

Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Justice providing additional information requested by the Committee during its evidence session with the Cabinet Secretary on 26 February 2013, dated 14 March 2013

At the sitting of the Justice Committee on purposeful activity within prison on 26 February 2013, which I attended jointly with Colin McConnell, Chief Executive of the Scottish Prison Service (SPS), and Joe Griffin, Deputy Director of the Community Justice Division, Committee members indicated that it would be helpful for them to have more information on the timetable for evaluating the HMP Greenock mentoring pilot and copies of interim evaluation reports from other mentoring projects that are currently operating in Scotland. In light of this request, I am writing to you to provide the information requested.

Routes Out of Prison Project

The Routes out of Prison (ROoP) Project was established in August 2006 and initially operated by Wise Group, Families Outside and SPS. Apex Scotland joined the ROoP partnership in 2008 and now operates in seven Scottish prisons.

ROoP uses Life Coaches to assist offenders through peer support / mentoring by meeting them at the gate when leaving prison, accompanying them to appointments and explaining the purpose and processes of other services to clients. Life Coaches are recruited on the basis that they have experience of offending, addictions or other personal difficulties.

[An evaluation of the ROoP project](#) (552KB pdf), undertaken by the Criminal Justice Social Work Development Centre for Scotland at the University of Edinburgh, and was published in 2011.

Moving Forward Through Care Service

The Moving Forward Through Care Service is operated by the Youth Community Support Agency (YCSA), and was launched in April 2010, expanding on the existing Glasgow Through Care Service to include service users from outside Glasgow. The service engages with young offenders between 16 – 21 years from Black / Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds serving custodial sentences within HMYOI Polmont, helping them to re-engage with their community upon release.

The service has four primary interventions as follows; a group programme, run during the period of imprisonment; one to one support work; family support, and; post – liberation support.

An evaluation of the Moving Forward Through Care Service was undertaken by Opt4Change Limited and was published in June 2011, assessing the progress of the new service after its first year of operation. The evaluation details what the service was doing well, the challenges faced and opportunities for future development.

HMP Greenock Throughcare Support Pilot Project

With regard to the Throughcare Support project at HMP Greenock, officials from SPS have confirmed that they are in the final stages of a competitive tendering process with three Scottish universities. The selected university will provide training, support and independent evaluation of the project, working in tandem with SPS during the project and producing an evaluation of the project at the end of the first year of operation in March 2014. SPS will also be working with their own internal research branch in evaluating the project.

I hope that this information is useful to the Justice Committee as you decide on next steps in investigating purposeful activity in prison and I look forward to taking forward this important issue with the Committee.