

Foreign National Offenders – Are We Meeting Their Resettlement Needs?

The Foreign National Resettlement project is a new initiative based at HMP Huntercombe in the UK. The project was commissioned by the Prison Group Director of the Immigration Removal Centre & Foreign National Prisons Group (IRC & FNP) and is due to run until April 2020.

After visiting HMP Huntercombe and HMP Maidstone, Her Majesty's Inspector of Prisons (HMIP) reported "prisoners were routinely deported from the UK without their offending behaviour and resettlement needs being addressed and that there was ineffective provision of information to support resettlement in another country".

The aim of the project is to explore resettlement opportunities for prisoners being deported overseas and review current resettlement activity to see if it can be developed further.

The project wants to look at all resettlement needs but specifically:

- accommodation
- education/training and employment
- re-establishing and maintaining family ties
- mental and physical health provision
- drug and alcohol support schemes

We want to identify practical support that can be accessed quickly.

In June 2019 we held a Foreign National Resettlement Workshop and invited colleagues from the Ministry of Justice, Her Majesty's Prison & Probation Service, The Home Office, and EuroPris. The workshop provided 12 resettlement ideas, some required significant policy change, others were more suited to the parameters of this project.

The following schemes were selected for development:

1. **A Keeping in Touch Scheme** providing a network of ex-offenders (returnees) who will give support to future returnees, by telling their stories and promoting positive resettlement examples, thus providing hope that they too can make a success of returning to their country of origin.
2. **Establish Contact with Non-Government Organisations, Embassies, High Commissions, Prisons and Probation Services** to explore current resettlement options abroad, including services offered to returning migrants, to see if they could be accessed by ex-offenders.
3. **Explore the Faith Based Voluntary and Charitable Sector** and establish links with foreign missions and faith based organisations in the UK and abroad, to offer practical support and resettlement opportunities.
4. **Improving Family Relationships** by developing a range of options for offenders to establish, re-establish and maintain family and community links in their home countries and support the resettlement of FNO's prior to their removal from the UK by facilitating "family future" planning days and video conferencing calls.
5. **Explore Employment, Education and Training Opportunities for FNO's Overseas** by establishing international links at a local level for FNO's on deportation, with the help of organisations such as HM Prison Service's *New Futures Network* and their employment brokers. Ex-offenders leaving custody have often completed accredited training and educational courses (eg. Construction, Painting & Decorating, Barbering, Hospitality, Horticulture, Industrial Cleaning, Fitness Instructor/Personal Training and Social Enterprise Schemes) and many leave with qualifications and skills which not only provide a basis for a fresh start, but could also be desirable to potential future employers.

We are grateful to EuroPris for the opportunity to publicise this project in a wider forum and we would welcome any contributions you are able to offer towards our goals and objectives.

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