

WORKING WITH YOUNG OFFENDERS

The Foyer Federation Resettlement & Rehabilitation Strategy

The Foyer Federation is developing a national strategy to describe how Foyers can help to reduce the number of young people involved in criminal behaviour and help them make the transition to an independent, crime-free adulthood.

Following consultations with Foyers already working with this group, the Federation carried out a wider consultation with statutory, public and third sector organisations to assess the political appetite, practical implications, funding potential and timescale for delivery of its proposed approach.

This paper is the outcome of those consultations.

Transforming opportunities for young people

About the Foyer Federation

There are 14 million 14-30 year olds living in the UK today and as many as one in five will experience disadvantage because they lack the skills, resources and opportunities to take control of their lives and realise their potential as active and engaged young citizens. Some have grown up in the care system, some have experienced family breakdown or may themselves have become parents in their teens. All too often they will have had to fend for themselves before they have had the chance to build the experience and resilience they need to face the challenges of adult life.

For almost two decades, the Foyer Federation has helped turn young people's experiences of disadvantage into solutions that support their transition into adult independence. We develop transformational programmes and campaigns that fill gaps in community services and inspire policy and decision makers to make a more effective investment in young people. Successful examples range from supported housing, training and employment projects, to homeless prevention initiatives, including transitional learning and health programmes, a university bursary scheme and campaigns for welfare reform. The direct experience of vulnerable young people and those working with them helps inform our understanding of the barriers facing young people and develop new approaches to overcome them. The success of our approaches can be demonstrated both in the UK and overseas. Until now, the Foyer Federation's work has largely been channelled through integrated learning and accommodation centres, often known as Foyers. Foyers now operate in over 130 urban and rural communities across the UK, providing safe, quality assured environments, where experts reconnect up to 10,000 vulnerable young people each year with personal development opportunities.

The Foyer Federation Resettlement & Rehabilitation Strategy

BACKGROUND

By any assessment the outcomes achieved by the present youth justice system are poor. While there have been reductions in youth crime, first time entrants and the frequency of reoffending, the overall results continue to be unsatisfactory. Similarly reductions in the number of children in custody and the increasing proportion of offenders entering education, training and employment are encouraging, but the outcomes for many remain poor. A large proportion of the young people involved are both perpetrators and victims and the damage suffered by the communities in which they live and the impact on their lives is long lasting. Successive governments and agencies have introduced a complex range of measures to reduce criminal activity among young people and prevent them reoffending and, as a result, some young people have been able to move away from crime and achieve the transition into crime-free adulthood. But, despite such successes, the high numbers of convictions and the unacceptable levels of reoffending are evidence that the system as a whole is failing to meet the needs of the majority of young people who have engaged in crime, as well as failing the expectations of society as a whole.

Research conducted on behalf of the Youth Justice Board showed that offending rates were significantly influenced by the quality of relationships, the availability of key support services and by 'purposeful and co-ordinated resettlement'. As we approach a general election and a

THE COSTS OF FAILURE

- England and Wales imprison proportionately more of their young people than almost all other European countries¹
- 25% of young people in detention have literacy levels below those of an average seven year old²
- Persistent young offenders commit on average 15 crimes per year and spend up to 7 months per year in custody³
- The annual cost of detaining a young offender in the present system costs around £100,000, more than double the cost of sending them to Eton⁴
- Of the 10,000 young offenders who are detained each year, almost 80% will reoffend within two years of their release⁵
- Research conducted by the Prince's Trust estimates that youth crime costs Great Britain in excess of £1billion per year⁶
- 1. 'Out of Trouble' The Prison Reform Trust, 2009
- 'The Role of Literacy in Offending Behaviour' The National Literacy Trust, 2008
- National Literacy Trust, 2008

 B. Home Office Crime & Justice Survey, 2003-2006
- 4. 'Punishing Costs' New Economics Foundation, 2010
- 5. 'Children in Trouble with the Law' Barnardo's, 2009 6. 'The Cost of Exclusion' - The Prince's Trust, 2007

period of severe public expenditure restraint, politicians of all parties are increasingly coming to the view that the system needs to change; with Labour's Youth Crime Action Plan calling for more support to reduce reoffending and the Conservatives, asserting that, instead of creating more custodial places, we need a 'rehabilitation revolution' to cut the soaring costs of reoffending.

But the successful rehabilitation of young offenders is much more than just a political imperative, it is a matter of importance to everyone in society; whether they are concerned about having a safer community, reducing the burden on the taxpayer or the welfare of one of the most disadvantaged groups in the United Kingdom.

OBJECTIVE

For almost two decades, the Foyer Federation has helped turn young people's experiences of disadvantage into solutions that support their transition into adult independence. We develop transformational programmes and campaigns that fill gaps in community services and inspire policy and decision makers to make a more effective investment in young people. The Foyer

THE GENERATIONAL CYCLE OF OFFENDING

Prisoners are much more likely to be socially excluded than the general population¹. They are:

- 13 times as likely to have been in care as a child¹
- 13 times as likely to have been unemployed¹
- 10 times as likely to have been a regular truant¹
- 2.5 times as likely to have had a family member convicted of a criminal offence¹

The most prolific young offenders start early and, on average, are convicted by the time they are 13. They tend to commit the most serious crimes and go on to become prolific offenders in adulthood².

1. 'The Cost of Exclusion' - The Prince's Trust, 2007 2. 'Trial and Error' - New Philanthropy Capital, 2010 Federation seeks to respond to the challenge of youth crime by creating and promoting a sustainable national approach to deliver a transformational change in the services provided for young people who have offending backgrounds; who are serving custodial or community sentences; or who are at risk of offending. An approach designed both to reduce the current unacceptable levels of reoffending and to break the generational cycle of offending that prevents so many young offenders sustain the transition to independent, crime-free adulthood.

This new approach will provide intensive prevention, preparation and progressive interventions aimed at changing behaviours, developing skills, building resilience and opening up opportunities. It will focus on achieving positive change by working directly with young people and by supporting service providers and others with an interest in and responsibility for achieving positive outcomes. Delivered through a network of flagship centres in urban and rural locations using existing Foyers and other youth projects, the approach will help create local delivery

platforms for the range of integrated accommodation and support services that young offenders need. Success and sustainability will depend on the creation of more formalised relationships with local Youth Offending Teams and other statutory agencies and organisations.

At the heart of the process, the Foyer Federation's Transformational Asset Framework will be used to monitor consistency and innovation and ensure that local partners and practitioners invest in the right skills, resources and opportunities. Their investment will form part of a Social Compact with young people as they make the transition away from offending lifestyles towards sustainable livelihoods. Developed over many years and rooted in authoritative national and international research, the Foyer Federation's Asset Framework sets out the context within which commissioners and providers deliver transformational services and defines:

- The physical, social and economic capital and capabilities needed to achieve them;
- The competence and capacity to sustain excellence and innovation; and
- The breadth and depth of their impact on the communities they serve.

WHY FOCUS ON ASSETS?

Traditionally assets have been seen as tangible possessions which give future benefit; by contributing to cash flow, providing security or enabling the purchase of services. However, assets can also mean personal qualities, skills, contacts and other resources that add value to lives and opportunities to futures. Changing perspectives to embrace a wider interpretation of assets is what our vision is about.

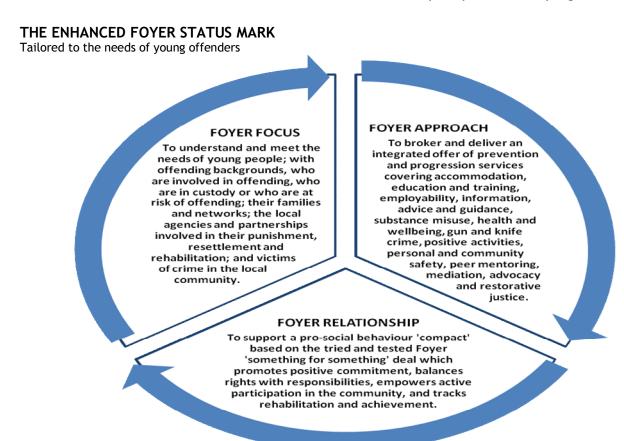
We believe that the crucial assets, both for an individual and the services supporting them, are not just physical or financial, but lie within the character, culture and context of how things are done and experienced. These are the assets of transformational behaviour.

Being able to articulate a broader and more complex understanding of what assets an individual or service might have, and what assets they need, is the beginning of thinking in a transformational way. We need to understand more about the identity of assets, how they are developed, their inter-relationships and their impact on outcomes and we need a better approach to shaping them for the future.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

The programme will be delivered through a network of flagship Foyers and foyer-like projects, which will harness local skills, resources and opportunities to deliver thriving outcomes for young people with experience of the youth justice system. The present absence of continuity, integration and quality in the provision of services for vulnerable young people often exacerbates the obstacles to be overcome and our overriding objective is to ensure that every child, regardless of their background and circumstances, achieves the expectations of the Government's Every Child Matters programme. For which purpose, the core principles of the Foyer Federation's quality assurance process will be very relevant.

Service providers will be encouraged to gain accredited status by working towards an enhanced version of the Federation's Foyer Status Mark, tailored to practice models which help deliver the Youth Crime Action Plan and with specific incentives for commissioners and providers to pilot innovative interventions that can further the reach and impact of the foyer process. Ongoing benchmarking will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of local investments, measured through a process that encourages the young person to track the development of their own unique learning journey and Social Compact. The programme will also explore new approaches to the collection of data, both to evidence its achievements and to quality assure the programme.



PARTNERSHIP PLATFORM

At present a local Foyer is usually one small player among a range of agencies with responsibility or interest in providing services for young people involved in the youth justice system. Within this field there will be beacons of outstanding work by individuals, who are achieving tangible changes in the lives of young people, and there will also be exemplary projects, with a proven

record of success in reducing offending behaviour. Yet, despite this, the majority of young offenders reoffend, most are reconvicted within one year of being discharged, many go on to become human fillers of the adult prison system and far too many remain a cost to public funds without making any positive contribution to society or the communities in which they live. Efforts to correct these systemic defects are often sporadic, lack cohesion and coordination, are under-resourced and ad hoc and many well intentioned individuals and organisations have now become part of the problem rather than part of the solution.

This notwithstanding, even in the present environment some Foyers have developed close relationships with local partners, but these are usually informal, personal and seldom underpinned by formal agreements. For the purpose of this programme Foyers would subscribe to a formal commitment to engage with local partners; to provide reports and information, to reduce youth crime and to encourage young offenders and those at risk of offending to make the transition to independent, crime-free adulthood. This will constitute a major commitment and the credibility of each local partnership will be assessed against these agreements.

To support this local objective, the Foyer Federation will establish a National Advisory Group; which will set national strategy and issue guidance for the development and coordination of services. It will review progress, assess performance and seek to address national policy issues. Its members will be widely drawn and will necessarily include representatives of the statutory, custodial, local government, education, employment, health and housing services.

WHY FOCUS ON FOYERS?

- There are over 130 Foyers in the UK, located in some of the most deprived areas of the country
- Foyers have a proven record of engagement with traditionally hard to reach groups
- The 'conditionality' of the Foyer contract is particularly appropriate for those whom traditional engagement routes have failed
- Foyers already support young people with a wide range of specialist needs, including care leavers, young offenders, young parents and refugees
- The Foyer mix of residents with different needs and aspirations, helps them promote residents as role models and encourage peer leadership
- Foyers are the UK's foremost providers of accommodation, linked to integrated education, training and support

DELIVERY PLATFORM

All parties to the programme would recognise that participating organisations also have individual objectives and other significant relationships. These would include delivery of the Youth Crime Action Plan, Local Area Agreement targets, Children's Trust plans and Youth Offending Board objectives. This programme must operate in collaboration with such arrangements and not duplicate or compete with them, but as a minimum we would expect local delivery platforms to:

- Replace ad hoc relationships with Youth Offending Teams and other partners with effective, formalised partnerships and joint practices;
- Deliver successful Intensive Support & Supervision Programmes and other community sentences which benefit young offenders and increase public confidence in non-custodial sentencing;
- Develop encounter programmes with prison inmates and Foyer residents, which build confidence and form part of coherent crime prevention plans;
- Establish family reconciliation services for offenders excluded from their families;
- Promote the use of ex-offenders as mentors and support the involvement of Foyers and offenders in the practice of restorative justice;
- Establish Foyers as a platform for the delivery of elements of the Youth Crime Action Plan;

- Improve the training of Foyer staff to enable them to better support and work more effectively with young offenders, ex-offenders and other agencies; and
- Develop links with local employers prepared to offer training and jobs to ex-offenders and provide the necessary local support to sustain such people in work for at least the first six months after completion of the programme.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

The National Advisory Group and each local partnership will agree specific definitions of success, but, within twelve months of launching the programme, a measurable improvement in the quality of services should be demonstrated, including progress towards some of the following:

- Improved outcomes for young people in Foyers;
- Reduced rates of reoffending among young people on the programme; and
- Better engagement of young offenders in education, training and employment.

WHY THE FOYER FEDERATION?

- We are an organisation committed to transforming the institutions, policies and circumstances that affect the lives of disadvantaged young people
- We have 18 years experience of shaping and quality assuring services for vulnerable young people and a proven ability to stretch and inspire the organisations that deliver them
- We work in partnership with delivery organisations who share our vision of 'raising the bar', endorse our commitment to transformational change and whose experience and expertise inform every aspect of our work
- Through our partners we have access to learning and best practice across the public and third sectors, including direct experience of working with care leavers, young offenders, teenage parents and refugees
- Our local, national, urban and rural reach allows us to develop approaches that impact on both policy and practice and enable us to influence the lives of young people experiencing disadvantage however they are housed

NEXT STEPS

In January 2010 the Foyer Federation circulated a draft Resettlement & Rehabilitation Strategy within the Foyer network and to many other agencies and organisations with particular responsibility for reducing youth crime and the present high levels of reoffending. Many of these organisations responded to this consultation by offering advice and suggestions for the improvement of the proposed strategy.

During this process we learned of many examples of good practice from individual Foyers and local partners which are delivering effective crime prevention, resettlement and rehabilitation services for young offenders and those at risk of crime and antisocial behaviour. Contributions were focussed on the following topics and these will be used to shape detailed guidance for flagship Foyers and others, including:

- How Foyers and similar centres can add value to local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships;
- The essential requirements for a local "flagship" project;
- Ways to engage Foyer service users and residents with local crime prevention initiatives;
- The means by which commissioners of services can exploit and replicate examples of excellence;
- How we might encourage the Foyer's network of
- supporters, including local employers, to engage with resettlement programmes;
- The need to identify the obstacles to effective cross-sectoral partnerships and the means of overcoming them; and

• Approaches by which the Foyer Federation can strengthen its engagement with present and potential strategic partners at a national level.

The results of our consultation have been studied carefully and, where appropriate, incorporated into this revised document. In other instances the advice will be built into ongoing development work with flagship Foyers and others in the future.

Directly flowing from this and as part of our ongoing development; we are establishing test-bed projects in the North West and South West, linked to YJB consortia pilot areas. Working with two of our core investors (Arena Options and Sanctuary Housing), we will be producing a 'delivery platform' guide, that will explore and shape how an enhanced resettlement and rehabilitation offer based on Foyers could function at the local level. The initial findings from this work, which will be used to encourage the involvement of more Foyers in the consortia areas and beyond, will be presented to the Foyer Practice Event in July 2010 and will feed into the future benchmarking of Foyer performance data with an enhanced focus on outcomes for young offenders.

In addition to its interest in youth crime, the Foyer Federation continues to promote a range of national initiatives that fill gaps in community services and inspire policy and decision makers to make more effective investments. These will help inform the development of the delivery platform and will be key elements of any emerging youth crime and rehabilitation initiatives.

CURRENT NATIONAL INITIATIVES INCLUDE:

- Healthy Transitions A programme funded by the Big Lottery which incorporates life coaching approaches, measures to track health outcomes, interventions around healthy eating, physical activities and mental well being.
- Working Assets A TSA funded programme which has explored how young people can tackle the problems associated with employability and how they might build and recognise a future asset base though involvement in community projects.
- <u>Creating a Better Youth Offer</u> A Paul Hamlyn Foundation funded programme to examine the
 conditionality which is a central element of the Foyer approach to the engagement of young
 people. Through National Investment Forums young leaders will develop positive social behaviour
 contracts to empower them to identify their skills, resources and opportunities.
- MyNav A Business, Innovation & Skills funded programme to explore the means by which young people can be helped to navigate positive journeys, through the creation of informal learning activities and the support of an innovative e-learning environment.

Launched at the Foyer Federation's National Policy Event on the 24th March 2010, this Strategy is dynamic and subject to ongoing review and continuous improvement.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.fover.net

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