



Exploring the role of Registered Social Landlords in providing accommodation and employment pathways to people who have offended

A report by Cymorth Cymru

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Introduction and Context

Cymorth Cymru is the umbrella body for organisations working with vulnerable people in Wales. Our members work across housing, homelessness, care and support, working with people who are vulnerable, isolated or experiencing housing crisis and assisting them to find and keep a home and build the life they aspire to. Many of our members work with people who have offended or are at risk of doing so, and as such our work focuses on the criminal and social justice agenda.

There is significant evidence demonstrating the positive impact that secure accommodation and employment can have in reducing reoffending. In Cymorth's view, however, Housing Associations (Registered Social Landlords or RSLs) are often not considered enough as potentially part of the solution.

With support from Clinks, Cymorth Cymru wanted to explore how Welsh RSLs could better contribute to accommodation and employment pathways, and therefore held an event at Parc Prison, bringing RSLs together with individuals from across the Criminal Justice Sector (CJS). The event explored the policy goals from all sides, including changes to the probation service with Transforming Rehabilitation, the role of the Youth Justice Board in Wales, the role of the prison service and the role of the Integrated Offender Management Cymru (IOMC) initiative.

The housing policy context was also explored given the pending removal of priority need from ex-offenders in Wales and the preventative focus of the new Housing (Wales) Bill. All of these legislative and policy changes present a challenge, but they also present a significant opportunity to do things differently in Wales in the future.

The event included discussion groups, where the 30 or so attendees from RSLs had the opportunity to discuss four key questions with partners from the CJS. These questions were:

- What barriers do RSLs face to providing accommodation and employment pathways for people who have offended?
- What could RSLs do to contribute in terms of developing accommodation and employment pathways for people who have offended?
- What commitment would RSLs want from the Criminal Justice Sector to take these ideas forward?
- What will RSLs do next?

The feedback from these discussion groups is outlined in the following four sections of this report, along with a series of conclusions and recommendations.

Executive Summary

Key Findings and recommendations:

It is fair to say that there is a great deal of enthusiasm from both the housing sector and the criminal justice sector to work collaboratively to take this agenda forward. Whilst both sectors identified a number of barriers that exist currently, there is a strong will to overcome these and identify better ways of working so that people who have offended receive better services. We identified four key questions to discuss at the event, and a summary of the discussions along with recommendations is provided in this Executive Summary.

What barriers do RSLs face to providing accommodation and employment pathways to people who have offended?

- A lack of suitable housing in terms of levels of stock in general but also a severe lack of appropriate stock (e.g. one bedroom properties or shared accommodation)
- Need for improved communication, as communication is often reactive and piecemeal and this can mean that important information is not shared between partners
- Concerns related to risk: including financial risk should tenancies should fail and reputational risks associated with prioritising services for people who have offended.
- Poor co-ordination and planning meaning people leave custody without settled accommodation
- The existing focus of policy and legislation which doesn't encourage the involvement of RSLs, and how this will change with the Transforming Rehabilitation agenda and the Housing (Wales) Bill.
- The need for support or funding in place in order to provide the level of services required for people who have offended when they leave custody

What could RSLs do to contribute in terms of accommodation and employment pathways to people who have offended?

- Improve communication both internally across departments and externally with CJS partners
- Use internal resources to offer opportunities, including: ring-fencing stock; opening up placement and employment opportunities as well as internal employment, training and education programmes; and using other schemes such as targeted recruitment and training or empty homes initiatives to work with people who have offended
- Influence strategy, policy and delivery both in housing and the CJS so that there is greater link up and focus on working with people who have offended
- Champion the cause and seek to change internal cultures which can offer prove to be a barrier for RSLs
- Work together in a collaborative way to multiply the opportunities available

What commitment do RSLs want from the Criminal Justice Sector?

- Better information sharing with strong, identified links between the sectors and organisations on the ground
- Funding and support services in place for people who have offended who are living in social housing and require such services, in order to mitigate against the risks RSLs identified and ensure people are receiving what they need in order to flourish

- Better joint working both strategically through a closer link up in commissioning and also operationally through, for example, a stronger role for RSLs in case management
- Improved understanding on both sides

What will RSLs do next?

- Explore good practice in order to get inspiration for their own approaches or develop collaborative relationships to take these ideas forward
- Improve communication and information sharing internally and externally
- Develop a stronger operational and strategic understanding of the CJS
- Change internal cultures where they need to be changed to ensure whole organisational buy in to working with people who have offended
- Continue to engage with people using services to ensure that they are working in the most effective way
- Explore specific opportunities to develop accommodation and employment pathways for people who have offended

Recommendations:

Recommendation 1: RSLs and CJS agencies (police, probation and prisons for example) need to build communication links.

Recommendation 2: That custody resettlement services have a stronger focus on securing settled accommodation

Recommendation 3: That RSLs are integrated into the resettlement process

Recommendation 4: Specific networking events should be organised for RSLs to discuss joint working arrangements and to build relationships with the incoming CRC provider and their supply chain

Recommendation 5: RSLs should have a role in influencing CJS commissioning processes

Recommendation 6: RSLs should, where possible, target opportunities at people who have offended. This should include: accommodation; work experience placements and jobs through internal maintenance programmes; targeted recruitment and training opportunities; and empty property renewal schemes

Recommendation 7: RSLs should, where possible, open up internal ETE programmes to people who have offended in their community

Recommendation 8: Criminal Justice strategic leads to support RSLs to make links with the key Criminal Justice and Community Safety strategic fora, at Wales wide, regional and local level

Recommendation 9: IOM Cymru to consult with the Welsh RSL network in order to inform the development of the Wales Reducing Reoffending Strategy 2014-16 Delivery Plan

Recommendation 10: RSLs should each select Criminal Justice champions to act as a key contact point for the CJS

Recommendation 11: RSLs should agree ways of working to raise awareness with Senior Management and Boards about the role RSLs can play in supporting people who have offended

Recommendation 12: the CJS sector should feed into housing and support commissioning processes

Recommendation 13: Housing providers should be better integrated into the case management process

Recommendation 14: Workforce development for CJS agencies should include an exposure to the housing sector, and vice versa

Recommendation 15: Co-location of services should be encouraged to facilitate a better shared understanding

Recommendation 16: Cymorth should organise study tours to good practice projects, and ensure attendance comes from boards and Senior Teams.

Recommendation 17: Use existing networks and groups to improve collaboration between sectors, including Supporting People Regional Collaborative Committees, Integrated Offender Management groups and Cymorth and CHC networks.

Recommendation 18: CJS colleagues should identify key contacts for RSLs to make contact with

Recommendation 19: The CJS should develop factsheets about the current and future landscape of the sector, particularly Transforming Rehabilitation, for RSLs and other partners, particularly

What barriers do RSLs face to providing accommodation and employment pathways for people who have offended?

Lack of suitable housing: It is no surprise, given the chronic shortage of housing across the UK, that this was highlighted as a key barrier to providing accommodation pathways to people who have offended. More specifically, suitability of housing stock poses a key challenge, with a lack of single person accommodation and shared accommodation. Often temporary accommodation has provided a fall back option but these models are not necessarily sustainable for people leaving prison, particularly where they want to enter employment or break away from environments where, for example, substance misuse might be more prominent. The lack of housing stock can also make it more difficult for RSLs to resettle people who have offended in a dispersed way across communities, rather than creating concentrated 'offender specific stock'. A shortage of stock is also relevant in terms of specific offender groups, for instance there are concerns about whether mixed gender accommodation would be appropriate and whether there are suitable options for people with families or children.

Need for improved communication: There was a consistent message from RSLs that communication is currently a barrier and that it needs to be improved. RSLs partly attribute this to a lack of relevant contacts working in the CJS, and where contact does occur it tends to be reactive and issue based rather than strategic. Contact therefore needs to be improved with police, probation and prisons. Where links are more operational than strategic, staff turnover can quickly see established communication channels break down, and it is recognised that there needs to be a more strategic relationship in place to provide continuity. Both RSL and CJS attendees said that they lacked a strong understanding of who the key contacts are and how the processes work in the counterpart sector and that this was a barrier to communication. As a result, RSLs were concerned that if they aren't provided with appropriate information about people who have offended, such as risk information and data sharing, it is much more difficult for them to put the right housing support in place, increasing the likelihood of the tenancy failing.

Recommendation 1: RSLs and CJS agencies (police, probation and prisons for example) need to build communication links.

Perceptions of risk: RSLs expressed concerns related to risk, both in terms of the client group in question and reputational risks for their own organisations. Given the issues already expressed around communication, there was concern about how much information on risk would be clearly communicated to RSLs if they were accommodating or employing people who had offended. For example, if a probation caseworker does not have any contacts within an RSL then it is unlikely that they will find a way to share appropriate information with them, meaning the RSL might not be information about the levels of risk associated with an individual that they are housing. Therefore, clear data sharing processes should be established between the CJS and all RSLs so that appropriate information is available when people who have offended resettle into social housing.

A related risk to this that was expressed by RSLs is that there may be a greater likelihood of tenancies failing and therefore an increase in voids by targeting services at people who have offended (due to, for example, difficulties resettling after a long period in custody or a lack of support upon re-entering the community). Similarly, looking at it from an employment perspective,

RSLs felt that targeting people who have offended carries the risk of them not turning up to placements of employment. Therefore, RSLs were concerned that providing accommodation and employment pathways pose possible financial risks.

The most prominent risk identified as a barrier is reputational risk. Concerns were raised about the view the public, councillors and other tenants might have if an RSL is seen to be targeting services at people who have offended over and above other groups. There was a general acceptance that people who have offended are not a popular client group amongst many communities, and therefore RSLs could come in for criticism if they favoured this group over others. There is also concern about labelling particular properties as 'for offenders' and that this might lead to reputational damage for RSLs.

Poor co-ordination and planning: A key issue highlighted by RSLs is that currently there is very little coordination and contact prior to an individual being released from custody. This makes it difficult for housing providers to plan for the individual's release and find appropriate accommodation, and with offenders currently having priority need they will often be placed into temporary accommodation leaving RSLs with little involvement. With the incoming Transforming Rehabilitation agenda this may of course change, as the Community Rehabilitation Company (responsible for delivering services to low and medium risk offenders) will have to work with an individual three months prior to release and develop a resettlement plan. Housing Legislation is also changing in Wales, and from 2015 it is likely that former prisoners will lose priority need status and whilst some proposed amendments to the Bill may strengthen support for ex-offenders, homelessness prevention will be crucial in prisons.

Another challenge identified is the fact that providers operate across multiple areas currently and it can be difficult for prisons to know whom and which organisations to refer people into. Partnership arrangements were viewed as inconsistent across Wales, and depending on the prison, location and RSL in question. This general lack of co-ordination is seen as a key reason for the lack of planning around an individual's accommodation needs prior to release.

Recommendation 2: That custody resettlement services have a much stronger focus on securing settled accommodation prior to release

Recommendation 3: That RSLs are integrated into the resettlement process

Legislation, policy and upcoming changes: Some of the key challenges identified currently to providing settled and sustainable accommodation options are legislation and policy. In the previous section issues around priority need are alluded to, in that the priority need provision provides a safety net with access to temporary accommodation. This can sometimes see less focus placed on the role that RSLs could play in terms of co-ordination and planning for release from custody. Furthermore, in the current system, if an individual turns down accommodation (For instance it may be unsuitable due to location), then the Local Authority no longer has a duty to house them. These have all been identified as barriers to providing accommodation pathways currently.

From April 2015, when Wales' proposed Housing Bill comes into force, there will potentially be a host of new challenges relating to policy and legislation. Specifically, there will be no legal duty to accommodate ex-offenders as priority need will be removed, and instead priority will be based on

identified vulnerability. RSLs raised concerns about what vulnerability will look like in terms of eligibility, and that it could be interpreted in 22 different ways by 22 different Local Authorities.

Another challenge on the horizon is Transforming Rehabilitation. There is an understandable concern about how changes to probation might affect the role of RSLs in providing accommodation and employment pathways, with many organisations concerned about a target driven payment system. It will be important to ensure that RSLs are fully informed about TR, particularly as it moves towards implementation phase. RSLs will need to know who the prime provider is and which organisations are contracted to deliver services within their supply chain.

Recommendation 4: Specific networking events should be organised for RSLs to discuss joint working arrangements and to build relationships with the incoming CRC provider and their supply chain

Need for support and/or funding: There was a general acceptance amongst RSLs that where they were providing accommodation pathways to people who had offended, a certain level of support or intensive property management was required. In some instances this would be provided through specialist funding streams, specific commissioned services through Supporting People or Probation, or through other streams such as grants or trusts. This is not always the case however, and sometimes there is a lack of support for people leaving prison, and RSLs are understandably concerned about placing people into unsupported tenancies.

Recommendation 5: RSLs should have a role in influencing CJS commissioning processes

SECTION SUMMARY:

There are a number of identified barriers to RSLs providing accommodation and employment pathways to people leaving prison. Many reflect broader issues facing the housing sector, such as a lack of suitable housing and perceptions of risk. Some barriers are specific to the relationship between housing and the CJS however, and if issues such as poor communication, poor co-ordination and planning and a lack of support and funding can be addressed then we may see a stronger collaborative approach across the two sectors. Our recommendations from this section are summarised below:

Recommendation 1: RSLs and CJS agencies (police, probation and prisons for example) need to build communication links.

Recommendation 2: That custody resettlement services have a stronger focus on securing settled accommodation

Recommendation 3: That RSLs are integrated into the resettlement process

Recommendation 4: Specific networking events should be organised for RSLs to discuss joint working arrangements and to build relationships with the incoming CRC provider and their supply chain

Recommendation 5: RSLs should have a role in influencing CJS commissioning processes

What could RSLs do to contribute in terms of accommodation and employment pathways for people who have offended?

Communication: RSLs could improve their own information sharing in relation to tenants who have offended. Internally RSLs can ensure that communication is strong between different Directorates, for example if someone in the housing team is aware that a tenant has offended, this can be communicated to the support team so that appropriate support can be put in place if possible. Externally RSLs could be building communication links with prisons, police, probation and other contracted providers on the ground, as this will begin to solve some of the issues highlighted in the previous section.

Use internal resources to offer opportunities: RSLs can look internally at their own stock and where possible ring-fence that for people who have offended. Where maintenance and refurbishment work needs to be carried out to bring properties back into use or during a void period this accommodation offer could be tied into skills and training opportunities within maintenance teams. Similarly, where work such as this and more major works are outsourced, RSLs can use targeted recruitment and training principles to ensure work and training opportunities are available to disadvantaged people including those who have come out of custody. In Wales we are bringing a number of empty properties back into use, this could be a specific opportunity to target people who have offended and both skill them up and provide them with sustainable accommodation.

Recommendation 6: RSLs should, where possible, target opportunities at people who have offended. This should include: accommodation; work experience placements and jobs through internal maintenance programmes; targeted recruitment and training opportunities; and empty property renewal schemes

Link people into existing internal Employment, Training and Education provision: Many RSLs already provide a number of employment, training and education interventions to their tenants and other members of the community, recognising that welfare reform is placing greater pressure on people's finances and a greater imperative on them to find and sustain employment. Where RSLs are providing ETE services, this again could be opened up to people in their community who have offended. As well as essential skills, job search support, CV writing skills and interview skills, RSLs can also offer a pathway through volunteering, work placements and part time and full time employment into their own organisations or the many contractors they work with through their supply chains.

Recommendation 7: RSLs should, where possible, open up internal ETE programmes to people who have offended in their community

Influencing strategy, policy and delivery: Whilst there are clear overlaps between the Housing and Criminal Justice worlds, there is always an opportunity to enhance this. Given the critical link between the CJS and Housing, RSLs could provide important information to inform strategic planning and commissioning in the CJS sector. They could also feed into contracting processes and service reviews with information from a housing perspective, enabling services to better meet needs. Linking back to the first point around better communication, where capacity allows RSLs can also provide important representation at national, regional and local level to shape

strategy, policy and delivery of CJS services, or they can have their views represented through the relevant representative bodies such as Cymorth Cymru and Community Housing Cymru. For example, the Wales Reducing Reoffending Strategy 2014-16 was launched at the start of 2014 and RSLs could play an important role in influencing the delivery plan.

Recommendation 8: Criminal Justice strategic leads to support RSLs to make links with the key Criminal Justice and Community Safety strategic fora, at Wales wide, regional and local level

Recommendation 9: IOM Cymru to consult with the Welsh RSL network in order to inform the development of the Wales Reducing Reoffending Strategy 2014-16 Delivery Plan

Championing the cause and challenging cultures: Whilst many barriers are practical, some are also about culture and priorities. RSLs therefore thought that nominating Criminal Justice champions in the RSL sector, either across organisations or within each RSL, would create a clear and consistent contact point for external partners as well as a driver for change internally. There was also a strong feeling that in order to influence change RSLs need to bring Chief Executives and Boards along on this journey, particularly at a time where they are facing many different and sometimes conflicting priorities. Getting Boards and Senior Management Teams involved in events and dialogue with the CJS would help, as would taking them to see inspirational services and immersing them in the CJS infrastructure, through prison visits for example. RSLs can also continue to look at the impact these ideas will have on different departments within their organisation, and engage with them to develop shared objectives and priorities internally for working with people who have offended. If there are possible conflicts that arise, it is important that RSL departments work these out collaboratively rather than coming across them during service delivery and dealing with them on a piecemeal basis.

Recommendation 9: RSLs should each select Criminal Justice champions to act as a key contact point for the CJS

Recommendation 10: RSLs should agree ways of working to raise awareness with Senior Management and Boards about the role RSLs can play in supporting people who have offended

Collaborating: RSLs in Wales have a strong history of collaboration, including through established consortia across the whole of Wales; collaborative working for the Welsh Housing Bond; and collaborative working through the 'In One Place' health, housing and social care model. This spirit of collaboration would be a powerful tool in developing accommodation and employment pathways for people who have offended. It would allow RSLs to share risk, share investment and better manage the complications that come with a concentrated Prison Estate along the M4 corridor and English prisons resettling people into Wales.

SECTION SUMMARY:

A number of examples of how RSLs can contribute to providing accommodation and employment pathways have been identified. Some of the examples are about improving collaboration internally, between partners and between sectors, recognising that this would have an impact in improving joined up working. Practical steps have also been identified around accommodation and employment however and if taken forward, could have a significant impact. This section in particular draws out a key factor that Housing Associations can bring to accommodation and employment

pathways. As many of the points in this section show, RSLs can provide a holistic approach which ties together key components required to work with people who have offended. They have the potential to provide a number of accommodation options whilst also tying in a range of Employment, Training and Education services, and in some instances they can also provide or enable access to levels of housing-related support to people too. A summary of the recommendations from this section is provided below:

Recommendation 6: RSLs should, where possible, target opportunities at people who have offended. This should include: accommodation; work experience placements and jobs through internal maintenance programmes; targeted recruitment and training opportunities; and empty property renewal schemes

Recommendation 7: RSLs should, where possible, open up internal ETE programmes to people who have offended in their community

Recommendation 8: The CJS should identify opportunities for RSLs and their representative bodies to influence at a national, regional and local level

Recommendation 9: IOM Cymru to consult with the Welsh RSL network in order to inform the development of the Wales Reducing Reoffending Strategy 2014-16 Delivery Plan

Recommendation 10: RSLs should each select Criminal Justice champions to act as a key contact point for the CJS

Recommendation 11: RSLs should agree ways of working to raise awareness with Senior Management and Boards about the role RSLs can play in supporting people who have offended

What commitment would RSLs want from the Criminal Justice Sector?

Better Information sharing: This was not a surprising suggestion given that it was flagged as a key barrier currently to Housing Associations providing accommodation and employment pathways.

RSLs expressed a need for strong communication from police, probation and other contracted providers about their tenants where appropriate and relevant. This would make it easier for RSLs to provide appropriate services and improve the chances of people sustaining tenancies.

RSL felt it would be beneficial to have a link into police, probation and other contracted providers when considering accommodation options for people who had offended. For example if an offender wants to live somewhere or with someone, CJS agencies may have valuable information about the appropriateness of the situation and if this is shared, it could improve the chance of a successful tenancy.

Funding and/or support interventions: Whilst the housing and support sector should be putting support in place for those individuals that require it, there is an expectation amongst housing providers that the justice sector should also be contributing to support packages for people who have offended and that it shouldn't just be a housing issue. To make this happen, RSLs want to see funding available and directed at accommodation and employment pathways, either through large central schemes such as Transforming Rehabilitation or through more focussed and local interventions so that people have a clear support package in place. Recognising that it is a joint responsibility there is enthusiasm about exploring joint commissioning or pooled budgets, as well as areas like social investment which haven't attracted a great deal of interest in Wales currently.

More joint working: RSLs are enthusiastic and interested in playing a key role in providing accommodation and employment pathways for people leaving prison and they want to see this as part of a joint working approach with the CJS. Examples of how this could be done and examples already happening in Wales include having the CJS feeding in issues and priorities to housing and support commissioning processes; integrating wider representation of housing providers into the case management process; and easier access into prisons to enable joint working as often relationships are based on specific schemes and specific individuals. In general, concentrating on creating ongoing operational and strategic links between the two sectors would be valuable and effective given the recognition that housing plays a key role.

Recommendation 12: the CJS should feed into housing and support commissioning processes

Recommendation 13: Housing providers should be better integrated into the case management process

Improving understanding on both sides: There is an acceptance that many of the existing difficulties are due to a lack of understanding on both sides about each other. Whilst this will be continually built up over time through creating stronger links and relationships there were some suggestions for more formal ways by which this understanding could be developed. For example: Standard training for police, probation workers and people working in prisons could include spending time with RSLs to understand how the world of housing operates, and vice versa; and

encouraging co-location of services as this would create consistent exposure between the two sectors.

Recommendation 14: Workforce development for CJS agencies should include exposure to the housing sector, and vice versa

Recommendation 15: Co-location of services should be encouraged to facilitate a better shared understanding

SECTION SUMMARY:

There is clearly enthusiasm from RSL partners about taking a more pro-active approach, but this comes with a call to CJS partners to make a commitment in return. Whilst some of the requests are more difficult to take forward, such as the provision of funding and support, other suggestions place a greater focus on improving working practices so that information sharing and joint working become the norm and foster an environment where there is a much greater level of shared understanding. A summary of the recommendations from this section is provided below:

Recommendation 12: the CJS sector should feed into housing and support commissioning processes

Recommendation 13: Housing providers should be better integrated into the case management process

Recommendation 14: Workforce development for CJS agencies should include an exposure to the housing sector, and vice versa

Recommendation 15: Co-location of services should be encouraged to facilitate a better shared understanding

What will RSLs do next?

Explore good practice: At the workshop which formed the basis of this report there were some examples presented of good practice from Wales and the UK. These examples generated a lot of enthusiasm and attendees were keen to explore how they might replicate or develop their own approaches. Many attendees therefore expressed an interest in visiting these and other examples of providing accommodation and employment pathways. These could be organised and facilitated by organisations such as Cymorth. There is also interest in using this approach to drive culture change through organisations, involving board members and Chief Executives/Senior Management Teams and immersing them in good practice to encourage them to drive forward their own approaches.

Recommendation 16: Cymorth should organise study tours to good practice projects, and encourage attendance from boards and Senior Teams.

Improving communication: Many of the issues identified are about communication and RSLs placed great emphasis on improving this as a next step that they will take. Suggestions include sharing key contacts with CJS colleagues and identifying key leads internally that could provide single points of contact for CJS agencies, perhaps through the Criminal Justice Champion approach recommended already. It was also suggested that existing networks and groups could be used to improve collaboration between RSLs and CJS colleagues. A key requirement if RSLs are going to be more proactive in building links is to quickly share information about where links can be made within the CJS structure. For example, are there CJS leads on accommodation, and what governance arrangements locally, regionally and nationally could RSLs link into? On the housing side, Regional Collaborative Committees, which form part of the Supporting People governance architecture, already involve probation and this model could be replicated elsewhere. The national representative body for Housing Associations, Community Housing Cymru, could also engage proactively on behalf of the sector at a national level, and use networks such as their Chief Executives Forum and Housing Services Forum to take these ideas forward.

Recommendation 17: Use existing networks and groups to improve collaboration between sectors, including Supporting People Regional Collaborative Committees, Integrated Offender Management groups and Cymorth and CHC networks.

Recommendation 18: CJS colleagues should identify key contacts for RSLs to make contact with

Develop a better understanding of the CJS: There was recognition that some people working for RSLs will have fairly limited knowledge of the CJS and there isn't always overlap between Housing and the CJS sector. RSLs are therefore keen to get a better understanding of the CJS by finding out who the key organisations are, and getting contacts within those organisations in order to engage with them and understand their roles and responsibilities. There was also recognition that given the changes taking place across probation, RSLs need to get up to speed with what that might mean for them and communicate all of this information about organisations, people and policy change internally. It was suggested that in order to help the RSLs generate a better understanding of the CJS, it would be helpful if CJS colleagues could develop and share fact sheets of key information.

Recommendation 19: The CJS should develop factsheets about the current and future landscape of the sector, particularly Transforming Rehabilitation, for RSLs and other partners, particularly

Changing internal cultures: A common theme throughout from RSLs has been the need to change internal cultures to be more open to working with people who have offended and targeting services to them. Therefore RSLs suggested they would educate all departments with the information that they gather from the CJS sector, spreading knowledge throughout organisations. There is recognition that this is not necessarily just an issue in relation to people who have offended but a wider role that RSLs can play in supporting and regenerating communities.

Continue to engage with people using services: RSLs place a strong emphasis on involvement and inclusion with tenants and people they support and there is a strong feeling that this focus needs to be maintained should they look to provide accommodation and employment pathways to people who have offended. Specifically, there is a need to have constant dialogue with tenants and people using services so that they can understand their needs, concerns and what is important to them and target the right services, as well as educating them about the wider role of an RSL in the community. There is also a recognition that RSLs need to use innovative and creative engagement methods with those who are harder to reach.

Explore specific opportunities to develop pathways: Whilst much of this section has been about general principles, RSLs are keen to pursue tangible opportunities as a next step. For example, RSLs can look at existing developments or developments in the pipeline and explore how these might offer employment, training and education opportunities to people who have offended or be targeted as specific accommodation. Whilst housing development has been slower through the economic downturn, RSLs are still building homes and larger specialist housing schemes, are exploring innovative new finance models to increase building and they are refurbishing and maintaining properties on an ongoing basis. All of this provides multiple opportunities to create innovative accommodation and employment pathways, and whether they are large or small scale projects, they will all make a significant difference to people who have offended if they are targeted towards them.

SECTION SUMMARY:

A number of next steps have been identified to take this agenda forward for RSL and CJS partners. Many of the suggestions respond directly to the issues identified in the previous sections, with some being quite practical steps forward such as identifying and exploring good practice and exploring specific opportunities to take the agenda forward. However, some of the suggestions will take longer to take forward such as improving communication, understanding and internal cultures. The crucial point to note is that the enthusiasm is there from both sides. A summary of the recommendations from this section is included below:

Recommendation 16: Cymorth should organise study tours to good practice projects, and ensure attendance comes from boards and Senior Teams.

Recommendation 17: Use existing networks and groups to improve collaboration between sectors, including Supporting People Regional Collaborative Committees, Integrated Offender Management groups and Cymorth and CHC networks.

Recommendation 18: CJS colleagues should identify key contacts for RSLs to make contact with

Recommendation 19: The CJS should develop factsheets about the current and future landscape of the sector, particularly Transforming Rehabilitation, for RSLs and other partners, particularly

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