The Centre for the Study of Crime, Criminalisation and Social Exclusion

Liverpool John Moores University

Reducing Reoffending Research Project

Action Learning Set 3 - Turin, Italy, Thursday 20th February 2014

1. Introduction

The ambition of ALS1 and ALS2 had been to showcase the integrated criminal justice practice operating in The Hague (Netherlands) and Knowsley (Merseyside, UK) respectively. With ALS3 the emphasis shifted to explore the capacity to import some of the examples of good/best practice - taken from Dutch and UK partners - into the Italian context. The Life Change Programme (LCP), developed and currently delivered by MALS Merseyside, has been previously identified as mode of working that can be introduced into the work the European Research Institute currently undertakes. However, a key objective of ALS3 was to raise collective awareness of the operation of the criminal justice system in Italy more generally so that delegates can make more realistic assessments of the potential for integrating different and innovative ways of working to reducing reoffending.

With the project reaching it's halfway point and attention increasingly focusing upon the impact of the innovative work seen in Knowsley and the implementation of new working practices in Italy the agenda for the day was a mix of reports on progress and a range of interactive activities designed to get delegates planning with greater conviction for how the scheme will continue to develop. The first run of presentations concerned introducing delegates to the workings of the Italian criminal justice system, and, in the talk about the Penal Mediation Centre for Juvenile Offenders, of trying to establish the opportunities for the European Research Institute to develop lessons learned from European partners. The Dutch delegation followed this up with an update on developments on the work being undertaken by the Safety House model in and around The Hague.

The presentation from MALS Merseyside reported on the move they've made – since ALS2 - to deliver the LCP in Liverpool Prison. This has seen a slightly shortened version of the community based LCP being delivered in a very different setting and the presentation captured the emergent strengths/weaknesses of this new mode of operation. In-line with the desire to encourage shared learning delegates then broke into mixed groups to discuss a hypothetical offender case study and to identify processes and interventions that would be applied in Italy, Netherlands and the UK. The exercise highlighted just how varied responses would be and how partners would draw in very different agencies to help address the problematic offending behaviour the case study identified.

The afternoon session began with a presentation by the LJMU Research Team that sought to identify some of the emergent issues/evidence from the on-going process evaluation. Central to this presentation was the need for a case management system to help process, monitor and evidence client progress and this was a theme picked up on in the ERI presentation that followed that started to identify the measures the organisation is generating to develop mentoring (and the LCP specifically) in Italy. Two more rounds of group activity followed with nation based groups analysing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to rolling out the LCP programme. The day concluded with each group producing a SMART action plan to determine the next steps moving forward to the next action learning set in September. The agenda for ALS 4 will be driven by a need to consolidate the developments witnessed in the three jurisdictions since the project's commencement and to assess the progress being made in reaching the stated project objectives.

2. Morning Presentations

The first two presentations of the day were from representatives of the host country, detailing the origins of the centre in which the Action Learning Set took place and the history of the work with young people in the area. This offered some context to the work of the European Research Institute and where it is most likely that they will be able to implement some of the learning and models of working the project has explored to date. As always, full presentations are available on the website.

Sara Caracuso - Psychologist

- The centre is in part of the city which was observed for many years as it was run down and neglected. However, it has been renewed and regenerated over time

- The centre was opened four years ago from private foundation funding. It was originally a public bath but there was no money to restore it, so **the municipality gave operational control of the mediation centre to the ERI**. The centre is open to all district citizens for children to play, people to study, parties, presentations, one stop shops and other community engagement activities

- The citizens **in this area are active communities who wanted a place to cooperate and collaborate**. The centre provides precisely this environment. **Some social problems remain but the building has supported the recovery process.**

Giovani Ghibaudi - President of the Penal Mediation Centre for Juvenile Offenders

- **The Penal Mediation Centre for Juvenile Offenders (PMCJO) is only one in Italy**. Its aim is to prevent (re)offending in young offenders. It works with minor (young) offenders and victims of all ages

- The **PMCJO work in partnerships once offending happened but their priority is to try to prevent crime before young people become offenders**. Their **interventions are guided by what the people who need help ask for (i.e. a client centred approach) as this helps them understand where criminality stems from, as does their victim work**

- The PMCJO provide mediation to understand the needs of those who are victims and perpetrators. The organisation is a public body and subject to regulation by the law

- In the last 3 years the PMCJO has managed 300 victims. They work with hospitals, social services, women's centres, police, magistrates and social care organisations

- Prevention work includes getting offenders to recognise their needs and responsibilities in order not to reoffend as well as working to get public and private sectors to work together

- The district in which the PMCJO operates was known only ten years ago as a dangerous area where the safety of citizens was not assured. The changes in the territory have been thanks to the collaboration between public and private organisations and individuals. The **collaborations have meant that small time criminals would not approach public services for help (due to fear of the consequences) will talk to private organisations, so here the PMCJO has been able to help** using both its religious and lay volunteers.

In the third presentation from our Italian hosts, Mizar gave an overview of the usual routes through the Italian Criminal Justice System to help all member countries to contextualise the young people's interventions provided by the European Research Institute.

Mizar Forioso - Italian criminal justice system

- Mizar explained that the Italian Criminal Justice System is complex and difficult to understand even for native Italians. In view of this she outlined **the most common route though criminal proceedings** for adults (emphasising that there are many alternatives). There are three steps: investigation, trial (by trial court or court of appeal) and conviction. An additional court (cassation) decides on lawfulness (similar to the UK Crown Prosecution Service, hereafter, CPS)

- The investigation must demonstrate that a crime was committed. Usually a preliminary investigation judge will launch the investigation. There is a difference between civil and criminal law in that the latter have to be tried. **However, there is a difference between theory and practice in that whilst all crimes are meant to be prosecuted, different prosecutor's offices decide how and what to prosecute, resulting in regional differences, particularly between northern and southern Italy**. In Turin they focus on white collar crime whereas in southern Italy there is a focus on anti-mafia, despite there being high levels of other types of crime

- Preliminary investigation happens before the person has been arrested to see what has happened. If a judge validates the indictment, a person can be accused, or if there is no evidence of a crime or no crime then there is a request for discontinuance. Once there is evidence of a crime there is a preliminary hearing where they decide whether the evidence is sufficient (again, similar to CPS in the UK). The case goes no further if evidence is insufficient (non-lieu) or if the evidence is sufficient, a council of judges decide whether the accused is guilty. The accused even then can then then go back to court to appeal. **This court process can take up to three years during which time the accused can be on remand in prison (depending on the risk level of offender and crime)**

- The police collaborate with the public prosecutor's office to report crimes. They investigate, prosecute and try to enforce the law. Sometimes public prosecutors head investigations or sometimes they delegate leadership of investigation to the police. CID may know a crime was committed due to victim or Heath professional reporting it. They then begin the investigation through a preliminary investigation judge who can put a demand in to the public prosecutor's office to investigate. However **court judges are different to preliminary hearing judges and the two are very separate which is problematic**

- In the execution phase, **prison staff (educators, psychologists, directors and prison police officers) assess offenders' personalities (similar to a UK pre-sentence report by probation) and the court judge chooses the punishment, which can be prison or alternative measures such as a fine**. There are also ancillary measures such as removal of parental authority or preventing them holding public office and additional alternatives (decided case by case) such as day release from prison where offenders are restricted to 14 hours out a day, no weapons, no driving license etc. or supervised probation in which they can only leave prison to work or for education

- **1988 saw criminal reform of young people's policy (policy prior to this belonged to historical fascist regime). Thanks to EU directives being enforced over last twenty years, Italy was able to introduce the concept of protecting childhood. A m**inor is classed as up to 18 years of age with those less than 14 under the age of criminal responsibility so cannot be prosecuted. 14-18 can be prosecuted but it is taken on a case by case basis

- The aim now is for young people to understand their crime and 'find alternative solutions to criminal life'. **The idea is to balance rights and protection of young people (rehabilitation) with the rights and protection of society**. Policy for young people intends to: Educate them not to commit crime (through responsibilisation strategies) but also not mark them for life due to one mistake (through destigmatistation and deinstitutionalisation policies); Recognise them as able to make decisions, but who need help to ensure they know what is going to happen; And finally to balance punishment with protection

- **The phases of a young person's investigation differ from adults in the inclusion of support throughout the court process and the possibility of diversionary sentencing**. The phases include: An investigation before criminal proceedings to establish the crime; Giving assistance to the accused young person; Precautionary measures i.e. a will to offer an alternative to prison known as 'last chance' and is a diversionary option. Alongside 'last chance' there can be conditions including: Home detention; community refinement (i.e. into protective custody whereby they can go out to work or education but have to go home to a community e.g. a care home run by social services); Or provisional detention (which is a last resort)

- The mediation centre operates alongside the public prosecutor to work preventatively with young people who appear to be offending. **The aim is always to prevent or divert where possible meaning that many centres are involved in the care of juvenile offenders, including social service day centres and community centres. Juvenile detention centres are the last resort**. Reception centres aim to understand and guide the young person to help them learn to live life differently

- Should criminal proceedings occur, they can result in: No liability as under age; immaturity (i.e. the accused cannot understand what they did); immateriality (meaning no crime was committed); pardon (where they admit committing the crime but do not receive punishment); rehabilitation; acquittal or conviction

- Rehabilitation (last chance) orders are used only when the convicted young person consents to entering the programme, and when they have the stated support of their family and operators (service providers). Where the young person is referred for rehabilitation through the last chance option, they are placed in the custody of social services and receive a personalised programme. The outcomes of their programme are assessed by the judge who decides whether it was successful. **It is in this process that the ERI LifeChange Project occurs through a referral by Social Services as part of the young person's rehabilitation plan.** If the outcomes are positive the offence is extinguished, if it is unsuccessful, criminal proceedings can restart.

3. Developments since ALS2

Action Learning Activity 1 – What progress have partners made since ALS 2

Netherlands (Hans Metzemakers, Safety House)

- One of the biggest shifts in the operation of The Safety House since ALS2 is that they have gained more control of how they work in that they focus on **specific target groups rather than simply tackling long lists of individuals identified by the police through multiple arrests**

- The government-backed regionalisation of Safety Houses (i.e. roll-out to neighbouring smaller cities rather than operating solely in The Hague) means they now work with nine Local Authorities**.** This has created two predominant concerns;

  1. whilst partners are generally happy for the Local Authority to take the lead in coordinating a diverse range of service providers, there is concern that Safety House Process Managers are being used as mediators in resolving inter-agency problems, rather than talking directly to one another

  2. harmonising Safety House strategy across the nine Local Authorities who each have differing procedures is difficult

- The delegates reported a recent rise in Dutch Muslim young people who, by virtue of returning from or seeking to travel to the conflict in Syria, have become part of the Safety House caseload. The example was cited of 25 young women aged between 13 and 17 who were held back at the airport due to suspicions they were going to Syria to take part in the unrest to highlight that this is a role that sees the **Safety House proactively engage groups (to prevent offending) rather than being reactive (to reduce re-offending)**

- The Safety House partnerships have increasingly **recognised the need for a Systems Approach to their work in terms of looking both at individuals *and* their environment (for example working with whole families rather than just the young (re)offenders).**

Turin (Iskender Forioso, ERI)

- There has been a change in the law in that **Drug Possession for personal use has been decriminalised which should decrease the number of people in prison** although no statistics are yet available on this

- From the last meeting in Liverpool the ERI took three main areas which they are developing in Italy: to **undertake partnership like the Dutch Safety House using a shared web portal to share information**, to **ensure that mentors receive support in order to maintain their wellbeing** (which will be in the form of a Psychologist) and **in January they began to run the LCP programme with two of their young people, in a mediation centre which is an ex-prison.** This is proving difficult as the young people vary from day to day in their will to engage. It is felt this may be improved by making the final day of the LCP an internship (work experience day) and getting an ex-offender to run the programme. They are intending to use the same evaluation forms as Knowsley to monitor impacts.

- They have also noted that unlike the UK and Netherlands, in Italy adults receive no support post release from prison. In view of this **the ERI is working to develop links with the prisons to attempt to run the LCP for adults on release from prison** (ideally based around the UK inspired group working model). However, permission from the municipalities will be required.

Knowsley (Anthony, MALS)

The Knowsley update was combined with a more formal presentation by Anthony Evans (MALS mentor and co-producer of the Life Change programme) concerning the operation of the Life Change Programme (LCP) both in the community, and now within HMP Liverpool. The presentation was split into three sections - (1) The delivery of the life change programme in the first 12 months; (2) the issues involved in delivering the programme in custodial and community settings; and, (3) towards Year 2 of the programme – and it was designed in such a way to help structure the working practice(s) of Italian partners who will be taking this model of reducing reoffending forward.

The delivery of the life change programme in the first 12 months
In the space of little over 12-months MALS Merseyside has gone from working with a cohort of 7 people to hosting a database of clients in excess of 70. Initially clients who joined the programme did so on a purely voluntary basis and the programme was 'in the community' based. At the time of the presentation in February 2014, of the 7 individuals who participated in the first LCP, 4 completed the programme and 2 of these have subsequently reoffended (1 re-called to prison three weeks after his release and the other has only recently re-offended). One of the two successful clients is now working on a crime prevention programme being delivered in local schools and colleges whilst the second is delivering programmes for a local charitable organisation.

These very different experiences capture the diverse nature of the group with which MALS works, many of whom have long and entrenched criminal histories.   The logistics of ensuring that individuals with chaotic lifestyles were able to attend the group was also a challenge identified and the co-facilitator of the group often had to use his own vehicle to ensure attendance. Whilst this usefully emphasises the high motivation amongst the staff group it does highlight the need to take a 'small steps' approach in setting realistic goals in working with this client group.

The most recent and significant development for the programme has been the extension of the service with the move into HMP Liverpool to deliver a tailored version of the LCP to inmates. Following a request from senior prison staff for MALS to operate within the institution the LCP has been re-designed with some additional sessions included to meet the needs of this target group. The first cohort of consisted of 12 men who all volunteered to be on the programme and not only was the LCP able to claim 100% retention across the 8 sessions but all who participated reported positively on their experience in the subsequent evaluation. The higher rate of compliance is generally consistent with programmes delivered in the prison establishment compared to those delivered in the community (as attendance on prison-based programmes is often seen as a break from the routine of the establishment). Nevertheless, the level of engagement with the programme was extremely high and prison staff reported that this compared very favourably with other programmes delivered in the prison. 8 out of the 12 prisoners who completed the programme have subsequently been given positions of trust within the prison and there are plans for one of the original participants to co-run the next group.

Issues involved in delivering the programme in custodial and community settings

A number of factors were identified as contributing to the effective running of the programme. These were:

- **Logistics** – participation in the prison setting was logistically easier because it was easier to access the group members and bring them to the sessions.

- **Credibility of facilitator** – as a former offender himself, the facilitator was readily accepted by the group and a relationship of trust was quickly established. The group participants could both identify with him and saw him as a role model as someone who had successfully desisted from crime and established a positive identity and role within the community.

- **Environment** – the initial community based LCP being based in a class room like setting had been criticised by some as being inappropriate given that many of the group had been excluded from the educational system. The room in the prison was far more comfortable and relaxed and this made it easier for the group members to share their personal feelings, hopes and fears. Some of the group members were interacting with each other for the first time even though they were based on the same wings in the prison. It was recognised however that there were dangers in expecting individuals to share personal and emotional information that might increase their vulnerability on the prison wings. To this end work was/is needed to ensure that prisoners are continually supported during and after completing the programme so that they are not left to cope with their feelings alone.

- **Trust** – many of the participants were initially weary of those running the programme and given the nature of the group it was seen as important to establish rules of confidentiality early in the programme. It was stressed that whilst the programme was intended to create an environment of trust and engagement, confidentiality could not be adhered to if the individual disclosed that they intended to harm themselves or others, or engage in criminal activity. Generally speaking though it was felt that those who participated in the prison programme presented as being more motivated and engaged compared to those in the community. It was felt that some of the latter were only attending because their probation officer had advised them to do so.

- **Group size –** the size of the group was seen as a significant factor in enhancing the delivery of the material. The larger number of participants worked well as those involved where able to work together and share their experiences in an environment of mutual learning.

- **Support** – the proactive presence of a prison governor was seen as a contributing factor in the success of the programme. For many of the group members their only previous encounters with prison staff had been in their 'authority' role and the visible presence of a governor in this more supportive role made them view him more positively. The 'marketplace' of local agencies coming into the prison and being available for the men to engage with to explore the learning, housing, employment support available was highlighted as being especially constructive. The involvement of their families was also crucial in supporting the group members through the programme. Family members were invited to attend the final session in the prison and this enabled the group participants to demonstrate the progress they had made to those closest to them. This had clearly had an impact on many of the men who expressed feelings of guilt regarding the impact of their imprisonment on their family members.

Towards Year 2 of the programme

MALS have now trained 31 mentors from the local community. During the first year the organisation worked with 58 offenders of whom, according to information available, 8 have re-offended. The 24 hour helpline has now been established and is well utilised by the service users and provides a valuable 'out of office hours' response to those with chaotic lifestyles. Some individuals who were initially reluctant to engage with the organisation have subsequently contacted them some months after their release for assistance. MALS has helped 3 individuals obtain employment and even where there have been less concrete and concrete positive outcomes from their involvement, there have been other improvements noted such as increased cooperation and compliance with other agencies.

Action Learning Activity 2 – A Case Study to explore and contrast international partner's responses to offending

In order to draw out the differences and similarities in provision offered across the three countries, and how these would impact on the individuals journey through the criminal justice system, the evaluation team devised the following case study involving a young man with a range of problems which were not untypical of the experiences faced by many subject to supervision. Delegates were organised into three groups, with representatives from each country in each, and encouraged to explore the following questions in their discussions;

- what services are available to address John's risk/needs?
- how would John's case be managed on his release?
- in an ideal world how could you and your partners respond better to John's needs/risks?
- what are the barriers preventing you from moving towards this ideal situation?

Action Learning Activity 2 - Case Study

John is 18 years old and has been sentenced to a six month prison sentence for assault. This involved an unprovoked attack upon another young male in a local bar. John had been drinking heavily on the night of the offence. He started offending when he was 11 years of age and has numerous convictions, mainly for property related offending. Local police intelligence suggests that John's criminal activity was escalating prior to his arrest and there were concerns that he was associating with more sophisticated offenders, some of whom have convictions for possession of illegal weapons and drug supply.

John's parents divorced when he was 9 years old and he subsequently spent several short periods in care as his mother found it increasingly difficult to cope with his behaviour. He was living with his mother prior to his arrest but she has indicated she is unwilling to allow him back into the family home as she has a new partner who does not like John. As a result John is likely to be homeless on his release. John has a 12 month old son although he has never lived with his son's mother. His relationship with the child's mother has been a volatile one and there are suggestions that John was violent towards his former partner. Although John states he is keen to have contact with his son when he is released it is unlikely that the child's mother will agree to this.

John has no formal qualifications having been excluded from school when he was 13 years of age. A report by an educational psychologist indicates that his reading age is that which would be expected of a 9 year old. He was also assessed as having low self-esteem and finds it difficult to concentrate for a sustained period of time.

Summary of Feedback

In **Italy** there is usually one lead officer dealing with John's case. Normally this would be a worker from the social services department, whose responsibility would be to develop a care plan which they would subsequently be responsible for overseeing throughout the period of intervention. Addressing John's educational needs would be seen as a priority with the Diploma in Education considered compulsory and a failure to attain it would result in a learning needs assessment by social services. The education department is more engaged in working with young people like John and provision is generally more effective than other areas of work such as assisting with issues relating to debts and employment. John could apply for financial assistance on his release but welfare payments are only paid for up to three moths and he would have to prove that he had been engaged with services within the past two years. The large numbers of people working illegally, high levels of unemployment and lack of adequate welfare provision make responding challenging.

In the **Netherlands**, the Safety House would have responsibility for John and would arrange for him to be visited and assessed by a social worker prior to his release from his custodial sentence. There are also specific educational programmes available in the Netherlands to address his literacy and numeracy deficits. John would be offered practical assistance but this would be dependent on him engaging a programme of intervention. This contrasts with the **UK** experience in that delegates identified the absence of a statutory requirement for John to cooperate with agencies on his release as a barrier to responding. Any contact with John would be on a voluntary basis. A period of supervision aligned with an appropriate level of sanctions for non-compliance was seen as the differences as to whether or not individuals like John ultimately engage with services.

It was acknowledged that austere economic conditions in all jurisdictions are compromising the ability of public services to respond to people like John. It was believed that this was already resulting in an increase of criminal activity and that this would persist unless more funds were made available. In Knowsley (UK) the funding budget has been reduced by 35% and this has made the local authority much more dependent on other voluntary organisations (such as MALS) to deliver services and meet the needs of this group. However aligning work streams across different agencies and sectors was seen as problematic given stringent restrictions on how public funds can be allocated.

There were also some key structural differences identified across the three countries. In the United Kingdom, there is a developed and coordinated welfare system and there would be a statutory obligation assist John secure accommodation following his release. In the Netherlands there would be support available, such as temporary accommodation, provided on a time-limited basis but as stated above this would be in the form of supplying food vouchers, paying accommodation providers or travel expenses rather than directly giving funds to the individual for them to spend. In Italy there is no statutory obligation to provide financial support to released prisoners.

Another significant difference identified between the three countries is in terms of health provision. Whilst accessing health provision for offenders was difficult in all three jurisdictions, the availability of a National Health Service (NHS) in the United Kingdom meant that this was not tied into the individual's financial circumstances. In the Netherlands, for example, accessing drug and alcohol treatment is dependent upon whether or not the individual has health insurance. For many problematic drug users the only treatment available therefore is a methadone reduction programme, which might not be the most appropriate response for the individual nor address the wider problems relating to their drug use.

4. Afternoon Presentations

Though the vast majority of the afternoon session was taken up with group activity learning exercises there were two presentations that started the afternoon session and again the extensive slides used on both occasions are available on the website and should be used in conjunction with these brief summaries of the commentary they offered.

The Research Team (Matthew and Helen, LJMU)

The LJMU presentation reported on the on-going process evaluation and the evidence available to gauge the impact of integrated offender management interventions and of the work of MALS Merseyside specifically. The presentation was designed with the key theme of the day in mind, namely to help draw out lessons from the Knowsley experience that may helpfully guide Italian partners as they embark on service delivery. The ALS model is built around the open, honest and mutually beneficial dialogue that such shared learning should facilitate.

The presentation began by outlining the original three-tiered ambitions of the research project;

1) to conduct a recidivism analysis using Merseyside Police data;
2) to gauge Social Impact Measures using KIOM records; and,
3) to facilitate Action Learning Sets to help develop learning through collaboration.

Whilst these three objectives should all be met by the project's conclusion the often cited delay in establishing the case management system was once again highlighted. Case Management Systems are not just concerned with the more co-ordinated and monitored progression of an individual through the criminal justice system (and its different component parts). They are tools that capture the effectiveness and performance of interventions by recording a client's legal status and assessments to be made of any changes in the frequency, seriousness and nature of recorded offending behaviour. Though (at the time of writing March 2014) a case management system is due to go live imminently its absence has complicated the ability of the project to conduct the desired **recidivism analysis** as the use of alternative data systems involved extensive KIOM administrative staff inputs. With the case management system live it will be possible for the research team to relatively quickly cross-check current records and build up a picture of the impact on criminal activity.

In terms of gauging the **Social Impact Measures** the Progress Inventory forms that have been completed by KIOM staff have helped generate data that the presentation was able to make some rather broad observations at this stage;

- the pathways that had the greatest total and average scores (i.e. those the KIOM workers expressed greatest concern about in their assessment of individuals) were lack of employment opportunities, a lack of motivation to change and concerns around associating with offenders;
- a number of issues routinely returned surprisingly low scores. On a scale where 0 reflects no concerns, 1 some concern and 2 major concerns, accommodation scored an average of 0.31 across six assessments, health 0.08 and relationships 0.21 (to put that in some context the averages for lack of employment and lack of motivation were 1.9 and 1.2 respectively);
- when split between users based in the community and those in prison exactly the same order of issues are reported but the average scores (and hence concern) of those assessed in prison are much higher
- none of the pathways are significantly altered across the 6 episodic assessments

The **facilitation of Action Learning Sets** has obviously been happening and is on-going. Where the theme of ALS2 was about mentoring – its uniformity, capacity to engineer change, and place within the criminal justice system – the focus of ALS3 is on the importation of ideas and models of working into the Italian context. To this end the presentation offered brief commentary on the MALS process evaluation to help identify areas of practice that partners may draw learning from. The major issues we pulled out from the experience of the operation of mentoring services by MALS are as follows;

- **the need to ensure proposed and initial plans for mentoring projects are well thought-through and thorough in their design**. By their very nature voluntary and third sector agencies are small units with often limited experience of successfully attracting external funding and maybe there are training opportunities in proposal/bid writing that could be offered to help projects develop. In the case of MALS the absence of funding streams to fund volunteers travel has compromised the service reaching its full potential as it has often been difficult to mobilise mentors to go and work with their mentees. Whilst it must be pointed out that contingency plans have now been put in place to attempt to address this issue in Knowsley it is a good example of where speaking to those services already operating can help identify less obvious areas for funding;

- **the issues raised by the absence of a case management system**. As eluded to above, case management systems are in part about the correct and systematic processing of individuals through their experience of services (and in respect of integrated offender management about ensuring the client 'pathway' needs are matched to the correct partner agency). But they are also about being able to evidence effectiveness and to pinpoint and allow for a longitudinal assessment of changes in a client's profile and offending behaviour. Such information is useful for all partners but it can help mentoring services better identify 'trigger moments' where they may have the greatest impact;

- **the dangers and threat of skewed workloads and being unable to accurately capture innovative working practice**. A striking feature of the work MALS Merseyside's work has been the development of a small number of highly resource-intensive cases of particularly chaotic and problematic individuals.   Requiring extensive and long-term support by virtue of the combinations of issues they experience, this time investment can be off-set - and seen as finically and socially beneficial - by the fact that as ex-prisoners with extensive criminal careers (often in excess of 20 years) they are not offending whilst engaging with MALS. However, it is essential that the innovative and extensive work conducted with these individuals is recorded accurately to help decipher and reward the input the mentors make. During the lifetime of the project a reappraisal of the contact-recording model has been made and for those establishing new models of working it is important to think through the defining of key terms like 'contacts' and 'sessions' to help future planning and to more accurately measure and determine impact;

- **the need to develop and keep developing capacity**. To their credit, a long-standing objective of the MALS delivered LCP is to encourage those who engage with the programme to one day consider becoming mentors themselves, and, having reached an appropriate point in their desistance process that has happened with the appointment as mentors of one-time mentees. But also beyond this group MALS go to considerable lengths to recruit volunteers from a variety of backgrounds and this constant emphasis on recruitment is essential to the sustainability and longevity of the project (whilst also promoting civic values).

The final element of the presentation concerned a brief summary of the small scale evaluation of the first completed prison based delivery of the LCP. The key findings to emerge from this small piece of bespoke evaluation that may provide partners interested in developing similar schemes in their jurisdiction were as follows;

- the catalyst for user engagement that **the facilitator being an ex-offender** proved to be as he very quickly established a rapport with the group represented the change that is possible
- the **voluntary and non-coercive** nature of the project ensured meaningful user 'buy-in'
- the **detailed and varied timetable** of activities/themes that explored individual's motivations for committing crime and set about testing their ambitions to think/behave differently
- the powerful role the **group dynamics** played in ensuring people engaged and collectively explored the topics being discussed in thematic sessions
- the importance of a **relaxed and comfortable environment** to maximise engagement
- the significant role that **guest speakers** (including victims of crime and medical professionals) had on the participants and how much more willing they were to listen to these voices
- the **support of prison staff** was seen as vital as lending gravitas to the project and made participants reflect more positively upon these officers
- the importance of the potential channels of **'through-care support'** and the on-going input MALS are prepared to provide both in and outside the prison meant individuals didn't feel abandoned

Italy (Iskender, ERI)

- The presentation built on the momentum Italian partners had already generated through their contributions in the morning session about the work the ERI are currently undertaking and are planning to develop further in rolling out the LCP. The main thrust of the presentation was to showcase a recently developed software package that offers the case management capability seen as so crucial to the intentions operational in all three partners' jurisdictions. This was seen as especially significant as Iskender expressed his concerns that agencies do not work well together in Italy so the ERI are thinking that a safety house approach would really help them.

- The ERI have developed a cloud website where documents can be shared between mentor and tutor and eventually social services and the psychologist. The ERI will retain control and oversight of the software and will retain the power to grant the necessary levels of authorised access to documents and for users to be able to log in and upload new materials.

- Access would be granted to individuals on two Levels, one of greater sensitively than the other. Level 1 is for core documentation whilst Level 2 is for information/files of a much more personal and confidential nature. Only mentor and tutors will log in and add to Level 2 files.

- The ERI are currently only able to offer case studies of how the system works but the hope is that as more partners engage the software will become a tool for effectiveness management and then can feed into court processes to evidence an individual's engagement with the LCP.

- It is hoped that the LCP will operate as closely to the Knowsley model as possible with internships in a social enterprise designed to replicate MALS work placements. The two social enterprises already lined up to support the project are a cafe restaurant and an oven bakery.

- Throughout their time on the ERI administered LCP it is hoped expected that users will have access to a psychologist to provide support for individual's esteem and psychological well-being
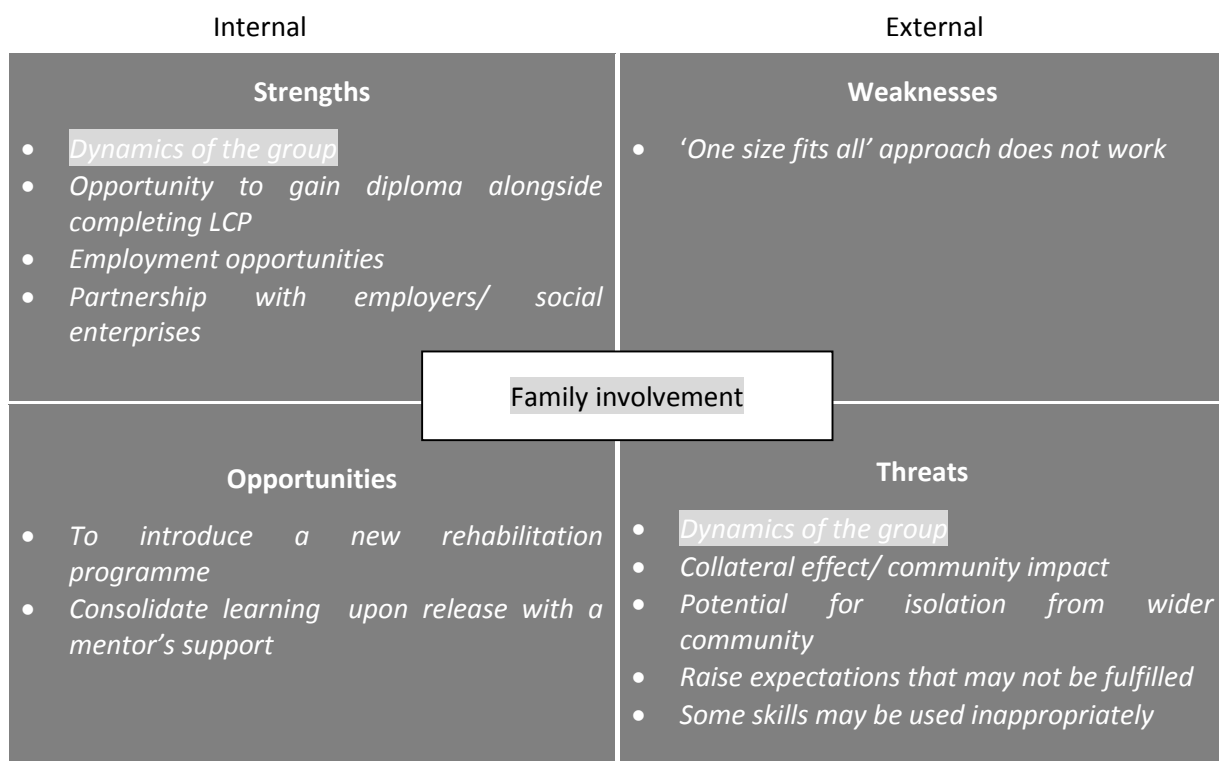
5. Planning ahead

Action Learning Activity 3 - SWOT analysis

This planning and evaluation tool provides a snapshot of a situation and can be used in a review situation to highlight areas of strength, weakness, opportunity and threat (SWOT). The technique involves stating the objectives (in this case the implementation of the LCP) and identifying the internal and external factors that either support or militate against achieving that objective. Hence the SWOT analysis can be used to help make decisions about the best path for effective implementation of the LCP. Three action learning groups were established for this particular workshop activity. Each group was led by an Italian delegate. The groups were asked to address the following key question:

- **Discuss the potential strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the rolling out of the LCP in Italy in respect of either social and educational issues, law enforcement and juristic issues or employment and psychological issues**

Social and Education Issues

Internal	External
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
 • *Dynamics of the group* • *Opportunity to gain diploma alongside completing LCP* • *Employment opportunities* • *Partnership with employers/ social enterprises*	 • *'One size fits all' approach does not work*

Family involvement

Opportunities	**Threats**
 • *To introduce a new rehabilitation programme* • *Consolidate learning upon release with a mentor's support*	 • *Dynamics of the group* • *Collateral effect/ community impact* • *Potential for isolation from wider community* • *Raise expectations that may not be fulfilled* • *Some skills may be used inappropriately*

With regard to social and educational issues, the significance of family support straddles both the strengths and weaknesses boxes. This is because family involvement in the process is seen as both a positive factor but also an obstacle to rehabilitation and personal planning if they are not there to support. It was felt that the UK could learn from Italy around the **relative ease that young people can gain their high school diploma alongside, in this case, completing the LCP. This was seen as a key strength of the project in Italy alongside the partnership with employers and social enterprises**.

The discussion around this SWOT analysis also cautioned around attempting to implement a standard LCP regardless of the nuances of the participants and the cultural context. What was termed collateral impact was also discussed. This referred to the possibility that young people within the community seeking social attention may potentially behave in inappropriate ways in order to garner the social attention that the LCP offers. Another issue raised concerned the need for **careful matching within the groups going through the LCP**. If careful cohort matching was not undertaken this raised the spectre of more experienced criminals influencing less experienced offenders. However if the group dynamics are well balanced this can be a real strength of the LCP.

Employment and Psychological Issues

Internal	External
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
• *Internship as a novel way of tackling ETE needs* • *Identify and assess strengths of individual* • *Motivate people to change* • *Psychological support through life of project*	• *No 'ex –offender' involved* • *Pay volunteers or risk lose them to paid work* • *Not integrated with psychological approaches*
Opportunities	**Threats**
• *New psychological case studies* • *New chance for people still in old system* • *Innovative approach for tutor and offender*	• *Money* • *Engagement of partners/ offenders* • *Uncertain if it will work* • *Information sharing*

Production of a set of guidelines with transnational applicability for tutors/ mentors in both the UK and Italy

In feedback, the rapporteur for this SWOT analysis on employment and psychological issues pointed out that an over-riding potential strength but also a weakness, opportunity and threat is the possibility of **generating a set of best practice guidelines for tutors and mentors based on delivery of LCP in both the UK and Italy** based on what is discovered over the next 18 months. In Italy, employment is considered as a fundamental human right yet it is also a major problem in this period of austerity and global slowdown. Hence whilst the internship idea is prized as strength of the programme that will be implemented in Italy it also presents significant challenges in delivery. It is hoped that Italy's **strong network of social enterprises** and the co-operative ethos will support this particular delivery target. The internship/work placement idea is far from novel. The community based LCP delivered in the UK had a built-in work experience internship and this was seen as an integral feature of the behaviour and attitude changing agenda of the programme. The production of a set of guidelines for tutors and mentors was interpreted in several ways and seen as spanning the boundaries of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It was viewed as a 'double-edge sword' in that it brought pressure in terms of key performance targets for the numbers engaged (a perceived weakness and a threat). It was also viewed in terms of a guidance manual for those new to mentoring and this could be extremely helpful in sharing knowledge (strength and an opportunity).

Law Enforcement and Juristic Issues

Internal   External

Strengths	Weaknesses
• *Sharing knowledge and experience* • *Communication between the various agencies involved* • *Reducing reoffending*	• *New idea at present but could become unfashionable and outmoded in a few years* • *Funding* • *Difficulties managing volunteers who may drift in and out of the programme*
Opportunities	**Threats**
• *Mentoring programme and its evolution* • *Guidance provided by older mentors to juveniles*	• *Personal backgrounds of the mentors if they become reoffenders* • *Mentor-offender relationship and possibility of negative influence on very young*

Voluntary

The discussion on this SWOT analysis focused on the relationship between the mentors and offenders. It was suggested that the possibility of friendships forming could lead to both parties losing sight of the programme's real goal. This could be a significant issue for young mentors who may be more impressionable. In addition, where ex-offenders mentor offenders the risk to both parties of returning to the 'offending environment' needed to be assessed. In the MALS model, not all mentors are ex-offenders. **The MALS mentoring training also places great emphasis on boundaries and risk assessment between mentors and mentees**. With regard to the perceived weakness of managing volunteers, Italy can also take good practice from MALS in that the MALS model clearly stipulates the desired time commitments from volunteers at the outset. Volunteers are informed that if they cannot give the requisite 3-4 hours per week for 12 months, then they should not start the course at this time. Clearly volunteers' personal circumstances may unexpectedly change during this period but with sufficient notice, flexible adjustments can be made.

Action Learning Activity 4: SMART action planning

This workshop activity was designed to allow delegates to discuss and identify an action plan around a particular or set of objectives within a foreseeable time frame. SMART (**s**pecific, measurable, **a**chievable, **r**ealistic and **t**ime-based) plans layout a clearly defined set of actions that each national delegate grouping commits to undertaking within a specified period following the action learning set meeting. In this case, the idea is to review these SMART plans at the next action learning set meeting in September 2014 whilst recognising that some of the propose achievements need longer to germinate.

Knowsley SMART plan

Specific		Measurable	Agreed	Realistic	Timely
What specifically is to be achieved?	*What are the specific actions that need to be taken?*	*What will be the key tangible measures of success?*	*Who needs to agree with this action to ensure its successful completion?*	*How realistic is it that this action can be fully achieved*	*What is it that makes this the right time to be pursuing this action?*
4 LCPS in prison with 12 offenders on each	Offenders identified and target number met	Courses complete	MALS. KMBC/ HMP Liverpool	Green[1]	Transforming Rehabilitation Agenda
Funding streams identified to ensure sustainability	Identify funding and apply	Number of successful applications	MALS/ KMBS/ Partners	Amber	Payment by Results
Volunteers engaged and trained	Ensure each volunteer has a personal development plan	Number of volunteers retained over a 12 month period	KCVS/ MALS	Amber	Need to evidence impact for EU funding
CORVUS – implementation of the case management system	CORVUS goes live in March 2014 and produces quarterly performance information	Live in 03/14 and production of quarterly performance information	Merseyside Police/ KMBC	Amber and Red	Need to evidence impact for EU funding

Knowsley, MALS and their partners have set some clear objectives around the scale of implementation and delivery of the LCP. The availability of a functioning case management system (CORVUS) is also prioritised. Whether CORVUS will deliver in the way intended in the initial timeframe is a cause for concern.

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[1] Like the traffic light colour coding system green means 'go or yes', amber means 'caution or possibly' and red means 'stop or no'

ERI SMART plan

Specific		Measurable	Agreed	Realistic	Timely
What specifically is to be achieved?	*What are the specific actions that need to be taken?*	*What will be the key tangible measures of success?*	*Who needs to agree with this action to ensure its successful completion?*	*How realistic is it that this action can be fully achieved*	*What is it that makes this the right time to be pursuing this action?*
Test the LCP with minors	Test it on 10 minors	At least 2 minors succeed in LCP	Minors Social Services Criminal Justice System	Understand the role of each participant and to identify participants	MALS experience can be successful best practice to follow
Test the LCP with adults	Try to test it with adults	Involve at least 1 adult	An adult	Understand the role of each participant and to identify participants	The economic crisis, lack of job opportunities and wide engagement
Improve/ empower network	Actions at local and international levels	Strengthening of local and international networks	MALS Knowsley Den Haag LJMU	Bureaucracy/ legal problems	The system is overcrowded and this could help to smooth the procedure
Enable ex-offenders to become tutors/ mentors	Look at best practice Training guidelines for mentors	Involve (train) at least 1 mentor	Ex-offenders MALS, Knowsley, Den Haag, LJMU	Find an ex-offender who could become a volunteer mentor is essential	

The ERI plan focuses upon a trial run of the LCP using the best practice from the MALS model. Initially the LCP will be trialled on a small cohort of minors primarily. In addition efforts will be made to recruit ex-offender mentors. The support, direction and open communication channels between the EU project partners are prized by ERI in delivering on this SMART plan.

City of The Hague SMART plan

Specific		Measurable	Agreed	Realistic	Timely
What specifically is to be achieved?	*What are the specific actions that need to be taken?*	*What will be the key tangible measures of success?*	*Who needs to agree with this action to ensure its successful completion?*	*How realistic is it that this action can be fully achieved*	*What is it that makes this the right time to be pursuing this action?*
Implementation of a new standard 'system' orientated approach in the way of working represents a significant move away from person-oriented policy programmes for offenders that recognises the multi-faceted pathways in and out of offending and within these the significance of the family. In other words the intervention programme is targeted at the offender and members of her/his family (one plan, one c-coordinator with partner organisations involved in its implementation	Identify families with one or more criminal members Analyse all family members over a 5-10 year period Identify interventions from the justice system,, local authority and social workers Examine what services have been delivered and evaluate their success Organise a meeting of relevant partners	Interventions Shared problem analysis and an inventory of the situation *vis-a-vis* all persons involved at the start of the process One plan, one coordinator with all partners in agreement about the interventions	Participating partner organisations in the Safety House 9 local authorities for which the Safety House has jurisdiction Ministry of Justice	The model presupposes excellent communication between the partner organisations on all levels as well as political support	Emerging new ideas about social work. Responsibility for youth care will be decentralised to local authorities in 2015 Growing awareness of the added value provided by a system oriented approach

This SMART plan is based on the idea that the involvement of the system/ the family in an action programme increases the likelihood of re-offending.

6. Key Issues for Partners/Delegates to consider

There would appear to be a few enduring issues it would be helpful for delegates to consider;

- **Establish the extent to which the LCP can be imported into the Italian context**. MALS Merseyside are embedded into the Knowsley Integrated Offender Management Project and have a clear remit to work with adult offenders referred to the organisation through this programme. For the ERI the situation is less certain with (at present) no clear referral mechanisms and vagueness surrounding the target group (young people and/or adults, and intervening pre-criminal justice engagement or after as a referral option). Establishing the extent to which the LCP can be delivered in Turin, and the support EU partners can offer in helping this process, is key to the longer ambitions and objectives of the whole project.

- **The need to continually assess the status and potential development of computerised case management systems (and where possible sharing and developing best/good practice)**. ALS4 has seen the ERI showcase the software package they have developed, UK partners were confident a police-led system would soon be operational, whilst ALS 1 showed how much further ahead the Dutch information technology systems were. There would appear to be great potential for partners to share (amongst others things) their experiences of determining levels of accessibility for associate agencies, performance management/measurement criteria, and information sharing agreements. The increasing importance to be placed on the measurable outcomes of interventions and the ability of coherent case management systems to capture and tease out successful interventions serves to highlight the benefits that flow from ensuring software packages are in place and operational.

- **The need to establish where partner agencies and organisations are positioning themselves in changing criminal justice landscapes**. In the UK the rolling out of the Transforming Rehabilitation agenda and the profound shifts taking place in the provision of offender management/support services has consequences for both statutory and voluntary sector organisations. In the Netherlands the adoption of the Safety House model in municipalities beyond The Hague and the increased role for local authority managers may have implications for the operations of the Safety House. For the ERI the challenge would appear to be in establishing a version of the LCP as a viable referral option in a criminal justice system that appears to utilise limited referral interventions. The broader challenges that shape the criminal justice landscapes partners find themselves within will inevitably impact upon the stability and performance of the interventions we've been examining through the Action Learning Sets.

- **The extent to which the delivery of mentoring should be structured and uniform**. Echoing a question raised in the report for ALS2 but brought into sharper focus now by the development of in-prison based LCP schemes in Knowsley and the ERI embarking on working with young people there is a need to keep reflecting upon the level of consistency and coherence in these modes of delivery. For the collective learning of all there is much to be gained from assessing the experiences of delivery models that are stretched over different time periods, are delivered in very different settings, and by mentors of varying backgrounds. Also it is necessary to examine the inevitable business-like pressures that govern resource allocation and planning decisions, that could determine that mentoring services look to develop more regimented courses of interaction even if that may compromise some of their innovation and person-centred approaches

7. Appendix 1: Participants

All participants in the Action Learning Set were provided with information sheets about the European Reoffending Research Project and consent forms were completed.

Morning session attendees were:

- Hans Metzemakers – Department of Public Order and Safety, The Hague
- Sjoerd van der Luijt - Safety House , The Hague
- Teun de Frel - Safety House, The Hague
- Iskender Forioso – Researcher, European Research Institute
- Federico Floris – Practitioner, European Research Institute
- Stipan Forioso – Practitioner, European Research Institute
- Paula Sumner – Manager of Community Safety Services (including KIOM and Domestic Violence Victim Groups), Knowsley Borough Council, UK
- Louise Thomas – Area Community Safety Manager (Prescott and Halewood), Knowsley Borough Council, UK
- Yvonne Mason – Temporary Project Coordinator, Knowsley Borough Council, UK
- Kate Myers – Merseyside Police, KIOM, UK
- Clare Donohue - MALS manager (Mentoring offenders who leave prison and delivering the Life Change Project), Merseyside, UK
- Anthony Evans – MALS, Merseyside, UK
- Giles Barrett, Helen Beckett Wilson, Matthew Millings and Lol Burke, Liverpool John Moores University, UK

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY
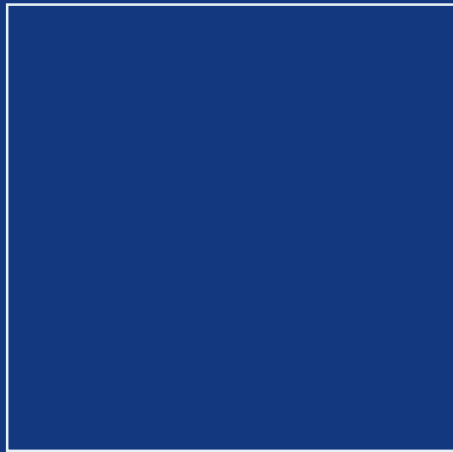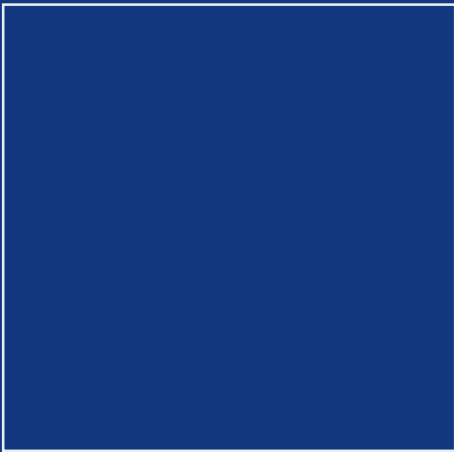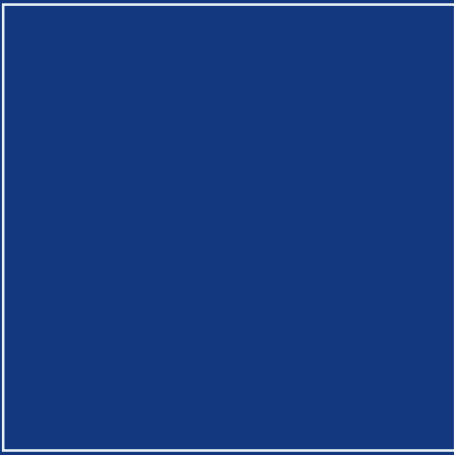
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