

Prisons and Probation: Sharing and Refocusing Knowledge and Practice/Prisons et Probation: Partageons et recentrons nos connaissances et nos pratiques.
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Working better together for offender reintegration: the Third Sector perspective

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Partnership as response to policy problems in criminal justice

- Three 'wicked problems' – seemingly intractable problems that have complex causes that are not amenable to straightforward or cheap solutions. Tend to recur because they are entrenched.
 1. High and persistent levels of offending & recidivism.
 2. Cost of public criminal justice services/Austerity policy -> severe budget cuts for prisons, probation, municipal and resettlement services.
 3. The desire to make public services more efficient, and for providers (business, public sector and third sector) to evidence their effectiveness.

Policy idealism: the third sector as vanguard of reform

Governments are enthusiastic about the *idea* of partnership between sectors but in application they tend to imagine that:

- The third sector should become more like the public sector;
- The public sector should become more like business;
- Business should become more like charities!

(Former senior Home Office/Ministry of Justice official).

Loss of identity of different sectors/agencies

Merging functions of welfare/penal spheres

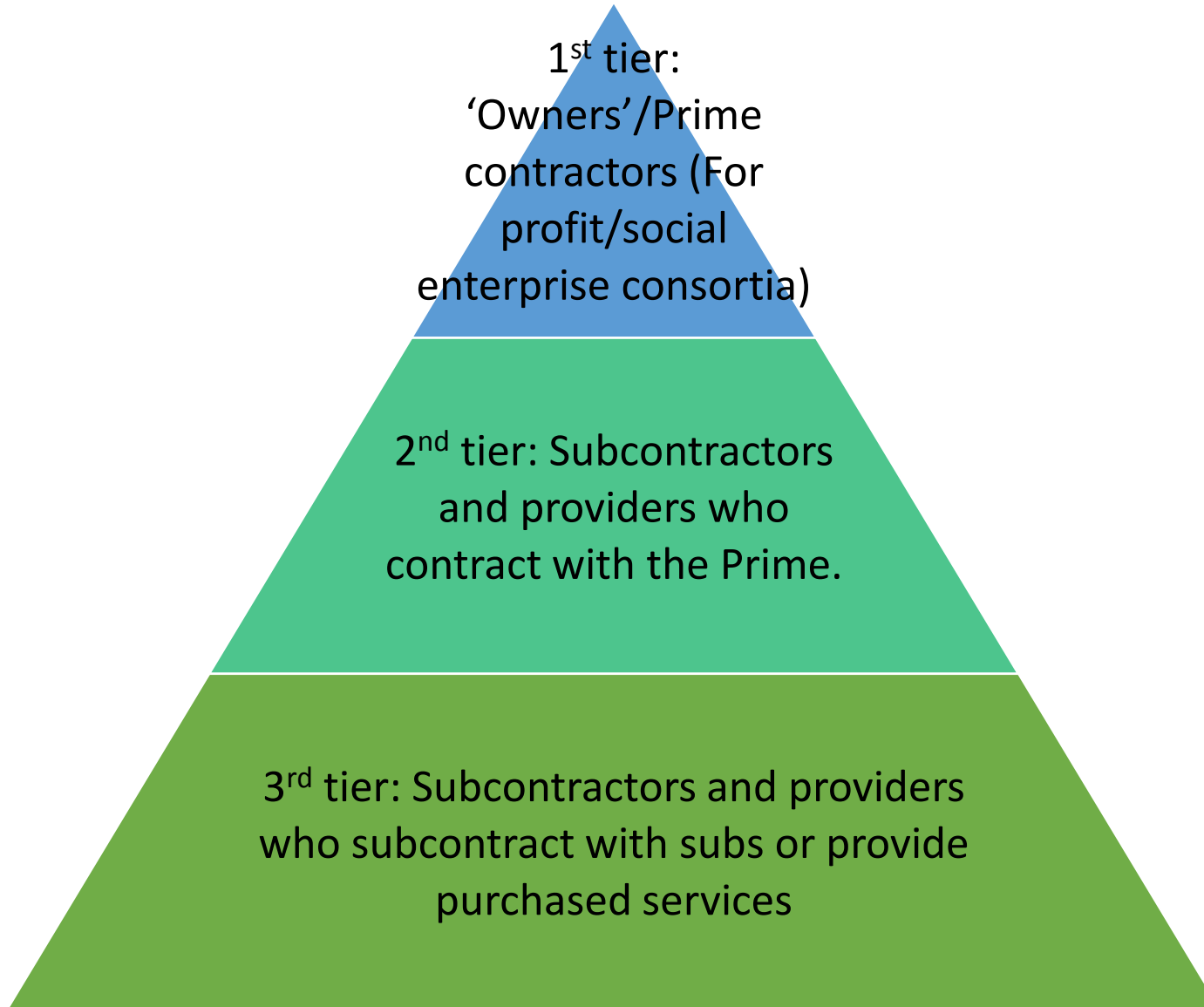
Conflating interests of for-profit and public interest.

Field-shaping events - 1990s to 2020s

Adaptation to disruption

- Marketisation
- Professionalisation
- Penal Drift
- Dislocation/displacement

The voluntary sector has legitimately, and adroitly, adopted a 'Janus-faced' strategy in order to operate on many fronts. Nevertheless, it may be argued that a cluster of recent developments is placing greater strains on these certitudes. This process has been likened to a 'great unsettlement' for the voluntary sector where resources, relationships, approaches and understandings' that existed previously are increasingly called into question. To this insight we add an 'unsettlement', or departure from, the state-voluntary sector consensus as the social democratic model of public welfare makes a transition towards a marketised model (Corcoran, Williams, Prince and Maguire, 2018).



*'Collapsing under
the weight of its
own complexity'.*

Transforming
Rehabilitation:
prime provider
subcontracting
model for
outsourced
probation, UK.
2014-2021.

Desistance –
a fluid and
gradual
process

Primary desistance refers to any crime-free phase in the course of a criminal career (Maruna, 2001; Farrall 2014)

Secondary desistance happens when the individual assumes a non-offending identity (Calverley, 2014; Gadd 2006)

Tertiary desistance shifts in a desister's sense of belonging to a moral, social and political community (McNeill, 2015), involving recognition of ability and desire to change, a subjective sense of belonging , interaction with others (Weaver, 2016), trust between prisoners/probationers and staff (Ugelvik, 2022), imagination and creativity (Healy, 2014).

- Desistance = relational, situated/local, affective, (symbolic) interaction.

Third sector –
the
interpersonal
and socio-
political nature
of their work

- Third sector focus on the foundational, 'pre-desistance work' (Buck), that is, preparation in building basic esteem, recognition, confidence etc.
- Taking uncertainty as a given basis for complex work with desisters
- Oriented towards desistance rather than offence focused
- Complex relationships with partners and service users
- An acceptance of the fears, difficulties and conflicts experienced by desisters
- 'In finding voice, convicted people *challenge* professionalised understanding of 'offenders' (Buck, 2020)
- Desistance work is both restrictive and empowering
- Clients remain subject to state-managed carceral and community justice
- Holistic, person-centred approach can conflict with actuarial and managerial priorities

Legitimate third sector role

- Criminal justice third sector a significant resource – financially, workforce, community volunteers.
- Sector harmed by state- or corporate ‘capture’
- Consciousness of the avoidable harms that may be perpetuated by the use of volunteers.
- A limit to penal drift – the restriction of risk-management and rule violation sanctioning powers from the statutory sector to voluntary sector ‘partners’.
- Permitting 3rd sector to apply ‘legitimacy clauses’ when undertaking contract work without penalty in commissioning.
- Sector-wide guidelines/code of ethics.

What 'better' means
– core conditions for
resilient partnerships
in desistance
(Corcoran et al, 2017,
2018, 2019,
2020a,b).



NON-IDEALISATION OF
PARTNERSHIPS/DEPOLITICI
SATION.



WHERE TRUST AND PARITY
OF PROFESSIONAL ESTEEM
ACROSS ALL PARTNERS



PLURAL VOICES
INCLUDING THAT OF THE
DESISTER AND DIVERSITY
OF SKILLS, KNOWLEDGES
AND APPROACHES.



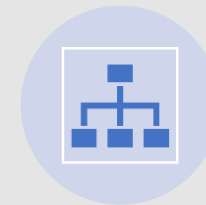
APPRECIATIVE METRICS
(‘SOFT’ AND
‘INTERMEDIATE’
MEASURES).



A BALANCE OF RISK
AWARENESS WITH AN
APPROPRIATE FOCUS ON
POSITIVE CHANGE AND
MUTUAL TRUST.



RECOGNITION AND
SUPPORT OF DESISTANCE
PROCESSES ‘FROM THE
START OF SENTENCE AND
CONSISTENT SUPPORT
THROUGH THE JOURNEY’.



THE KEY MEASURE OF
SUCCESS IS ‘CHANGE’
RATHER THAN
‘MANAGEMENT’



STRONG PRINCIPLE OF
SUBSIDIARITY IN
COMMISSIONING AND
(IDEALLY) A STRONG
COMMITMENT TO
LOCALISM AND PLACE-
BASED JUSTICE.