



Innovative VCS Involvement in IOM Arrangements

Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Final Report



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Index

Page 2	Overview of Project
Page 5	Strand 1 Report
Page 7	Strand 2 Report
Page 10	Strand 3 Report
Appendix1	Financial Report



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Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole

1. Set-Up of the Project

This project, unlike others in the pilot, required agencies to cooperate and work across a relatively wide geographical area and across the boundaries of two unitary authorities, a county council and several district authorities. It involved organisations from both the statutory and voluntary sector working together to develop and deliver a project, responsive to the needs of both rural and urban communities within an extremely short timescale. Despite the complexities of the situation the organisations cooperated and worked extremely well together.

The project was led by the following infrastructure bodies:

- Bournemouth Council for Voluntary Service (with a Volunteer Centre embedded)
- Poole Council for Voluntary Service (with a Volunteer Centre embedded)
- Dorset Community Action (a Rural Community Council with a CVS embedded)
- Dorset Volunteer Centre (a stand alone Volunteer Centre).

Bournemouth CVS acted as the lead agency. A Steering Group comprising all partners, both statutory and voluntary, was established in order to develop the bid and oversee progress. Participation in the project from all partners, including the statutory partners was high and support was forthcoming from the outset.

2. Overall Local Outcomes

Despite the short duration of the project the following outcomes can be demonstrated:

- Relationships have been developed between Police, Probation, Prison, Drug and Alcohol Treatment Agencies and VCS across the three areas
- A Steering Group comprising statutory and voluntary sector partners has been established which will continue to meet
- New relationships have been established and existing relationships strengthened between VCS organisations across the three areas
- A Forum for VCS organisations working with offenders/ex-offenders which will meet three times a year and further develop the relationships between organisations and agencies has been established
- An increased focus within the VCS on work with offenders/ex-offenders has been developed
- Many VCS organisations are now expressing increased confidence and a desire to do more work with offenders/ex-offenders
- VCS organisations working with Offenders have been linked in with other CVS capacity building services e.g. funding, governance advice

- Awareness amongst the VCS and community members has been raised about IOM and other criminal justice areas e.g. community payback and restorative justice
- £35,000 has been disbursed through a small grants programme which has facilitated front line work with offenders and training for volunteers
- A transparent system for the election of voluntary sector representatives has been developed and is currently being implemented
- The VCS are now participating in local strategic planning structures

3. Overall Sustainability of the Partnership approaches

The sustainability of much of this work rests on a number of inter-related factors. Clearly participation in strategic partnerships by the VCS will be crucial to ensure that new ways of working are embraced and resources flow to the sector which will enable that to happen. This participation in turn is dependent upon the continued survival of the forum as the body which will elect and hold to account its' representatives. Fortunately, Bournemouth Borough Council has agreed to continue to fund the Forum for 2011/12 and has granted additional monies to contribute towards the operating costs. The long term survival of VCS organisations will increasingly depend upon successful partnership and collaborative working and again regular meetings of the Forum have an important role to play. Last, but by no means least, the continued commitment of volunteers will be ever more important for future sustainability as public resources shrink. Again this has been given a significant boost through this work.

The statutory agencies most closely involved were enthusiastic, committed, encouraging and keen to embrace a partnership approach to the work. Attendance at events and initial Steering Group meetings was high. At the final meeting of the project at the end of March, it was however evident that cuts in funding had already had an impact. Three of the key original statutory members of the Steering Group have now been transferred to other duties. Remaining members are unsure about the future of their jobs and which agency might employ them in the future. This will have an impact upon the sustainability of the work as it makes the ongoing development of relationships somewhat challenging.

4. Lessons learned and what, with hindsight could be done differently.

In our view there is little we would change given the constraints under which we were working. For a short term project in which we have had to engage with a wide range of partners and deliver a number of different strands it has all gone well and a great deal has been achieved.

From a practical point of view, there are two things which we would want to clarify and perhaps influence in preparing initial budgets in funding bids. Firstly, it was unclear at the outset just how much additional capacity would be required to

participate in the evaluation of the project. A great deal of the limited time available was spent on coordinating attendance by VCS organisations and statutory agencies at evaluation meetings. We also had not initially budgeted for financial expenditure including travel expenses for volunteers who, given the relatively wide geographical area covered, were at times significant. Secondly, the fact that payment was in two stages made it difficult to disburse the grants in a timely manner to organisations. The second payment did not reach us until the end of January, but the grant had to be paid to the organisation and spent by the end of March. This left a very short time for the organisations to deliver their projects.

One of the other lessons we have learned is that our focus may have been a little narrow in the past as we have focussed on the local authority and NHS as the key statutory partners. If feasible we will review our partnership work to ascertain whether there are other key partners we should be engaging with, so that we are ready for all eventualities.

With more time, we could have looked in more detail at our plans and possibly ensured that the funding made an even greater impact. Another issue which we might have addressed with more time was how to use our networks to get organisations either representing victims or areas specifically affected by crime involved.

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Innovative VCS Involvement in IOM Arrangements

Strand 1 Final Report

Strand 1 was led by Bournemouth CVS and focused on the strategic involvement of the VCS in IOM with the overall aim being **“To enable the VCS to participate in strategic partnerships with IOM partners.”** There were 4 main aspects to this strand as follows:

1. Mapping key VCS resources across Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole

Outputs

In order to map VCS resources across BDP we initially liaised with our statutory and voluntary sector to combine existing contacts lists of organisations working with/ providing services for offenders in the local area. Once we had completed this task we wrote to the organisations identified to invite them to participate in a short survey which was developed between strands 1 and 2 to ascertain their current needs (see strand 2). We also sent messages out on our existing ‘general’ e-networks to invite any other organisations to sign up to our new ‘Working with Offenders E- Forum’.

Outcomes

We now have an up to date list of key VCS Resources and have used it to bring organisations together in a forum thereby helping them to develop new relationships with statutory agencies and with other VCS organisations

Sustainability

Funding from Bournemouth Borough Council will enable us to continue to update this list.

2. Developing a network of organisations and establishing a forum.

Outputs

a) E-networks: The information gathered through the mapping exercise was used to create an e-network of organisations interested in receiving information about working with offenders. (This e-network will also be used to support the new Forum and be used to share information from the VCS representatives with the wider sector as well as a tool to gather views on specific issues.) There are currently 136 contacts signed up to this e-network.

b) Voluntary Sector Forum: On 30th March a new Voluntary Sector Forum was launched for organisations which either currently work with offenders/ ex- offenders or would like to. This event was attended by 51 delegates. Feedback from the forum was extremely positive and organisations also stated that they were keen to continue meeting. *“I really enjoyed the forum and found it very useful for networking with other organisations.”*

Outcomes

Communication channels have been established between VCS organisations and with statutory agencies.

Sustainability

a) E-network: Although time intensive initially, an e-network once established is easy to maintain. The ‘Working with Offenders’ E-network is now added to a menu of choices for all organisations interested in signing up to receive information from Bournemouth CVS and Poole CVS and this mailing list will be

maintained and information disseminated to groups as part of the main CVS function.

b) Voluntary Sector Forum: Bournemouth Borough Council has agreed to fund the forum for 2011/12. A Resource Pack, distributed to members on a memory stick contains information about the forum and also good practice guides on running an organisation (funding, governance issues etc) and working with offenders, copies of the Clinks *Breaking the Cycle* Green Paper response, a list of acronyms and jargon used in this field of work, and information about help available from local infrastructure organisations is a sustainable resource for all organisations. The information can be shared with other colleagues/volunteers and kept for future reference.

3. Building the capacity of VCS organisations to participate more effectively in IOM.

Outputs

All the organisations identified during the mapping exercise were sent information about the support available to them from local infrastructure organisations (i.e. the CVS's and Volunteer Centres). This information was also included on the memory sticks for all delegates at the Forum.

Outcomes

During the reporting period 12 organisations attended a one to one advice session with staff from Bournemouth CVS or Poole CVS to look at either funding or governance issues. In addition Bournemouth CVS and Poole CVS ran several training sessions on issues relating to running an organisation and 27 delegates from organisations identified during the mapping exercise attended these sessions during the reporting period.

Sustainability

All the organisations identified during the mapping exercise have been invited to join the additional e-mail networks run by Bournemouth CVS and Poole CVS to receive information on other generic issues such as funding opportunities, local training courses and offers of help etc.

4. Enabling the VCS to participate in strategic partnerships within IOM

Outputs

6 partnership boards relating to community safety/working with offenders were identified across BDP. Election procedures were drawn up and the Communications Officer liaised with the Chair/clerk of each board to discuss including a VCS representative as part of the board's membership.

Outcomes

Of the boards identified, 5 have agreed to include VCS representation as part of their membership. An election is in progress and a training session for new representatives as part of their induction has been organised.

Sustainability

The processes which we have put in place will be sustained by the three infrastructure organisations and VCS will now be key participants within strategic planning and decision making processes.

Volunteering and Integrated Offender Management - (Strand 2 of the multi-stranded proposal led by Bournemouth CVS)

Strand 2 Final Report -

Bournemouth & Poole Volunteer Centres were the lead agency, for Strand 2 and were assisted by Dorset Volunteer Centre and Dorset Probation Trust.

Outputs	Outcomes	Sustainability
An electronic survey was jointly designed which suited the needs of both strand 1 and 2. This was distributed to our combined contacts, from the 2 CVS's and 3 Volunteer Centres.	<p>14 organizations identified with and completed the survey. The results were collated and shared with appropriate colleagues;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organizations who required funding help were passed on to our Funding Advisor for further funding support. 2. Training needs identified were tackled in the 1/2 day workshop for with organizations (22 participants) held in February. 3. The existing Volunteering E-network was expanded to include new contacts gained via the survey, and now includes volunteering-related information on work with offenders. 4. New contacts were shared with Strand 1 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There will be ongoing support/work for the organizations referred to the funding advice team. 2. Dorset Probation asked for the training needs analysis and aim to develop a future training plan for the VCS. 3. The Volunteering E-network will be sustained through the Volunteer Centres' core work. 4. These were incorporated to further develop the new email network within BCVS.
A small grants-scheme was developed and panel members recruited from across the VCS and Statutory sectors. This included case study templates, application forms, monitoring requirements and templates for this.	<p>7 out of 8 applicants were awarded funding to the total of £35,000 and grants ranged from approx. £500 to £9,500.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 7 organizations were assisted to re-submit their bids to more fully meet the criteria and/or amend their project plans. 2. The project who were 	All of the 7 funded projects plan to continue their work and the funds have therefore made a considerable impact on their future sustainability.

Outputs	Outcomes	Sustainability
	declined, were assisted to put in a further bid with a reduced offer, however they declined to accept a reduced offer at that later stage.	
A training session for Volunteer Centre staff was hosted by Dorset Volunteer Centre and chaired by Bournemouth & Poole Volunteer Centres and Probation Staff	Volunteer Centre staff from across Dorset had the opportunity to meet and discuss issues and concerns as well as receive training on; good practice, how to support organizations with recruitment of volunteers and how to support volunteers from offending backgrounds.	The one-off training session that has improved current staff knowledge and will ensure that we all respond to volunteers or organizations with the same messages. The materials gathered for the VC staff session fed into the organization session
A workshop was developed for organizations and material on good practice advice was developed/collated for organizations seeking to recruit offenders as volunteers.	13 organizations including grant-recipients received current good practice advice and had the opportunity to network and discuss their work. 1. Information was distributed via the e-networks 2. Organizations who attended the Forum also received a memory stick (see strand 1) containing good practice materials.	The materials gathered for the session were collated to produce a leaflet which will be distributed by all 3 Volunteer Centres to the rest of our registered organizations.
We organized a meeting specifically for these stakeholders (grant-recipients) to report back on the impact of their projects and to raise awareness of the importance of volunteering/mentoring.	The 7 grant-recipients reported back to one another and the steering group members on their progress and provided some powerful and insightful case studies.	The reports and case studies collated from the grant-monitoring will feed into promotional materials that the Volunteer centre will be able to use in general promotions and good practice work with other organizations.
Agree a joint referral/information sharing procedure/s to cover the recruitment of volunteers	We discovered that this task would have been too huge to have completed given the	This work and further discussion will be picked up and carried forward at

<i>Outputs</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Sustainability</i>
between the Centres, statutory partners and placement organizations.	time-frame, therefore the topic was introduced at the launch of the Forum (under strand 1).	future Forum meetings.
Negotiating with our statutory partners to provide funding or in-kind support and/or exploring the possibility of the Volunteer Centres applying for funding to sustain the project or specific strands of it.	Feedback from our final survey concluded that our statutory partners are not in a position at present to fund this work	A successful bid to Lloyds TSB will see Bournemouth & Poole Volunteer Centres continuing to work with a small group of offenders to support them into Volunteering over the next year.

Working with Offenders in Rural Areas

Summary Report

Report on the viability of community engagement in the Divert programme

IOM Project Strand 3:

Research into the Involvement of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Integrated Offender Management in Rural Dorset

The aim of this strand was:

- To raise awareness amongst rurally based voluntary and community groups in Dorset, of the Dorset Integrated Offender Management programme – DIVERT.
- To assess the viability of rurally based voluntary and community groups acting locally to increase the capacity and responsiveness of the DIVERT programme.
- To identify the wider outcomes that might be achieved for both communities and offenders through the involvement of local voluntary and community groups in Integrated Offender Management in Rural Areas.
- To identify the risks and possible mitigations for those risks, of the involvement of local voluntary and community groups in Integrated Offender Management in Rural Areas

Outputs

After an initial sift of existing material such as data on rurally based offenders and a study of local community plans, an approach was made to local community partnerships and visits made to speak at six of them. A briefing paper was prepared and distributed before each visit. Those partnerships that did not accept an invitation to speak were circulated with information and asked to distribute it.

Visits were also made to community groups that either worked directly with offenders (e.g. Footprints) or whose work could be of obvious benefit to offenders (e.g. ReadEasy, JobClub, Dorset Service Users Forum).

A focus group of interested parties, including parish councils, was organised.

Conversations were also held with probation, and members of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams directly involved in the Divert programme.

A report was written with recommendations (Action Plan). Report is attached.

Outcomes

Awareness of the Divert programme has been raised. Simultaneously awareness of and interest in other criminal justice ideas, in particular community payback and restorative justice, has also been raised. In the longer term, this should lead to greater involvement from the voluntary and community sector in working with offenders but at this stage is clearly only the preliminary step.

Those who run projects and those interested in being involved have detailed their assessment of the difficulties they have encountered to date and those they

envisage as potential risks. These principally fall into the categories of funding/sustainability, information sharing between statutory and voluntary agencies, duplication.

Sustainability.

As this was principally a research and awareness raising strand sustainability is largely dependent on the success of the other strands of the project. The recommendations proposed at the end of the report listed under Outputs were as follows:

- Encouragement to all voluntary sector organisations involved, ***or interested in possibly becoming involved***, to be invited to join the voluntary sector forum for criminal justice
- The forum to be encouraged to explore issues of information sharing protocols, sharing of good practice, avoidance of duplication
- The forum to establish a sound dialogue with the probation service, the police and other statutory agencies so that both sectors have realistic expectations of what the voluntary sector can bring to IOM and other aspects of criminal justice
- The importance of guaranteed long-term funding streams to voluntary organisations working in this area to be emphasised to the relevant parties as a pre-requisite for sustainability
- The voluntary sector to be encouraged to be actively involved in the Dorset Community Safety Partnership generally and with any suitable sub-groups such as the one proposed on volunteering and mentoring of offenders.
- Voluntary groups themselves, the forum, the community safety partnership and other relevant groups to be encouraged to raise awareness about their activities and the potential for getting involved amongst all communities in Dorset in order to ensure both a constant supply of volunteers and an understanding of the purpose amongst the public at large.

These should help ensure sustainability and also promote the wanted outcomes of better linkages between the VCS and the statutory sector to implement IOM, an increased level of VCS input into IOM as well as greater involvement more generally from the VCS in working with offenders. It is also likely to encourage the involvement of smaller organisations into the process and encourage more of the community to offer themselves as mentors or other volunteers. And of course, ultimately, this should all assist in the overall aim of reducing crime!