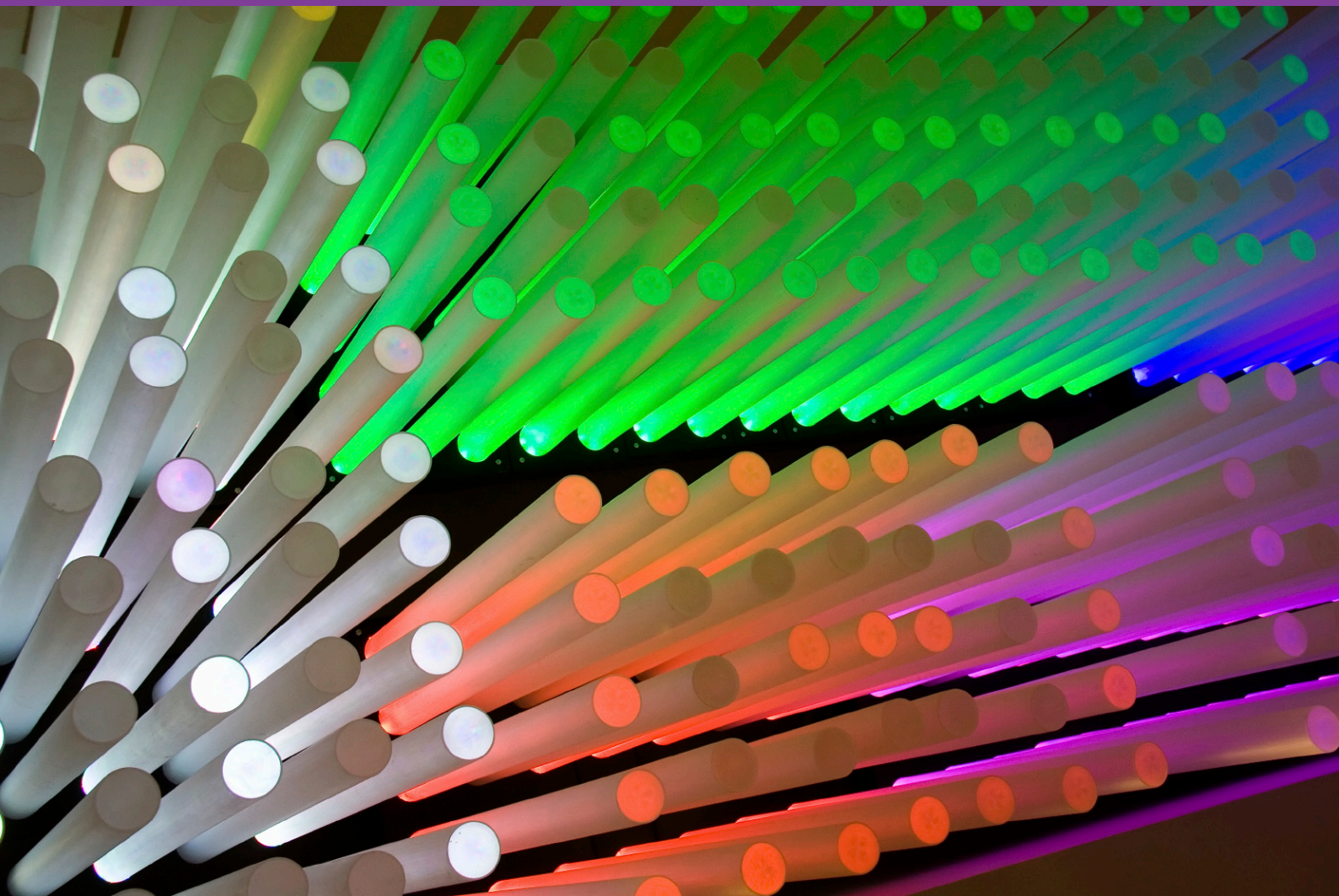


BELIEVING WE CAN

Promoting the contribution
faith-based organisations can make to
reducing adult and youth re-offending

Consultation Document
November 2007



Foreword by

The Rt Hon. David Hanson MP Minister of State



The Government recognises and values the experience and resources that faith communities and organisations bring to building strong, active and safer communities. Faith-based organisations have a long and impressive history of working with some of the most challenging and socially excluded young people and adults in our society to help them turn away from crime. Faith can be a great source of support and a motivator for personal change, and can also motivate people from a wide range of backgrounds to help and care for others. Some faith-based organisations are large service providers, many employ staff, but most are based in local communities and rely heavily on the contribution of committed volunteers.

The Faith and Voluntary Sector Alliance launched by my predecessor Baroness Scotland two years ago has helped to both consult and involve local organisations and communities, but there is more to be done to fully realise the faith and wider voluntary and community sector contribution. Most crime is local and most offenders will return to live in local communities. This is why the role of local organisations is so crucial to preventing crime and supporting offenders to find homes and jobs, deal with a whole range of challenges, and integrate back into communities.

I strongly welcome this collaboration between the National Offender Management Service and the Youth Justice Board and our partners to promote and strengthen the spiritual and practical support provided by faith-based groups and volunteers in prison, through the gate and in the community. It is an important strand of our wider work to remove barriers and better aid a reduction in reoffending.

Our commitment to increase the range of providers in order to get better value out of available resources and drive better service delivery, engage the third sector as partners and advocates of service users and communities, and support mentoring and volunteering, is integral to our work to reduce re-offending. Indeed, this work forms an important plank of our consultation on a new cross-Government Reducing Re-offending Strategic Plan, which we will publish shortly. With well over half of the resources needed to reduce adult and youth re-offending lying outside the Criminal Justice System, ensuring that offenders benefit from mainstream services, and through joint planning and commissioning at all levels, is high on our agenda. As faith-based organisations are mainly engaged through and across the reducing re-offending pathways, there is scope to increase their relationship with the full range of agencies and commissioners to support end-to-end offender management.

We want to overcome the challenges of working in effective partnership with faith-based organisations and increase their role in prevention and reducing re-offending. This paper sets out the reasons why, consults on a way forward and asks questions to help identify the right actions to achieve change. Whether you are a faith-based organisation, an offender manager, a commissioner or funder, or work in the prison service, I very much hope that you will read this paper, engage with the issues it raises, and let us know what you think.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'David Hanson'.

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1. Introduction

Faith-based organisations have been working with offenders in prison and the community for many years. Individuals including volunteers from many faiths support offenders in their efforts to turn away from crime, and the Probation Service ensures that unpaid work benefits faith communities. The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) Faith and Voluntary Sector Alliance was set up to support delivery of national and regional plans to reduce re-offending by better informing, consulting and involving local organisations including faith-based organisations and faith communities. We want to learn from the good practice that exists across England and Wales and to ensure we integrate and realise the unique contribution that faith-based organisations bring to work to reduce re-offending and protect the public.

This consultation paper seeks to promote the work of faith-based organisations with both adult and young offenders, and explore further actions that Government can take working in partnership to strengthen engagement with the faith-based sector as well as its role in service delivery. It does this by:

- **Describing the different strands of work undertaken by faith-based organisations working with offenders in the community, young offender institutions and prisons;**
- **Exploring the barriers for faith-based organisations in progressing this work and seeking solutions to better inform, consult and involve them in work to support offender management;**
- **Providing a focus on diversity, with an equality impact assessment to be produced alongside final agreed actions.**

Consultation responses will be used to inform a new Government strategic plan to reduce re-offending and a new NOMS Third Sector Action Plan. The Youth Justice Board (YJB) will be drawing on the responses gathered to inform discussions around the future of third sector engagement. This includes drafting a formal response to those organisations who attended the ‘New Approaches to Partnership’ seminar in May 2007 jointly hosted by the YJB, the Prince’s Trust and CLINKS.

There is great potential to develop the involvement of faith-based organisations and faith communities working in partnership locally to support offender management including recognising and supporting the critical role of volunteers. They are working to help people turn away from crime, offenders settle back into their community, find work and somewhere to live, and supporting their children and families. Some faith communities and organisations will be working with offenders but will not be linked with prisons or probation areas. Some will work alongside other faith-based organisations as part of formal or informal structures. Some groups will receive funding from criminal justice agencies and/or other commissioners and funders, and others will choose not to do so. Faith groups bring different perspectives, a spiritual approach and knowledge of local communities. We need to engage these communities and organisations, explore with them what information and support they require and how we can best work with them to achieve our shared goal of safer communities.

The Home Office 2003 Citizenship Survey identified religion as the fourth most important arena for civic and social participation and formal volunteering in Britain. Many faith-based organisations have a long history of working with socially excluded young people and adults including those who have committed crimes or are at risk of doing so. Many of the challenges for faith-based organisations mirror those for the voluntary and community sector as a whole, such as those of sustainability and capacity. We need to explore what is similar and different.

This consultation is aimed at faith-based organisations, funders, public sector decision makers and commissioners, and providers. With around half of the resources needed to reduce re-offending lying outside the Criminal Justice System, over 75% in the case of the youth justice system, this paper is relevant to all partnership bodies and commissioners of services contributing to preventing crime and reducing re-offending.

1.1. Context

Crime affects us all either directly as victims or indirectly when it impacts on the communities in which we live and work. Reducing re-offending and protecting the public by those who have already been through the Criminal Justice System is a key priority for Government but it can not do it alone, it needs the help of other partners and organisations, particularly at local level. The cross-Government **National Reducing Re-offending Delivery Plan**¹ identifies the important role of the third sector² including faith-based organisations within the seven strategic pathways that are crucial to tackling re-offending: accommodation; education, training and employment; health; drugs and alcohol; children and families of offenders; attitudes, thinking and behaviour; and finance, benefit and debt. The inter-dependency of these different pathways is reflected in the Youth Justice Board's approach to resettlement and is outlined in the YJB publication **'Youth resettlement – a framework for action'**.³

Recognising the crucial role played by other partners and organisations in reducing re-offending and the potential for them to do more, Government launched the Faith and VCS Alliance in November 2005 as one of three Alliances to support delivery of the cross Government plan to reduce re-offending by better informing, consulting and involving local organisations and communities. A national Faith Alliance Strategy Group includes representation from criminal justice agencies, faith-based organisations, and the Cohesion and Faith Unit in the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The Strategy Group has oversight of the development of policy and plans to value, promote and strengthen the contribution of diverse faith-based organisations to reducing re-offending.

1 NOMS (2005) National Reducing Re-offending Delivery Plan, Home Office: London

2 The third sector comprises organisations that are non-governmental; are 'value-driven' (primarily motivated by the desire to further social action, environmental or cultural objectives rather than to make a profit per se); principally reinvest surpluses to further their objectives.

3 YJB (2006) Youth Resettlement: A Framework for Action, Home Office: London

London Faith Alliance Small Grants Programme

The Government Office for London (GOL) 'London Resettlement Programme' explores ways in which faith-based groups can be used in resettling offenders and re-integrating them into the community.

In 2006/07, 19 projects received funding from a small grants initiative totaling £24,000. Projects were run by Christian and Muslim groups (including Somali-specific groups) and by projects that worked with all faith communities. Seven projects operated across London and the rest were delivered in specific areas. Around 200 organisations worked together in partnerships. Over 3,000 offenders and over 8,000 non-offenders were involved at an average cost of £7.69 per offender.

The outcomes from the 18 completed projects were:

- **over 30 offenders were rehoused**
- **45 offenders learned new skills**
- **65 ex-offenders received counselling and/or mentoring support**
- **31 offenders entered paid or voluntary employment**
- **11 ex-offenders enrolled on educational courses.**

The project exposed gaps in the provision of services for ex-offenders. It was concluded that projects needed to be run on a rolling basis, including 'themed' rounds focusing on specific communities or geographical locations; and that the relationship between GOL and the Muslim community should be developed, with other faith groups being encouraged to participate.

The NOMS reform programme seeks to develop commissioning, joint commissioning and partnership arrangements and this, coupled with the funding for faith-based organisations from other Government departments and agencies, offers some potential for faith-based organisations to do more alongside the public sector in shaping and delivering offender services and interventions. These changes are supported by the Offender Management Act 2007 with regard to the provision of probation services.

Commissioning means that NOMS can direct resources at the interventions that best help rehabilitate adult offenders, and from a range of providers. The YJB recognises the valuable contribution provided by the third sector and supports and encourages the involvement of voluntary and community organisations including faith-based organisations in the delivery of services to young people. Many third sector organisations already deliver crime prevention programs in partnership with local Youth Offending Teams (YOTs)⁴ and custodial establishments. The vital role of the faith and community sector in education, training and youth work is well known and already plays a particularly important role in working with the most disengaged.

⁴ There is a YOT in every local authority in England and Wales, made up of 5 statutory partners - this typically includes representatives from the police, probation, social services, health (incl drugs and alcohol action teams) and education. Other key local partners include Childrens Trusts and Integrated Youth Services. This multi-agency approach enables local commissioners and organisations to respond to the needs of young offenders in a comprehensive way.

Worcestershire and Herefordshire Faith Project

Worcestershire and Herefordshire Youth Offending Service are currently running a faith project supported by the YJB and with funding from the Office for Criminal Justice Reform. Working alongside the Worcestershire Inter-Faith Forum, Race Equality Council and other key partners, the project aims to engage faith communities in youth justice by providing them with information on crime in their area, consulting them for their views, developing routes for faith communities to be involved in reducing crime, and working to help faith communities act as a catalyst for the communities to become more involved in crime prevention and anti-social behaviour related issues. The project aims to develop, test and evaluate a model for engaging faith communities with youth justice services, and provide tools, hints and tips for use by other services. One key finding from the project has been that partnerships are of critical importance to its success.

YMCA England

YMCA is an inclusive Christian movement which works to prevent homelessness and re-offending by providing young people with supported accommodation, housing advice, mediation and life-skills training.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the YJB and YMCA England was launched in October 2007 in order to establish a framework of shared principles to guide both parties in forming a cooperative working relationship for planning and accomplishing agreed projects and activities across England that will contribute to a reduction of offending and re-offending by young people. The new partnership represents the continued commitment to forming alliances between statutory youth justice services and third sector organisations.

Central to the partnership is the aim to develop more widespread local partnership working between local Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) and member YMCAs. Through closer national and local cooperation, both organisations hope to be able to promote safer communities and better outcomes for young people in areas such as crime prevention and reduction of re-offending as well as improving access to mainstream services and meeting 'Every Child Matters' programme outcomes.

Regional reducing re-offending partnership boards and the All-Wales Reducing Re-offending Strategy Board include representatives from the voluntary and community sector. Every regional plan contains actions to progress the Faith and VCS Alliance and there has already been some regional consultation with links made with existing networks. However, there is a clear recognition that to make progress there needs to be effective engagement by partners at a local level. We therefore need to consider the important contacts and relationships that prisons, probation and youth offending teams already have with faith-based organisations and communities. For adult offenders the new Probation Trusts will have a critical role representing NOMS in local partnerships in relation to planning, commissioning, and joint commissioning.

There are different strands of work in which faith-based organisations and communities are and can be further involved:

- **the reducing re-offending ‘pathways’ : accommodation (including the provision of approved premises), finance, benefit and debt, skills and employment, support for children and families and help to tackle drug and alcohol problems;**
- **providing volunteers to support all of the above in prisons, YOTs and for offenders subject to community orders;**
- **offenders and ex-offenders providing peer support;**
- **restorative justice and victim perspectives;**
- **unpaid work with faith-based organisations working with Probation and Community Payback projects that actively seek the views of faith communities regarding the type of work undertaken;**
- **interventions such as mentoring for those facing sentences of under 12 months in custody - where there is a high level of unmet need;**
- **taking forward recommendations in the Corston report on women offenders and the recent report on Young Black People and the Criminal Justice System⁵.**

Some voluntary, community and faith-based organisations will want to take on service delivery for the first time and some will want to expand what they are doing already, but others will continue to be involved with no payment – people will continue to volunteer, engage in decision making, and advocate and campaign on behalf of others, and this is to be encouraged and affirmed. What we need to explore is how we can make the best of the unique contribution of faith communities. How, for example, can we work with faith-based organisations as an integral part of resettlement/offender management, a specific and recognised part of the plan for the offender that takes account of the risk they present and their range of different needs to help them stop offending.

In November last year NOMS and HMPS Chaplaincy hosted the ‘Believing We Can’ conference to engage with a wider range of faith-based organisations and communities and help find out what was needed to support and strengthen their role in reducing re-offending. Similarly, the ‘New Approaches to Partnership’ seminar hosted by the YJB in May 2007 which attracted a variety of voluntary and community organisations provided an opportunity to discuss new ways of effective partnership working and delivery between the sectors. The learning from these conferences and the work being taken forward in partnership at both a regional level and by prisons, probation areas and YOTs working in partnership with faith-based organisations has informed this paper and its proposals.

5 Home Office (2007) The Corston Report: a review of women with particular vulnerabilities in the criminal justice system, Home Office: London

House of Commons Home Affairs Committee (2007) Young Black People and the Criminal Justice System, second report of session 2006-07

1.2. What do you think?

This paper consults on a proposed way forward and asks a number of specific questions to determine actions and responsibilities that can strengthen the role of faith-based organisations in reducing re-offending.

The consultation questions are placed throughout the document and brought together in **Annex 1** in the form of a response sheet. We would also welcome your views and ideas on any additional areas you feel are not addressed by the paper and consultation questions.

This consultation paper will be circulated at national, regional and local level through NOMS, the YJB, and our partner organisations.

For convenience you may respond electronically by downloading the response sheet at:

http://noms.justice.gov.uk/news-publications-events/publications/consultations/BWC_third_sector_08

Please email your responses to: **Mary.Hassan9@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk**. Alternatively you may photocopy the response sheet and return to us at the address below:

**NOMS Partnerships Unit
Voluntary and Community Sector Team
4th Floor Fry Building
SE Quarter
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF**

Please send your response by Friday 22 February 2008

2. The role of faith-based organisations in reducing re-offending

In **Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime: The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in the National Offender Management Service**⁶ NOMS recognised that voluntary and community organisations including faith-based organisations bring additional skills, knowledge and expertise and can offer advantages in dealing with the multiple disadvantages faced by offenders. These include an emphasis on user involvement in service provision; increased trust from offenders due to their independence from Government and its institutions; the use of volunteers – which brings significant resources and provides an important link to local communities; continuity for prisoners returning to the community; and a flexible, innovative and non-bureaucratic style, bringing fresh thinking to problem areas with the advantage of being less risk averse and able to put ideas into action quickly. The client centred approach is a particularly valuable one and in line with Government's aim of putting users at the heart of service commissioning and delivery. It includes campaigning for change, user advocacy and directly involving users in specifying services and interventions, for example helping offenders to manage their own sentence plans and providing opportunities for offenders and ex-offenders to mentor and volunteer.

Faith-based organisations make up a substantial part of the third sector. The Charity Commission's register of charities shows over 22,000 religious charities of all shapes and sizes currently working in England and Wales. Importantly, not all faith-based organisations will be registered as charities so this is an approximation of the size of the sector. A survey conducted in 2002 by the London Churches Group identified more than 2,000 faith-based social action projects in the capital alone, employing 3,000 people, supported by 13,500 volunteers, with 120,000 beneficiaries. This is likely to be a very conservative estimate given that the response rate to the survey was 30%. In November 2003, the report **Faith in England's Northwest**⁷ mapped faith-based activity in the region. This found a thriving community, involved in the most deprived areas and running some 5,140 separate projects. A follow-up study found that the sector generated over £94.9 million per annum for the regional economy.

This community spirit and engagement is reflected in the criminal justice system both within prisons and through work in the community with offenders, ex-offenders and those who are at risk of committing crime – case studies in this paper demonstrate the type and range of work currently underway. Projects include the provision of practical support services to offenders and their families, housing and hostels, skills development, pastoral advice, visitors' centres, youth clubs, soup runs, mentoring and befriending. Multi-faith chaplaincy teams work in all prisons to provide prisoners with spiritual and pastoral support as well as offering a range of services, counselling courses, life skills and victim awareness. HMPS Chaplaincy and some faith-based organisations are also engaged in partnerships to better identify the needs of offenders, including their religious and pastoral needs, and shape interventions. Probation areas also have good links with faith communities, not least through the provision of unpaid work and Community Payback schemes which allow local communities, including faith communities to have a say in the type of work undertaken by offenders.

6 NOMS (2005) *Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime: Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in NOMS* Home Office: London

7 Northwest Development Agency (2003) *Faith in England's Northwest*

Prison Advice and Care Trust (pact) (formerly the Bourne Trust)

The Prison Advice and Care Trust (pact) was originally established by the Catholic Church in England in 1898, and was for many years known as the Bourne Trust until it merged with Prisoners' Wives and Families Service in 2000. The charity has a very diverse workforce but retains its underpinning Christian ethos. Pact currently manages nine family-friendly prison Visitors Centres and provides family support services in a further four prisons across London, the South East, South West and South Wales, using a mix of professional paid staff and trained volunteers from local communities and student placements. The charity has also developed a model of 'First Night in Custody' service at Holloway, Wandsworth and Exeter prisons, which has been shown to reduce suicide risk and to respond to the needs of children and families. Pact also provides supervised play services in Visits Halls, runs a catering social enterprise called 'pact lunch', and has developed family-focused resettlement initiatives and mentoring projects at a number of prisons. Most recently they have developed a courts based 'Community Advice and Support Service' as part of the Devon & Cornwall Community Justice programme. In these ways, pact provides important services to prisoners' and their families whilst enhancing contact between prisons and courts and local communities.

Prison Link

Following the widespread unrest associated with the 1985 violence in Lozells, many families found that they had a relative before the courts. As friendship, support, counselling, transport, prayer and legal advice were offered, Prison Link was born.

Delivered by the United Evangelical Project in Birmingham, Prison Link aims to empower and support prisoners and ex-offenders and their families and children by offering a range of services designed to maintain family links and stability and to encourage positive change.

Prison Link has identified the particular pressures that many Black and Asian families experience within the penal and wider criminal justice system. It aims to raise awareness of the situation of people from minority communities in the system, especially those within the wider Christian community.

Grassroots

Family Days and Support Project

Run by the Diocese of Blackburn, and funded from the Invest to Save budget, this project aims to build partnerships with local prisons in Lancashire to support prisoners and their families, helping them to improve social inclusion for disadvantaged groups. The project maintains the links between prisoners and their families and between prison and the community, enabling prisoners and their families to maintain relationships and supports resettlement in the family home where possible. The project develops groups of volunteers drawn from the community, including from local churches, who are vetted, trained and supported to work with prolific and other groups of offenders. The project works across Lancashire out of HMP Lancaster Castle, Wymott, Preston and Kirkham.

Family support workers and volunteers support between 50-100 families per quarter and over the last two years over 50 family days have been held – these are structured events with over 339 prisoners and 1190 family visitors (adults and children) participating in workshop, art and craft activities, and interactive family sessions.

2.1. The distinctive value of faith-based organisations

Faith-based activity can be broadly described as of three types:

- **has a high level of faith-based content and it is this that is targeting re-offending;**
- **has a range of activities and some faith specific content but this is not the primary focus to initiate change;**
- **non-faith but delivered by a faith-based organisation.**

There are some needs that can only be met or are best met by faith-based organisations. For offenders that are of faith it is right that they are able to express and practice their faith within prison, and have access to spiritual care and support including as part of a rehabilitative journey in custody and beyond. This is provided by multi-faith chaplaincy teams in prisons and in some areas continued by Community Chaplaincy projects after release. Some offenders will be returning to communities where faith is a strong part of the fabric of that community and support within and through faith organisations can help build trust and acceptance and support effective reintegration. There are, for example, faith-based organisations that provide mentors for offenders from faith groups to support them during the first few weeks following release, a time when they are usually at their most vulnerable.

Swansea Community Chaplaincy Project

Working across all the 7 reducing re-offending pathways, Swansea Community Chaplaincy help ex-offenders by identifying both their needs and wants via its SPIDER self assessment system. The project then allocates Community Chaplains to act as mentors and advocates to help empower and encourage self-confidence in ex-offenders by, for example:

- accompanying individuals to the benefits office; offering support at key meetings; accessing community resources such as Citizens' Advice Bureau to help assist ex-offenders in money management; access to recycled furniture and white goods;
- helping ex-offenders access college courses, vocational training & employment and then providing ongoing support;
- maintaining professional relationships with Social Services; Probation; Drug Intervention Programme teams to help service-users access relevant and appropriate drug treatment programmes;
- Stimulating change in the attitudes, thinking and behaviour of ex-offenders by providing requested support, care and attention they may not otherwise receive.

West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy Project

WCCP employs two Community Chaplains and draws 50% of its volunteers from faith communities across West Yorkshire. The networking and partnership-building role of the community chaplains has enabled them to embrace the diversity represented in the area. They work mainly with Islamic, Sikh, Christian, Buddhist and Hindu faith communities across Bradford, Leeds and Dewsbury, and have good working relationships with the Yorkshire & Humberside Faiths Forum as well as the more local Bradford and Leeds multi-faith forums.

WYCCP has raised awareness of the difficulties faced by ex-offenders by educating diverse faith communities, thereby maximising the input of these communities into transforming the lives of ex-offenders. This educational role has gained them widespread support in a short space of time and shown that faith communities working together in partnership are a massive resource for reducing re-offending.

Feltham Community Chaplaincy Trust

Feltham Community Chaplaincy Trust (FCCT) operates a multi-faith project out of HMP and YOI Feltham, which recruits and trains volunteers from diverse faith communities across London, enabling them to befriend and support young men, of the same faith, who are returning to their local areas. FCCT works closely with community groups, voluntary organisations and statutory bodies such as Youth Offending Teams, the Probation Service, Social Services and the Police.

To date just over 80 volunteers from 21 London boroughs have been trained. To meet the diverse needs of the young men leaving Feltham the volunteers come from many different ethnic backgrounds and currently the project has links with over 43 different faith communities. One of the biggest challenges, the fact that many prisoners are on remand and are then moved to other prisons, has been overcome by developing links with other establishments, so the project is now able to work with prisoners released from Rochester, Highdown, Portland and Glen Pava.

Since its inception in 2005, FCCT has worked with 51 young men and 38 of these have been released to date. Of these 38 only 11 have re-offended and 5 of these 11 had chosen not to be matched with a mentor.

In May 2007 the work of the project was acknowledged by the Youth Justice Board and Ministry of Justice, when it won the award for Best Faith Alliance.

What some of the young service users have said about the FCCT project:

“The help I’ve got over the last year has been really good; it has been really helpful to talk to someone who has seen me both inside and outside [Feltham]”

“I never knew of any organisation that would send someone to help me through my first day out of prison, from start to finish, I am really impressed and really grateful”

Even where the activity is ‘non-faith’, faith is usually the motivation for social action, directly informing the content and character of the support and services given. An ‘added’ or distinctive value may then be identified through understanding the particular characteristics of faith-based organisations in shaping and delivering public services. This does not mean of course that a particular religious organisation will necessarily deliver a service better than a particular secular organisation. It means that if faith-based organisations can meet the required criteria and standards they should be able to compete for funding, and that they may bring particular strengths.

In **Faith, Hope and Clarity: Developing a model of faith group involvement in civil renewal**⁸, Vivien Lowndes and Rachael Chapman set out three ‘in principle’ rationales for faith group involvement in civil renewal:

- **The role of faith groups in promoting community values and identities, linked to their ‘theology’ and their enduring presence in communities. Faith-based values and identities can motivate citizens to be involved in their communities and in social action.**
- **Organisational capacity of faith groups in developing members’ skills, mobilising volunteers, providing staff and venues, and their role in reaching excluded groups (though the resources profile of different communities varies enormously). Also social capital – ability to mobilise networks and relationships within communities.**
- **The representative and leadership role of faith groups inside communities and within broader networks and partnerships. There is however a policy challenge here with regard to issues of accountability, representation and inclusion – policy makers have to compare, weigh and judge messages in consideration of the extent and nature of their ‘mandate’.**

Unpaid Work

Merseyside Probation Area has developed a number of interesting unpaid work projects aimed at benefiting local faith communities. These include

- **renovating the Merseyside Sikh Temple, culminating in constructing a golden arch and ceiling in the Holy Room;**
- **clearing and landscaping the grounds of the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King;**
- **painting and decorating the Liverpool Hindu Temple, which like the Sikh Temple, doubles as a community centre; and**
- **clearing of a very derelict and overgrown Jewish cemetery in the Kensington area of Liverpool.**

The Cardiff Unpaid Work team constructed a new Palki for a local Sikh Temple – Gurdwara. When this work was completed the Temple asked the team to build a mobile Palki which could be taken to peoples’ homes at times of celebration or to commemorate a death in the family. The temple was so delighted with the quality of the offenders work that it has offered the workshop’s services to Gurdwaras across England and Wales.

A feature of these projects has been the opportunity for offenders to learn about and respect the traditions of other cultures, which has been hugely beneficial in breaking down barriers and improving race relations.

8 Lowndes, V. and R. Chapman (2006) Faith, hope and clarity: Developing a model of faith group involvement in civil renewal in Tessa Brannan, Peter John, and Gerry Stoker (eds) Re-energising Citizenship: Strategies for Civil Renewal, Basingstoke: Palgrave

Faith-based organisations are then gateways to the tremendous energy and commitment of their members, with access to a large body of motivated volunteers. They already marshal by far the largest number of volunteers working in prisons. Research carried out for HMPS Chaplaincy, through Clinks, and by the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, King's College London found that (on the basis of returns from 70% of prisons) over 6,000 faith-based volunteers contribute 16,300 hours every four weeks within the prison estate. Volunteers carry out a wide range of activity to support prisoners and their families, increase the social contact of prisoners and provide a link with local communities and continuity for ex-prisoners.

Offenders come from local communities and that is where much of their offending occurs and it has to be dealt with. Even those who go to prison will, apart from a very small minority, return to live in the community they came from. Grounded in local communities and with members that may include marginalised and diverse individuals, faith-based organisations are particularly well placed to provide local understanding, strong local links, and innovative community based solutions to support the reintegration of offenders⁹.

Faith-based organisations offer an invaluable link into those communities and individuals who are not part of other networks or accessing mainstream services and support. Because religion occupies a central place in the culture and identity of many minority ethnic and refugee communities faith-based organisations can be the principle gateway to these communities; they can help diverse offenders find the support they need and promote an understanding of those needs and the barriers to getting them met. They also have the potential to offer a more accessible and less daunting route to services and support - through offering services from their place of worship within communities, supporting self-help and, often as a first port of call, helping offenders and other socially excluded individuals access more mainstream services. It is important to recognise however that in some parts of the country there is not always a sufficiently large local faith community to offer volunteer and other support to offenders of certain faiths. This is particularly true for Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism in areas outside London, where there may be a mismatch between the profile of the offender population and the local community.

St Mungo's

This secular housing association resettles Muslim offenders from Pentonville Prison, which has a growing population of around 200 of these prisoners. The project engages positively with community leaders to prevent homelessness by resettling ex-offenders in the Newham, Tower Hamlets and Hackney Boroughs of London.

Green Pastures Housing

This Christian organisation, based in Southport, purchases houses for homeless individuals in conjunction with other agencies they consider suitable. They launched a pilot project with the NW Area of the Prison Service to deliver houses for ex-offenders and are working with North Staffordshire Community Chaplaincy to enable them to offer housing to prisoners on release. This work is proving to be successful in breaking the cycle of re-offending by improving the quality of life for ex-offenders and enabling local faith communities and groups to play an active part in the local response to crime prevention.

⁹ In *Releasing the Resources of the Faith Sector* (Faithworks, 2003), Tim Reith points out that the “distinctive values of faith groups also means that they often develop innovative strategies to tackle long-running problems, making them key partners in policy innovation”.

A brief literature review has been carried out within NOMS to identify how much evidence is available on the effectiveness of faith-based interventions in preventing anti-social behaviour and reducing re-offending. This was not a full systematic review but scanned the body of literature in the international public domain. The studies indicate that research methods used to look at faith-based interventions for offenders are generally very poor and that there has been minimal exploration of a range of faiths beyond Christianity, with broader diversity issues largely ignored. Within these constraints, the review found that currently there was no hard evidence to suggest that structured faith-based interventions have a direct impact on reducing re-offending. There is however some analysis demonstrating that those individuals participating in religious activity are less likely to behave in an anti-social way or commit crime, and a small number of studies indicate that participation in religious activity in prison can have a positive impact on offender adjustment and reduce anti-social and aggressive behaviour. There are several studies demonstrating how faith-based organisations provide a range of support and advice services which may support offenders from committing further offences. There is in general a need to develop the evidence base on 'what works' to include not only faith-based but a range of interventions to reduce re-offending.

QUESTIONS

- Are there benefits to faith-based activity to reduce re-offending not identified in this paper?
- What can we learn from the work of prison chaplaincy and community chaplaincy projects and the links they have with local communities that can help us develop the role of faith-based organisations to support offender management?
- How can offender managers access resources and activities offered by faith-based organisations across the reducing re-offending pathways?
- How can we begin to assess the contribution made by faith-based organisations to reducing re-offending?
- What specific contribution can the faith-based sector make to working with children and young people and families, particularly to prevent offending?
- What role is there for faith-based schools in working with young people at risk of offending?

3. Challenges

Faith-based organisations share many of the challenges and barriers to shaping and delivering public services faced by the third sector as a whole, and particularly those experienced by small local organisations. There are a number of large well established faith-based charities who have provided mainly welfare services and influenced policy for decades, but the majority of faith groups are small to medium sized, informal, community based and focused, have weak external links, and are heavily reliant on volunteers. Identifying these commonalities is important because it can aid partnership development and inform capacity building work and solutions. Generic challenges and barriers were identified by faith-based organisations at the Believing We Can conference in November 2006, along with a number of issues and challenges that are unique to providers of interventions for offenders and to faith-based organisations¹⁰. These are set out in the **Believing We Can Conference Report**¹¹ and inform this paper.

3.1. Infrastructure and support

Many faith-based organisations have limited external links and the relationship between faith-based organisations and the wider third sector needs strengthening to promote shared learning and build capacity. This is even more the case for minority faith groups, mirroring the recognised barriers and lack of support for BME voluntary and community organisations in general. Encouraged by its funders, VCS umbrella and support organisations has over a long period had an ambition to link with and support faith-based organisations but in the main have not been particularly successful. This is in part due to the complexity of engaging with the faith-based sector and the fact that many faith organisations do not recognise themselves as part of the VCS. Although there is a growing faith-based infrastructure and it is most often the first port of call for faith groups, it is not well funded, is stronger in some faiths and in some geographical areas than others, and its governance structures can prevent it from being accountable locally for the delivery of faith-based social action. Maintaining a regional presence can be particularly difficult for smaller faith communities.

This means that faith-based organisations in general and minority faith organisations in particular have poor access to information on funding opportunities, promotional and networking events, capacity building opportunities, new initiatives and Government policy and programmes in important areas of interest. There is also a lack of information about the services that are being delivered by faith-based and other organisations across the country – this can lead to unnecessary duplication of services and missed opportunities for local and regional partnerships between small and large organisations.

10 Some faith-based organisations prefer to use the term VCF – Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector – as a means of acknowledging this distinctiveness.

11 Believing We Can Conference Report, Clarks, May 2007 www.clarks.org

Development support for Community Chaplaincy

Community Chaplaincies offer an innovative way to resettle ex-offenders with the support of all the local faith communities, prisons, the Probation Service and a range of voluntary sector partners. They provide a comprehensive approach towards mentoring ex-offenders to leading law-abiding lives, working both in the prison and in the community. In May 2006 Clinks (www.clinks.org), sponsored by HMPS Chaplaincy Headquarters and NOMS Partnerships Unit employed a Community Chaplaincy Development Officer for a 2 year period.

The post holder has sought to build the capacity of existing initiatives and promote new and innovative projects. With a growing number of community chaplaincy projects throughout England and Wales it is more and more the case that individual projects need to work together. Activity has focused on working towards having shared mission statements, policies and procedures, common monitoring and project evaluation methods, and above all a strong national network that can support individual projects going about their daily business. All of this will be essential to the future development of community chaplaincy.

At a strategic level it is important that community chaplaincy projects continue to work closely with the Prison Service, Probation Service and both the national and regional structures of NOMS. This partnership ensures that the aims and principles of community chaplaincies are understood, and crucially, make it possible for agencies to work together to achieve common aims of reducing re-offending, reducing crime, tackling social exclusion and building safer communities.

If you would like to know more about community chaplaincies then please visit www.communitychaplaincy.info. This website has only recently been developed by one of the Community Chaplaincy Projects and is the first step in marketing community chaplaincy in a national way.

Between 2006 and 2008 the Government is investing £13.8m in faith communities through the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund (FCCBF). The fund is managed independently of Government by the Community Development Foundation. The fund's aims include strengthening faith-based organisations' capabilities and sustainability so that they can play a fuller part in civil society and engage more effectively with public authorities; supporting effective leadership and management skills; the development of umbrella/representative faith-based organisations to enable them to successfully mentor smaller faith groups; and improving understanding and relationships with local government so that faith-based organisations are better equipped to work with them. In addition to the FCCBF, government money has gone through Futurebuilders¹² and Capacitybuilders¹³. The Capacitybuilders' Improving Reach Programme aims to improve the reach of infrastructure to BME, refugee, faith, and isolated rural groups, and Capacitybuilders has launched a further programme following an evaluation of the pilot.

It would appear however that only a very small number of faith-based projects working with offenders have been funded directly through the FCCBF or Capacitybuilders targeted programmes. The failure of all types of third sector organisations working with offenders to access capacity building funds in any

¹² Futurebuilders is a Government-backed fund offering support and investment to third sector organisations to deliver public services

¹³ Capacitybuilders is a non-departmental government body set up in 2006 to build the capacity of the third sector through a range of investment programmes

significant way is reflected in the Futurebuilders investment profile. Crime is one of five Futurebuilders public service delivery areas but the fund has not been able to reach its target for supporting organisations delivering services in this area. Futurebuilders has identified the characteristics of the criminal justice VCS (a large number of small organisations and a small number of large organisations) and slow progress on the creation of commissioning opportunities as the key reasons for this.

3.2 Engagement

Whether or not faith-based organisations are funded or provide services, they have a role in shaping services and advocating on behalf of their members. There is a need for commissioners and providers from all sectors to work more effectively and consult with faith communities so that they are more aware of the needs of offenders and the role faith groups can play in their resettlement. Faith communities are often excluded because of a lack of awareness by government and others of how to reach and involve them, and because of resource constraints - engaging with faith community groups often requires active networking and relationship building.

It needs recognising that there are considerable local and regional variations in the profile, resources, attitudes and practices of faith communities and organisations, and this includes variation within as well as between the different faiths. White Muslim immigrants from Eastern Europe, for example, do not easily fall into conventional groupings. It is important to reach minority faith communities, including because they can be a link to socially excluded individuals and groups, but these communities in particular lack resources and are under represented in partnership activity and consultations. Communication networks are less developed and more localised making minority faith groups significantly more difficult to engage with, particularly on a regional level. It may also be particularly hard to reach certain groups, women for example, within some faith communities, as they may not be well represented within formal networks, and their needs may not be fully recognised or promoted.

3.3 Public service delivery - funding and commissioning

Alongside income from members and fundraising activity, support for faith-based organisations comes from the full range of funders including charitable trusts, local and regional government, programmes such as Invest-to-Save and Supporting People, as well as Lottery funds (although these are not acceptable to every faith or denomination). A great deal of faith-based work is unfunded however, and the sector is characterised by a lack of sustainable funding in general, with many groups reliant on short term one-off grants. Faith-based organisations say that they are often overlooked by funders and others who do not see beyond the 'faith' label to their community and social action role. In addition there is concern within the faith-based sector that in the climate of fear that exists around terrorist attacks and the radicalisation agenda, specifically in relation to Muslim offenders, nervousness and suspicion about faith activity may increase.

Faith community organisations are fully eligible to apply for support from funding programmes and to bid for contracts with the stipulation that public money must not be used to fund proselytising activity. This can however be a challenge for funders and providers in terms of clearly defining provision and separating roles, and can be particularly complex where support is provided to individuals who are already of faith and contains a faith element, without proselytising. Research has shown that most members of faith communities view their voluntary action as 'doing God's work' (usually interpreted as providing practical help) rather than an opportunity to attract others to faith, and that explicit

proselytising is rare¹⁴. It is the case however that faith-based organisations themselves may find it difficult to separate out secular and religious activity in their day to day work, or may not always wish to do so, and some have beliefs that in some circumstances can be at odds with the public service ethos of inclusive provision¹⁵.

The practical difficulty of separating roles was identified in Greg Smith's work in Preston¹⁶, along with fear by faith groups that public money would subvert their ethos. Smith identifies the need for clear criteria and guidance on funding faith-based social action to help clarify and deal with these complex issues. Crucially, within the criminal justice field, there is also a need to clarify good practice principles, responsibilities and accountabilities when faith-based groups are working within a prison or providing part of an intervention for offenders that is unfunded or not supported by public funds. It is, for example, important that interventions sit comfortably with existing multi-faith chaplaincy services. Although requirements and guidance would be different from that needed for contracted services it could borrow from it as issues around proselytising and risk management, for example, would be much the same.

PS Plus 'Belief in Work' Project

The project links offenders with mentors who share their faith, and engages with employers who would not normally be working with criminal justice services.

Following training for mentors and their organisations on offender and employment-related issues, faith organisations have been establishing a network of employers prepared to accept applications from offenders. Participating employers are offered support for a six week period when they take on an offender. With a target of getting 50 offenders into work, the project aims to establish whether engaging faith communities works, to disseminate learning from the pilot, and to assess the extent to which faith communities can support the aims of statutory agencies in ways that other agencies cannot.

In March 2007, the project was awarded a Butler Trust Certificate in recognition of its outstanding work with offenders.

Pecan

This Christian project helps people to overcome their barriers to employment and to find, and hold, satisfying jobs. In particular, they aim to reach people who have been missed out or excluded by existing employment and skills training provision.

Pecan's most recent project is the 'WorkOut' project which seeks to help ex-offenders into stable employment through a range of voluntary work, mentoring, life skills and job-search support. They also aim to place each ex-offender into stable accommodation within three months by working in conjunction with a number of other partner organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

14 Locke, M, Lukka, P and Soteri-Procter, A (2003) Faith and voluntary action: community, values and resources, Institute for Volunteering Research (2003)

15 The Church Urban Fund has launched a free online resource to promote excellence in employment by faith-based charities involved in social and community projects. 'Just Employment' contains advice and case studies about the specific issues faced by faith-based organisations such as whether discrimination laws prevent them from excluding people who are not Christian and what to do about employees whose values clash with an organisation's ethos.

16 Great Gulfs or Chasms, report by Greg Smith on the Bridge Builders project in Preston, in Faith-based Voluntary Action, Economic and Social Research Council seminar series (2007)

NOMS has a key policy objective around increasing the diversity of NOMS suppliers in order to get better value out of available resources and drive better service delivery. In the youth justice sector the commissioning capacity of YOTs is limited although recent increases in prevention funding have provided opportunities for funding faith-based projects. To secure funding when opportunities do arise faith-based organisations along with all providers will need to demonstrate that they can best deliver the desired outcomes and support individual sentence plans, manage risk, provide value for money, and have in place robust equal opportunities policies and practices. The Offender Management Act requires the Secretary of State to publish national standards for the management of offenders and guidelines about the qualifications, experience or training required of staff working directly with offenders. The Act makes clear that these standards will apply, so far as practicable, to all providers from whichever sector.

This presents a substantial challenge for faith-based organisations. The international literature on faith-based projects within correctional systems shows that they are often poorly defined, lack access to management and development support, and find it hard to evaluate and demonstrate outcomes and consistency of service. This view was supported by faith-based organisations attending the Believing We Can conference in 2006. Organisations voiced concerns that small providers in particular may be overlooked in the shift from grant funding to commissioning as they lack the skills and knowledge needed to engage in consortia bids to win and deliver larger contracts; and that minority faith groups face additional barriers including because they have less experience of working in the criminal justice field. Organisations also identified lack of access to knowledge and skills development and training available to prison and probation staff, and a general lack of clarity about NOMS and how services will be commissioned in the new environment.

3.4. Volunteering and Mentoring

Funders are increasingly requiring providers to demonstrate a more 'professionalised' good practice approach in the recruitment, management and support of volunteers. This is particularly important in work with offenders who have complex needs, and where there is an important element of risk awareness and management. In a sector that is largely small and poorly resourced and so heavily dependent on volunteers, these requirements can be a significant barrier to faith-based organisations. Many volunteers and mentors from faith communities do their work on an informal basis and emerge spontaneously out of local congregations rather than through volunteer centres or organisations such as Age Concern and Citizens Advice Bureau. This can isolate them from the knowledge and support that such organisations provide. There is a national, regional and local volunteering infrastructure that provides information and support, but again this is not well used by faith-based organisations.

Circles of Support & Accountability

Hampshire and Thames Valley Circles of Support and Accountability is one of the leading Circles of Support and Accountability projects in the UK. Currently run by Quaker Peace and Social Witness, it plans to become independent by early next year. It works with people who have sexually abused children or adults and are at a high risk of re-offending. Circles volunteers are recruited, trained and supported to offer their 'core member' social and emotional support and to hold them accountable in ways that compliment statutory provision. Reducing isolation and loneliness has been proven to reduce the risk of re-offending significantly. About 60% of the volunteers have come from the local faith communities. In five years it has set up Circles for about 40 offenders and not one of them has been charged with any new sexual offence. The project received a Justice Award in 2006.

QUESTIONS:

- Are there barriers to faith groups working with offenders in custody and the community not identified in this paper?
- Do you have examples of good practice on overcoming barriers including through multi-agency working?

4. THE WAY FORWARD

4.1 Third sector commitments and actions

The YJB is currently developing a strategy on working with the VCS. In developing this area it has been working closely with the Prince's Trust and CLINKS. The early stages of this work including a seminar held in May 2007 have resulted in recommendations for action in four main areas: overall YJB engagement with the VCS (including encouraging local partnership working with YOTs); user participation; how to work most effectively with young BME offenders; and how to engage most effectively with smaller VCOs.¹⁷ Third sector and other practitioners working on issues of community cohesion – particularly those working with YIP, ISSP and RAP programmes and those working with Muslim communities – have expressed concerns that vulnerable young people may be at risk of being criminalised by extremist elements in their community. In response the YJB has recently appointed a Senior Strategy Adviser to work on issues around radicalisation.

Alongside YJB initiatives, a new **NOMS Third Sector Action Plan** is being developed to bring together and build on strategies and activity already underway to increase the role of the third sector in reducing re-offending, identifying robust actions to reduce institutional and other barriers and constraints. The key action areas and outcomes for the Third Sector Action Plan will include improved engagement and consultation (in compliance with the Compact on relations between Government and the VCS)¹⁸; improved data collection and shared learning to inform planning and commissioning; improved outcome focused procurement practice; skills for commissioners to work better with the VCS; ensuring that third sector organisations in the justice field better access the full range of funding and development opportunities; and increased volunteering and mentoring opportunities within a framework of good practice.

The NOMS Plan and the YJB response will set out how commitments made in the cross-Government **Partnerships in Public Services**¹⁹ action plan for the third sector will be met²⁰, and will form part of a wider **Ministry of Justice Third Sector Strategy** to be in place from April 2008. NOMS is also working to integrate policy and actions on the third sector into a new cross-Government Reducing Re-offending Strategic Plan (to be consulted on alongside the NOMS Third Sector Action Plan and this paper), with the aim of increasing joint and joined up commissioning and non-CJS funding going to the third sector to reduce re-offending.

Consideration of the needs of diverse faith-based organisations will be an integral part of the planning process, and consultation on this faith paper will inform the final third sector plans and their implementation. Recommendations in each key area (such as improved procurement practice) will include specific consideration of the barriers faced by community, BME, women's and faith-based organisations and, where appropriate and feasible, identify targeted actions.

17 A New Approach to Partnership Seminar - Recommended Principles for YJB Engagement with the Voluntary & Community Sector, published by Clinks and Prince's Trust.

18 www.thecomcompact.org.uk

19 Cabinet Office (2006) Partnerships in Public Services: An action plan for third sector involvement, Cabinet Office: London

20 commitments include engaging with the third sector in its full role (as partners in planning, advocates of users and service providers); removing barriers to procurement; streamlining assurance processes; and ensuring that the widest range of third sector organisations are involved in service delivery.

To support the implementation of its Third Sector Action Plan, a new NOMS national infrastructure fund (£600k a year for three years from April 2008) will provide strategic funding for national third sector umbrella organisations that can advise and support third sector organisations working with offenders, and facilitate communication and engagement between NOMS and the third sector. The fund will enable better engagement, capacity building support and signposting to funding and development opportunities for third sector organisations including faith-based organisations working with offenders.

4.2 Regional Faith and VCS Alliances

Developed with YJB Regional Managers and the full range of partners, regional reducing re-offending action plans and the plan for Wales will give consideration to working effectively with the third sector including faith-based organisations and report on what has already been achieved.

In addition, the YJB will encourage its regional teams to invite faith-based organisations to present to YOT managers at regionally held prevention and other fora. This way, a dialogue between the two sectors can develop and ways of engagement can be identified.

NOMS will identify a good practice model from current regional Faith Alliance activity to share learning and promote good practice across the piece.

The following regional activity is now underway:

The South East ROM office has appointed a Faith and VCS Development Advisor. The Advisor will lead on developing a coherent and effective strategy to make the Alliance a reality, engaging a greater number of organisations and promoting their needs and contribution.

The North West has set up a Faith Alliance Group with representation from prisons, probation, CLINKS and faith groups, working across the region with offenders and their families. The Group includes a rep from NW Government Office, with links to the DCLG Cohesion & Faith Unit. The ROM has appointed a six month seconded senior probation officer to work as a Faith Alliance Coordinator and will host two events in Prisons Week to promote the engagement of faith-based communities in partnership with Prison and Probation services, IMPACT and CLINKS. The Chief Officer of Merseyside Probation co-ordinates a Merseyside faith forum.

The South West has held faith round table events inviting faith representatives from around the region to see what the sector needs to develop its services in an effective and integrated way. Talks are specifically revolving around faith community involvement with high risk offenders and an exploration of best practice.

Yorkshire and Humberside has established a faith forum and work to take the faith alliance forward is underway, including on identifying and removing barriers to faith-based interventions. The region has a VCS pathway with detailed actions set out in the Reducing Re-offending Action Plan.

YJB Regional Teams have identified opportunities in their own areas. For instance, the YJB Regional Manager for the North East has explored the possibility of developing relationships with faith groups in the region. He has met up with senior members of the Christian church fraternity, looked at examples from the USA, and started work to develop links across the region.

4.3. Achieving competitive neutrality

A commercial **Reducing Barriers Strategy** led by the NOMS Commercial and Competitions Unit (CCU) is being finalised and will be consulted on as part of the NOMS Third Sector Action Plan. The Plan will include actions such as the delivery of fair and sustainable funding, minimising the cost and complexity of tendering, streamlining assurance processes, offering standard documentation, and supporting efficient and effective sub-contracting through Lead Providers. CCU is developing the **National Provider Network (NPN)** which will be an online searchable database of existing and potential providers. It will also provide a communication vehicle to issue tender opportunities and guidance/model documentation to registered providers. Subject to the outcome of a procurement exercise currently underway it is anticipated that the NPN will go live in early 2008. NOMS will ensure the needs and capacity of faith-based organisations are taken into account when developing, marketing and delivering the NPN. Targeted action will be taken if certain types of organisations including faith-based organisations are under represented.

NOMS is commissioning the development of a **toolkit for VCS providers on monitoring and demonstrating effectiveness**. The needs and circumstances of the faith-based sector have informed the work to date and consultants will involve faith-based organisations in developing the toolkit. Building the evidence base on the effectiveness of faith-based activity to reduce re-offending is being looked at as part of a wider programme of work within NOMS to identify effective interventions and what works. The Ministry of Justice will also link to the new £5m programme announced by the Cabinet Office for a Third Sector Research Centre to support third sector organisations build a better evidence base for their work.

The Ministry of Justice and CLINKS are represented on the steering group to develop a **national programme to train and support commissioners on how to work better with the VCS**.

Commissioners of offender services are a key audience and the programme will include understanding and working with diverse organisations including those that are faith-based. IDeA is leading, commissioned by the Office of the Third Sector in the Cabinet Office.

NOMS is undertaking a focused initiative as part of work on public protection arrangements to support diverse providers **working with high risk of serious harm offenders** and the development of risk management more generally. This is to determine responsibilities, mandatory requirements and produce guidance. HMPS Chaplaincy is represented on the small steering group and faith-based organisations are a key audience for this work.

NOMS will support a **local demonstration project** on new ways of working across sectors and agencies (and potentially involving a range of local commissioners) to design, contest and deliver a specific offender service. The project will provide learning on the how in relation to local joint planning and commissioning, subcontracting, consortia bidding and delivery, and involving small, diverse providers including faith-based organisations. NOMS is at an early stage of talking to Futurebuilders about working together to support this initiative.

QUESTION:

How could a local demonstration project best deliver learning on the role of faith-based organisations in reducing re-offending?

To remove some of the barriers for faith-based organisations, give commissioners confidence in working with faith-based groups, and provide clarity, NOMS will give consideration to developing **guidance on funding and commissioning faith-based organisations working with offenders, supplemented by guidance on faith-based interventions within prisons** (to capture activity that is not subject to contract and/or publicly funded) – setting out requirements, responsibilities and accountabilities. Work has already started in this area. NOMS Effective Interventions Board has commissioned the development of a set of standards that can be used to ensure that faith-based organisations are clear what they are providing and meet the quality that NOMS would require. Guidance will be developed alongside or as part of any broader guidelines on contracting and working with faith-based organisations. In June 2007 the Commission on Integration and Cohesion published its report **Our Shared Future**²¹ The report includes a look at the issue of Local Authorities funding faith-based organisations and awarding public service contracts, and recommends “that a set of clear guidelines should be developed to enable Local Authorities and others to be able to award public service contracts to faith-based bodies without fear that there will be issues over whether this will lead to proselytising or pressure on users of services to accept the religious beliefs of the providers.” In response DCLG are considering convening a panel of experts to consider this question, including representatives from faith communities, the Local Government Association, and Charity Commission, and publishing in 2008 a Charter for excellence in public service delivery by faith communities building on the Faithworks model that already exists²².

Given resource constraints, an approach is needed to better connect faith-based organisations and other third sector organisations working with offenders to generic capacity building opportunities and programmes. This will be a key priority of the new NOMS national infrastructure fund. NOMS will also contribute to cross-Government work to build the capacity of diverse third sector organisations to help build longer term stability, and ensure that NOMS providers and potential providers benefit from any relevant funding streams and programmes. The NOMS VCS Team will work with trust funders, Capacitybuilders and Futurebuilders to explore how work to build the capacity of voluntary, community and faith-based organisations to deliver correctional services could be better supported, and to raise the profile of funds with our commissioners and providers. NOMS and HMPS Chaplaincy are currently funding a Community Chaplaincy Development Officer based in CLINKS to build capacity in Community Chaplaincy projects and facilitate consistent policy and good practice across projects. NOMS and Chaplaincy will explore how this project might be developed to support a broader range of faith-based organisations including through signposting to generic third sector infrastructure and development opportunities at all levels.

21 Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007) *Our Shared Future*, Communities and Local Government Publications www.communities.gov.uk

22 The Faithworks Charter aims to help churches deliver a standard of excellence in serving others and demonstrate to Government and the public that they can be taken seriously as providers of local services. The Charter was specifically mentioned by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion as a potential model set of guidelines for enabling local authorities to award public service contracts to faith-based bodies without fear this will lead to proselytising.

QUESTIONS

Given the complexity of the faith-based sector, resource and other constraints:

- What needs doing to improve its access to support services, learning and information sharing?
- What is best provided by faith-based infrastructure and what by generic infrastructure, and how can they work better together?

4.4. Engagement

NOMS and the YJB recognise faith communities, including minority faith communities, as a distinctive part of the third sector and will involve their representatives in partnerships and ensure that their voices are heard. When developing actions and requirements to improve engagement and consultation with the third sector and service users, alongside the Cabinet Office code of practice on consultation, the Compact, the **Compact Code on Good Practice on Community Groups (2003)**²³, and **Partnerships in Public Services**, NOMS and the YJB will have regard to the good practice guidance set out in **Working Together: Co-operation between Government and Faith Communities**²⁴ including the case study on the Leeds pilot consultation project on faith communities, criminal justice and the rehabilitation of ex-offenders.²⁵ Key recommendations include recognising that faith communities may need resourcing to participate fully in consultations (lack of capacity is identified as the single most significant obstacle to effective consultation); identifying the most important issues for consulting faith communities as a means of targeting resources; supplementing formal consultation with an effective network of informal contacts; and making use of local interfaith bodies. The report emphasises that policy makers and planners need to understand the diversity of faith communities with regard to inequalities between faiths in their resource base and their present ability to engage.

The Cohesion and Faith Unit (CFU) in DCLG leads on the Government's agenda for engagement with faith communities. At national level the Faith Communities Consultative Council (FCCC), a non statutory body, informs Government policy and addresses its impact on faith communities. The Council also has a role in identifying challenges to involving local faith communities, helping find solutions and share best practice. FCU also supports the Inter Faith Network for the UK (www.interfaith.org.uk) to link regional and local inter faith and multi faith bodies, and can provide contact details of faith umbrella bodies and advise on which bodies to approach for information and help. Within the context of the Local Government White Paper,²⁶ the DCLG are developing an interfaith strategy to increase the level of interfaith and multifaith social action, specifically through putting in place the appropriate infrastructure at all levels and overcoming barriers faced by young people and women in participating in

²³ www.thecompact.org.uk

²⁴ Communities and Local Government (2004) *Working Together: Co-operation between Government and Faith Communities* www.communities.gov.uk

²⁵ the Leeds Pilot was commissioned by the Home Office, managed by Leeds Faith Communities Forum, and concluded in January 2004. The project carried out a time limited local faiths consultation exercise to examine the effectiveness of local faith bodies and mechanisms for gathering views on Government policy and practice. The project found that the most effective method of consultation used was the focus group and advocated the use of targeted focus groups as a primary consultation method with the faith sector. The use of existing networks and organisations such as Leeds Faith Communities Forum, Concord Interfaith Fellowship and the Community Chaplaincy were invaluable in identifying groups and facilitating contact.

²⁶ The White Paper promotes interfaith collaboration in local communities and includes an ambition that every local authority should have an interfaith forum, tied closely into Local Strategic Partnerships. www.communities.gov.uk

interfaith and intercultural dialogue and activity. The interfaith strategy is due to go out for consultation in December 2007. NOMS and the YJB will work with the CFU to support commissioners and decisions makers to access and make better use of faith umbrella bodies and networks and to consult effectively with faith-based organisations, and to contribute a reducing re-offending perspective to the developing interfaith strategy. NOMS and the YJB, working with CJS partners, will review stakeholder engagement including to identify and strengthen the representation of faith-based organisations in reducing re-offending boards, pathway groups and other relevant partnerships at all levels. The new NOMS national infrastructure fund will help support the engagement and representation of diverse third sector organisations in NOMS policy making and delivery.

4.5. Volunteering and Mentoring

Volunteers Can: Towards a Volunteering Strategy to Reduce Re-offending consultation document was published by NOMS in May 2007. The document sets out the challenges and opportunities for building the role of volunteers in reducing re-offending and consults on objectives and actions to

- **Increase the number and diversity of volunteers**
- **Become more strategic in volunteer development**
- **Improve the quality of support to volunteers**
- **Establish the impact of volunteering**

Proposed actions include providing guidance to NOMS and providers on the value of volunteering; building links with groups less likely to volunteer; promoting and disseminating good practice and case studies; and volunteer co-ordination to be a distinct part of job roles in prisons and probation. Faith-based organisations have been consulted along with other stakeholders and partners, and responses have been analysed to determine final actions and priorities to be published within the NOMS Third Sector Action Plan.

The consultation document asked if there were any particular issues in attracting and engaging volunteers from faith groups working either in prisons or the community and how NOMS should work with faith groups in the community. The majority view was that it was important to reach out to faith groups through multi-faith forums and individual faith communities and actively to facilitate their help in engaging volunteers. It was suggested that recruitment through faith groups helped to involve more diverse communities and also to reduce fear of crime. Better publicity and community links, help with transport and travel costs and opportunities for groups to visit prisons were all advocated as useful practical steps. Making groups aware of risks and risk management was also suggested. Some felt that it was important to attain a deeper understanding of the tenets and practices of each faith and to demonstrate that these could be accommodated in the volunteering setting. Some respondents expressed concerns over possible proselytising by volunteers, and that faith-based interventions might deter volunteers from other backgrounds.

The increasing onus placed on restorative justice processes as well as mentoring is reflected in the ever growing numbers of volunteers recruited to work with YOTs. The YJB's recently launched **Volunteering in the Youth Justice System – guidance for youth offending teams and secure**

establishments²⁷ recognises the value and importance of volunteering within the youth justice system. It gives details of the benefits of using volunteers, the kinds of role they can perform, and how to plan and manage a volunteer programme.

QUESTIONS

- **How can faith groups working through or with volunteers be supported to achieve best practice and demonstrate impact?**

4.6 Chaplaincy

Chaplaincy has a powerful role to play in raising awareness of what faith communities can do to rehabilitate and resettle offenders as chaplains and volunteers working with chaplaincy are part of their wider faith communities. Chaplaincy teams in prisons can provide a role model of people of different faith traditions respecting their differences and working together to ensure the religious and pastoral needs of offenders are met. It is an approach that seeks to promote diversity, tackle racism and religious discrimination and model joint working practices whilst maintaining the distinctiveness of each faith tradition.

HMPS Chaplaincy will

- **Continue to seek to meet the religious, spiritual and pastoral needs of prisoners, in consultation with Faith Advisors and others**
- **Continue to develop a strong, diverse, inclusive and vibrant chaplaincy**
- **Continue to work with Community Chaplaincy and other local projects in appropriate ways, strengthening links to support end-to-end offender management and through the gate work**
- **Continue to support, enable and equip faith-based volunteers to work with offenders and ex-offenders**

Chaplaincy Team – HMP Cardiff

How chaplaincy reflects the diverse nature of the prison population

Cardiff Prison Chaplaincy team aims to meet the needs of the Prison population by having available Chaplains who come in regularly or who can be called on at need. There are Anglican, Roman Catholic and Free Church Chaplains (including both Methodist and Salvation Army). There is a Muslim Chaplain who does generic duties as well as leading prayers and organising Ramadan and Eid. A Sikh and a Buddhist chaplain come in on a weekly basis and a Jehovah's Witness comes in by request. A Jewish Chaplain comes in for one member of his faith. There is access to other Chaplains as required.

How chaplaincy contributes to the life of the prison

Chaplains do generic duties (visiting prisoners in the Health Care Centre and in Segregation and seeing prisoners as part of the induction process and when they make an Application). Chaplaincy is

27 Youth Justice Board (2007) Volunteering in the Youth Justice System - Guidance for YOTs and Secure Establishments www.yjb.gov.uk

represented on most of the meetings which take place in the Prison, including on the Senior Management Team, security, resettlement, care team and safer custody. They work with a member of the Education staff in delivering Family Man/Fathers Inside in the Chapel. They also work closely with the prison Family Liaison Officer. Two Chaplains (Sikh and Muslim) have skills in other languages and can help to interpret as needed.

Chaplaincy faith links to the various faith communities and the contribution of volunteers

Each Chaplain has their own individual link with their faith community and about 30-40 volunteers from faith communities come in to the prison – some weekly, others every month or so. Members of 5 or 6 different church groups come in to lead ‘the Service of the Word’ in the Eucharist. Parishioners from a local Roman Catholic Church come in for Mass on Fridays. Local Prison Fellowship takes a Bible Class and also a member of another Free Church comes in to lead Bible Study. Members of the local Muslim community bring in and share a meal at Eid. Sometimes local volunteers come in for Jumma’h Prayers and to help with the Islamic class on Wednesdays. Local churches have also been a source of mentors for the prison. The Play Area leader is line-managed from Chaplaincy and volunteers work in the Play Area. Chaplaincy also liaises with Official Prison Visitors.

SORI (Supporting Offenders through Restoration Inside)

This Restorative Justice programme has been developed in the Prison by one of the Chaplains. The programme works in close partnership with other organisations including YOTS, Victim Support, a local College of Further Education and the Probation Service. Two of the Ordinands, on placement, have been involved in the delivery of the course and have continued to help after their placement ended. One is now employed part-time and a local Methodist Minister is also working part-time supported by grant funding for the development of the work.

Strengths of working together as a multi faith team

Working as a multi-faith team has helped to build understanding of different faiths and shown that joint working to support prisoners is possible and more important than differences. Together, the team have visited each other’s local places of worship to gain understanding and break down barriers. As a result there is cultural and faith enrichment and a raising of religious awareness and tolerance more widely in the prison.

4.7. Diversity

NOMS and YJB plans and initiatives to strengthen the contribution of the third sector to reducing re-offending will include consideration of the specific barriers faced by women’s, BME and minority faith organisations and communities. Targeted actions will be identified to increase the diversity of provision and providers in prison and community settings.

The need for more sustained and substantive involvement of voluntary and community organisations in this important agenda was recently highlighted in the Home Office Select Committee’s report on the over-representation of Black Males in the Youth Justice System. The YJB will consequently be supporting successful partnerships where they exist as well as helping form new partnerships where needed.

Guidance on funding and commissioning faith-based organisations will include the expectation that faith-based interventions supported by public funds should have in place equal opportunities policies and practices, be open to all members of the group to whom the service is offered, deliver their services in a way that does not directly or indirectly discriminate against individuals who do not share that particular faith, and have an open attitude to other sections of their own faith and to other faiths. This does not mean that all such initiatives should necessarily be formally constituted on a multi-faith basis, for example where interventions are delivered to address a specific religious need in the prison population it may be more appropriate for a single faith organisation to do this.

Work to strengthen faith-based sector access to information and support will explore how better resourced single faith structures might work with smaller and minority faith organisations. The 43 Church of England Dioceses²⁸, for example, have a strategic position and there is potential to strengthen collaboration with other faith groups in order to share learning and build capacity. This is important because minority faith traditions do not have this type or level of support. Many Mosques for example are independent from the wider structure and have very little formalised regional or area support.

NOMS will promote the use of Inter faith councils particularly at local level as a mechanism for consultation, and the need to reach diverse individuals, women and disabled people for example, within faith communities.

QUESTIONS

- **What have prison, probation and YOTs learnt from working with faith-based organisations – how can we best identify and share the learning?**
- **Are there good practice examples on removing barriers for women's and minority faith organisations and promoting diversity?**
- **What needs doing to improve women's and minority faith organisations' access to support and development opportunities? What works currently?**
- **What needs doing to improve multifaith collaboration and activity? Are there good practice examples?**

²⁸ Dioceses have local and sub-regional boards as well as departments of social responsibility delivering services and providing some capacity building advice and support. A National Social Responsibility Network brings together key personnel in strategic roles to encourage joint policy and good practice.

ANNEX 1

<h3 style="margin: 0;">Consultation Response</h3> <h3 style="margin: 10px 0 0 0;">BELIEVING WE CAN</h3> <p style="margin: 10px 0 0 40px;">promoting the contribution faith-based organisations can make to reducing adult and youth re-offending</p>				
Thank you for responding to this consultation. You may prefer to respond only to those questions of relevance to you.				
Name				
Position				
Organisation				
Address				
Tel		Type of organisation (X)		
Email		Third Sector	Private	Public

The role of faith-based organisations in reducing re-offending	
Are there benefits to faith-based activity to reduce re-offending not identified in this paper?	
What can we learn from the work of prison chaplaincy and community chaplaincy projects and the links they have with local communities that can help us develop the role of faith-based organisations to support offender management?	

How can offender managers access resources and activities offered by faith-based organisations across the reducing re-offending pathways?	
How can we begin to assess the contribution made by faith-based organisations to reducing re-offending?	
What specific contribution can the faith-based sector make to working with children and young people and families, particularly to prevent offending?	
What role is there for faith-based schools in working with young people at risk of offending?	

Challenges	
Are there barriers to faith groups working with offenders in custody and the community not identified in this paper?	
Do you have examples of good practice on overcoming barriers including through multi-agency working?	

The way forward	
How could a local demonstration project best deliver learning on the role of faith-based organisations in reducing re-offending?	
What needs doing to improve the faith-based sector's access to support services, learning and information sharing? What is best provided by faith-based infrastructure and what by generic infrastructure, and how can they work better together?	

How can faith groups working through or with volunteers be supported to achieve best practice and demonstrate impact?	
What have prison, probation and YOTs learnt from working with faith-based organisations – how can we best identify and share the learning?	
Are there good practice examples on removing barriers for women's and minority faith organisations and promoting diversity?	
What needs doing to improve women's and minority faith organisations' access to support and development opportunities? What works currently?	
What needs doing to improve multifaith collaboration and activity? Are there good practice examples?	

We would also welcome your views and ideas on any additional areas you feel are not addressed by the paper and consultation questions