

Note of Meeting

Reducing Reoffending Board

24th November 2021, 10:30-12:30

1. Welcome, apologies and actions from previous meetings

Attendees:

London Probation Service
Metropolitan Police Service
London Heads of Community Safety
Clinks
Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime
Greater London Authority Health Team
London Councils
Youth Justice Board
RFEA

Apologies:

Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal
Service
Her Majesty's Prison and
Probation Service
London Prison Group
Department for Work and Pensions
Public Health England
National Health Service

The actions from the last meeting were covered.

2. Police and Crime Plan

Ahead of the meeting, Board members were sent a link to the draft Police and Crime Plan (PCP) and a summary document outlining the actions relevant to the Reducing Reoffending Board.

With a shortened Mayoral term of just over 1,000 days, MOPAC will be looking to move quickly on the PCP to ensure maximum time for delivery. This means the PCP will be focused on small number of priorities centered around the Mayor's manifesto with a clear outcome focus. Input from stakeholders has been and will continue to be gathered throughout the development of the PCP.

The PCP will be broken down into four priority areas:

- Reducing and preventing violence
- Better supporting victims
- Increasing trust and confidence
- Protecting people from being harmed and exploited

Alongside the development of the PCP, the VAWG Strategy is being refreshed and consulted on.

Formal consultation will be running for 8 weeks through the below methods:

- Written and email responses to consultation
- Online survey on Talk London and YouGov
- In person workshops and advertising for those without access to tech
- Four public workshops

- Targeted workshops for specific audiences, including deaf and disabled people, young people, frontline police officers and offenders. Specifically, a group around drugs especially because of the Mayors commitment to a drugs commission within his manifesto.
- Small pots of money to facilitate communities running their own PCP conversations.

Comments on the draft PCP:

- Need to reflect the link between reducing reoffending and disproportionality
- Need to reflect the new two-tier framework
- Could look at expanding the use of deferred prosecutions
- Community Safety Partnership Surveys could be useful to use as a success measure

3. Two-Tier Framework for OoCDs

MPS provided an overview of the upcoming changes to Out of Court Disposals (OoCDs), and the challenges for successful implementation. The role of this Board will predominantly be assisting in the mapping of existing services, determination of a minimum service offer and leveraging assets to meet this minimum offer in time for April 2023.

A working group is looking at how these cases will transform into the new framework, what will happen to the breaches and who will be responsible for monitoring compliance.

Every borough will have a form of diversionary service, and MOPAC have some commissioned services, but these are not all pan-London which has highlighted the need to map the services and try to plug the gaps to avoid a postcode lottery.

A bid has been submitted to create an app for the two-tier framework which will enable frontline officers to identify the diversionary services available in a certain area and do a live assessment while out on the street to see if a person would be eligible. Ideally there would be a central team to manage this two-tier framework to reduce burden on front line officers in monitoring compliance.

4. Thematic Session – Veterans in the CJS

RFEA is a military charity supporting 20,000 veterans a year by providing support with the overall aim of employment. The charity has operated specialist programmes in the Criminal Justice System since 2012 which have been branded Project Nova. They have worked in partnership with 24 Police Forces, who ask 'Have you served in the UK Armed Forces' in Custody Suites and refer veterans for support. Currently piloting a Veterans Hub with HMPPS at Holme House Prison in the North East and have recently completed a pilot with NPS London working to identify and support veterans on their caseload.

Cobseo Criminal Justice Cluster is the Umbrella organisation for Armed Forces charities with the key function of influencing policy and enabling networking between member organisations.

The Armed Forces have always recruited in areas where there are fewer employment opportunities and young people can join up at the age of 16. Armed Forces families can often have very strict discipline which is handed down through each generation.

The structure and support available when in service can mean that childhood issues are suppressed or managed, but cause issues later in life when they no longer have their support system in place. Many techniques for military training can have deep impacts.

Veterans are a hard-to-reach group due to their very different life experiences including active service where, what they have seen, done, or not done is beyond what civilians experience in their lives. Their work and friendships are all within the military and this makes them distrustful of civilian support and very commonly believing that it is not for them or they will not be understood.

It is estimated that 3.9% of prisoners are ex armed forces personnel but a sample survey of prisoners suggests this percentage could be higher and highlights the issues with identification. 25% of ex-armed forces personnel in prison are there for sexual offences and 32.9% in prison for violence against person. Both these figures show the over-representation of ex-armed forces personnel compared to the civilian prison population.

An overview of the pilot Probation ran with RFEA in London to support veterans on their caseload was provided. This has now come to an end. The pilot showed issues with identification but, once they were identified, the service support was very effective and met their distinct needs. Probation are intending to commission a service in the future to take the learning from Project Nova and are gathering information before going out to the sector for this service.

The LHOCS representative expressed the need to start this work before veterans are discharged by joining up local authorities with services to make sure everything is in place before they return to civilian life. The biggest gap is the need to improve their trust and confidence in support available.

RFEA outlined that there is a programme in place called 'Care After Combat' to support people who are being discharged, predominantly due to disciplinary issues, however it does not have a 100% referral rate. Referral is due to become mandatory which may assist with this.

Going forward partners are to build veterans as a specific group into work on developing trust and confidence.

5. AOB and Close

MOPAC are working with the London Probation Service to co-commission the wrap-around service for women in touch with the CJS from July 2022. This will build on the current successful pan-London service and seeks to extend it for three more years.

The service is open not just to women on probation, but also women at risk of reoffending identified by a wide variety of partners, including police, health and local authorities, from across London.