



# ESRC Seminar Series

## The Third Sector in Criminal Justice

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# Aim

- to critically explore third sector (voluntary, charitable and non-governmental organisations) involvement in the criminal justice system and consider how it might develop in future

# Objectives

- review the current evidence and understandings of the role of TSOs in the criminal justice process;
- consider explanations for the growth in TSOs involvement in criminal justice;
- explore the potential for, and challenges to, integrating TSOs into the criminal justice process;
- explore the impact of TSOs' involvement in the provision of core criminal justice services on their traditional roles and values;
- examine the contradictions between TSOs as providers of core criminal justice services and as campaigners for penal reform;
- explore the challenges for TSOs of addressing social inclusion and diversity arising from their involvement in the provision of criminal justice services;
- examine the use of research in evaluating the role of the third sector in criminal justice and consider the benefits and limitations of such research;
- identify gaps in existing knowledge about TSOs involvement in criminal justice; and
- develop a future agenda both in terms of social research and policy and practice.

# Seminars

- **Seminar 1** - The third sector and criminal justice: A critical relationship?
- **Seminar 2** – Volunteers in the criminal justice process
- **Seminar 3** – Penal reform and service provision
- **Seminar 4** – The mixed economy of criminal justice: the challenges of contestability, privatisation, and partnership working
- **Seminar 5** – Researching Third Sector Organisations' contribution to the criminal justice system
- **Seminar 6** – Towards a new agenda for the third sector and criminal justice: lessons for research, policy and practice.

# Outputs

- Website:  
<http://www.law.leeds.ac.uk/research/projects/the-third-sector-in-criminal-justice.php>
- Reports of seminar proceedings
- An edited collection
- Articles in a range of relevant practitioner journals and e-newsletters.
- Presentations at practitioner conferences nationally, regionally and locally.
- A good practice guide aimed at TSOs providing criminal justice services
- Training events

# Seminar One

- Set out the policy context and rationale for third sector involvement in criminal justice services
- Explore their current contribution and the potential to enhance their involvement
- Consider the reasons why government policy is pursuing greater involvement of TSOs in criminal justice

# Third Sector in criminal justice

- Long history
- Primarily provide additional/supplementary services to date
- Whole range of services in criminal justice to victims, suspects, offenders and 'the system'
- Large diverse sector with blurred edges
- Often relies on 'soft money'

# Defining the Third Sector

- How constituted
  - Kendall and Almond (1999)
    - Formally organised
    - Institutionally separate from the state
    - Non-profit distributing
    - Self-governing
    - Based on voluntary membership and contributions
- Function
  - Service providers
  - Campaigning/reform/pressure groups



# Government Policy

- The government's vision is for TSOs to provide statutory criminal justice services as part of a mixed economy of providers
- Payment by results/social impact bonds
  - Transfers the risk and cost of service provision from government to providers/investors
- Potentially transforms the role of TSOs
- Fundamental shift in the relationship between state and voluntary organisations

# Implications

- Benefits
  - Increase financial stability of TSOs
  - More strategic and stable service provision
- Costs
  - Traditional values undermined
  - Stifle innovation and flexibility
  - Increase in bureaucracy

# Questions

- Does the third sector have the capacity, expertise and capability to do what the government is asking?
- Does the third sector want to provide statutory criminal justice services?
- How will TSOs provide the required services?
- How will the plans impact upon TSOs and their broader role?
- What are the implications for individual TSOs and the Third Sector as a whole?

# Futures

- Tensions 'between the aim of 'doing good' in relation to social issues and causes and the pressures of 'doing well' as organisations in an increasingly professional and competitive market (Tonkiss and Passey, 1999: 261)
- Danger that what makes the Third Sector attractive, legitimate and useful will be lost