is the case Peter offended again raising questions about what success is, what is feasible for mentoring to deliver, and what are realistic goals for clients

## 4. Action Learning Sets

In the afternoon session, the delegates were split into three groups in order to reflect upon the presentation by MALS and to explore the potential for rolling out mentoring services further. In the allocation of individuals into groups for the discussions, care was taken to ensure that all partners were represented. **The objective of these discussions was not only to examine what participants made of the model of working delivered by MALS in Merseyside, but to engage with broader questions about the utility of mentoring (as a criminal justice intervention) in general and the ability for such ways of working to be transferred between partner jurisdictions.** The purposefully loose and evolving discussions were originally structured around the following core questions:

- How can the mentoring project outlined by MALS be adopted/adapted by partners?
  - What do you understand by mentoring;
  - Are the facilities available to make mentoring work;
  - Is there a will to utilise mentoring;
  - What do you predict levels of engagement – from all parties - will be
- What, from your experience, works well in reducing offending behaviour and why (be as specific as possible with actual case examples)
  - What potential does mentoring offer that sets it apart from other interventions

In summarising and teasing out the key themes that emerged out of these discussions the analysis that follows is built around 3 sub-headings: the concept of mentoring; the potential for exporting the MALS model of working to Partners; and, the challenges and dilemmas of mentoring schemes that need to work through.

### The concept of mentoring

- Across all three groups it would be accurate to say that there was broad support for moving towards increased usage of mentors within the criminal justice system and positive reflections were offered on the model MALS are using. However, many people were keen to stress that **mentoring should not come to be seen as a quick fix solution to tackling re-offending and should instead be viewed as one of an increasingly diverse range of interventions that can be used to address offending behaviour.** Described by one respondent as a useful 'tool in the box' there was recognition that whilst mentoring may indeed be successful for some, for various reasons (in part touched upon in the commentary that follows) it isn't an intervention that will work for all and should not therefore be applied wholesale. Rather, what is needed is closer co-operation between criminal justice and social services to identify those individuals and indeed those individual needs where mentoring might work best;

- What mentoring offered for many was not only an innovative and dynamic intervention, but **the scope to develop positive role models and to offer a form of non-judgemental support.** For a group who many believed lacked figures of respect to look up to and who appear to enjoy wholly

negative and antagonistic relationships with authority figures there was a feeling that mentoring could bring a 'new voice and a new input' into encouraging offenders to see the need to change their behaviour. The MALS model – independent from specific criminal justice agencies but inevitably closely aligned to many in its routine working – was viewed as maintaining the critical distance required to encourage offenders to see the project as something different to the more established institutional structures of criminal justice;

- where debate raged and where it is possible to find differences of opinion in the operation of mentoring concerned **who are, and indeed who should be, the mentors**. The majority of people emphasised the idea that productive mentoring was the result of appointing people with the right skills set. People who would communicate with and listen to the clients they were working with, who delve deeper and beyond the 'presenting problem' into those issues in a person's biography that has shaped their offending, and who (where necessary) engage with partners to help the offenders modify their behaviour. Thought of this way mentors (providing they have sufficient training and meet required expectations of the role) could be drawn from very different backgrounds. However, there was a significant minority of people who maintained that the very personal experience of overcoming and attaining an offending free lifestyle could only be achieved by listening to and learning from someone who has experienced such challenges themselves. This is a crucial divergence of opinion and one that highlights real tangible and conceptual differences in how to deliver mentoring;

- what was also apparent in the discussions was the recognition of **the need to have realistic ambitions for mentoring schemes** and, even more so in light of the more business-like priorities that abound in criminal justice policy landscapes, to ensure such projects are suitably resourced and backed up. To successfully mentor an offender could take one or two sessions, one or two months or even longer, and the unpredictability and largely chaotic nature of the lives offenders are dealing with means generating a simple formula for success is very difficult. Delegates were therefore keen to stress firstly that patience needs to be shown with mentoring interventions and secondly that imposing targets or rewarding organisations by virtue of their success may warp priorities. Though some argued for mentoring to be used coercively the majority of delegates felt that this was an arrangement that ex-offenders should enter into voluntarily and that making the experience too prescriptive (as was feared with the plans in England and Wales to provide mentoring to short-term prisoners within a framework of statutory supervision) could compromise both the working cultures of mentors and the indeed the broader ethos of instituting and promoting change.

### **The potential for exporting the MALS model of working to partners**

The MALS presentation focused very much on the mode of mentoring service delivery as is currently utilised by Knowsley partners and a key aspect of the Action Learning Set discussions was the extent to which partners felt they might be able to adopt/adapt the model in their jurisdictions. With so many partner agencies from the Knowsley Integrated Offender Management Scheme in attendance this was an opportunity for the Dutch and Italian delegates to both get an insight into the *theory* of mentoring and the *practice* of its delivery as they were able to engage with delegates actively involved in organisations who can refer into MALS.

## The Netherlands

Dutch delegates reflected positively upon the MALS model and though change would be required to the provision of mentoring currently available (used by the probation service for those convicted of sexual offences) there was a strong feeling the approach could be adopted and would be successful. Three features in particular instilled in the Dutch delegation a belief that exporting the scheme could work;

- Firstly that the more holistic approach built into mentoring – that looks at the individual, their life chances/experiences and not just at their offending – **is at ease with the predominant ‘pluriform’ approach in Dutch criminal justice working to prioritise a welfare and social care approach to tackling re-offending behaviour** (as oppose to prioritising adversarial conflict). Moreover, that mentoring is provided by agencies and organisations in addition to, and separate from, traditional criminal justice services keeps step with the growth of multi-agency working operating through such mechanisms as the Safety House that all evidence the broader and more holistic approach to addressing offending behaviour;

- Secondly that the multi-agency approach, and in particular the devolving of responsibility for running such a scheme to an organisation like MALS, would **encourage greater mobilisation of grassroots organisations**. This was viewed as a positive development by virtue the potential such smaller and more independent agencies had to engage new groups of clients and to build trust and communication with groups of people that traditional criminal justice structures had found ‘hard to reach’. Amongst the examples cited of this ‘bottom up’ approach was the use of Moroccan Youth Workers accessing Moroccan young people as the discussions sought to pinpoint the perceived advantages of having mentors more in tune with, and having a greater appreciation for the circumstances being faced by the offenders they are dealing with;

- A third and final strength of the MALS model was **the utilisation of ex-offenders within mentoring and their ability to provide a ‘welcome new voice’** in making offenders address their behaviour. One of the delegates was at pains to stress how they felt a new generation of offenders were emerging whose resistance to engaging with authority figures demanded that new approaches and new ways of communicating are required. The employment of ex-offenders was seen as being able to offer a new input and to give the scheme much greater gravitas which would encourage offenders to take the intervention more seriously. Moreover, employing the mentors themselves within crime prevention work was seen as an opportunity to increase the numbers of people from social groups current service provision was guilty of under representing.

## Italy

Italian delegates again reflected positively on the MALS model but remained cautiously optimistic for their chances of importing the model wholesale due primarily to infrastructure constraints. The mentoring provision that is currently delivered (and that project partners the European Research Institute are involved in delivering) takes place within the prison system and is primarily aimed at young people. As it stands, and to the best of the partner’s knowledge, no provision is provided for mentoring once clients leave the prison and there is a lack of clarity over what agencies would have the appropriate jurisdiction and remit to provide services, let alone establishing where those services would be delivered, by whom, and within what stream of work. The situation is

complicated further because many of the young people that the partner's currently work with serve very short sentences (thus compromising the potential and sustainability of mentoring work) and even more are non-Italian nationals who are a much more transient population and for whom the partner's claim there is little financial support or incentive to invest in interventions for them.

That said however, the delegates remained positive that lessons from MALS could be transferred and that – with the right support and creative thinking - there are ways their current practices compliment and can build upon the approach to mentoring employed in Merseyside. The three most prominent avenues for further enquiry are;

- the partners are involved in rather thorough and intensive mentoring of young people in prison with the four hours a day, five days of the week provision they offer including paid employment opportunities and sessions designed to enhance individual's educational and personal development. Much of this work is made possible by the support for mentoring that comes from a progressive prison governor who has shown **a willingness to let voluntary groups operate within the prison and with whom there may be potential to explore developing mentoring approaches;**

- moreover, given that **mentoring is used for the purposes of social education there is hope that this approach could be extended to offenders** as long as it is backed by long-term and substantive political support. The mentors are qualified to degree level and employed by the social administration department. The Italian delegation still harbours concern though for which body/agency would take this forward;

- the **potential to utilise ex-offenders to help address current and future potential offending behaviour of young people.** Whilst the partners are able to access and work with young people within the prison estate that contact is not able to be maintained once the young people leave prison. Therefore an idea being explored is to conduct preventative work with those young people deemed at risk of engaging in offending behaviour prior to their involvement with the criminal justice system. The use of ex-offenders to deliver this form of mentoring was seen as important in engaging and having an impact on the young people by virtue of the intimate personal experience(s) they bring and their distance from more mainstream service provision.

### **The challenges and dilemmas created by MALS model to be worked through**

- A key dilemma for a number of participants concerned **the voluntary nature of mentoring service provision and questions about how sustainable this is in the long-term.** The independence of MALS and their use of volunteers whilst seen as one of the key strengths of the project is also at odds with the increasingly business-like models that operate within criminal justice policy (in the UK in particular). The feeling from many within the discussions was that the goodwill of volunteers must not be exploited and questions were raised about fair it would be if increased reliance is put upon such agencies and individuals when funding is directed or withdrawn from elsewhere. Until the debate about mentoring and volunteering for organisations like MALS reaches the level of responsible citizenship and civic obligations of members of society, then there is a feeling that as



one of a number of diverse interventions that are used within criminal justice, mentoring needs to be resourced properly to help establish itself as a viable option. The momentum towards greater use of mentors was one all welcomed but it was considered essential that recognition is given to the time commitment and emotional investment mentors (often unpaid) make with their clients;

- unlike many other mentoring interventions that often focus on clients from the veritable 'soft' end of the offending spectrum, a recognised strength of the approach MALS adopt is their willingness to take on offenders referred through the Integrated Management Project. Some of those more 'extreme' clients have found their way to MALS because traditional interventions haven't proved to be successful in tackling their behaviour and mentoring is the latest in an often extensive personal biography of criminal justice experiences. The willingness to work with offenders from all backgrounds and with diverse criminal careers raises, for some, **questions about the need to consider different tiers of mentoring provision**. Whether that be thinking about the skills and experiences required to work with (amongst others) young and adult offenders; those who have committed acquisitive as opposed to violent crime; or, even to consider matching the gender, nationality or ethnic group of mentors and mentees. These are questions and dilemmas that once again compel us to think who are the mentors and what skills and/or experiences they are required to bring to their position;

- as mentoring interventions become more integrated within mainstream provision and new agencies start to deliver services there were calls from some for there to be **clarity over information-sharing agreements and for boundaries to be established**, as much for the mentor and mentees as much as the criminal justice partners. Inevitably there needs to be intelligence exchanges between statutory agencies and mentoring services to provide necessary detail of the clients being referred but for data protection reasons this need to be formally defined. For the mentors too a balance has to be found that doesn't lead to them knowing more than they need to about their clients, particularly if – as one of the mentors commented – it complicates the mentoring relationship (if the mentee is suspicious about how and why their mentor knows so much about them and/or if the mentor is uncertain about what can be disclosed to/with the client). Establishing information sharing protocols and defining the directional exchanges of information (whether mentors should report unreported crimes made known to them and the extent to which intelligence is passed down to the individual mentors) are a foundation on which mentoring needs to be built. The MALS model and their arrangement within the Integrated Management Project was held up an example of how such agreements could work/function;

- the above discussed need for information sharing agreements and the clear drawing up of operational boundaries are part of what many people saw as **the need to articulate and invest in a long-term commitment to mentoring**. A routine feature of discussions was that mentoring clearly offered something new and something different to the interventions available to tackle reoffending but that in and of itself it was not a definitive solution. Highly skilled mentors and/or those volunteers who've overcome the very real challenges faced by those individuals trying to desist from crime can offer forms of engagement and communication that sets them apart from other criminal justice services;

- though the momentum of the day and was generated by the broad support for the concept of mentoring and the work of MALS, there was recognition that **mentoring schemes may encounter some resistance in the occupational working cultures of criminal justice agencies**. Police officers spoke of how some officers may be reluctant to rely upon projects for working with offenders that rely on volunteers, particularly if some of those volunteers are ex-offenders. Delegates with probation experience in both England and Holland commented about how the close one-to-one intensive mentoring of clients is very much the style of traditional probation work and that there may be unease at staff relinquishing such roles to external agencies;

- a key challenge for mentoring schemes is to **establish the point of access and to determine where best to locate the 'trigger moments' that get clients to engage**. Establishing whether contact is best made through partner agencies referring in to an organisation, or whether proactive work in prison establishments work best is fundamental to the design and ethos of mentoring projects. In addition to that (and being mindful that mentoring isn't appropriate for all offenders all of the time) there is a need to consider the eligibility and appropriateness of mentoring for clients. With clearer eligibility criteria and more clearly articulated aims and objectives of the scheme to enhance all parties understanding of what mentoring can offer it is then possible to ensure mentoring is located at the right intervention point and that suitable people are being worked with. For (potential) clients too such a renewed sense of purpose enhances communication with them and more clearly informs them about the project, its objectives and the expectations upon them;

- an issue raised by one of the delegates with extensive experience of mentoring provision expressed concern that **the provision of mentoring services mustn't go so far that it privileges offenders and that balance needs to be struck in providing support but in also being fair to the wider community**. A dilemma of incentivising and providing support for individuals beyond mentoring alone, the concern was that (for example) trying to arrange work placements or providing educational/leisure activities for mentees is a level of investment that is not readily available to people who come from similar backgrounds and areas who have not broken the law. Whilst discrepancies in accessing training/education and further support can be understood within the context of say prison programmes, concern was expressed that when it is more localised mentoring organisations that are negotiating and creating opportunities this may cause unease create localised tensions (if ex-offenders are seen to be supported into employment and/or local employers are seen to work too closely with groups of ex-offenders at the expense of others).

## 5. Key Questions for Partners/Delegates to consider

There are a number of key questions and themes for further discussion that flow from the day that delegates may want to consider with a view to future collective dialogue.

**- Is it possible for the MALS model of working to be adapted/adopted by international partners?**

Much of the ALS was about providing delegates with the opportunity to explore the MALS model of working and to reflect upon organisation's ambitions, their ways of working, and their place within the current infrastructure of offender management in Knowsley. The challenge now is to assess the extent to which this model can (and can not) be exported to international partners.

**- If mentors are to be used is it essential that these mentors have at one point been offenders themselves?** Of all areas of discussion this was the one area where opinions were divided and it is important to establish whether mentoring is a skill that be learned and developed through training, or indeed whether mentoring is about experience and being able to share and relate highly personal experiences with individual in order to get them to engage.

**- If mentoring is to be used as an intervention does it need to be tiered, with offence-specific mentors working on clients from their own specialised areas of expertise/experience?** Strong arguments were made within the groups that for more serious offences specialised mentoring input is required and this then encouraged reflection on whether indeed across the offending spectrum there is mileage in training up mentors and directing mentoring inputs to pre-defined fields.

**- How can, and should, 'success' be defined for mentoring interventions?** Inevitably the question that will be asked of any intervention is 'do they work' and whilst 'work' is a nebulous term for a variety of interventions for mentoring it appears especially problematic. In its current mode of working MALS is primarily a volunteer-driven intervention working without coercive powers with often prolific offenders. Under such circumstances whether clients *re-offend or not* seems too broad and disproportionate a measure of impact and so questions then need to be asked about what other measurements should be used to gauge success. However, will measuring such things as attendance rates, engagement with services, change in attitude, and type/frequency of re-offending 1) capture the nature of the work being put in, and 2) placate those gauging the impact of mentoring.

**- Should the delivery of mentoring be more structured and uniform?** There was widespread recognition that a mentoring session can last anything from half an hour to a full afternoon, and that a course of mentoring could be two sessions over the course of a fortnight or a series of sessions stretched over months. But in light of the establishment of the more structured *Life Change Programme* and the inevitable business-like pressures that govern resource allocation and planning decisions, should mentoring services look to develop more regimented courses of interaction even if that may compromise some of their innovation and person-centred approaches.

**- How advanced are partner jurisdictions case management systems?** A feature of the Dutch delegation's presentation was to remark on the real time and fluid information exchanges made possible through their computer systems. A question to explore is what are partner's experiences of computerised case management systems and is there room for development/refinement.

## 6. Looking Forward: Considerations for Action Learning Set 3

The next Action Learning Set will take place in Turin, Italy in February 2014. Amongst other things there appear, at this stage, to be two emergent substantive themes to help shape the day. Firstly, the extent to which some of the models of working and best practice explored in the previous two Action Learning Sets can be transferred into the Italian context. Having had the opportunity to explore the Safety House model showcased in The Hague and then the work being delivered through the Knowsley Integrated Offender Management Scheme (and more specifically the mentoring intervention of MALS) in Knowsley, Action Learning Set 3 provides a platform for the Italian partners to offer an insight into their working practices.

Secondly, time will also be taken to review the process and delivery of the Life Change Programme on Merseyside. The LJMU research team will endeavour to offer some insight into issues affecting the delivery of mentoring services, and to then review available data about the impact the programme is having at this early and interim stage of its development. This non-judgemental and objective assessment of on-going working processes is designed to form part of the collective learning and sharing of good practice that underpins the Action Learning Set series.

## 7. Appendix 1: Participants

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

Morning session attendees were:

- Hans Metzmakers – Department of Public Order and Safety, The Hague
- Laurence van der Broek - Safety House , The Hague
- Teun de Frel - Safety House, The Hague
- Iskender Forioso – Researcher (operating in three regions in Italy), European Research Institute
- Federico Floris – Practitioner (operating in three regions in Italy), European Research Institute
- Stipan Greco – Practitioner (operating in three regions in Italy), European Research Institute
- Justin Thompson – Director of Social Inclusion, Knowsley Borough Council, UK
- Kevin Rigby – Area Community Safety Manager, Knowsley Borough Council, UK
- Paula Sumner – Manager of Community Safety Services (including KIOM and Domestic Violence Victim Groups), Knowsley Borough Council, UK
- Louise Thomas – Area Community Safety Manager (Prescott and Halewood), Knowsley Borough Council, UK
- Nicola Haigh – Area Community Safety Manager (Huyton), Knowsley Borough Council, UK
- Yvonne Mason – Temporary Project Coordinator (representing Louise Thomas), Knowsley Borough Council, UK
- Jamie Brougham – Merseyside Police, KIOM, UK
- Mike Cloherty – Area Commander, Merseyside Police, UK
- Tami Garvey-Jones – Merseyside Police, UK
- Nick Kayani – Merseyside Probation Trust, UK
- Sean Prins – Liverpool Prison, UK
- Clare Donohue - MALS manager (Mentoring offenders who leave prison and delivering the Life Change Project), Merseyside, UK
- Leah Gorry – MALS, Merseyside, UK
- Giles Barrett, Helen Beckett Wilson, Matthew Millings and Lol Burke, Liverpool John Moores University, UK

Joined in the afternoon sessions by practitioners from the KIOM:

- Dave Fidler – Merseyside Police, KIOM, UK
- Helen Winstanley – Merseyside Police, UK
- Anthony Evans – MALS, Merseyside, UK
- Helen Bentham – Youth Offending Service, Merseyside, UK
- Nora Graham – Merseyside Probation Trust, KIOM, UK



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Or get in touch with us:

Dr. Giles Barrett

Director CCSE

t: 0151 231 5931 e: [g.a.barrett@ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:g.a.barrett@ljmu.ac.uk)