

EX POST PAPER

Exit Work in a multi-agency setting

Introduction

Exit Facilities are not acting in isolation. They can be part of a cooperation between different organisations and in this sense being hired or function as part of a multi-agency system that is being coordinated by a third party. As exit programmes often contain a large variety of activities, there also will be contacts with other suppliers of services for the target group either by having mutual relationships with these suppliers or by coordinating a multi-agency setting as exit facility itself.

The difference between a set of mutual ties between organisations and multi-agency is that in the second form there is joint contact between network partners when it comes to assessing situation and defining how to intervene. This has its advantages, as discussing a case from different point of views can increase the quality of diagnosis or providing better solutions than a mono-disciplinary approach. However this way of working also contains challenges when it comes to, for example response time, exchange of information and so on.

Multi-agency working has rather become a buzzword. Who would oppose to cooperation when it comes to a difficult challenge like decreasing radicalisation or even violent extremism? The purpose of this paper is to dig a bit deeper when it comes to multi-agency structures. How to reach the goals of the cooperation, prevention of radicalisation and getting people re-socialised to society? What are the prerequisites for good effective cooperation? First we will look into multi-agency work in general. After that, we explore the cases of an exit facility being part of a multi-agency setting organised by a third party, and the situation in which the exit facility is managing a multi-agency network.

This paper is based on experiences of people who work in a multi-agency situation, or who are responsible for organizing the cooperation.

Working in a multi-agency setting

Teaming up partners to provide a seamless supply for persons with multiple and serious problems is not new and neither an approach for exit work only. In several Member States there are multi-agency structures for juvenile delinquency, addicted persons, homeless and so on. Exit work can learn from this adjacent fields. Sometimes exit work is even embedded in, or attached to these existing structures like info houses. Apart from building on their existing expertise and framework this choice also is made because of overlap in the target group and/or the rather limited amount of cases of radicalisation that don't legitimise an own structure.

One of the experiences is that it should be clear for everyone involved, what **multiple en serious problems** are, and what could be done by participating partners themselves. This both avoids over reporting to multi-agency settings, that are in general more time and budget consuming, as under reporting where organisations don't share their worries or ask for expertise in time.

The given **mandate** of multi-agency structure determines the actions it can deploy. This derives from general legislature (for example the exchange of information), more specific policy documents (like national CVE strategies) and the prerequisites and desired output of the commissioning state body. Apart from the general mandate there are the mandates that are given by organisations and professional codes of conduct within the multi-agency settings. Both types of mandate should be in accordance with each other.

Most multi-agency settings are dominated by professionals working together. **Families, grass root organisations, religious leaders and communities** tend to be less involved. It may be that their participation is less appropriate because of the exchange of confidential information, lack of professional assessment methods and working in an informal structure. On the other hand this groups are key for supporting those who want to leave a radical environment. This implies arrangements for involvement, and communication should be present to avoid that families and communities feel footloose (not knowing where to go) or start 'shopping' (approaching each and every institution they can find).

The same applies to the **participants** who certainly in the beginning of their exit process need a person they trust rather than a kaleidoscope of professionals with whom they have not build a form of relationship yet. A mentor or a case manager who is the linking pin with (other) professionals is helpful in this situation. Defining the relationship with the participant is key. Is he/she recipient or owner of the process. To what extend does he/she have access to information. How big is the transparency?

Even more than in a stand-alone situation there is a need for **clear goals** for exit programmes in a multi-agency setting. Should a person deradicalise or is disengagement sufficient? How to define and measure success? What is considered to be criminal behaviour and what is extremist? Deriving from this goals, it should be clear for grass root professionals from participating organisations what signs of radicalisation or atypical behaviour might be worrying, and how this should be reported. This requires training and clear lines on how to report within the own organisation.

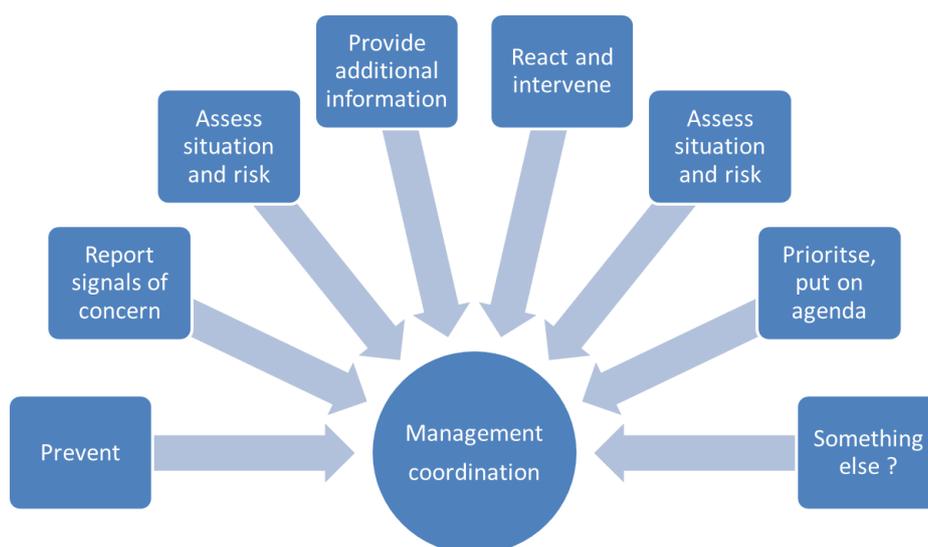
When starting up a multi-agency cooperation on exit work the step after setting the goals is **identifying the partners**. Are there pre-existing relationships that are suitable for the new challenge? Apart from available

know-how, readiness is key. Are organisations feeling the sense of urgency to cooperate on this matter? Do they have enough resources to offer? Are there any missing links and who could solve this? The next step is to determine the level of engagement of partners. Will they be called in on an ad-hoc basis when needed? Are they invited to be involved in case-management? Are they responsible for a certain part of the chain of the exit process?

Being part of a multi-agency network

To fight radicalisation there is a demand for prevention, intervention and law enforcement. This three components are present in most CVE action programmes on a national, regional and local level. Exit facilities are an important part of the chain as they help people to re-socialise to society. Given the large impact for the person himself, his social environment, society in general, and for budgetary reasons it makes sense to have an early warning system and a supply for those who are in there initial phase of the radicalisation process. Cooperation with the preventive network is useful for exit facilities, as it will downsize the number of cases and also can be the place where potential participants can be found and convinced to step out of the radical environment. Also the law enforcement partners can bring on future participants. Another benefit for the exit facility is that a larger multi-agency network can provide more facilities for the target group as follow-up for the deradicalisation/disengagement process.

Graphic 1 is an example of how a setting like this could look like. The (local) government is the coordinator, the exit facility is one of the interventions. The different tasks and roles can be performed by the coordinating government it self, NGO's being commissioned to do so, and third parties that have no hierarchal or financial ties with the coordinating entity (for example national health service in a local network, a NGO financed by charities and so on).

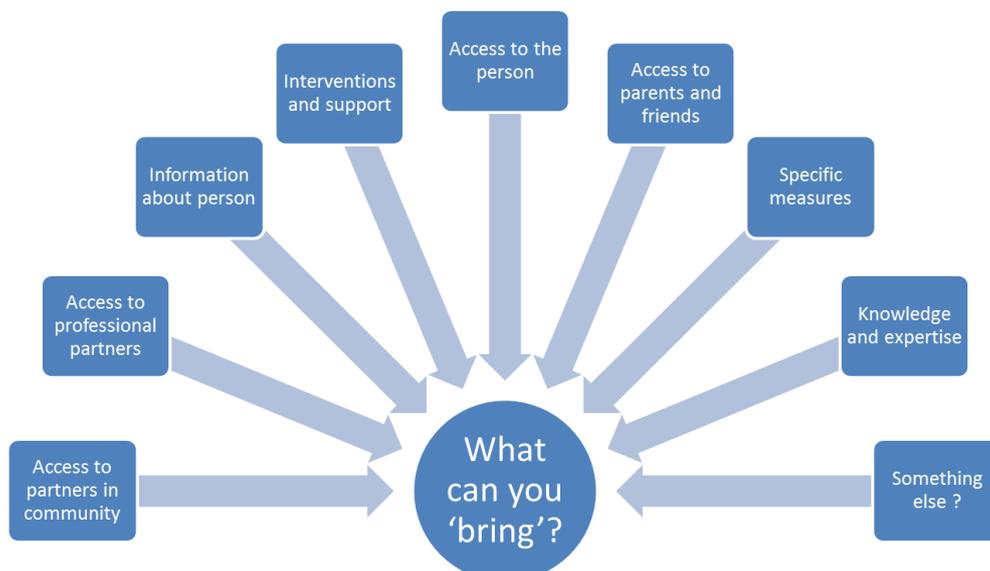


Some important points when functioning in a multi-agency network are:

- Is the multi-agency network the only way of access to the facility?
- To what extent are the facility and the facilitators independent in their activities?
- Does cooperation have effect on the level of acceptance by the target group (f.e. working with the police)?
- What are the criteria to get involved in a case?
- What is the role of the network during the exit process?
- Is the exit facility only concentrating on the radicalised person himself or also on the social environment?
- How is aftercare being organised?
- What if one of the partners is not providing?
- To what extent is participation in the cooperation time saving/absorbing?
- To what extent is there a level playing field when it comes to use of language, quality of services and goals of the cooperation?
- Are the right partners on board from your organisational point of view?

Coordinating a multi-agency network

Exit programmes usually offer a mix of coaching, practical matters (housing, work, school, education, etc.) and counselling. This wide variety in supply cannot not be supplied by one facilitator or his/her organisation. Neither will all the possibly needed expertise be available. Graphic 2 shows a range of qualities that can be needed to help a person who wants to deradicalise/disengage. Some of these qualities are hardly transferrable. F.e. when there is no minimum level of trust and no access to a person, it will be impossible to help.



Some important points when managing in a multi-agency network as a exit facility are:

- How to organise supply? Gentlemen's or rather formal service level agreements?
- How to secure quality of the services provided by others?
- Should all network organisations be involved in all cases?
- How to keep partners involved for example when their services are not needed in current cases or the number of cases decreases?
- Where does the scope of the network end? Example: what would you do if you see a family member is afraid of the radicalised person? Is working on that part of the resocialisation rather a point for another agency/network?