

Appendix 3

Consultation Response Volunteers Can: Towards a Volunteering Strategy to Reduce Re-offending				
Name	Jackie Westlake			
Position	Policy Adviser			
Organisation	The Prince's Trust			
Address	18, Park Square East London NW1 4LH			
Telephone	0207 543 1288	Type of organisation (✓)		
Email Address	Jackie.westlake@princes-trust.org.uk	VCS ✓	Private	Public

We appreciate the time and trouble you are taking to contribute to this consultation, and recognise there are many questions. You may prefer to respond only to those questions of relevance to you.

Introduction, aims, challenges and opportunities
<p>Our mission : "To value, build, and support the unique role of volunteering in helping to reduce re-offending and build public confidence".</p> <p>The definition of volunteering: "Any activity within the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) that involves individuals willingly giving their time for the benefit of offenders, victims, and the wider community. It can add value to the services provided and commissioned by NOMS and its partners and is distinct from other forms of unpaid work".</p> <p>Sections 1 & 2</p>

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<p>1. Do you agree with the strategy's mission and aims for the development of volunteering? Yes/No</p> <p>Please can you say why?</p>	<p>Yes. We believe that the Trust would not help the number of young people it does without the help of our volunteer network, Our volunteers are recognised by the young people we work with as adding something very special to the programme they are involved with, and are often the catalyst that helps to turn their lives around. We recruit these volunteers from both the public and employee participation agreements between the Trust and key companies. However not all volunteers work directly with young people, Many are involved in support roles such as fund-raising, panel or committee members and as Trustees.</p> <p>With about 10 volunteers to one member of staff, they add an enormous value to The Prince's Trust in terms of time, experience and expertise. They bring skills and contacts, enthusiasm, new ideas and commitment to help get young people's lives working.</p> <p>For some of our programmes we offer a volunteer mentor who receives additional training specific to the mentor role. Again, we work to national standards set by the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation. Our Business start-up programme which includes allocation of a mentor, is particularly popular with young (ex)offenders. Referrals come from both Prisons and Probation.</p> <p>We are pleased, therefore, that NOMS recognises the value of volunteers through this mission statement.</p>
<p>2. Are there other ways in which volunteering can contribute to the Faith and VCS Alliance, reducing re-offending pathways, public protection and/or offender management? Please describe.</p>	<p>Through their knowledge and experience, volunteers can also support government in policy development, particularly in circumstances where the volunteer has been, or continues to be, a service user. The Trust is currently supporting an ex-offender who advises the Offender Management Programme Board.</p>
<p>3. Are there challenges, other than those stated in section 2.3, which need to be addressed before volunteering to reduce re-offending can reach its potential? Please describe.</p>	<p>Rigorous management practices must be in place to support volunteers. This takes considerable resources, both in time and money, which will be a significant challenge to organisations that do not have that infrastructure in place.</p>
<p>4. Are the barriers identified in Figure 3 the most significant? Yes/No</p> <p>If no, which other barriers are missing?</p> <p>How can we best work together to address these barriers?</p>	<p>As for 3., it is important that volunteers are properly supported, around their time, financial and emotional support. The Trust has a clear policy for working with volunteers, and has developed a toolkit for volunteers and their managers. The standards in the toolkit meet the requirements of the National Occupational Standards for Volunteering, developed by The Voluntary Sector National Training Organisation (VSNTO) and first published in 2004.</p>

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	<p>The Trust would be happy to work with NOMS in developing a similar toolkit, but the commissioning process will need to identify, and support, a sustainable level of volunteer management.</p> <p>NOMS is also best placed to collate and disseminate good practice to providers.</p>
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Increasing the number and diversity of volunteers	
Objective: Developing a clear understanding of the definition of volunteering	
Section 3.1	
<p>5. Do you agree with the proposed definition of volunteering to reduce re-offending? Yes/No</p> <p>Do you have any comments on the definition?</p>	<p>Yes. It reflects the Prince's Trust definition (see below), albeit it has a specific focus on reducing re-offending.</p> <p><i>A Prince's Trust volunteer is someone who freely chooses to give their time to undertake tasks and activities to help the Trust achieve its aims, without payment, or the expectation of payment. The arrangement is voluntary for either side. Either party can bring this to an end.</i></p>

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<p>Objective: Promoting widespread involvement of volunteers across NOMS Section 3.2</p>	
<p>6. Apart from the suggestions made in this section, how else should NOMS' providers recruit new volunteers?</p>	<p>The commissioning process should be specific about the requirements on providers to recruit and maintain volunteers. There should be a national standard for volunteers and their management which should be reflected in any commissioning. NOMS' providers, it should be clear, will be prisons, probation, along with the private and voluntary and community sector.</p>
<p>7. How can we encourage more offenders to volunteer as advisers, counsellors and mentors to other offenders both in prisons and in the community?</p>	<p>Offenders working as volunteers with offenders can be a powerful tool in reducing re-offending. The Trust is taking forward this work through the 121 project. The idea for this project came directly from young people who had experienced custody through consultation and a seminar: <i>'Breaking the Cycle of Offending'</i> held by The Prince's Trust in December 2006, hosted by HRH The Prince of Wales. Throughout the consultation, service users unanimously said they wanted tailored 1-2-1 support from people with similar backgrounds.</p> <p>This project recognises the complex needs of offenders and offers ongoing support using fully trained 'Supporters' who have broken the cycle of offending and now live successful lives. The concept of the programme is to change the culture of dependency by prisoners on the statutory services and empower them to take control of their futures. It also aims to help break the stigma attached to being an offender and highlight the potential for change.</p> <p>Supporters must be ex-offenders (those with experience of the criminal justice system). They need to prove they have been out of prison for two years and clean from any substance addiction for 2 years. Each Supporter will be risk assessed. The role will be voluntary with expenses paid, and will particularly address prisoner relocation.</p> <p>Supporters will receive an initial 10 days intensive training with follow-up specialist training. They will be supervised and have access to Supporter forums to share best practice. They will also be offered a corporate coach for their own personal development. Clear boundaries and standards will be adhered to. Supporters will also establish specific boundaries with their prisoner e.g. times of contact.</p> <p>Supporters are being recruited through personal networks developed by rehabilitation centres. It is expected that, when rolled out, similar organisations will be contacted, and current Supporters will be used as ambassadors to promulgate the work.</p>

<p>Objective: Increasing the diversity of volunteers Section 3.3</p>

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<p>8. How can volunteers from diverse groups best be engaged? (e.g. BME, young adults and men)</p>	<p>Service users are best placed to identify the local networks that mean the most to them, and make a powerful case for what, and who, is needed to support them. The Trust heard this message at the <i>Breaking the Cycle of Offending</i> seminar last December. As a result, Clinks, in partnership with The Trust, has established a Taskforce to identify how best to involve offenders and ex-offenders in the development and delivery of services to reduce re-offending. The Trust works in partnership with other organisations that have a direct line to different, diverse and often hard to reach groups.</p>
<p>9. Are there any particular issues in attracting and engaging volunteers from faith groups working either in prisons or the community?</p> <p>How should we work with faith groups in the community?</p>	<p>The Prince's Trust has looked to partner Community Chaplaincy projects. Through volunteers from differing faiths, the Community Chaplaincy works with young people whilst in prison and then support them in re-settling on release. The work of the chaplaincy across all faiths is recognised as reducing re-offending and the fear of crime.</p>
<p>10. Given the length of time that security checks can take, how can we best retain volunteers' interests during the waiting period?</p>	<p>During the waiting period, the Trust encourages volunteers to attend meetings and events; try out aspects of the role with supervision; attend training sessions; and shadow another volunteer. All of these are good preparation for the work, maintains interest, and makes the volunteer feel a valued part of the organisation from the start.</p>

Becoming more Strategic in Volunteer Development

Objective: Developing ownership and leadership of volunteering Section 4.1

<p>11. How should ROMs, as part of their commissioning, co-commissioning and partnership work, develop volunteering at a regional level?</p>	<p>Volunteering must have a national champion with national standards if it is to succeed as a strategy to reduce re-offending. It is only by having a national steer, will regional managers feel able to, among competing claims for their time and resources, to develop volunteering as part of their regional reducing re-offending strategy.</p>
<p>12. Is it important for local leadership for volunteering to be developed (e.g. in prisons and probation)?</p>	<p>Yes. Without a lead within prisons and probation, nothing much will happen. Staff in both services are stretched, and it will take someone who has volunteering as their job description to ensure</p>

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<p>Yes/No</p> <p>Please explain why</p>	<p>action is taken.</p>
<p>Objective: Strategic fit for volunteering to reduce re-offending Section 4.2</p>	
<p>13. What are the key issues facing prisons and probation areas, VCS and private organisations seeking to work more closely together in their approach to volunteering to reduce re-offending?</p>	<p>Commissioning could be a barrier to organisations working together, as it introduces an element of competition into delivering services. Experience shows that, if competing consortia bid for contracts, volunteering might not be properly resourced within the bid, and may not be delivered, or delivered ineffectively. There needs to be more than “encouragement” around volunteering, if NOMS is serious about a volunteering strategy.</p>
<p>14. How can the regional reducing re-offending partnership strategies promote volunteering in their agenda?</p>	<p>There needs to be clear guidance within each of the pathways about the most effective ways of engaging volunteers.</p>
<p>15. What needs to be done to encourage offender managers to include volunteering and mentoring in offender management plans?</p>	<p>NOMS must identify the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of volunteering and mentoring so that offender managers feel more confident about their use. This will involve closer engagement with the third sector, particularly those organisations that have a strong volunteering element to their work, and identification of good practice across the regions.</p>
<p>Objective: Developing a strategic link with wider volunteering policies and agendas Section 4.3</p>	

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<p>16. Beyond those identified in the strategy, with which other structures and forums should NOMS and ROMs engage?</p>	<p>Umbrella organisations for the VCS such as CLINKS, NCVYS, if not already mentioned</p>
<p>17. How can volunteering to reduce re-offending be embedded at a local level e.g as part of wider CJS volunteering/ work on community safety?</p>	<p>This requires formal recognition of the value of volunteering, both for volunteers, the organisation, and the individuals who are supported by volunteers.</p>

<p>Improving support to volunteers</p>	
<p>Objective: Developing clear lines of responsibility for volunteer support and coordination Section 5.1</p>	
<p>18. Should providers include volunteer co-ordination as a distinct element of someone's job? Yes/No</p> <p>Please say why</p>	<p>Yes. It is critical that volunteers are properly managed, both for themselves and for the aims of the organisation. By doing so, The Trust ensures that the recruitment, training, support and management are delivered to high standards.</p> <p>In recognition of the importance The Trust places on volunteering, The Trust has assigned responsibility for volunteering to a key member of the Senior Management Team.</p> <p>Each Country/Region/Function must have one member of staff who has responsibility for volunteering within the area. There may be others who take on direct management of volunteers, but the overall strategy within the Country/Region/Function must remain with one named member of staff, normally at an Executive level.</p> <p>There will need to be a network of staff and volunteers who recruit, train and support the volunteer network within the Region/Country/Function. This group will need to work to the standards within the Toolkit. The standards will be audited by the Quality Team on their audit visits around the UK.</p>

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<p>19. Given the resource implications of this, do you have any alternative ideas for volunteer co-ordination?</p>	<p>No. It would be short sighted to skimp on this, given the importance of the work undertaken by volunteers.</p>
<p>20. Are there specific issues for volunteers working with young adult offenders as opposed to those working with adult offenders, whether in the community or prison? If different, how?</p> <p>How does this impact on the management of these volunteers?</p> <p>How can we ensure that young adult offenders remain engaged with the volunteers (eg through matching, training)?</p>	<p>As The Trust works solely with those under 30 it is difficult for us to make a comparison</p>
<p>Objective: Adhering to good practice standards in volunteer management Section 5.2</p>	
<p>21. How can NOMS best encourage the growth of volunteering, and ensure good practice in volunteer management, within current resources?</p>	<p>By engaging with those organisations that have well established procedures, setting minimum standards for volunteer management. Opportunities for recognition and accreditation is a motivating factor for some volunteers. Promotion of nationally recognised accreditation will therefore help to engage new people into volunteering.</p>
<p>22. Are there special considerations around volunteering with high risk of harm offenders?</p> <p>Please consider</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of harm to the volunteer • Specific skills required 	<p>It is important that robust risk assessment processes are in place and agreed in advance with all parties. Additional levels of training and experience might be a useful criteria for volunteers working with high risk offenders.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection procedures • Special support/training needs on high risk issues eg safeguarding children • Referral information • Limits on confidentiality 	
<p>23. How else can NOMS ensure good practice in volunteer involvement?</p>	<p>Good practice is demonstrated by many small scale and local voluntary organisations. NOMS needs to engage with and learn from, these projects as well as from larger national bodies. Umbrella organisations (national and regional) are in a good position to identify areas of good practice.</p>
<p>24. Are existing quality standards appropriate to volunteering with offenders or are additional standards required?</p>	<p>The Trust currently works to the National Occupational Standards for Volunteering, developed by The Voluntary Sector National Training Organisation (VSNTO) and first published in 2004.</p>

Establishing the Impact of Volunteering

Objective: Developing a stronger evidence base for the impact of volunteering across NOMS Section 6.1

<p>25. What work/research on the impact of volunteering would be most useful to you?</p>	<p>General research on the impact of volunteers to reduce re-offending is needed, but specifically, research on the value of volunteering by ex-offenders to reduce re-offending would be most useful.</p>
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Implementation - Section 7

<p>26. Do you agree with the priorities</p>	<p>Some of the ongoing additional actions should be seen as priorities.</p>
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set out in this section? If not, why?	<p>They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collating and disseminating case studies of volunteering opportunities• Volunteer proofing [current and] future key strategies and policies within NOMS• Promoting the role of volunteering to raise awareness of opportunities for engagement <p>There needs to be urgent work at regional level to engage with the third sector on how volunteering should be developed across the region.</p>
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Do you have any other comments?

Thank you for responding to this consultation document. Please send your completed form by Friday 10th August 2007:

By email to:

james.memmott@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

By post to:

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

Telephone: 020 7035 0210