



Summary of National Equal Offender Network (NEON) projects:

EXODUS (LP: SEEDA)

EXODUS represents a unique collaboration between the Prison and Probation Areas for London and the South East, together with Regional Development Agencies, Government Offices and the voluntary sector to develop effective interventions with short term prisoners and prolific offenders. It particularly aims to model good practice in anticipation of the implementation of Custody Plus and is developing an integrated induction and assessment process in custody to facilitate effective "through the gate" services.

Partners will work together, ensuring the needs of target groups are identified and addressed effectively, ensuring a planned transition from custody to community to the workplace, and work with employers to promote equality of opportunity for ex-offenders.

Exodus will implement innovative models of intervention in identified pilot areas.

Women into Work: Moving On (LP: SOVA)

This project aims to identify and challenge barriers to employment, training and education for women who have experienced disadvantage, particularly through their experience of the Criminal Justice System.

The target groups for the programme include women with:

- Experience of the Criminal Justice System
- Experience of work in the sex industry
- Poor/inadequate housing
- Experience of being victims of mental, physical and sexual abuse
- Low levels of qualifications and skills
- Physical and mental health problems, including HIV and AIDS.

Partners are engaged in delivering innovative empowering projects to meet actual, not perceived need, including:

- Work with employers to fill skills gaps and shortages
- Facilitating the development of social enterprises in prison which can be continued upon release
- Training women to run prison radio stations
- Holistic interventions for women from custody to release
- Peer research and support methodologies
- Family mediation
- M-learning.

Reachout (LP: NIACRO)

This project, based in Northern Ireland, is building on the outcomes of a previous project (Personal Progression System) which focussed on pre-release employability training. In the current project, the focus is on ex-offenders in the community and building links with employers with “hard to fill” vacancies. The Reachout project will develop strategies that engage employers thereby ensuring that the demand side of the labour market is prepared to engage with the motivated, trained ex-offender. This will take the form of customised training to employers who are referred by Business in the Community, and by the generation of work based training and placement opportunities for ex-offenders, based on models developed in the disability sector (incentives etc.). This project is developing models of peer mentoring and works very closely with the Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland.

RESET (LP: Rainer)

RESET aims to challenge and influence cross departmental government policy by re-engineering resettlement practice for imprisoned juveniles. Ultimately the aim is to enable young offenders to achieve sustainable integration in the labour market.

The research will also focus on juvenile females, reengaging offenders with their families, resettlement mentoring, and the models applicability to young adult offenders.

The lead partner is Rainer and the partnership contains every government agency with a juvenile resettlement brief, plus key national voluntary and community organisations.

Unlocking Potential (LP: South Wales Probation Area)

Unlocking Potential’s partnership brings together Probation Service, Prisons and Jobcentre Plus in South Wales along with the Welsh Development Agency, Welsh Assembly Government, Careers Advisers and other relevant employer and voluntary organisations. The partnership is working to develop effective ways of working with employers and ex-offenders to “unlock potential” both in terms of meeting employers’ labour requirements and in order to improve ex-offenders’ opportunities to access the labour market.

The partnership will test new multi-agency approaches to working with the target group (employers and ex-offenders) in order to change the hearts and minds of employers to overcome prejudice and discrimination against individuals with a criminal record. The partners are committed to demonstrating to employers the social and economic reasons for employing ex-offenders. This multi-agency approach will also be used to empower, encourage and motivate ex-offenders to access labour market opportunities.

IMPACT: Changing Directions (LP: HMPS)

This project is focussed on barriers to self-employment for prisoners classified as either sex offenders or presenting “Risks to Children” and will involve an element of action research with approximately 75 prisoners serving sentences as either HMP Risley or HMP Wymott. The project will include the trialling of intensive community based supervision, the development of risk assessment tools and work closely with the Police, National Probation Service and other relevant partners. It will also develop a prison-based enterprise training programme; drawing up individual

business plans and the development of a small business support network designed to encourage sustainability.

**IMPACT: Ascend
(LP: HMPS)**

This project is focussed on ex-offenders from Black and Minority Ethnic communities, who are doubly disadvantaged in the labour market. Ascend will tackle cultural and institutional barriers and issues facing BME ex-offenders by engaging community and voluntary sector organisations to deliver key resettlement objectives for the target group. It will also tackle institutional barriers to progression and open up routes to employment for the target group by challenging patterns of discrimination and inequality in the labour market.

**IMPACT – Asset (lead partner
HMPS)**

This project is focussed on three categories of ex-offenders:
16-21 year old adult males
50+ year old males
16-65 year old females
The project aims to prove that a multi-agency case management approach coupled with a holistic delivery model is key to place the target groups on an equal footing with regard to economic reintegration. It will do this by engaging the voluntary sector to deliver key resettlement objectives, development of tools, methodologies and networks to enhance employability to test the support mechanisms needed to help the target groups to access the labour market. It will also build links to employer groups to promote the business case for a diverse workforce and employment of ex-offenders.

Links to National policy / legislation

- Criminal Justice Act 2003
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Social Exclusion Unit – Reducing Re-offending by ex-prisoners (2002)
- Jobcentre Plus – New Deal Employment Option – payment of employer subsidies.
- Welsh Assembly Government – Crime Reduction Unit
- Welsh Development Agency – Business advice provided through SME Equalities Project
- “Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime”, December 2003 (Carter Report)
- “Reducing Crime, Changing Lives”, January 2004.
- Criminal Justice Act 2003 (specifically Custody Plus)
- Prolific and Other Priority Offender Strategy
- SEU Report Reducing Reoffending by ex-Prisoners
- The National Reducing Reoffending Action Plan
- Rehabilitation of Prisoners – Home Affairs Committee Report, January 2005
- The Future of Local Government: Developing a 10-year vision’

All projects are working with a wide range of European partners to develop new models of intervention, share good practice and test transferability of ideas, tools and methodologies.