

Grant Funding Opportunity to pilot, develop and test to provide proof of concept of schemes/initiatives which may reduce the risk of self-harm or self-inflicted death in prison

1. Background and Policy context

Safety and security are at the heart of successful prisons, and provide the foundation upon which prisons can work to reduce re-offending. NOMS is committed to tackling violence in prisons, and reducing self-inflicted deaths and self-harm. Statistics on deaths, self-harm and assaults in prisons are available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics>.

[PSI 64/2011](#) sets out NOMS' approach to safety in custody, including the use of the Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) process, which is the process prisons use for identifying and managing prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm. Providing and enabling prisoners in distress to access and make use of the right forms of support for them, at the right time, is important to support such vulnerable prisoners.

There are a number of ways in which prisoners in distress are supported, including directly by staff (be they officers, chaplains, health professionals or others) and peers (for example through the Samaritans' Listener scheme). On any given day, approximately 2000 prisoners are being actively managed under the 'ACCT' process. In 2013-14, over 1500 trained prisoners responded to over 75,000 requests for support from other prisoners through the Listener scheme.

NOMS wishes to continuously strengthen support for prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm and is committed to working with partners to do so. NOMS is inviting bids from providers wishing to provide and/or enable the provision of services/support and advice/intervention for prisoners who are at risk of suicide and/or self harm. This grant funding opportunity seeks to identify further schemes and models of support which may help vulnerable prisoners, and to develop proofs of concept.

2. Scope, Timescale and Funding

Grant funding of up to £150,000 is available in the period 1 October 2015 – 30 September 2016.

3. Project Approach

In their application the successful grant recipient/s will need to describe how the work they are proposing will contribute to reducing the risk of self-harm or self-inflicted death amongst prisoners, demonstrating an awareness and understanding of the systems, processes and support mechanisms already in place in prisons, nationally and in proposed sites.

NOMS recognise that this is an area where the evidence base is complex, and isolating cause and effect can be challenging. Interventions and services may still be commissioned on a pilot basis where evidence is lacking or inconclusive, providing:

- There is a clear description of the service, including the outcomes it aims to deliver, and who it is for;

- There is a clear plausible rationale for why the service should work. The rationale should include reference to published high-quality evidence that supports the approach being taken;
- There is a strategy in place for gathering evidence about whether the service works, using a high quality methodology. Effectiveness may be defined in terms of reduced instances of self-harm or self-inflicted death.

Project proposals will need to satisfy these criteria.

Amongst the ways in which we think the grant funding might best be used is to:

- Pilot and test for proof of concept alternative approaches to suicide and self-harm reduction, complementing systems and services already in place;
- Offer targeted support to particular groups, cohorts, or locations of prisoners;

We have no fixed views about the best ways to achieve these ends, and are open to suggestions from providers who want to work towards them at a national, regional or local level.

NOMS is committed to evidence-informed commissioning - see 'NOMS Commissioning Intentions for 2013-14' for more details of our approach, available at: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/about/noms/commissioning-intentions-2013-14-oct12.pdf>.

4. Project Outcomes

The funding seeks to enable as many as possible of the following outcomes:

- a) Prisoners vulnerable to acts of self-harm or suicide, or experiencing other forms of crisis, are supported and helped to find alternative ways through their distress;
- b) Alternative approaches to suicide and self-harm reduction, complementing systems and services already in place, are piloted and tested for proof of concept;
- c) Targeted support is offered to particular groups e.g. female offenders, cohorts, or locations of prisoners;
- d) Through working with the grant recipients, prisons and prison staff are better equipped to meet the needs of prisoners in distress, being able to draw on the expertise and knowledge of the grant recipients;
- e) Learning and practice is shared between the grant recipients and prison establishments to enhance understanding of prisoners' needs at times of emotional distress;
- f) Safer custody practice within the prison is enhanced;
- g) Evidence and evaluation of the impacts of the support/intervention/service is provided.

Bidders should evidence how their solutions achieve the outcomes (a) to (g). The Authority will assess how the bids received achieve these outcomes and in addition how a bid or combination of bids achieves these.

5. Invitation to tender

Bidders are invited to put forward proposals which achieve these project outcomes, and any other pertinent to the context in which this funding is offered.

The successful recipient(s) will be:

- One organisation who can deliver the scheme.
- One organisation who can deliver part of the scheme.
- A lead organisation establishing partnerships with other bodies who can deliver the scheme.
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- A consortium formed from a number of organisations with shared objectives and agreed arrangements for leadership and governance to deliver the scheme.
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6. Skills and Knowledge

Bidders will need to show that they:

- Understand the environment in which they will be operating and have the skills to deliver successfully within it:
 - Understand the reasons why prisoners may experience emotional distress, including those factors arising from the experience of imprisonment as well as individual factors' and factors common to prisoners as a cohort and groups within that population;
 - Understand the risks and triggers associated with an increase of self-harm and suicide.
- Have experience of managing projects/grants/contracts within a specific timescale, meeting set milestones and achieving objectives set out, through a project plan and within the budget set.
- Have the ability to oversee projects, evaluate and report on outcomes and manage grant finances.

7. Equalities

Bidders are required to set out how they will ensure that equalities issues are considered in their proposal. This should include an explanation of the way in which it will address the needs of the population of offenders with, for example, learning disabilities and difficulties, and across the nine protected characteristics specified in law.

8. Costs, monitoring, and evaluation of the scheme

Bidders will be expected to forecast costs for the duration of the grant and will meet with NOMS representatives regularly to discuss progress and review expenditure.

Bidders are required to provide an implementation/project plan for the duration of the Grant period 1 October 2015 to 30 September 2016, detailing realistic timescales, key stages and milestones, proposed stages for progression of agreements and commitments, engagement with key partners/stakeholders,

relevant quality assurance mechanisms as well as any other relevant considerations. They will also need to describe the key risks to delivery and how they will manage them.

The successful recipient(s) will be required to deliver the work outlined in the implementation/project plan (to be agreed as part of the grant agreement) within a budget of up to £150,000 per annum. Payment will be made evenly in the financial year 2015/16 in advance. Services will be to 30 September 2016 in which time all payments for delivery will have been paid in advance prior to the financial year ending 31 March 2016.

Bidders will be invited to describe how their scheme can be evaluated in ways that will add to the evidence base in terms of what works to reduce the risk of self-harm or self-inflicted death, or to achieve the intermediate outcomes of working with prisons and the wider criminal justice system.

Bidders will be invited to explain how the grant funding will leave a sustained and lasting legacy, for example by improving capacity, building the evidence base in terms of what works etc.