

Building Voluntary and Community Sector Involvement in Integrated Offender Management

The potential brokerage role of Local Support and Development Organisations

April 2012

Resource 3 of 7

Home Office

CLiNKs
supporting voluntary organisations that
work with offenders and their families

1. Introduction

This is the third in a series of resources that draw on the learning from *Building Voluntary and Community Sector Involvement in Integrated Offender Management*, a programme that was funded by the Home Office and managed by Clinks.¹

It is primarily intended to help key stakeholders involved in local Integrated Offender Management (IOM) arrangements to consider the potential role of Local Support and Development Organisations (LSDOs) in brokering strategic and operational links with the local Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), but it may equally help VCS organisations to think about working through a lead organisation in order to build stronger relationships with commissioners.²

The other resources in the series include:

- Resource 1** The added value of VCS partners in Integrated Offender Management arrangements
- Resource 2** Mapping and engaging with potential VCS partners
- Resource 4** How VCS organisations can engage with local IOM arrangements and other Criminal Justice System (CJS) structures
- Resource 5** Strategic partnership working
- Resource 6** Operational partnership working
- Resource 7** IOM: the rural partnership challenge

The series is accompanied by a number of online supplements which provide additional material to support all seven resources:

- Supplement 1** Integrated Offender Management: A briefing
- Supplement 2** Overview of the project: *Building Voluntary and Community Sector Involvement in Integrated Offender Management*
- Supplement 3** Glossary of acronyms
- Supplement 4** Bibliography and linked resources

¹ Clinks is a national membership organisation that supports the work that Voluntary and Community Sector organisations undertake within the Criminal Justice System of England and Wales. Their vision is to see an independent, vibrant and well-resourced Voluntary and Community Sector, working in partnership to promote the rehabilitation of offenders. For more information see <http://www.Clinks.org>

² LSDO: Local Support & Development Organisation – a charitable body such as a Council for Voluntary Service that typically provides a range of support services for all the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations within its area. This might include help with organisational development, funding advice, training, and co-ordinating the sector's engagement with and representation on local strategic groupings. Many LSDOs have Volunteer Centres attached to their organisations or work very closely with them.

2. Background

Levels of VCS involvement in IOM appear to vary considerably from place to place.³ A 2009 NOMS-commissioned evaluation of VCS involvement in four national IOM pioneer sites found that although in three of the four sites a number of larger VCS organisations were closely involved as full delivery partners within IOM arrangements, a much wider set were only engaged with more sporadically as referral agencies.⁴ The same three sites involved at least one VCS organisation on their project steering groups, but across all four sites the involvement of the Sector as a full strategic partner was negligible.

It was against this background that Clinks was invited to work in partnership with the Home Office between November 2010 and April 2011, to strengthen the role of the VCS in IOM in four different 'development and demonstration' areas: Bournemouth, Dorset & Poole; Croydon; Gloucestershire; and Leeds.⁵ Crucially, it was stipulated that grants could only be awarded to projects led by local VCS organisations. Statutory partners involved in IOM needed to give their support to the proposals, but could not hold the funds or direct the work undertaken. The Home Office was keen to use this mechanism to give the VCS a stronger foothold, and to see how far it enabled the VCS to develop a more equal role in strategic local IOM arrangements.

Each local programme of work was overseen by a VCS-led, multi-agency steering group. A wide range of activity was funded across the four areas, which could broadly be categorised under four main headings:

- Establishing strategic partnerships and capacity building within the VCS to engage with local IOM arrangements;
- Developing and delivering innovative services to offenders managed under IOM arrangements;
- Providing opportunities for volunteering and mentoring with and by offenders managed under IOM arrangements;
- Piloting the use of small seed-corn grants to involve small VCS organisations.

The Hallam Centre for Community Justice at Sheffield Hallam University was commissioned by the Home Office to undertake an evaluation of the project.⁶ One of the aims of the evaluation process was to capture the very diverse experiences of all the organisations involved in the programme which could be used to help others to develop the role of VCS partners in their local IOM arrangements. These factors were analysed and collated as part of the evaluation and have very much informed the development of this series of resources.⁷

³ See Supplement 1 for more information about IOM.

⁴ Kevin Wong & Christopher Hartworth. 2009. *Integrated Offender Management and Third Sector Engagement: Case studies of four pioneer sites*.
Online: <http://www.barefootresearch.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Integrated-Offender-Management-and-Third-Sector-Engagement%E2%80%A6.pdf>
[Last accessed 24/1/12]

⁵ See Supplement 2 for more information about the project.

⁶ Kevin Wong, Caroline O'Keeffe, Linda Meadows, Joanna Davidson, Hayden Bird, Katherine Wilkinson & Paul Senior. 2012. *Increasing the voluntary and community sector's involvement in Integrated Offender Management*.
Online: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/horr59/> [Last accessed 14/03/2012]

⁷ This resource draws heavily on the practice learning from the evaluation of *Building Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Involvement in Integrated Offender Management*, undertaken by the Hallam Centre for Community Justice at Sheffield Hallam University. See also Kevin Wong *et al.* 2012.

3. The potential brokerage role of Local Support and Development Organisations

Across three of the four areas (Bournemouth, Dorset & Poole; Croydon; Gloucestershire), Local Support and Development Organisations (LSDOs) took the leading role in facilitating and managing VCS involvement in the funded partnership work.⁸

Historically the majority of LSDOs – such as Councils for Voluntary Service - have played a key role in developing networks of VCS organisations in their local areas, as well as offering a range of capacity building help. With the advent of Local Strategic Partnerships, many LSDOs have also developed key roles in leading and facilitating strategic VCS engagement with these local authority-led structures.

However, as discussed in Resource 2, VCS organisations working with offenders may not yet be fully ‘on the radar’ of their nearest LSDO because of their specialised focus and different geographical, commissioning and funding histories. Furthermore, while LSDOs may already be well linked into the work of their Community Safety Partnerships, they may not yet be very knowledgeable about the wider Criminal Justice System, work with offenders, or strategic partnership initiatives such as IOM.

In the three LSDO-led programme areas, the LSDOs were all at very different starting points in terms of their awareness of the CJS and the development of key strategic relationships:

- None knew very much, if anything, about IOM generally or about their local IOM arrangements;
- All had gaps in their existing knowledge of local VCS organisations working with offenders and their families;
- One had developed good links with its local Criminal Justice Board and was starting to develop a programme of work around VCS engagement with the wider CJS, following a partnership event aimed at all sectors.
- Another was developing links with its Probation Trust and local prisons and had worked with Clinks to hold an ‘Open Space’ event bringing partners from all sectors together to debate how to make the area safer.
- The third LSDO provided VCS representation on the local Community Safety Partnership via its Chief Executive, but the wider staff group had very limited knowledge of local IOM arrangements or the working of the wider CJS and few established relationships with key partner agencies such as Probation.

Despite these differences, the learning from the programme was that, given the opportunity to develop this specialist knowledge and build relationships with the key strategic partners involved in local IOM arrangements, and control of some funding to underpin this involvement, all three LSDOs were very quickly able to play ‘a critical role in delivering this programme and were seen as being effective’.⁹

The LSDOs were seen by both statutory and VCS partners alike as being able to:

- Play a neutral role in bringing all partners around the table to discuss local IOM arrangements and the potential for greater VCS involvement;
- Reach out into VCS networks and communities to identify potential local partners and facilitate their engagement with IOM arrangements;

⁸ LSDO: Local Support & Development Organisation – a charitable body such as a Council for Voluntary Service that typically provides a range of support services for all the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations within its area. This might include help with organisational development, funding advice, training, and co-ordinating the sector’s engagement with and representation on local strategic groupings. Many LSDOs have Volunteer Centres attached to their organisations or work very closely with them.

⁹ Kevin Wong *et al.* 2012.

- Bring potential VCS partners together into consortium arrangements for the delivery of specific projects or aspects of the initiative; and
- Develop strategic relationships with statutory partners involved in local IOM arrangements and facilitate VCS engagement and representation at that level.

This multi-faceted brokerage role was described by some senior statutory partners as ‘pivotal’ to the success of their local programme initiatives. For example, in a final workshop convened by Clinks to distil the four areas’ learning from the programme, the second key learning point identified by partners from all sectors focused on the ability of LSDOs to broker operational engagement between case managers and the wider VCS:

Infrastructure organisations can play important roles as “brokers” to guide case managers around services available from VCS. Not all services that offenders need are labelled as services for offenders, and a local broker will know what else is available.

Experience in the fourth programme area, Leeds, showed that a leading VCS service provider (West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy Project, working closely with Foundation and other key VCS partners) could play these roles equally well, but perhaps faced more challenges in terms of its perceived ‘neutrality’ and capacity in the longer term to accommodate the role alongside the demands of service delivery.

The following case studies provide examples from the programme of the role of local brokerage by both LSDOs and a lead service provider in enabling effective partnership working between VCS and statutory agencies.

Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole:

Three Councils for Voluntary Service (CVSs) and Volunteer Centres

The three CVSs and Volunteer Centres based in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole worked together to enable local VCS organisations to make applications for seed-corn grant monies and to provide training on working in the CJS and with offenders managed under local IOM arrangements. Their strong local reputation with VCS organisations and statutory agencies was instrumental in forging effective links and organising elections of VCS representatives to strategic boards.

London Borough of Croydon:

Croydon Voluntary Action (CVA)

CVA is both a Council for Voluntary Service and a Volunteer Centre involved with community engagement, grass roots projects and capacity building. The organisation is well known in the area and their lead role for the project has been vital in enabling communication with a variety of community based organisations and in creating valuable links between the VCS and the statutory agencies involved in local IOM arrangements. This has created the necessary confidence on both sides to facilitate effective partnership working at both strategic and operational levels.

Gloucestershire:

Gloucestershire Association for Voluntary and Community Action (GAVCA)

In Gloucestershire, GAVCA's existing role as the leading LSDO for the county enabled a rapid response that was essential in co-ordinating the range of projects funded through the programme. GAVCA provided local knowledge to facilitate access to local services and acted as a local conduit between VCS organisations and statutory agencies, as well as supporting performance management and sustainability. Its flexibility in enabling local agencies to respond to emerging local agendas ensured that delivery was matched to local need.

The programme was of critical importance in demonstrating to members of the wider IOM partnership the value of working alongside the VCS. This has led Gloucestershire Constabulary to offer funding to support continued VCS engagement via GAVCA in the coming year (2012-13).

Leeds:

West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy Project (WYCCP)

Leeds provided a good example of an alternative to the LSDO model used in the other areas. In Leeds, the brokerage role in the project was taken by WYCCP. Drawing on its extensive experience in providing services to support offenders on release from prison, WYCCP was able to draw on its existing knowledge and links with other key VCS partners such as Foundation Housing and bring all partners together to develop VCS involvement in a new multi-agency IOM Hub at the gate of HMP Leeds.

4. Exploring the potential for local VCS brokerage

Having considered these examples, statutory partners involved in local IOM arrangements may wish to explore the potential for LSDOs in their own areas to take on the sorts of brokerage roles developed through this programme.

Where partners already have some links with their LSDOs, this may simply involve convening a meeting with the Chief Executive and / or other key staff to discuss and explore ways in which the organisation might develop an expanded role of the kind outlined here.

For partners with no established links or relationships, information about all the LSDOs in England, their websites and contact details, are available from NAVCA's website at:
<http://www.navca.org.uk/directory>.¹⁰

In Wales, they may be downloaded from WCVA's website at:
http://www.wcva.org.uk/all/dsp_link.cfm?subcat=145&cat=17.¹¹

¹⁰ NAVCA: National Association for Voluntary and Community Action – www.navca.org.uk

¹¹ WCVA: Wales Council for Voluntary Action – www.wcva.org.uk

Although the potential role of LSDOs as brokers of VCS involvement in local IOM arrangements was widely endorsed within this programme, the evaluation of the programme nonetheless acknowledged that this may not always be a role that LSDOs have any capacity to take on:

This may not reflect VCS capacity and capability nationally. If local brokerage organisations are used in future programme development, government departments will need to consider how best to build capacity in less well developed organisations.¹²

In these circumstances, partners will need to weigh the benefits of investing time and resources to help an LSDO move into this new sphere of activity and develop its knowledge and capacity to undertake a meaningful brokerage role in local IOM arrangements. As this programme has illustrated, it is by no means impossible for an LSDO without a history of active involvement in the CJS or IOM to develop such a role, but there would need to be a willingness to invest time from other partner agencies to foster new relationships, share knowledge and to create planned opportunities for increasing engagement and involvement.

Where an LSDO is unable to take on such a role, even with the support of a wider partnership grouping, the Leeds model could be considered as an alternative. Partners would then need to consult with other stakeholders in order to identify a trusted lead VCS organisation with well-established local VCS networks, and draw up an agreement setting out the scope and boundaries around the role.

The levels of funding required by an LSDO or another lead VCS organisation to broker and sustain VCS involvement in local IOM arrangements are likely to be relatively modest, requiring some initial investment in mapping and engagement activities, and support for ongoing communications / forum / networking costs. However at a time when resources are scarce, it will be important for VCS partners to present a well-argued business case for this new work that clearly demonstrates the added value that will accrue from such investment.

Although this Resource has been written largely for a statutory audience, it is of course equally open to local VCS organisations to get together and consider how their involvement in local IOM arrangements might best be led and facilitated, either through their LSDO or through some other arrangement. The next Resource in this series - Resource 4: *How VCS organisations can engage with local IOM arrangements and other Criminal Justice System (CJS) structures* - therefore explores in greater detail how VCS organisations can engage with IOM and other local CJS structures to take this work forward.

¹² Kevin Wong *et al.* 2012.

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Author and editorial group

The resources were drafted by Lesley Frazer, Policy Manager at Clinks. The Home Office editorial group overseeing their production included Bernard Lane and Sule Kangulec of the Reducing Reoffending Unit.

Feedback or further information

If you have any feedback on the resources, are seeking further information about the programme, or would like to share your own advice/experiences on involving VCS organisations in IOM arrangements, please contact:

Lesley Frazer Clinks lesley.frazer@clinks.org
Bernard Lane Home Office bernard.lane@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

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Contact Us

www.clinks.org | info@clinks.org | 0207 248 3538

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