



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Novas Scarman wins Community Programme Award for work with offenders Social justice charity challenges current government investment**

Novas Scarman's Floating Support Team for High Risk Offenders has received an 'Outstanding Award' from the Howard League for Penal Reform Community Programme.

The Floating Support Team supports high-risk offenders to re-settle into the community. During its first three years of operations 89% of its customers maintained their accommodation and were not charged with any further offences, against a national average of just 33%. It is an integral element of the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements in Avon and Somerset.

Carol Price, Avon and Somerset Probation MAPPA Accommodation Officer, says,

"It is evident that those who have moved into general needs accommodation within the community with the assistance of floating support provided by our partnership with Novas Scarman successfully sustained their accommodation and made their journey towards a crime-free lifestyle possible."

One 25-year-old Customer who has been supported for over a year and had previously managed only three weeks out of custody before re-offending, says of the service:

"Without the support and help from my worker I would probably have gone back to prison within a few weeks – they don't tell me what I want – they ask me to set my own goals and I like that."

This service also represents incredible value for money for the public purse – the cost to support an average of 173 customers each year to make positive changes in their lives is just £890.17 per person. This is compared with the average cost of keeping a person in custody at upwards of £23,585 per person per year.

Maria Donoghue-Mills, Co-Group Chief Executive/Founder of Novas Scarman Group, and Social Enterprise Ambassador, says,

"The government needs to invest less in institutional provision that wastes lives and money, and more into schemes run by the Third Sector that actually work. By enabling individuals to successfully change their lives, our service helps people to pursue routes into training and employment, allowing them to make a positive contribution to local communities. Ultimately it offers them alternatives to reoffending, which is evidenced by the fact that 89% of those supported by the service haven't been convicted of further offences."

The Howard League for Penal Reform annual award is for the country's most successful community programmes dealing with offenders. The award is part of our Community Sentences Cut Crime Campaign, which aims to encourage public and government support for successful community sentences.

Baroness Linklater presented the awards at an event at the House of Lords on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2008.

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### NOTES TO EDITOR

The **Novas Scarman Group** is major social justice charity at the cutting edge of tackling social disadvantage through social enterprise, innovation and positive impact.

Novas Scarman works at a local level to empower people and communities by creating opportunities for positive change through personalised support and development, pathways into work and learning, inclusive local decision making and change programmes, and releasing enterprise and cultural expression.

We bring communities together by enabling a voice for those often not heard or marginalised, to be at the heart of our communities, and we aim to become one of the world's most influential and effective catalysts for social justice, inclusion and diversity.

Three organisations – Novas Group, PATH and Scarman Trust – merged in December 2007 to create the Novas Scarman Group, representing a joining together of shared values in order to facilitate social justice and inclusion, diversity and cohesion.

The organisation has four core activities:

- Community support services serving the most disadvantaged communities
- Clusters of social enterprises based in Contemporary Urban Centres
- Nation-wide programmes of learning and inclusive pathways to work
- Campaigning and policy advocacy work – “connecting the streets with the corridors of power”

In October 2007 Maria Donoghue-Mills, Co-Group Chief Executive/Founder of the Novas Scarman Group, was appointed as a Social Enterprise Ambassador as a key part of the Government's Social Enterprise Action Plan, which was launched last year by then Chancellor Gordon Brown. The programme is funded by the Cabinet Office and led by the Social Enterprise Coalition.

### About the three organisations

The Novas Group was Charity of the Year in 2007 and combines support for vulnerable individuals with major programmes of social enterprise development

The Scarman Trust pioneered support for grassroots social entrepreneurs and recently helped to develop proposals for a new Social Investment Bank – backed by both Gordon Brown and David Cameron

PATH supports Black and Minority Ethnic entrants to professions and has recently been given both the RTPI and Civil Service Diversity Award