

# Circles South East

Reducing sexual harm through prevention, rehabilitation,  
education and safeguarding

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# Brief History

- \* 1994 - Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA) first established in Canada.
- \* 2002 – 3 pilot projects funded by Home Office
- \* 2011 - one of the projects Hampshire & Thames Valley COSA became Circles South East.
- \* Theoretical Framework developed - this model ensured that Circles in Britain worked closely with statutory agencies and remained focused on core aims and objectives.

# The Three Key Principles

## Theoretical Framework

### Support

Reduce Isolation and  
Emotional Loneliness



Model Appropriate  
Relationships



Demonstrate  
Humanity and Care

### Monitor

Public Protection



Support Statutory Authorities-  
Police, Probation, MAPPA



Safer Communities



### Maintain

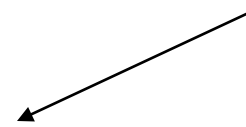
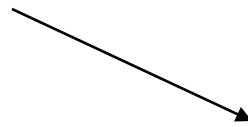
Hold Offender  
Accountable



Relationship of Trust



Maintain Treatment  
Objectives



**Reduce Re-offending**

# Circles of Support

Police

Probation

Social Services

Prison

**MAPPA Meeting  
Managing Risk**

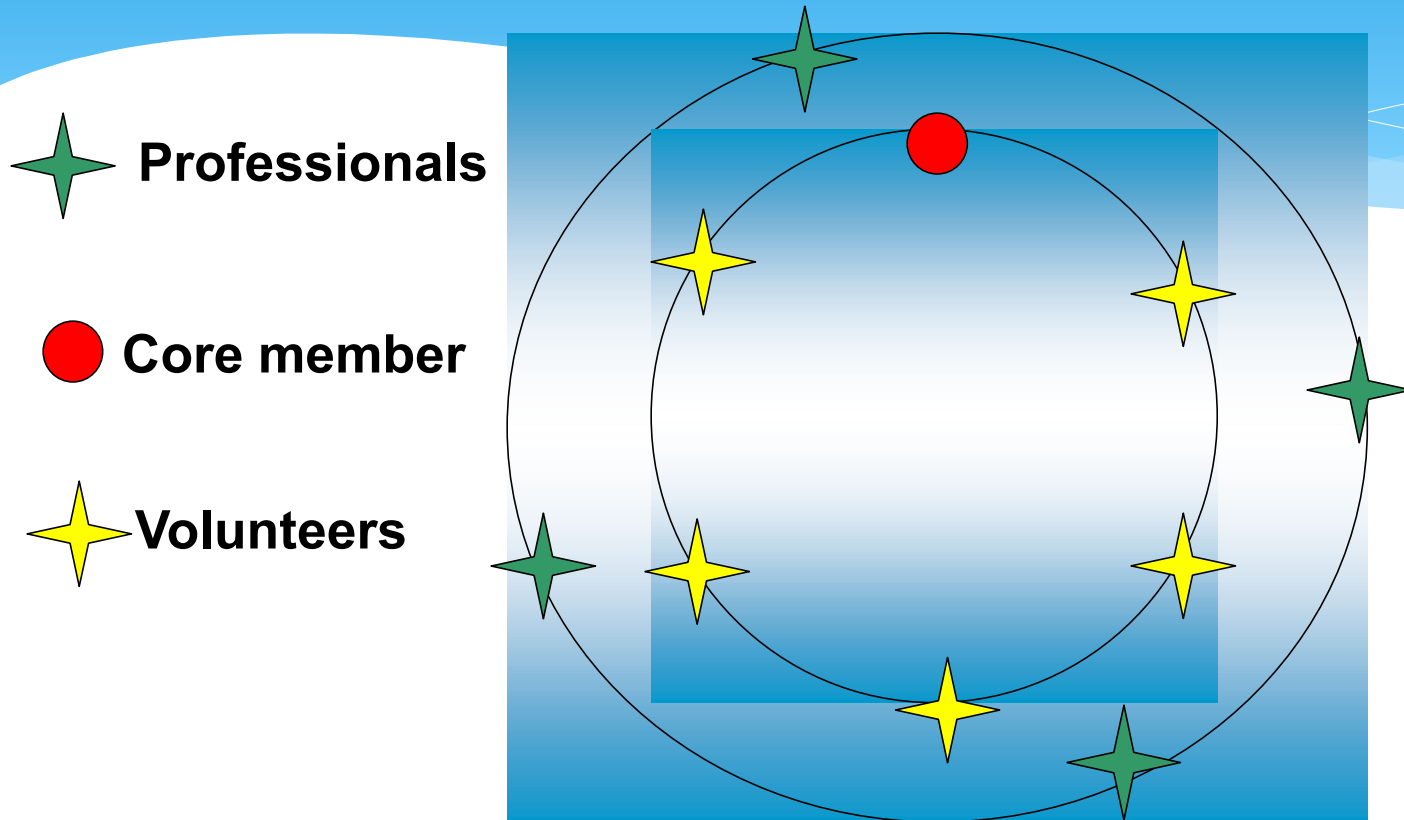
Housing

Substance  
Misuse

Circles South East

Education Dept

# Circles of Support & Accountability



**The Circle comprises volunteers from the community who are supported by professional staff**

# Suitability

- \* Adult – male or female
- \* Conviction for a contact Sex Offence
- \* Assessed as between Medium and Very High risk of Serious Harm on OASys
- \* Has risk issues related to
  - Emotional Loneliness
  - Social Isolation
  - Lack of community Integration
- \* Accepts some level of responsibility for offending

# Circle process

- \* Core Member referred by Probation Officer
- \* Information gathered and potential Core Member interviewed and assessed by Coordinator
- \* Planning meeting held
- \* First Circle meeting held with professionals
- \* Co-ordinator withdraws and volunteers meet weekly with Core Member
- \* Quarterly 2 part reviews – professionals invited to attend part 2 of review
- \* Decisions made to move to individual contact to aid integration into appropriate social activities etc.

# How and why Circles work

- \* Desistance Theory – developing positive social capital is central to the desistance process.
- \* Strengths
- \* Positive role models
- \* Hope and motivation
- \* Realism
- \* Individualism



# Expected Outcome for CMs

- \* Engagement in community based activities
- \* Managing pro offending thinking
- \* Improved pro social behaviour
- \* Sustain positive behaviour
- \* Increased emotional wellbeing
- \* Increased confidence
- \* Employment/voluntary work

## **Circles South East:**

### **The First Ten Years 2002 - 2012**

Data collected over a ten year period

involved 142 sexual offenders

71 involved in a Circle, 71 not involved in a Circle

Of the 71 Core Members who became members of a Circle, not one of them has been reconvicted of a contact sexual offence or an offence of violence since being in a Circle.

Ten of the 71 men who didn't receive a Circle went on to commit a further contact sexual offence or a violent offence.

(Bates et. al., 2012)

# Circle volunteers

1. Ability to be able to support the work of statutory agencies
2. Achieving a balance between support and accountability
3. Ability to work individually and as part of a team
4. Recognition/management of manipulation and collusion
5. Ability to maintain confidentiality
6. Respectful approach
7. Ability to access support when necessary
8. Provide a structured framework to provide emotional/practical support
9. Ability to maintain appropriate personal boundaries
10. Ability to assist development of community, social and support networks

# Adapted Circles?

- ❖ Total 139 CMs between January 2009 and 2011; 32 CMs identified as low IQ/autism cases = 23%
- ❖ Early Circle closure rate on ID cases =  $18/32 = 56\%$
- ❖ Early Circle closure rate of Non-ID CMs =  $30/107 = 28\%$
  
- ❖ Thames Valley/Hampshire Adapted Circles Pilot 2014; 6 cases identified. 1 reoffended before Circle established.
- ❖ Adaptations made to Coordinator JD, Volunteer training, Circle structure and format and risk assessment.
  
- ❖ Outcomes; 4 of the 5 (80%) CMs completed their Circles, engaging for the full 2 years. In the remaining case, Circles ended prematurely due to CM recall due to non-compliance.

# Links with the OPD Pathway?

- OPD – Offender Personality Disorder pathway is a Dept of Health and HMPPS jointly funded initiative focussed on workforce development in NPS
- There are ‘treatment’ pathways for clients in prisons and the community such as IIRMS (Intensive Integrated Risk Management Service)
- As part of the Kent and Sussex IIRMS we have commissioned a COSA service for men and women with sexual and/or violent offending histories who are screened onto the OPD pathway
- This service is called ENSO mentoring for clients with sexual or violent offending
- The service starts pre-release to provide an effective element of the ‘through the gate’ support

# Outcomes

- \* Annual figures 2017/8
  - ❖ 540 registered volunteers
  - ❖ 156 referrals for Circles – 92 CM had support service
  - ❖ 150 service-users in total
  
- \* Adapted Circles Pilot – Thames Valley/Hampshire
  - ❖ Adapted pilot cases – 100%engagement; 80% completion
- \*
  - ❖ Howard League – Organisation of the Year 2018 shortlisted. Highly Commended.