

Research Report

Supporting short-term prisoners leaving HMP Leeds: Evaluation of the Shelter Prisoners Advocacy Release Team

**Deborah Quilgars, Anwen Jones, Mark Bevan,
Roger Bowles and Nicholas Pleace**

**Centre for
Housing Policy**



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Registered Charity No. 1107583
Company Limited by Guarantee No. 5309739

THE UNIVERSITY *of* York

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ISBN 1 874797 44 7
Published by
Centre for Housing Policy
University of York
YORK YO10 5DD

Telephone: 01904 321480
Fax: 01904 321481
Email: chp@york.ac.uk
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January 2012

Acknowledgements

Firstly, the researchers would like to thank all the PART service users who were willing to speak to us in HMP Leeds or in the community and shared their experiences of pre-and post release resettlement support.

Secondly, we are very grateful to the Shelter PART team for their help and support with the research process. Their assistance with arranging interviews, the project monitoring and also being interviewed themselves was much appreciated. We would also like to thank all the other agency representatives who were willing to be interviewed for the research and also helped us to track and locate ex-prisoners over time. Thanks also to HMP Leeds and the SORT team for facilitating our research visits and to the Ministry of Justice for providing criminal records data on a sub-set of the sample for the research.

This research would not have been possible without funding by the Pilgrim Trust and Lankelly Chase. The researchers would also like to thank Pilgrim Trust's Advisor, Samantha Gross and Glen Whitehead at Shelter for their guidance with the research.

Contents

- Acknowledgements iv
- List of Tables vii
- List of Figures vii
- List of Case Studies vii
- Executive Summary ix
 - PART referrals ix
 - The support service x
 - Outcomes for service users xi
 - Overall impact of project xii
- 1 Introduction 1
 - Policy context 1
 - The PART project 4
 - Evaluating PART 5
 - Report structure 8
- 2 Meeting the accommodation needs of ex-offenders: A review of recent literature 9
 - Introduction 9
 - Background to the literature review 9
 - The literature review 10
 - Studies identifying factors associated with resettlement 11
 - Process evaluations 12
 - Outcome evaluations 13
 - Assessing the evidence on interventions 16
 - Conclusion 17
- 3 Referrals to the prisoner advocacy release team 19
 - Introduction 19
 - Referrals to PART 19
 - Appraisal of the referral process 21
 - Profile of service users 23
 - Demographics 23
 - Housing status 24
 - Economic status prior to custody 24
 - Offending history 25
 - Support issues 26
 - Conclusion 28
- 4 Delivering the support service 29
 - Introduction 29
 - Support in prison 29
 - Immediate post-release support 32
 - Longer term resettlement support 34
 - Intensity and duration of support 36
 - Approach of the PART service 38
 - Geographical coverage of the service 40
 - Inter-agency working 41
 - Conclusion 42
- 5 Outcomes for PART service users 45
 - Introduction 45
 - Case closures and status on leaving 45
 - Reasons for closing cases 45
 - Accommodation status at case closure 47
 - Other outcomes at case closure 50

Conclusion	52
Longer term outcomes: Evidence from the longitudinal group	52
Factors affecting resettlement.....	55
Factors affecting the resettlement process: Relationship/ social network level.....	60
Factors affecting the resettlement process: Personal level.....	62
The impact of PART on resettlement paths.....	63
Conclusion.....	63
6 Evaluating the success of PART.....	67
Costs of the service	67
Costs of implementing PART.....	68
Evolution of service delivery.....	69
Unit costs	70
Crime reduction savings	71
Case studies	73
Conclusion	75
Supporting People: Comparing outcomes for housing support services working with people with a history of offending in 2008/9.....	75
Comparing service outcomes from West Yorkshire Supporting People service and PART	77
Planned and unplanned moves: the rates at which housing support services lost contact with people with a history of offending in 2008/9	80
Experiences of other ex-prisoners in West Yorkshire	82
Support in prison	82
Support immediately on release.....	84
Longer term support.....	85
Outcomes of Support.....	86
Inter-agency working.....	87
Conclusion	87
Comparison to the Shelter London Prisons Project	88
Comparing the client group	88
Comparing the service	88
Comparing the outcomes	89
Conclusion.....	89
7 Conclusions.....	91
Introduction	91
Key achievements	91
Key challenges.....	92
Reviewing the model.....	94
References	97
Appendix 1: Progress of the longitudinal group	101
Appendix 2: Supporting People Outcomes, England	107
The types of support that people with a history of offending were reported as needing.....	107
The extent to which housing support services met identified support needs	109
Appendix 3: Data collected on accommodation status of offenders and former offenders.....	113
OAsys.....	113
P-NOMIS.....	114
Asset.....	115
Social housing data	116
Local level data sets	116

List of Tables

Table 1.1: Longitudinal sample of interviewees	6
Table 3.1: Referral sources to PART	20
Table 3.2: Reasons for referrals not being accepted by PART	20
Table 3.3: Ethnicity of PART service users	23
Table 3.4: Nationality of PART service users	24
Table 3.5: Any accommodation available on release?	24
Table 3.6: Economic status prior to custody	25
Table 3.7: Offences committed, PART service users	25
Table 3.8: Any history of certain type of offences, PART service users	26
Table 3.9: Number of previous sentences.....	26
Table 3.10: Support needs identified at assessment	27
Table 3.11: Support from agencies at point of referral.....	28
Table 5.1: Reasons for leaving the service	46
Table 5.2: Accommodation status on leaving.....	48
Table 5.3: Temporary accommodation arranged on leaving prison?	49
Table 5.4: Support from agencies at referral and case closure	51
Table 5.5: Support needed, and positive outcomes, for clients leaving the service.....	52
Table 5.6: Matrix of client longer-term outcomes, by status at PART case closure.....	54
Table 6.1: Reconviction rates for those serving less than 12 months custody.....	68
Table 6.2: Budget for first three years of PART Project.....	69
Table 6.3: Convictions and reconvictions of interview sample by offence type.....	72
Table 6.4: Reconviction records of interview sample	72
Table 6.5: Cost of convictions before and after prison	73
Table 6.6: Case study summaries.....	74
Table 6.7: Broad types of service used and duration of service use by people with a history of offending using housing support services in England in 2008/9.....	76
Table 6.8: Differences between identified needs and outcomes between PART users and people with a history of offending using Supporting People funded services in West Yorkshire in 2008/9	79

List of Figures

Figure 6.1: Accommodation at service exit among people with a history of offending using housing support services funded by Supporting People in West Yorkshire in 2008/9	81
Figure 6.2: Accommodation at service exit among people with a history of offending using housing support services funded by Supporting People in West Yorkshire in 2008/9	82
Figure A2.1: Commonly identified support needs among people with a history of offending reported by housing support services funded by Supporting People (2008/9).....	108
Figure A2.2: The rates at which commonly identified support needs among people with a history of offending were reported as met by housing support services funded by Supporting People (2008/9).	110

List of Case Studies

Case study 4.1: Mr S	36
Case study 5.1: Mr B (Successful resettlement)	64
Case study 5.2: Mr A (Partial resettlement)	65
Case study 5.3: Mr N (Failed resettlement).....	66

Executive Summary

The Shelter Prisoners Advocacy Release Team (PART) was a three year pilot project (2007-10), funded by the Pilgrim Trust and run by Shelter, which was set up to test a model of resettlement support for short-term prisoners (under 12 months sentence) who were in housing need on leaving HMP Leeds (and settling in West Yorkshire). The service (a team leader and two full-time workers) aimed to provide accommodation and related support to prisoners for up to eight months post-release.

The Centre for Housing Policy (CHP), University of York undertook an independent evaluation of the service. A range of methods were utilised including: individual client monitoring, longitudinal interviews with service users, analysis of reconviction data, interviews with staff and key stakeholders, focus groups with other ex-offenders, an analysis of other similar services and a cost analysis.

PART referrals

A total of 321 referrals were made to the Shelter PART service between December 2007 and 1st August 2010. Two thirds of referrals were received from HMP Leeds resettlement team. Other referral sources included a Shelter housing advice worker based in the prison, CARATS¹, other third sector providers working in the prison and self-referrals.

Of the 321 referrals, 199 were assessed and accepted onto the PART service (62%). Of the non-starters, over half were unable to take part due to factors related to the criminal justice system, including prisoners being transferred before an assessment could be undertaken or the client being released from prison (including on an End of Custody License). One in six of the non-starters declined to take part in the service. Only one in five referrals were inappropriate, that is they did not meet the project criteria.

Overall, service users and other agencies reported that the referral process was fairly smooth, with the service usually responding quite quickly to a request for assistance. However, where delays were experienced, this caused some anxiety for service users. In terms of undertaking assessments, a key challenge was obtaining information on people's offending histories which were needed in order to access appropriate housing.

The average age of assessed PART service users was 33 years (with the youngest client being 20 and the oldest 61). The majority (83%) of PART services users were single men, described their ethnic background as White British (84%), and were of British nationality (95%).

All PART service users were facing housing problems on release with 63 per cent having no accommodation on release (the others could stay temporarily with friends or were facing eviction from present accommodation). The vast majority of people were unemployed before the prison sentence. There was a high level of reported health and support needs with 84 per cent of service users assessed as having a drug or alcohol

¹ CARATS = Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare Services

abuse problem, 49 per cent a mental health issue and 38 per cent a physical health problem or disability.

The support service

There were three main elements of the support service: support provided whilst the client was in prison, immediate post-release support and longer term resettlement support.

The main aim of the support in prison was to arrange appropriate accommodation for release. This was often challenging due to the shortage of accommodation and/or support services for ex-prisoners in West Yorkshire and most people had to move into temporary accommodation settings on release. However, hostels in particular were often not popular with clients, other people were hard to place due to the nature of their offences and some ex-prisoners were barred from certain hostels due to past behaviour. Where there were no options available, the PART service would attempt, often successfully, to secure housing under the homelessness legislation.

The support provided by PART immediately post release, in particular meeting clients at the prison on release, was seen to be very important by many service users and most agencies. This appeared crucial for some clients to ensure that they could access both accommodation and benefits on release (the latter often taking some time to set up correctly), especially in the context where the key challenge for the service on release was trying to ensure ongoing client engagement with the service.

Longer term resettlement support focused on accommodation issues, in particular helping service users move from temporary to permanent housing, but also attempted to address any gaps in people's wider support needs. This commonly involved inter-agency working particularly with housing support workers and drug /alcohol services and – less frequently – social services, mental health services, social services, and offender managers. Some services were easier to access for clients than others. A key issue was attempting to minimise duplication of services and the PART service usually closed cases when a package of support was in place.

Whilst inter-agency work in the prison had developed well over the pilot period, there were clearly some problems with information sharing and communication. It was also evident that not all agencies in the community had a clear understanding of the PART service although most agencies appreciated the need for, and contribution of, the PART service. It was also challenging for a small team of workers to work across five different local authority areas.

The average (mean) length of support for all cases was just over four months, with a large degree of variation, ranging from nine days to nearly 18 months although only four clients were supported for over 12 months. Contact logs also showed that the intensity of support varied considerably between clients.

The total cost of the service was £426,000 over the three years, with an average cost per participant of £2,219 – which would have varied considerably depending on contact time.

Outcomes for service users

Approaching a third of service users were progressing well at case closure. A fifth (21%) had completed their support plan; 7 per cent had been referred on for more appropriate support from another agency; four per cent ended support as they were satisfied with their situation, and a previous tenancy had been saved for one per cent of the sample. About half (49%) of PART cases had, however, disengaged from the service by case closure. Other reasons for case closure included being transferred to another prison (6%), being sentenced to a longer prison term (2%) and clients declining further support (5%).

In terms of accommodation outcomes, approximately one in eight (12%) service users were living in some form of settled housing (independent tenancies) at case closure. A further fifth (20%) were living in a formal temporary accommodation setting (supported accommodation or hostels). A fifth (22%) of users were living with friends and relatives and a further fifth (20%) were in prison.

Very few people had obtained employment or training by case closure. The project recorded higher levels of success in helping people to maximise income (56% of those requiring support in this area), establishing contact with external services (64%), maintaining accommodation (40%) and better managing substance misuse problems (35%).

Analysis of the longitudinal data found that most of the people who completed their PART support plan at case closure had maintained or improved upon their resettlement status at the end of the eighteen month tracking period. Conversely, most of the people who did not complete their support plan at case closure had a failed resettlement outcome at the end of the tracking period. Whilst there were exceptions to these rules, the data was suggestive that once a client had been set upon a positive resettlement path they had a good chance of maintaining or improving on their situation in the longer term.

The longitudinal work also showed that a wide range of factors impacted on resettlement outcomes, including:

- structural factors (including availability of settled housing; location/neighbourhood issues; unresponsive labour markets and exposure to poverty);
- institutional level factors (including prison discharge procedures; type of temporary accommodation available; delays in the benefit system; and housing management practices);
- social networks (including family relationships; wider social networks; and relationships with support workers), and;
- personal level factors (including substance misuse and personal motivation).

The PART service was able to influence a number of these factors, for example institutional barriers related to homelessness assessments or benefit delays, but had limited direct influence over many of the factors related to successful resettlement, particularly structural factors such as the nature of housing and temporary accommodation available in each local authority.

Police National Computer (PNC) data on reconvictions for the longitudinal group revealed a lower offending rate post release than pre-imprisonment. If offending had continued at the same rate for the 12 months before imprisonment, 223 offences would have been expected in the post-release 12 months compared with the 180 observed (adjusted for duration). This suggested a reduction of 43 reconvictions for the longitudinal group (and approximately £68,000 saved in terms of the cost of offences for this sub-group).

Overall impact of project

Most service users interviewed appreciated having the support of PART pre-release to help them retain or, more usually, secure accommodation for release. Many service users had experience of leaving prison with nowhere to stay in the past and they remarked on the difference having somewhere to go had made to them.

Interviews with other ex-prisoners in West Yorkshire suggested the value of a link project like PART by confirming the lack of support available in prison with arranging accommodation, as well as the lack of help available on leaving prison. Respondents felt that this lack of support impacted on their likelihood of reoffending especially when reliant on social networks that encourage drug taking and recidivism. A number of these respondents also stressed the need for ongoing support to enable them to attempt to modify behaviour and assist longer term resettlement.

The research clearly showed the complexities involved in the system of support for those leaving prison. Whilst some ex-prisoners were familiar with some hostels and agencies the complexity of service provision meant that a 'link' scheme like PART was needed to negotiate a resettlement path through the various accommodation providers, drug agencies, the criminal justice system, the benefits system and so on.

The present PART model however appeared to meet the needs of some ex-prisoners better than others. Whilst the project was able to work flexibly to some extent to meet the varying support needs of clients, the project was unable to provide very intensive levels of support to any one client or longer-term support. Those clients with higher and/or longer term needs might have benefited from a more assertive, intensive service and/or more integrated partnership working at the local level.

1 Introduction

The Centre for Housing Policy (CHP), University of York was commissioned by Shelter, with funding from the Pilgrim Trust and Lankelly Chase, to undertake an independent evaluation of the Shelter Prisoners Advocacy Release Team (PART). Shelter PART was a three year pilot project, also funded by the Pilgrim Trust, set up to test a model of resettlement support for short-term prisoners (under 12 months sentence) leaving HMP Leeds.

The report presents the evaluation of Shelter PART. This first chapter outlines the policy background to the project, as well as introducing both the project and evaluation in more detail.

Policy context

The importance of effectively addressing the accommodation and support needs of ex-prisoners has been increasingly recognised in recent years. The *National Reducing Re-offending Plan* (NOMS, 2005) and *Five Year Strategy for Protecting the Public and Reducing Re-offending Strategy* (NOMS, 2006) both acknowledged the fundamental role of housing in assisting resettlement and reducing the rate of re-offending. Having accommodation and appropriate support helps offenders embark upon more stable lives (NOMS, 2005). Over ten years ago, a Home Office research study found that less than a third of released prisoners who had homes to go to were reconvicted, compared to 69 per cent of prisoners who had no home to go to (Home Office, 1999).

Preventing homelessness among ex-offenders was a key element of the previous Government's five year homelessness strategy, *Sustainable Communities: Settled homes; changing lives* (ODPM, 2005). The statutory homelessness safety net² for ex-prisoners was strengthened in England in 2002 by giving 'priority need' for re-housing to those 'vulnerable'³ as a result of serving a custodial sentence or being on remand. However, evidence suggests that few ex-offenders are found to be vulnerable and in priority need (Jones and Pleace, 2010). Further, although the Homelessness Code of Guidance specifically states that housing authorities must consider each case in the light of all the facts and circumstances and that housing authorities cannot adopt a blanket policy of assuming that homelessness will be intentional or unintentional in any given circumstances, many local authorities continue to regard ex-offenders as 'intentionally'⁴ homeless and, therefore, not eligible for assistance under the legislation (Jones and Pleace, 2010; Pleace and Minton, 2009; House of Commons Library, 2010).

² Via the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002

³ The key test for vulnerability is set out in *R v Camden LBC ex parte Pereira* [1998] 30 HLR 317 – 'Whether the applicant when homeless is less likely to fend for himself than an ordinary homeless person so that injury or detriment to him will result when a less vulnerable person would be able to cope without harmful effect'.

⁴ Someone can be found to be intentionally homeless if the person deliberately does or fails to do anything in consequence of which the person ceases to occupy accommodation (or the likely result of which is that the person will be forced to leave accommodation). In the case of offenders this can include committing a crime which results in imprisonment.

Research studies consistently show that ex-prisoners can face a range of housing problems on release – both associated with retaining any accommodation they may have had prior to custody and/or securing appropriate accommodation on release where they had no settled accommodation prior to custody. The problems they face include; a shortage of social housing or suitable accommodation (for example for offenders with support needs); not meeting the criteria for local authority support through the homelessness legislation (see above); difficulties accessing private rented accommodation due to affordability and social and private landlords' perception of offenders as risky or undesirable tenants (James *et al*, 2004; Allender *et al*, 2005; Penfold *et al*, 2009). Recent research that included the West Yorkshire Probation Area found evidence that some social and private sector landlords were reluctant to house current or former offenders (Pleace and Minton, 2009).

The same social disadvantages that mark the general homeless population are highly prevalent in the prisoner and ex-prisoner populations. It has been estimated that around a third (34%) of rough sleepers in London are ex-offenders (Broadway, 2009). Ex-prisoners, and in particular, short-sentence prisoners, are amongst the most socially excluded and 'hardest to reach' groups in society (Hampson, 2010). Alongside accommodation problems, many prisoners have experienced a lifetime of social exclusion, have poor basic skills and have high levels of other health and social support needs particularly associated with drug or alcohol misuse and/ or mental health problems, alongside low levels of support from family and other supportive networks. These support needs can all impact negatively on housing problems, and vice versa. In particular the link between drug problems and homelessness can be pervasive (Kemp *et al*, 2006), with 69 per cent of prisoners having used illegal drugs in the year prior to custody in one study (Stewart, 2008). Nevertheless many offenders have struggled to access health and social care services in the past (NOMS, 2005; SEU, 2002).

Arguably, a greater degree of policy emphasis has been placed on the resettlement of longer-term prisoners, as well as prolific offenders, than short-term prisoners in general. For example, the previous Government's Public Service Agreement 16 (PSA 16) set out the aims to increase the proportion of socially excluded adults in settled accommodation and in employment, including offenders on probation. Yet, one recent representative study (Stewart, 2008) found that prisoners sentenced to under a year were significantly less likely to have stable accommodation than longer term prisoners (82% versus 90%). Other qualitative research has also suggested that prisoners serving short term sentences can find resettlement support particularly difficult to access (Hartfree *et al*, 2008), not least because they do not have probation assistance as do most longer term prisoners (Lewis *et al*, 2003).

It has been argued that the lack of attention paid to short-sentence prisoners during their stay in prison, combined with a lack of resettlement services and social support following their release, helps to create a 'revolving door' of those prisoners returning to homelessness or becoming homeless on release, reoffending (at a higher level than longer term offenders, 60 per cent being re-convicted within one year of release) and returning to prison within a short space of time after release (National Audit Office, 2010). Short-term prisoners constitute the majority of those imprisoned each year. Over 60,000 adults per year receive custodial sentences of less than 12 months and they

account for 65 per cent of all sentenced admissions and releases. The majority of short sentences are for three months or less, whilst only 10 per cent are for more than six months. This means that most short-sentence prisoners serve less than six weeks as they are automatically released when they have served half their sentence⁵. Short-sentence prisoners are usually released without statutory supervision and there is currently no prison rehabilitation regime specifically designed to meet their needs. This has been justified on the grounds that there is insufficient time for rehabilitation services to make a difference. Many receive inadequate provision in relation to housing, health and employment and, given the length of their sentences served in custody, the opportunity for this group to engage in offending behaviour programmes and pre-release services is limited.

Adding to the difficulties outlined above, is the operation of policies and practices designed to address prison overcrowding in England and Wales. Prisoners are often transferred to prisons located many miles from their homes in order to free up space in local prisons. This reduces the likelihood of advisors having local knowledge of housing and other support services. These moves can also jeopardise family relationships and the chances of successful reintegration into the community on release, both important factors in reducing reoffending and accommodation outcomes (May *et al*, 2008; Rhodes, 2008).

Policy and research reports concur that improvements are required to effectively address the accommodation and support needs of ex-prisoners. NOMS (2008) set out a number of targets for prison and probation services for 2008-9 including that 80 per cent of offenders should move into settled accommodation on release from custody. However, a recent study by the National Audit Office (2010) found that NOMS does not know how many short-sentence prisoners are having their accommodation and employment needs addressed successfully whilst in custody. Reports have also highlighted the importance of effective inter-agency working of initiatives for ex-offenders to ensure that people's full support needs are met (LGA, 2005; Stephenson, 2006; Penfold *et al*, 2009).

This revolving door syndrome for short-term prisoners has recently been acknowledged at the Government level by the publication of the Green Paper (Ministry of Justice, 2010), *Breaking the Cycle*, which seeks to address the high re-offending rates particularly for short-term prisoners through reforms to the sentencing and rehabilitation of offenders, including: offenders with mental health, alcohol or drug abuse problems being diverted into treatment programmes; more work-based activities in prison; and, extension of victim reparation schemes. Whilst accommodation is not a major focus of the reforms, the Green Paper identifies this as an area for improvement including ensuring that 'offenders receive appropriate housing assessments, advice and signposting to community services to prevent them losing their homes, or being homeless' (p35). In terms of housing options, the paper specifically asks for responses on how the private rented sector can be made to work better with offenders.

⁵ If the sentence is less than 12 months the prisoner will get Automatic Unconditional Release (ACR) and will serve only half their sentence in prison (as long as they have not broken any prison rules and have been given additional days in prison). Time spent on remand will be deducted from the time spent in prison.

A range of 'promising' practices in rehousing ex-prisoners was recently documented in a recent Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) commissioned report (Penfold *et al*, 2009), although the lack of evidence in demonstrating effectiveness in this area was also highlighted. The immediate moment of release from prison (as well as the months following release) has been identified by researchers in the United States as a critical point in the reintegration process (La Vigne *et al.*, 2009; Nelson *et al.*, 1999). In the UK, one type of support regarded as potentially valuable is 'link' schemes which work with prisoners in custody and on release via 'through the gate' assistance and on-going comprehensive support (Penfold *et al*, 2009; Pleace and Minton, 2009). The Shelter PART pilot initiative represents an example of this type of provision, making the project and evaluation timely in terms of potentially contributing to the development of policy in this important area.

The PART project

As outlined in the Shelter Evaluation Brief, the overall aims of PART were: to support ex-offenders on release from HMP Leeds by ensuring that they have stable and appropriate accommodation on release, and that they receive support needed for successful resettlement – thereby reducing the risk of re-offending; and, to provide a proven model of support that can be promoted to NOMS and the Prison Service throughout the Yorkshire and Humber region.

Shelter has an established in-prison advice service in HMP Leeds called Shelter's Prison Housing Advice Service (PHAS) which provides expert housing assistance via one full-time worker to prisoners in custody. The new PART service was set up in October 2007 to complement this work by providing pre-release, through-the-gates and post-release support across West Yorkshire. With an office base in Leeds, the service covered five local authorities: Leeds, Calderdale, Kirklees, Wakefield and Bradford. The workers also had formal access to HMP Leeds, and a desk was made available for them to use during their visits in the PHAS service office.

The staffing of PART consisted of a Team Leader, two PART workers and a part-time administrator. In addition, for approximately one year (2009-10), one volunteer worker also worked with the team. A Shelter Service Manager oversaw the development of the PART service. It should be noted that the service began with a full staff team but the original Team Leader left in Spring 2008, with the new Team Leader coming into post in late 2008 (an interim part-time worker covered this period of time). The original PART workers also both moved onto other employment, the first in Spring 2007, the second in early 2009 and had to be replaced. Due to staffing issues, the project did not reach a 'steady state' until Spring 2009 in terms of a full project team being trained and in place. The new Team Leader was a qualified social worker and also an experienced housing professional. The PART workers also had experience in support work for vulnerable groups. All staff (and the volunteer) received induction training when starting with Shelter.

The service aimed to provide relatively intensive accommodation and related support to prisoners for up to eight months after their release, with initial meetings and support starting whilst people were in HMP Leeds. Each PART worker carried a case-load of

approximately 15 cases, the Team Leader and volunteer also carried a small case-load of 2-3 people (complex cases in the case of the former, and more straightforward cases in the latter including to provide a 'befriending' role for clients following more intensive interventions by workers). The project had an operational target to support 80 clients per year.

The main target group for the service was men in housing need who were serving less than a 12 month sentence and would not therefore receive statutory post-release support. However, the service was also able to support men with longer sentences who had been on license recall, meaning that they would no longer receive statutory post-release support.

The service was set up for an initial period of three years. Funding was not available to continue the service after this period and the project officially closed in September 2010. In the last two months, the project was unable to accept full referrals although some short-term targeted work in prisons continued and existing clients were supported with the project attempting to refer clients onto other agencies to ensure continuing support was in place when the service closed.

Evaluating PART

The overall aim of the research was to evaluate the extent to which PART met its aims and objectives, in particular:

- the extent to which the project was effective in helping clients avoid homelessness;
- the extent to which the project assisted clients in the immediate post-release period;
- the extent to which the project assisted in reducing recidivism;
- the impact of the project on service users, agencies and the wider community; and
- the extent to which the project model represents a saving to the State, i.e. the savings in avoiding both recidivism and homelessness.

The evaluation utilised a range of quantitative and qualitative methods:

1. Individual client monitoring: Two data collections tools were designed working with the project, firstly to collect a range of demographic and other profile information (accommodation history, economic status, needs of client etc) on each person at the point of sign up to the scheme (assessment record), and secondly, a closure record which collected information on the status of the client at the point of leaving the service, including accommodation and economic status, any known offending and whether a range of needs identified at assessment had been met. The PART workers collected the information as part of their day-to-day work. The PART administrator recorded this on an EXCEL database system. At the end of the pilot period, this data-set was checked and cleaned by the evaluators and data was transferred into SPSS for analysis.

2. Interviews with staff and key agency representatives: Two rounds of interviews were undertaken with PART staff (including the Shelter Service Manager), key contacts in HMP Leeds Prison and other key agencies operating in the five local authorities served by HMP Leeds Prison. A total of 19 interviews were conducted with agency representatives,

including representatives from statutory and voluntary sector housing providers and specialist support services for ex-offenders. All PART workers (except one worker in the final round) were interviewed on both occasions, and additionally, the Team Leader was interviewed at the mid-point of the evaluation.

3. Longitudinal, qualitative interviews with service users: The evaluation attempted to recruit 30 PART clients to take part in a longitudinal, qualitative interviewing programme. Documentation for possible interviewees was produced by the evaluation team and the project approached their current clients to ask for their assistance. In 2009, 22 interviews were achieved with PART clients who were in the early stage of the receipt of the service (just about to be released from prison or recently released, with nine men interviewed in prison and 13 men interviewed post-release). This sample of PART clients was then tracked over a period of eighteen months. Table 1.1 shows the number of the original sample who were interviewed at points 2 and 3, along with other information collected on interviewees who could not be tracked in person⁶. Thirteen of the original sample were interviewed at Point 2, and nine of these 13 at Point 3. A total of 45 interviews were therefore achieved with the longitudinal sample. In addition, a further five interviews were undertaken with PART clients at Point 3 in time⁷. These five interviewees were asked the same range of questions as the original sample but with information being collected retrospectively. A total of 50 separate interviews were achieved with former PART service users. In addition to the interviews, information was also available on criminal convictions for most of the interviewees (see below), alongside case notes from PART.

Table 1.1: Longitudinal sample of interviewees

	1 st interview (Point 1 – Summer to Autumn, 2010)	2 nd interview (Point 2 - Spring 2010)	3 rd interview (Point 3 - Autumn 2010)
Interviews/ information collected	22	13 interviews Plus information on 6 interviewees	10 interviews Plus information on 5 interviewees
Additional retrospective interviews	-	-	5 new interviewees

As Chapter 5 indicates, the longitudinal group were more likely to leave the PART project with a successful or partially successful outcome than the whole PART cohort, although the longitudinal group also included people who were having considerable difficulties in resettling including those who disengaged and slept rough. The longitudinal group was however similar in terms of most people presenting with drug and/or alcohol problems. The group, however, is not perfectly representative of all PART users. The qualitative analysis of the longitudinal sample therefore groups the interviewees by pathways through the service and longer term outcomes. This analysis allows the different possible trajectories of ex-prisoners to be mapped and explored. As the analysis is qualitative, we split the longitudinal group into a number of sub-groups, identifying the number falling

⁶ At the first interview, interviewees were asked to consent to us tracking them in the future via a range of methods, including in person, via friends and families and agencies that they were working with (including PART, Drug Intervention Projects (DIP), offender managers, housing support workers etc).

⁷ It was intended to conduct a telephone follow-up survey of all clients who had used the project from Spring 2009, however only 11 forms were returned giving permission to follow people up in this way. It was therefore decided to undertake detailed interviews with as many of the 11 people as possible rather than conducting a more basic structured telephone interview.

into each, but further analysis uses the convention of indicating where 'some' or 'few' or 'many' respondents identified particular factors in their resettlement rather than precise numbers which could be misleading.

4. Qualitative interviews with non PART-users: As part of the evaluation, additional interviews were undertaken in 2010 with other ex-prisoners who had not utilised the PART service. Whilst this could not provide a comparison group for the evaluation, these interviews were conducted to explore and understand the nature of services and support available to people leaving prison in the West Yorkshire area for those without access to the PART service. A combination of focus groups and face to face interviews were undertaken with 27 individuals in five locations (three focus groups with 18 individuals, and nine face to face interviews). These included respondents interviewed via organisations in Bradford, Wakefield, Huddersfield and two in Leeds. The interview locations included supported accommodation for recovering drug and alcohol users, and four drop in or day centres. The majority of respondents had been to HMP Leeds, been released in the last twelve months prior to the interviews (that is, the same time period as the interviewees above), had served less than 12 months and had experienced problems with accommodation.

5. Collection of reconviction data: The evaluation team designed a form, utilised by PART workers, to ask PART clients whether they would give their consent for data to be released to the evaluation team on any reconvictions over the period January 2008 to September 2011. These periods of time were selected to allow a one year pre- and post-reconviction rate to be calculated for each person. It was originally intended to collect data on all PART clients from early 2009, however difficulties were experienced in collecting the data and only 30 forms were available. 21 of the 22 original longitudinal sample gave consent for their reconviction data to be released to the evaluators, plus an additional nine people (including four of the five additional interviewees in retrospective qualitative interviews). Following a specific request, the Ministry of Justice provided Police National Computer (PNC) data to the research team for these 30 people. This data was provided in September 2010 (for reconvictions up to May 2010). An updated dataset will be provided at the end of 2011.

6. Analysis of Supporting People (SP) data: Three elements of SP data (2008/9) were analysed: the SP Local System (SPLS); the SP Client Record (SPCR or 'client record'); and the SP Outcomes for short-term services. This element of the research mapped accommodation and housing related support for offenders/ those at risk of offending in England (and West Yorkshire) and identified the nature of outcomes achieved from SP services for offenders/ those at risk of offending. Whilst not a formal comparison group, this data allowed outcomes from PART to be compared broadly to those achieved by accommodation and housing related support services for ex-offenders.

7. Cost study: Unit costs were calculated for the project. The cost exercise also reviewed the accommodation and reconviction outcomes from PART and assessed the possible savings made utilising two detailed case studies.

8. A literature and data-sets review: A comprehensive literature review, and review of current data-sets, that provide information on accommodation status and/or related resettlement outcomes for (ex-) prisoners were undertaken.

Report structure

The report is divided into six further chapters. **Chapter 2** presents the findings from the review of existing research on supporting ex-prisoners into accommodation. **Chapter 3** examines the referral procedures and provides a profile of all clients who used the service. **Chapter 4** discusses the delivery of the service in some detail, describing the type of support offered and the challenges the project faced. **Chapter 5** considers the outcomes of the service including the outcomes at case closure for all cases and a more detailed examination of the longer-term outcomes for the longitudinal group. **Chapter 6** assesses the cost benefits of the service and its relative effectiveness compared with other interventions including Supporting People services. Finally, the conclusions of the evaluation are presented in **Chapter 7**. **Appendix 1** provides further details on the longitudinal group of interviewees. **Appendix 2** provides some additional material from the Supporting People outcomes analysis at the national level. Finally, **Appendix 3** presented the review of current data-sets.

2 Meeting the accommodation needs of ex-offenders: A review of recent literature

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of recent research evidence on interventions designed to improve accommodation outcomes for ex-offenders and factors associated with successful resettlement. The chapter begins with a brief discussion of the background to the literature review before going on to outline the methods employed. The chapter then goes on to discuss recent research evidence in three key areas: firstly, studies which have highlighted factors that appear to assist the resettlement of ex-prisoners, secondly, studies that have focussed on the process of delivering specific interventions to assist resettlement, and; thirdly, outcome evaluations of specific interventions to meet the housing and support needs of ex-offenders.

Background to the literature review

As noted in Chapter 1, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) recently published a guide to good practice in homelessness prevention and meeting housing need for ex-offenders (Penfold *et al.*, 2009). The practice guidance was informed by a literature review using the principles of Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA)⁸ which covered literature published between 1997 and 2007; case study research involving a range of multi-agency projects and initiatives aimed at meeting housing need for ex-offenders; and, strategic workshops bringing together housing and criminal justice practitioners to consider the research findings and the key messages for future practice.

One of the main findings of the review was, as Stewart *et al.* (2005) has previously noted, that there is a paucity of evidence on what works in meeting the housing and related support needs of ex-offenders. The REA found that much of the literature was descriptive rather than evaluative, the material tended to focus on the problems faced by prisoners in securing or retaining accommodation and/or descriptions of intervention and not on assessments of their effectiveness. In some cases, studies provided detail on outputs (for example, the number of prisoners using a service) or on immediate outcomes (for example, the number found accommodation on release) but very few focused on longer term outcomes. Nevertheless, the review found there were a number of 'promising' interventions operating both within and outside prisons to provide housing and housing related support to offenders. These included:

- housing advice services based in prisons, such as the Housing Support and Advice Service provided in HMP Doncaster. This is a multi-agency scheme which aims to reduce the number of prisoners released without settled accommodation by providing proactive and early intervention for offenders whilst in prison;
- 'through the gate' services, such as the De Paul Trust Pyramid Project. This is a multi-agency initiative which provides a joined up service from reception to custody through

⁸ For more information on Rapid Evidence Assessments go to: <http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/my-civil-service/networks/professional/gsr/resources/gsr-rapid-evidence-assessment-toolkit.aspx>

to the community, whereby housing and support work started in prison is followed through after release;

- link worker and supported housing schemes, such as The Derbyshire Link Worker and Supported Housing Scheme. This is a partnership between HMP Foston Hall and a voluntary sector agency which aims to provide stability in women's lives and support them in moving on from the scheme's supported accommodation to independent settled housing; and,
- floating support services for ex-offenders, such as the Stockport Floating Support Service for (Ex)-offenders. This is a multi-agency initiative funded through Supporting People to deliver a dedicated floating support service to ex-offenders.

The review also highlighted the importance of a number of factors in the prevention of homelessness and meeting housing need for ex-offenders. These included:

- partnership working to increase capacity and diversity in housing provision for ex-offenders;
- effective multi-agency approaches to early assessment and planning (pre-release); and,
- comprehensive and continuing support for ex-offenders in the community.

The literature review

The aim of the literature review conducted for this report was to review more recent research evidence on interventions aimed at helping ex-offenders avoid homelessness following release from custody. Searches were made of the main social science databases (via the Web of Knowledge⁹); the relevant Government websites (DCLG, Home Office and the Ministry of Justice) and Homeless Pages.

The focus of this review was projects and interventions similar to the PART service which work with short-sentence prisoners both pre and post-release or seek to 'link' support in prison and in the community, rather than, for example, schemes which only provide housing advice in prison or those working with offenders released under licence (who have statutory support). Articles and reports were included only if they had been published in the UK between 2008 and 2010. Materials which simply described projects and interventions and think pieces were excluded. Unsurprisingly given the findings of the review conducted by Penfold *et al.* (2009) the literature search identified only three evaluations of specific interventions designed to meet the accommodation needs of ex-prisoners.

Given the paucity of robust research evaluations, it was decided to also review studies that whilst not consisting of formal evaluations of initiatives, provided evidence of the factors that might be associated with successful resettlement of ex-prisoners or provided insights into the process of delivering interventions for this group. As with the main review, studies published in the UK from 2008 to 2010 were included.

⁹ The Web of Knowledge is a comprehensive online academic database service which provides access to numerous databases including: the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI); Science Citation Index (SCI) and the Arts and Humanities Citation Index.

Below, studies identifying factors associated with resettlement are outlined, followed by process evaluations and finally the three outcome evaluations.

Studies identifying factors associated with resettlement

The Ministry of Justice Resettlement Surveys Reoffending Analysis (RSRA) (May *et al.*, 2008) was conducted to add to the evidence in relation to resettlement factors and the role they play in reducing re-offending. Three surveys of prisoners, conducted in 2001, 2003 and 2004 shortly before release from prison, were combined and matched with criminal history and re-offending information from the Police National Computer (PNC). A representative sample of 4,898 prisoners was available for analysis. The study found that accommodation and employment were significantly associated with re-offending. Ex-prisoners were significantly more likely to reoffend when they had problems *with both* accommodation and lack of employment (one year re-offending rate was 74 per cent for this group compared to 43 per cent of those with no problem with employment or accommodation¹⁰). Interestingly, whether accommodation arranged on release was stable or temporary did not affect reoffending rates (51% for both).

Another factor associated with successful employment and accommodation outcomes is receiving family visits in prison (Niven and Stewart, 2005), and the RSRA study found this to be associated with reduced re-offending. Interventions in prison which were significantly associated with reduced likelihood of reoffending were: contact with a probation officer; attending a prison job club; and attending a victim awareness course. Other interventions including education, offending behaviour programmes and drugs programmes, were not predictive of reoffending in this model. However, other research recognises that prisoners have a range of criminogenic needs that are likely to require a number of interventions both within prison and after release (Elliott-Marshall *et al.*, 2005).

The RSRA findings highlight factors which may play the most important role in decreasing the likelihood of re-offending in the first year after release from prison. The authors stress that it is not possible to conclude that these interventions caused observed reductions in re-offending. However these findings do indicate that interventions might be having some effect, and that there is value in undertaking additional research to examine this further. The authors note some limitations to the data. In particular, as prisoners were interviewed in the weeks before release only expectations of employment and accommodation could be gathered. Also, almost two thirds of the sample was serving sentences of less than 12 months which made them ineligible for many programmes (including offending behaviour and intensive drug programmes).

Although the role that employment plays in reducing re-offending has been widely acknowledged, less work has been done to explain why this should be the case. In an attempt to add to understanding this relationship, a recent study of routes into employment for ex-offenders (Rhodes, 2008) explored the experiences of 12 ex-offenders and revealed the importance of the role of social relationships in securing and

¹⁰ Note that this included both ex-prisoners who had served a sentence of less than 12 months or 12 months or over.

maintaining employment for ex-offenders. Importantly, social relationships played a constitutive role for many of the ex-offenders interviewed as ties to children and partners in particular encouraged the construction of a 'responsible' and 'legitimate' identity in which employment played a key role. The desire to be a 'good' parent and/or partner meant that employment was accorded a much higher value, while criminality became incompatible with this new self-identity. Further, social ties form a performative function, whereby offenders are able to secure employment through social contacts or word of mouth rather than having to face, and overcome, the more formal and exclusionary processes of the labour market. However, the reliance on social ties also reveals the frailties in existing provision aimed at assisting ex-offenders into employment (Rhodes, 2008).

Another recent study (Hartfree *et al.*, 2008), conducted for the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) sought to explore ex-prisoners' attitudes to, and expectations of, work; their experience of employment services and the labour market; and, the relationship between crime, employment, and unemployment. The study found that for many of those interviewed, finding employment was a priority but interviewees often had unrealistic expectations. The study also found that resettlement support to help people into employment was of variable quality and did not always lead to improvements in employability. Short-sentence prisoners sometimes found resettlement support difficult to access whilst some prisoners were reluctant to receive help either before or after release from prison. Significantly, many interviewees had housing and substance misuse problems that needed to be addressed before employment could be considered. Entering the labour market presented its own set of problems for this group because of their criminal records, employer attitudes and curfew restrictions. Re-offending among the study sample was common and the findings showed that re-offending, substance misuse and housing problems are closely entwined. However, employment status was more a reflection of circumstances in relation to substance misuse and housing, rather than criminal activity. The study found evidence to suggest that services need to find ways of addressing the needs of short-sentence prisoners by delivering intensive treatments within shorter sentence periods and/or strengthening their through care services.

Process evaluations

An interesting recent development in housing support for ex-offenders is the use of peer advisors and mentors, however few such services have been evaluated. One peer mentoring service that has been studied is the St Giles Trust Peer Advice Project (Boyce *et al.*, 2009) which aimed to advance the skill and employability of offenders; to provide training for, and supervision of, prisoners delivering housing advice in a number of prisons; and, to offer employment experience for offenders on their release from custody. The evaluation was a 'process evaluation' that is, it was conducted to help the St Giles Trust to develop and fine tune the prison Peer Advice Project and its community services by describing how the scheme was working in practice. The study was not designed to quantify benefits in terms of reduced reoffending. Nevertheless, the research suggests that mentoring schemes of this sort are promising. It appears to bring benefits to the Peer Advisors who valued their role, regarding the work as fulfilling, boosting self-confidence, providing some structure to their lives and as being a likely route to employment. Peer Advisors valued highly the opportunities to consolidate training and

work skills through a placement at St Giles Trust in the community upon release. These placements were seen as a means of applying skills gained in prison and gaining 'real life' work experience, also giving daily structure to their lives after the confines of prison. Clients of the scheme were also very positive about the support they received, and especially appreciative of receiving help from someone who has 'walked in their shoes'. However, whilst respondents believed the service was promising, and service users appeared to appreciate the service, there is not robust evidence on the effectiveness of the intervention or of any outcomes.

A recent small scale study into the effectiveness of SACRO's Supported Accommodation Services in Glasgow (McKay, 2008) found that one of the key features of successful resettlement for ex-offenders is suitable and sustained accommodation alongside practical and emotional support and assistance to constructively fill a person's time. This study also highlights the importance of collaborative working. The study involved just eight stakeholders, seven from organisations such as MAPP, the Drug Court Team and Prison Through-Care, and one service user. Six stakeholders completed electronic surveys and only two qualitative interviews were undertaken. The study aimed to examine the perceptions of effectiveness held by key stakeholders and does not provide data on outcomes which would demonstrate effectiveness.

Outcome evaluations

As reported above, only three interventions designed to provide accommodation and related support to ex-prisoner have been subject to an outcome evaluation during the period 2008-2010 (Hazel *et al*, 2008; Park and Ward, 2009; Dawson and Stanko, 2010). Below, each of these studies is described in some detail, providing a basic description of the initiative and evaluation methods, presenting key findings and also an assessment of the robustness of the study.

The RESET programme

The initiative

The resettlement, education, support, employment and training initiative (RESET) was a major resettlement project, involving over 50 national partners and operated in seven Youth Offending Team (YOT) areas across two regions of England (London and the North West), and an institution, for female young offenders. The two regions and the YOI operated different resettlement models:

- a 'case management' model where workers became part of the casework YOT team;
- a 'co-ordination model' where workers did not manage cases but arranged multi-agency resettlement support, and;
- an 'institution based' model which included outreach work after release by staff based in the institution rather than in the YOT.

RESET workers referred service users to appropriate services as required. The main issues and problems young people required support with were: employment, education and training; tackling offending; substance misuse; homelessness; anger management; and, family problems.

The evaluation

The evaluation of RESET (Hazel *et al.*, 2008) ran from 2005 to 2007 and comprised quantitative and qualitative elements; it describes the initiative and how it operated in three areas which all used different resettlement models.

Methods

The quantitative data collection included 208 information forms at the point of project entry and departure, and ongoing details of 150 activities, supplemented by 137 Asset¹¹ forms. Qualitative data included 90 interviews with key stakeholders and staff (50 at the start and 40 at the end), supplemented by seven focus groups with staff and four parent interviews.

Outcomes

RESET worked with a total of 208 young people over a 27 month period. The young people stayed involved with the project for an average length of seven months but three-quarters continued involvement beyond the length of their sentence.

- RESET appeared to have little or no impact on accommodation outcomes.
- About half the young people involved with RESET did something in breach of their licence conditions during their supervision period.
- About a third of the young people supported re-offended and was arrested during their supervision period. This is significantly less than previous figures for custodial sentences.
- The institution-based model with outreach was the most successful in reducing re-offending. The case management model was the least effective and had no impact on the reoffending rate.

Cost benefits

It was estimated that if RESET enhanced resettlement was rolled out across all custodial placements in England and Wales this would result in a total annual saving of £80 million. The RESET package cost £8,074 a year for a young person with a medium level of need.

Conclusions

The evaluation concludes that RESET had some success but found that poor partnership working was a serious barrier to resettlement.

Assessment of study

This evaluation provides one of very few comparative evaluations of interventions but it is not always clear from the study why some models of interventions worked better than others, in particular it does not explain why one model was far more successful than others in reducing re-offending. Although the study included interviews with a large number of service providers and a small number of parents, it did not seek the view of service users. Further, the evaluation did not follow clients' progress once the intervention ended and it is not possible, therefore, to assess longer term outcomes for those young people who used the service.

¹¹ Young Offender Assessment Profile. For more information go to: <http://www.yjb.gov.uk/en-gb/practitioners/assessment/asset.htm>

St Giles Through the Gates service

The initiative

Through the Gates is a scheme which aims to reduce re-offending by prisoners by ensuring they are supported before release, on the day of release and for some weeks after release if necessary by engaging them with housing, benefits, specialist agencies and probation. It currently operates in a number of London Boroughs. Half the staff members are ex-offenders.

The evaluation

The evaluation covered the first six months of the service, from August 2008 to January 2009 (Park and Ward, 2009).

Methods

The evaluation comprised two main elements:

- Quantitative analysis of project monitoring and records of 533 referrals (outcome data are based on a subset of 473 clients who were released during the pilot period)
- Qualitative investigation - interviews with nine individuals, including five service users, two St Giles workers and two representatives of other agencies in the community.

Outcomes

- Housing was obtained in 330 cases and there were 143 cases where housing was not secured.
- The service faced problems accessing specialist services; only around half of those with mental health needs and those with substance misuse problems were referred to appropriate services.
- All those who required education, training and employment (ETE) support were successfully referred to an ETE service.

Conclusions

Clients appeared to appreciate the support offered and other agencies also appreciated support with housing and felt that this was central in reducing re-offending. The qualitative data suggest that the service had some positive benefits. However, the evaluation identified a number of barriers and problems, notably:

- Difficulties in interagency working
- Late referrals (and possibly inappropriate referrals)
- End of Custody Licence (early release)
- Loss of contact with clients/clients not engaging.

Assessment of study

The data is unclear on housing outcomes and it appears there was some confusion about how to record housing outcomes, that is, whether temporary or permanent. The presence of former offenders in the St Giles team was also regarded as positive but it is unclear from the evaluation whether or how this added value to the service.

The Diamond Initiative

The initiative

The Diamond Initiative (DI) aims to reduce re-offending by focussing resources on offenders returning from prison following a sentence of less than 12 months, to wards which have been identified as having high resident offender populations: a group for whom no licensing provision would otherwise be made and for whom rehabilitation services are limited. The service is delivered jointly by the Metropolitan Police Service, Local Authorities and London Probation and in conjunction with partner agencies. DI teams seek to support offenders in any way that will help reduce the chances of them reoffending; by assisting with accommodation, applying for benefits, and referring them to specialist services.

The evaluation

The evaluation of the London Criminal Justice Partnership Diamond Initiative (Dawson and Stanko, 2010) covers the first year of the pilot initiative which started in November 2008.

Methods

Two waves of an on-line staff survey to enable the monitoring of staff perceptions over time; qualitative interviews with 36 Diamond Initiative staff members and 29 DI offenders; and, analysis of Police National Computer data to explore the criminal careers of the DI offender group.

Outcomes

A total of 115 (28%) of the DI offenders committed an offence within their first six months following the initiative for which they received a conviction. This compares with a 43 per cent re-offending rate among a comparison sample (provided by the academic reference group).

Cost benefits

The project is a major initiative costing £11 million over two years. A cost benefit analysis will be undertaken in the next stage of the evaluation.

Assessment of study

The absence of a matched control group and a short-follow up time preclude firm conclusions around the impact of the initiative in its first year, however these aspects will be addressed in year two of the study.

Assessing the evidence on interventions

Whilst there have been some new developments in addressing ex-offenders housing and related support needs such as the St Giles Through the Gate service and the Peer Advice Service; and attempts to improve multi-agency responses to the needs of ex-offenders, particularly via the Diamond Initiative and the RESET programme, there is as yet little evidence of what works in resettling offenders. The evaluations outlined above do not clarify which elements of support or which resettlement models are the most effective. In

particular, the studies reviewed here, like many other studies of interventions focussing primarily on housing support for ex-offenders, do not provide evidence on the effectiveness of interventions over the longer term. Further, some of these evaluations do not consider service user views or only include a very small number of service user respondents.

However, the next stage of the evaluation of the Diamond Initiative will include a statistical control group, a longer follow up time period, including the collection of reconviction data, and an attempt to decipher the particular aspects of the Diamond Initiative that contribute to and impact on re-offending, along with a cost-benefit analysis. The next stage should provide valuable – and robust data – on what works in reducing offending amongst short-sentence prisoners in London¹².

Conclusion

There is a great deal of literature on the resettlement of offenders and there are some examples of promising practice but as previous reports have noted, little evidence of what works in resettling ex-offenders in the community. The main gap in the existing evidence base is longitudinal qualitative data on the experiences of ex-offenders although the ongoing evaluation of the Diamond Initiative promises to provide robust data on what works in reducing re-offending amongst specific groups of offenders. Much of the research, as evidenced in this chapter, relies on the views of service providers and professionals rather than ex-offenders themselves. The relationship between accommodation, employment, and re-offending has been well documented but there remains little understanding of the interaction between these three elements of successful resettlement. However, existing research suggests that short-sentence prisoners appear to suffer greater disadvantages and are at greater risk of reoffending than those serving custodial sentences of 12 months or longer who receive rehabilitation support in prison and statutory support on release.

¹² Since the time of writing, year two findings of the Diamond Initiative have been published (Dawson, P. and Stanko, B. (2011) *An evaluation of the Diamond Initiative: year two findings*, London: London Criminal Justice Partnership. The promising results of the interim report were not substantiated using an Intention to Treat design utilising a matched control group of similar offenders drawn from similar, matched parts of London – over a 12 month follow up period no significant difference was found between the reoffending rate of the Diamond referral group and the control group. Whilst no cost savings were identified, there were some indications of positive outcomes in certain areas and lessons on implementation were also presented.

3 Referrals to the prisoner advocacy release team

Introduction

This chapter examines the referrals to the PART service during its three years of operation (2007-2010). It begins by documenting the number of referrals and examining the referral and assessment process. The chapter then moves on to present a profile of PART service users, describing their demographic characteristics as well as housing, economic and offending histories and health and support needs.

Referrals to PART

Any prisoner on remand or serving a custodial sentence of less than 12 months in HMP Leeds with a housing need, who was to be released to West Yorkshire, could be referred to PART.

A total of 321 referrals were made to Shelter PART service between the start of the project and 1st August 2010. After a setting up period, the project was fully operational from early December 2007 to July 2010, meaning that the project was receiving an average of 10 referrals per month over a 32 month period.

Table 3.1 shows that the main source of referral was the prison's resettlement team (SORT), accounting for two thirds (67%) of all referrals, and seven in ten (70%) of accepted referrals. The Shelter PHAS advisor based in HMP Leeds referred one in twelve referrals (9%), the relatively low number of referrals partly reflecting the fact that there was not a PHAS worker in post for most of 2008 and half of 2009. The CARATs (Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare) team in the prison also referred one in twelve cases (8%). One in twelve PART referrals were recorded as 'self-referrals'. However, in effect, many more referrals could have been recorded in the self referral category as prisoners generally made their own 'applications' (or 'apps') for housing assistance via the Prison Information Desk (PID) officer on the wings. These resettlement enquiries were usually forwarded to the SORT team in the first instance who then referred onto PART. Other referral routes included the West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy Project (WYCCP), who ran a similar resettlement service in the prison, and 'pre-release' courses for prisoners which the Shelter staff were invited to attend at one stage in the project.

Of the 321 referrals, 199 were assessed and accepted onto the PART service (62%). A further 122 referrals (38%) were not supported by the PART service for a wide range of reasons, summarised in Table 3.2. Only a minority of referrals, approximately one in five, potentially represented inappropriate referrals in terms of not meeting the criteria for the scheme – most commonly (15 cases, 12%) where a person had a sentence of 12 months or more and would receive Probation support (though this was not always known as some people were referred on remand and were later sentenced) or where the person had few or no housing support needs or too complex needs (eight cases, 7%). In addition, twenty one (17%) prisoners declined the services of PART (for example, refusing a legal visit or because they had arranged their own housing since they put in an application for help).

Table 3.1: Referral sources to PART

Referral source	Accepted referrals	Percent	Non-accepted referrals	Percent	All referrals	Percent
SORT	137	70%	72	62%	209	67%
PHAS/ Shelter	12	6%	15	13%	27	9%
Self referral	19	10%	7	6%	26	8%
CARAT	14	7%	11	10%	25	8%
WYCCP	4	2%	7	6%	11	4%
Pre-release	4	2%	5	4%	9	3%
Education	1	0.5%	0	0%	1	0.3%
Total	196	100%	117	100%	313	100%

Source: Project records. Data were missing for three accepted referrals and five declined referrals.

However, over half of the non-accepted referrals did not proceed to assessment due to the nature of the criminal justice system and the turnover of inmates in HMP Leeds. Thirty one (25%) referrals that were not supported by PART were transferred to another prison before PART could carry out an assessment. In another twenty four cases (20%), the potential client was released from prison before an assessment could be undertaken. The majority of these cases were due to the prisoner being released early on End of Custody Licence (ECL)¹³, whilst a few cases were referred too close to the release date to enable an assessment to be undertaken. Others (7%) were released from a court proceeding directly into the community (not allowing any time to assess their case). It should be noted that although a full assessment of these referrals was not undertaken, PART still had to process these referrals, attempting to organise meetings or locate individuals in HMP Leeds. This represented unproductive time that could have been spent on supporting people, and such activity needs to be allowed for in schemes that are working from a local prison with a large turnover of prisoners.

Table 3.2: Reasons for referrals not being accepted by PART

Reason referral not accepted	Number (%)
Transferred to another prison before assessment	31 (25%)
Released from prison before could undertake assessment	24 (20%)
Client declined service	21 (17%)
Outside PART remit as sentence more than 12 months	15 (12%)
Released from court into community	8 (7%)
Outside PART remit support needs too great or not present	8 (7%)
Other reasons	7 (6%)
Referral declined but reason not recorded	8 (7%)
Total	122 (100%)

Source: Project records.

¹³ All prisoners aged 18 years and over who were serving a determinate custodial sentence of between four weeks and under four years were eligible for release on ECL from July 2007 to 12th March 2010, subject to serving a minimum of 7 days in custody from date of sentence, except for those excluded as a result of their offence type or for other reasons. Exclusions included registered sex offender and those serving sentences for serious violent crimes and those who have broken the terms of temporary release in the past. Offenders on ECL were paid the normal discharge grant plus a subsistence payment (including housing costs if necessary) in lieu of benefit payments until their formal release date.

Appraisal of the referral process

Service users appeared to find the referral process fairly straight forward. This was despite some clients not being able to recall which agency had referred them and/or appearing slightly unclear about the referral process. Some of the clients said they had been referred by agencies including CARATs, SORT and PHAS, but most explained that they had self-referred or put in an 'app' for housing support after hearing about PART from prison officers, other prisoners, from the PART workers, at a pre-release course, or from adverts they had seen for the PART service. It was clear that many clients had been quite proactive in referring themselves (directly or via a third party) to PART. Many of the interviewees explained that they thought the PART service sounded like a good idea. Nevertheless, quite a few also said that they were somewhat sceptical because of their previous experience of services.

*...well I've been through so many organisations I thought 'do gooders, they'll help you out on the surface but underneath they won't'. So I was dubious...
(Service user)*

The majority of service users felt that once they had a letter from PART they did not have to wait too long for an appointment (a week or two, less in some cases). A couple said that they were pleasantly surprised as this was unusual in prison. However a few remarked that it did take some time between putting in an application and being seen by an officer or hearing from PART and felt it would have been helpful if they had been able to see a PART worker earlier. They recognised that this was sometimes difficult when they were serving short sentences (sometimes as little as six weeks), however in a minority of cases there had been adequate time before release and clients explained that they had been unsure what would happen on release and this had caused some anxiety. Some clients had doubted whether PART would be able to help them when they had so little time before release (often only a few weeks).

I put in an app [application] for housing and an officer came to see me and then he referred me to Shelter. I put the app straight when I got into prison but it took a few weeks before the officer came to see me so there wasn't much time for [PART worker] to help – only about three weeks...(Service user)

If I had started this at the beginning of my sentence, I might have got a one bed flat instead of a hostel... (Service user)

The timing of referrals was also perceived as a problem by PART workers and other agencies working in and outside the prison, largely as a result of the way that the prison operated. However, in the first half of the project, some agency representatives also felt that there had been delays in contacting the client following referral or in keeping the referring agency informed about the progress of the case (this was thought to be partly because of staff shortages¹⁴). As a result of this, PART changed its referral criteria in its second year so that clients should be referred at least two months before their release date. However, this appeared difficult to achieve due mainly to short sentences and

¹⁴ The PART team was without a full-time Team Leader from Spring 2008 to late 2008. The original PART workers also both moved onto other employment, the first in Spring 2007, the second in early 2009 and had to be replaced. The project did not reach a 'steady state' until Spring 2009 in terms of a full project team being trained and in place.

prison internal referral mechanisms and they continued to receive referrals and work with clients much closer to the release date.

However, overall, referral agencies felt that the referral process worked well and was relatively simple and straightforward. With the exception of the first few months of the service, there had been very few inappropriate referrals to the service (see above). Communication between key referrers and PART appeared good, particularly with the other Shelter service and the prison resettlement team who were located in adjacent offices in HMP Leeds. Some other agencies might have liked more contact with the service but this was understood as due to there being a lack of time available and felt that communication was still effective.

It has made life an awful lot easier – housing is such a problem and it is good to have another housing service and the communication with [PART worker] is much easier...we can just call [PART worker] and ask what is happening or [the PART worker] 'phones to let us know....(Agency representative)

Following referral, a PART team member would arrange to meet with the potential client to conduct a full assessment of their housing needs and check that they met the referral criteria and that support could be offered. Originally the PART team leader was responsible for undertaking assessment of all referrals but it was decided quite early on that PART workers should undertake the assessments themselves as they would be working directly with the client. The referral form provided basic details about the prisoner such as an outline of their housing problem, their support needs and offending details¹⁵. PART workers then went onto gather more detailed information about the client, their housing situation and other relevant information, for example, their support needs. This information was required to make arrangements for release, to identify suitable accommodation options (for example, if the client requires support for a substance dependency) and to build a case for a homelessness assessment (particularly proving vulnerability), and, importantly, to assess risk (for example, whether there was a history of arson, sexual offences etc which would constrain housing options or where the nature of offending suggests there was a risk to PART staff). Landlords often ask for an offending history and will not agree to house clients without this.

A key issue in undertaking these assessments was the lack of clear and consistent information sharing procedures. This was a particular issue in regard to the sharing of information about PART clients' offending histories. PART workers were able to access LIDs (the Local Inmate Database System)¹⁶ and OASys (Offender Assessment System) records but these did not always give details of all previous convictions. The later are held on the Police National Computer (PNC) but PART could not access these and had instead to rely on the good will of the SORT workers who could access these records. Pre-sentencing reports also provide useful information but again, PART workers were not able to access these and again had to rely on the SORT workers to provide this data. Shelter

¹⁵ As described in Chapter 1, the PART workers were experienced in support work for vulnerable groups although they were not trained social workers or mental health professionals. The assessments were therefore undertaken in this context, identifying housing-related support needs alongside accommodation issues, rather than detailed medical or specialist assessments of particular issues.

¹⁶ This system was replaced by P-NOMIS in 2010. This system should allow all agencies working in the prison to log in to the system, record interventions with the prisoner and read the prisoner's notes.

was a signatory to the West Yorkshire Information Sharing Protocol but this only applied to offenders serving 12 months or more so PART clients were not covered. It appeared that this information sharing had not improved over the course of the pilot.

Although the assessment process, particularly the collection of necessary information about the client’s offending history, was often onerous for PART staff, service users appeared to find the process straightforward and only one or two mentioned there being much paperwork. Most clients also said their PART worker had explained what the service could do to help them and had kept them informed about the progress of their case whilst they were awaiting release.

Profile of service users

This section outlines the profile of clients who were formally accepted onto the PART service, that is those who had undergone an assessment and both PART and the client agreed that the service could provide them with potentially useful post-release support. This section provides information on 192 separate individuals. It should be noted that five people utilised the service twice, and one person three times, accounting for the 199 referrals.

Demographics

The average age of assessed PART service users was 33 years (with the youngest client being 20 and the oldest 61).

The majority (83%) of PART services users were single men. A small number of people said they usually lived with a partner (7%), and a few others said they had a partner but did not live with them (7%). Just over half of the men (55%) stated that they had children but only nine men (7%) usually had children living with them.

The majority of PART service users described their ethnic background as White British (84%) (Table 3.3). A small number of people were from a White Irish background (5%), White Other (2%) or White and Black Caribbean (2%). Four per cent of clients were of Pakistani ethnic origin, and one person was Asian Indian. One person described their origin as Black British and Black African, respectively.

Table 3.3: Ethnicity of PART service users

	Number of all users (%)
White British	110 (85%)
White Irish	7 (5%)
Pakistani	4 (4%)
White and Black Caribbean	3 (2%)
White Other	2 (2%)
Asian Indian	1 (1%)
Black British	1 (1%)
Black African	1 (1%)
Total	130 (100%)

Source: Project records. Data were missing for 62 service users.

The vast majority (95%) of PART clients were British (Table 3.4). Three men had an Irish nationality, whilst one person was of Slovakian nationality and one person Rwandan.

Table 3.4: Nationality of PART service users

	Number of all users (%)
British	154 (96%)
Irish	3 (3%)
Central and Eastern European	2 (1%)
African (Rwanda)	1 (1%)
Total	162 (100%)

Source: Project records. Data were missing for 30 service users.

Housing status

The evaluation monitoring forms collected information on whether PART clients had any accommodation available to them on release. Unsurprisingly given the criteria for eligibility for the service, a majority of PART clients (63%) had no accommodation at all that they could return to. A minority stated that they had some sort of accommodation available to them, though as Table 3.5 shows this was predominately short-term arrangements with friends or relatives (22%) or parents (8%). Ten people (6%) stated that they had their own tenancy (usually council or housing association (HA) property) and were being referred to the project as they feared that they would lose this property (eviction proceedings had already been started by the landlord in a number of cases).

Table 3.5: Any accommodation available on release?

	Number of PART service users (%)
No - no accommodation	116 (63%)
Yes – friends or relatives (including partner)	40 (22%)
Yes - parents home	14 (8%)
Yes - own tenancy	10 (6%)
Yes – supported accommodation	2 (1%)
Yes – type not recorded	1 (1%)
Total	183 (100%)

Source: Project records. Data were missing for nine service users.

The majority of men had experienced housing problems before the present experience, with 79 per cent having been homeless (in their own definition of the term) in the past. Sixty per cent had applied as homeless to a local authority at least once in the past. An outcome was available for 68 clients: 31 per cent were accepted and allocated a tenancy; 34 per cent were provided with a hostel place or other form of temporary accommodation; 22 per cent were refused, and; 13 per cent did not receive an outcome (including withdrawing, moving area, not yet heard).

A summary of people’s accommodation histories revealed that whilst some had had only a few addresses in the last five years, most appeared to have moved frequently between a range of different settings including staying temporarily with partners, friends and relatives, hostels, drug rehabilitation centres, sleeping rough, prison and sometimes (often failed) tenancies. Many had had no fixed abode for a number of years.

Economic status prior to custody

Table 3.6 shows that 15 men (10%) were working prior to custody, mainly in full-time work. However, the majority (81%) of service users were not working before prison and

claiming benefits (mainly Jobseekers' Allowance but also Income Support/ Incapacity Benefit). A small number of service users were not working but were not claiming benefits and therefore literally receiving no income officially. It is likely that the eight people with an 'other' economic status were also not receiving benefits.

Table 3.6: Economic status prior to custody

	Number of all users (%)
Unemployed/ unable to work – claiming benefits	125 (81%)
Employed full-time	10 (6%)
Unemployed/ unable to work – not claiming benefits	6 (4%)
Employed part-time	4 (3%)
Self-employed	1 (1%)
Retired – receiving pension	1 (1%)
Other	8 (5%)
Total	155 (100%)

Source: Project records. Data were missing for 37 service users.

Offending history

PART service users were on remand or convicted for a wide range of (alleged) offences (Table 3.7). The most common types of charges related to theft, particularly shoplifting. The second most common offence was a breach of an existing order (often Anti-social Behaviour Order) or licence recall from Probation. Violent offences were also quite common, particularly assault and in a few cases Actual Bodily Harm or Grievous Bodily Harm. Burglary/ robbery and driving offences were also relatively frequent. Other offences included criminal damage, possession of drugs, sexual assault, handling stolen goods, carrying offensive weapons and fraud.

Table 3.7: Offences committed, PART service users

	Number of offences recorded
Theft (including shoplifting)	53
Robbery/ Burglary	14
Assault (3xABH; 1xGBH; 14x assault)	18
Driving offences	15
Possession of drugs	8
Handling stolen goods	4
Failure to surrender	1
Fraud (or attempt)	5
License recall	12
Breach of order	28
Not signing sex offenders register	2
Criminal damage	8
Firearm offences	2
Affray/ Drunk and disorderly	4
Sexual assault	3
Offensive weapons	4
Battery	3
Contempt	1
Violent Disorder	2
Harassment	3
Other	2

Source: Project records: 197 offences recorded; some individuals were convicted of more than one offence

Table 3.8 shows the proportion of men who had a history of violent offences (48%), history of arson (8%), any offences against children (5%), any sexually related offences (8%) and any violence shown towards women (17%).

Table 3.8: Any history of certain type of offences, PART service users

	Number of all users (%)
Violent offences	75 (48%)
Arson	13 (8%)
Offences against children	10 (5%)
Sexually related offences	13 (8%)
Violence shown towards women	27 (17%)

Source: Project records. Service users could be in more than one of the categories shown. Data were missing for 32 service users (arson and sexually related offences); 35 users (violence against women); 36 users (violence), and one user (children).

PART service users were asked how many custodial sentences they had served (including the present one). People reported between one and 100 sentences. The vast majority of PART service users were repeat offenders, with only thirteen people (10%) reporting that this was their first custodial sentence (Table 3.9). A further 37 per cent had served between two and five sentences, whilst 28 per cent had served between six and 19 sentences. A quarter (26%) had served 11 or more custodial sentences. In addition, five further users could not provide a number but it was recorded that they had served ‘many’ custodial sentences. It should be noted that most service users had been convicted of more offences than recorded here but had received community based orders. Service users were also asked to report their longest sentence, with responses ranging between one month and 12 years (with an average (mean) of 24 months).

Table 3.9: Number of previous sentences

	Number of PART service users (%)
1 sentence	13 (10%)
2 to 5 sentences	50 (37%)
6 to 10 sentences	38 (28%)
11 to 20 sentences	23 (17%)
21 or more sentences	12 (9%)
Total	136 (100%)

Source: Project records. Data were missing for 56 cases.

Support issues

At assessment, PART workers identified each person’s support needs (in addition to any accommodation related problems). Table 3.10 reveals that PART service users had a range of support needs. Most strikingly, the vast majority (84%) were assessed as having a support need around drug and/or alcohol misuse¹⁷. About two thirds of these people had past or current problems with drug misuse, particularly heroin, with many now on methadone programmes. About a third of PART users with a drug and/or alcohol misuse problem had severe alcohol problems. A small number of users had both a drug and alcohol problem.

¹⁷ PART workers asked clients whether they had any support issues around ‘mental health’, ‘drugs or alcohol’ and so on. This measure is therefore self-defined by the client at the point of the assessment with the service. The PART worker was trained in-house in conducting the assessment. The information collected was therefore for service purposes rather than primarily for research purposes.

About a half (49%) of PART users had a mental health issue, this was most frequently depression and anxiety, often stretching back over years and associated with traumatic experiences in both childhood and adulthood. Many also reported problems with self-harming and a risk of and/or past attempts at suicide. A small number reported a severe mental health problem including a personality disorder and psychosis.

Given the relatively young age group of PART users, it was perhaps surprising that nearly two fifths (38%) had a support need associated with a physical health problem or disability, however closer examination revealed that a number of health problems were related to past or current drug or alcohol use and/or to rough sleeping. Health problems included asthma, arthritis, ulcers, diabetes, deep vein thrombosis, Hepatitis C/ liver problems, back problems and heart conditions.

Table 3.10: Support needs identified at assessment

	Number of all users (%)
Drug/ alcohol issues	147 (84%)
Mental health problem	83 (49%)
Physical health problems	64 (38%)
Benefits/ welfare rights	42 (44%)
Independent skills	45 (29%)
Interpersonal/ social skills	28 (18%)
Anger management	32 (19%)
Abuse/ trauma	27 (17%)
Anti-social behaviour	26 (17%)
Offending	20 (12%)
Fleeing violence	10 (6%)

Source: Project records. Base numbers were different for each question due to missing data. PART users could be in more than one of the categories shown.

The PART team also asked service users whether they had any support issues related to a number of areas that might affect their successful resettlement. About two fifths of people said they needed help with benefits and 29 per cent needed help with independent skills (e.g. budgeting, keeping appointments, personal care) (Table 3.10). About a fifth of PART service users required support with anger management issues, past abuse/ trauma and/or anti-social behaviour issues. Only one in eight people mentioned a support need directly associated with offending behaviour. About one in twenty people needed support around fleeing violence.

Data was also collected on whether PART users had a history of being in care as children, revealing that at least 25 per cent had had this experience. Nine per cent of service users were ex-servicemen (from Navy, Army or Air Forces).

Contact with agencies at referral

Most PART clients (79%) were registered with a GP but one in five people were not. This is of some concern given the high level of reported health problems.

The majority (67%) of service users were in contact with at least one other support agency at the point of referral (Table 3.11). However, the most common agency was Probation (36%), support from which would have ended for most at referral (for example if they were on licence recall). Other than Probation, the most frequently mentioned

agencies were CARATs (3%), DIP (9%) or other drugs worker (agency unspecified) (4%). Very few clients were in contact with a mental health worker or housing support worker at referral. It needs to be remembered that PART users were in prison at the time of referral so were unlikely to be accessing community services. Nonetheless, given the short sentence lengths and the high level of drug and mental health issues, it is arguably worrying that so few people were receiving support in these areas.

Table 3.11: Support from agencies at point of referral

	Number of users (%)
Probation	42 (36%)
Not receiving any other support service	39 (33%)
DIP	11 (9%)
Multiple agencies ¹	7 (6%)
Drug worker (not from DIP)	5 (4%)
CARATs	4 (3%)
Community Psychiatric Nurse/other mental health service	3 (3%)
Other forms of support	3 (3%)
Homelessness service	2 (2%)
Housing support worker	1 (1%)

Source: Project records. Records were incomplete or missing for 75 service users. ¹ e.g. Probation and DIP, Probation, DIP and housing support services.

Conclusion

Of the 321 referrals received over the three year pilot period, 199 cases were assessed and accepted onto the PART service (62%). In over half of the non-starter cases, this was due to factors related to the criminal justice system, including prisoners being transferred before an assessment could be undertaken or the client being released from prison. Whilst overall, service users and other agencies reported that the referral process was fairly smooth, a key challenge for the service was around information sharing with difficulties in obtaining information on people's offending histories.

The average age of assessed PART service users was quite young at 33 years. The majority of clients were of White British ethnicity (84%). All PART service users were facing housing problems on release with the majority having nowhere at all to go on release. Most had been unemployed before the prison sentence. There was a high level of reported health and support needs with 84 per cent assessed as having a drug or alcohol abuse problems, 49 per cent a mental health issue and 38 per cent a physical health problem or disability.

4 Delivering the support service

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the support provided by PART and draws on interviews with PART clients, PART workers, and representatives from other agencies. The chapter also draws on client monitoring records (see Chapter 1). The chapter begins by describing the service PART delivered to clients in prison; in the immediate post-release period; and, over the longer term. The challenges faced by the service at these different points are outlined. The next section of the chapter considers the approach of the service and the intensity and duration of support. The chapter then goes on to examine the geographical coverage of the scheme and the effectiveness of inter-agency working. The next chapter focuses on client outcomes.

Support in prison

The main aim of PART was to ensure that clients had appropriate accommodation to go to on release from prison. As shown in Chapter 3, in a few cases service users had existing tenancies but were worried that they would lose these because they already had rent arrears before being imprisoned or were accruing arrears whilst in prison. PART could help save existing tenancies, by arranging for housing benefit to be paid and/or making arrangements to repay rent arrears and/or liaising with landlords to ensure that the property would still be available for the client on release (for example, reassuring them that the property had not been abandoned).

I had rent arrears and [PART worker] sorted it all out. She got housing benefit sorted and got in touch with the housing, that was the main thing, I still had my flat when I came out...(Service user)

However, as also noted in Chapter 3 (Table 3.5), the majority of service users had no accommodation available to them on release, whilst others could only identify a temporary situation usually involving staying with friends or relatives for a short period following release. Further, this was not always a suitable longer-term arrangement in cases where friends or family were, for example, drug users or involved in crime. Some clients who had nowhere to go said they had worried about ending up on the streets and back in a cycle of rough sleeping, drug misuse and offending as they had in the past. This was a pattern familiar to agency representatives too.

If you are a homeless drug user then you are just going to be slipping through the net all the time...staying on drugs, shoplifting and going back to prison...(Service user)

...if people don't have an address and also it takes ages for benefits to come through...so they will reoffend – that happens a lot. (Agency representative)

As part of the detailed PART assessment (see Chapter 3), and in subsequent meetings, the PART worker identified clients' needs and preferences both in relation to their housing

and wider support needs (for example, mental health, drug or alcohol issues). In terms of accommodation, they would discuss the range of housing options available in each local authority area, covering both temporary and permanent housing, and try to find appropriate accommodation in the area where the client wished to resettle. As will be seen further below, these options were severely limited. Early in the pilot, PART had prioritised the arrangement of temporary accommodation for the client on release, sometimes also making referrals to permanent accommodation in prison but sometimes post release depending on time availability. However this policy was reappraised and PART moved to a dual track approach, attempting to secure temporary accommodation on release and always making long-term referrals pre-release to avoid lengthy waits for permanent accommodation.

Analysis of Shelter's internal case records, and the interviews, showed that PART workers would often make several applications to various housing providers on behalf of the clients. In some cases housing providers would come into the prison to assess and interview the client. Where this was not possible then the PART workers would arrange appointments for the client to be interviewed once they had been released.

However, it was often not possible for the PART service to arrange either the type of accommodation that clients wanted or accommodation in the area they wished to resettle in. The first main reason for this was the lack of availability of accommodation options. Some areas, particularly Wakefield and Calderdale, had very limited temporary accommodation and no emergency accommodation available. In contrast, Leeds had a relatively plentiful supply of emergency and temporary supported accommodation but less floating support provision. In addition, it was difficult to help clients access private rented sector (PRS) accommodation as most had no money for a deposit and there were few rent deposit schemes and those that there were operated waiting lists. One scheme existed that was able to arrange such accommodation in one area, but this was not common.

A secondary reason for encountering difficulties in arranging accommodation was that it was also sometimes difficult for service users to accept that the options were very limited: they often had strong feelings about where they wished to live and in what type of accommodation and found it hard to understand why this was not possible. Related to this, not all service users agreed with their PART worker's advice about what would be the most appropriate accommodation option, for example whether a hostel would be acceptable or not (see below).

Although most clients were homeless on release, PART workers did not automatically attempt to secure housing under the homelessness legislation. Instead, workers would use this route if it was appropriate, for example, if the client was very vulnerable or if no other accommodation options were available. Where this was the case, PART workers would begin building a case to support homelessness applications pre-release. This involved gathering information about, for example, the client's offending history, support needs, medical history, and substance misuse, from various agencies and services both within and outside the prison. Whilst some clients were indeed very vulnerable and PART workers supported them in making a case for being in priority need, local authorities were sometimes reluctant to accept ex-offenders. According to PART workers and agency

representatives, local authorities would sometimes cite intentionality¹⁸ as a reason not to accept ex-offenders as homeless. PART attempted to challenge such decisions and had been quite successful in doing so (see Chapter 5). PART workers explained that this was because they only pursued and supported homelessness applications when it was appropriate to do so. Despite a clear PART policy in this area, some agencies still felt that PART had tended to pursue the homelessness route rather than exploring other options which would have suited some clients better, in particular, accessing the PRS.

Shelter is into homeless assessments and we don't really work that way anymore...With the clients I work with that approach doesn't work well. We tried that system when we first started and we've dropped it...Shelter are stuck in the past and need to get on board with the prevention agenda, and work in other ways besides formal homeless assessment...A lot of people we deal with have arrears with housing associations...so we liaise with private landlords. And clients seem to prefer it because it is a lot faster than registering with a housing association and getting onto a bidding system, and a lot struggle to do that. This is the second time we've had a bond scheme... (Agency representative)

Some PART clients did not wish to present as homeless even when advised that this was the best way to secure permanent accommodation. They did not want to have to stay in temporary accommodation whilst being assessed and/or waiting to be re-housed. More generally, some service users did not wish to stay in hostels because they believed that other residents would be drinking or using drugs and/or they disliked the rules and regulations imposed by many hostels. These clients wished to be rehoused immediately, if not in social housing then in the private rented sector, but this was not usually possible. PART workers, while sometimes frustrated that clients were unwilling to accept hostel accommodation, also recognised that such accommodation was not always appropriate but there was often little choice if the client was to avoid sleeping rough.

Do not stick people into these environments... they are throwing you out of the frying pan into the fire really... putting them into hostels where people are using, so obviously when people come out of jail, back to square one again, you need to be away from that environment...(Service user)

I would not want to stay in a hostel, when we refer someone to a hostel, well they have to be able to look after themselves, some of them are not [staffed] 24 hours so they aren't suitable for someone very vulnerable or young...they'd be intimidated. Hostels are not always appropriate...(PART worker)

¹⁸ Some ex-offenders may apply for accommodation or assistance in obtaining accommodation following a period in custody or detention because they have been unable to retain their previous accommodation, due to that period in custody or detention. In considering whether such an applicant is homeless intentionally, the housing authority will have to decide whether, taking into account all the circumstances, there was a likelihood that ceasing to occupy the accommodation could reasonably have been regarded at the time as a likely consequence of committing the offence.

It was also sometimes difficult to find accommodation for clients because of the nature of their offences, for example, violence, sexual assaults, or arson. In other cases, the client had been barred or evicted from supported accommodation; hostels; night shelters; and/or social housing because of rent arrears; violence, arson; or, anti-social behaviour. Understandably, this limited the options available even further. Whilst the PART workers would liaise with housing providers and try to address rent arrears (for example by agreeing a repayment plan with the client and housing provider) or by offering to provide support to help the client address their behaviour, it was simply not always possible to persuade housing providers to accept clients. This meant that some PART clients were released without accommodation to go to.

We need resources, more accommodation, because what do you do with clients who don't sort of fit in neatly, that people don't want to take because of their history of offending or because they have exhausted all their options in an area. (PART worker)

With the best will in the world we can't always get accommodation on the day of release for everyone – we try as much as possible – we'll negotiate with friends and family – but some people have burned so many bridges that you just can't negotiate. (PART worker)

PART workers could also help clients by bidding for properties in areas which operated choice based letting schemes. However, it was not easy to secure a property in this way before release as some housing providers would only accept tenants who had visited the property. Further most service users could not accept a tenancy whilst in prison as they had no means of paying the rent. The reason that PART workers started and/or continued to bid for properties was so that the client had a place on the waiting list and did not lose it.

As well as initiating the process of securing accommodation, PART workers would start liaising with other agencies to ensure that support was in place on release. For example, PART would arrange 'signing on' appointments at the JobCentre or Housing Benefit office, to ensure that clients did not have to wait any longer than necessary for benefits. They would also liaise with CARATs and/or DIP to ensure that clients were able to access drug services on release. The case records show that these pre-release interventions were often very time consuming and somewhat complicated, involving many agencies and often dozens of telephone calls, faxes and emails. Case study 4.1 illustrates some of these issues.

Immediate post-release support

The PART workers would, where possible, offer to meet clients on the day of release and would accompany them to appointments, to their accommodation if this had already been arranged, or to local authority housing option services if it had not been possible to secure accommodation for release.

[PART worker] *went with me to the council. When you have an organisation behind you it's a lot easier than going by yourself, you can get your point across more. It just gives you more backing.* (Service user)

Meeting clients at the prison gate was regarded as one of the most important elements of the service by many agency representatives and service users who accepted this help.

I think the main benefit of PART is their ability to work through the gate, to meet people at the gate on the day of release because that is when people go missing. We had a guy released last week [and] he had no one to meet him. I saw him in town on Saturday, he had no one to support him, and he didn't make it to any of his appointments. That is a dangerous time and where PART filled a gap (Agency representative)

Meeting at the gate is incredibly important –it makes people feel valued and cared about, OK there might not be anything we can do about accommodation but to say we'll meet you...it's just that human contact. (Agency representative)

It was not always possible for PART workers to meet clients on the day of release because they did not have the capacity to do so or because there had been little notice of release. This was particularly the case when they were released from court or released early under the End of Custody Licence (ECL) scheme.

Agency representatives, PART workers and service users all commented that the ECL early release scheme (see Chapter 3) had caused significant problems and had been counter-productive to successful resettlement. Clients were often only informed that they were to be released a day or two beforehand and PART was not always informed that a client was to be released early, so there was little or no time to make new arrangements. It was not only accommodation arrangements that were disrupted; there was also often not time to arrange appointments with support services such as DIP, or to arrange to meet the client and accompany them to housing options to present as homeless or to other appointments as required. In some cases this meant that the service lost contact with the client.

I think PART was not able to do the job as well as they could have done because of early release – that messed up a lot of their work, they'd work with someone, set things up etc and then they would be released early and PART would lose touch... (Agency representative)

Understandably, clients did not wish to remain in prison any longer than they had to, but being discharged under ECL simply added to their problems.

The day I got released they are giving me my methadone that morning but no appointment to go and see nobody so I'm going to start using again and shop-lifting aren't I? Obviously, when you are released homeless you are going to go back to your old haunts...I got early release and [PART worker] should have known...(Service user)

Although the PART workers would try to contact the client, by mobile telephone or through services such as drug programmes or day centres, they were likely to use, this was not always possible. However, they did manage to re-engage a few clients in this way.

More generally, one of the biggest challenges facing the PART workers was maintaining contact with clients in the early days following release. Many clients who said they were very keen to have the support of the PART team when they were in prison simply did not engage or failed to maintain contact with their worker on or after release.

.. I am not sure what the rate is but it feels like a lot especially as we put so much work in...but people's priorities change, their motivation changes when they are released – what the client thinks is important changes. They'll tell you that they want to change their lives and so on but when they come out it is completely different... (PART worker)

I think the key problem is heroin misuse...the ones that I have lost contact with or didn't engage were the drug users unfortunately...(PART worker)

It was also often difficult for PART workers and their clients to maintain contact because service users often did not have mobile telephones, or had no credit. Others had mobile telephones but subsequently sold them or changed their number.

Longer term resettlement support

The longer-term support provided by PART was often a continuation of the support provided pre-release, continuing its primary focus on accommodation issues but also addressing any gaps in people's wider support needs. PART workers continued to try and ensure that service users had in place the support services they required such as drug or alcohol programmes and other health and social care services. They were also often proactive in arranging appointments and in making sure clients attended these and would often accompany clients to various appointments to support them.

Ongoing support included helping clients to secure accommodation if they had none, or more appropriate accommodation, for example moving someone out of a hostel for homeless people and into specialist supported accommodation which could better support their drug misuse and offending needs. One client described how his PART worker had helped him move from a hostel into more suitable supported accommodation.

I am not sure who got me into the [hostel] but I do know that [PART worker] got in touch while I was there and [PART worker] knew I wanted to get out of there and ... kept in touch with me frequently and ...rang me to say I had an interview at [supported housing project]...I think [another agency] contacted [PART worker] and told him that I wanted to get out of the hostel. So [PART worker] sorted all that out – and [PART worker] came and met me on the morning of the interview as well. (Service user)

They also continued to work with clients to help them access more permanent accommodation, particularly ensuring they were on housing registers and encouraging them to bid for social housing properties.

From an analysis of the client records and interviews, a common pattern appeared to be for clients to move into supported accommodation following release (either first or second placement) or to move into accommodation with floating support. Either way clients were often then supported by a housing support worker, sometimes alongside support from a number of other workers from agencies particularly DIP, and less commonly, mental health services, alcohol services, and/or an offender manager (see Chapter 5). In such cases if PART and the client were happy that they were receiving all the support they required, the case would be closed and the client asked to contact PART if they required any further help. However, in other cases, the PART workers continued to work with clients even though they were accommodated in supported housing and had key workers. It was not always clear why PART continued to support some clients in this situation, and not others however two factors appeared to play a particular role. Firstly, it appeared that the type and intensity of support provided by key workers in supported accommodation varied and therefore sometimes the extra support from PART might add to rather than duplicate support. Secondly, PART workers explained that some clients were more vulnerable than others and required a higher degree and/ or longer term support.

Where joint working was ongoing, PART workers sometimes worked with other agencies and the client to develop joint support plans to ensure that the client's needs were being met, that the roles of the respective support workers were clear and thus to avoid duplication of effort. This arrangement appeared to work well in some cases. However, a few agency representatives also reported some inconsistency in PART's approach to joint working (see below).

[we would] arrange regular meetings – say once a week or fortnight and that would be a three way meeting between [PART worker], the key worker from our team and the client so everyone knew who was doing what so there was no duplication. It would be agreed who was doing what...and that worked very well. With other workers it just didn't happen – they might bring someone here but then they'd leave and they'd write a couple of weeks later to say that they would be withdrawing their support. And when we've questioned them about it they've said 'well there is no point in both of us doing the same job' so it was from one extreme to the other really...(Agency representative)

[PART worker] met me at the gates and walked with me to [hostel] I was there for six or seven weeks...I had support worker at [hostel] and a worker from [housing association] so I didn't really need [PART worker] but [PART worker] did keep in touch for a while – until I got this flat just to see if I was OK... If I hadn't had help from [housing association] then [PART worker] would have carried on working with me...(Service user)

Where clients had no other support in place then the PART workers would continue to support the client until such time as they could be referred to another agency or no longer required support. For example, one young man, who was living temporarily with his mother, explained that his PART worker was helping him find permanent accommodation but also working with him to address his substance misuse, to identify a college or training course, to apply for a Community Care Grant and to find a NHS dentist.

The PART service often found it difficult to refer clients on to some types of support services, in particular alcohol services, specialist mental health and/or social work services. Whilst only a minority of clients required this type of support, considerable work was often needed to convince social services to conduct a community care assessment. For example, in one case, PART worked with a client for about nine months before an assessment was undertaken and appropriate long-term supported accommodation was finally assessed.

Intensity and duration of support

In general, the level of support and duration depended on two main factors, the service user's needs/ nature of other support available from other agencies (see above), and their engagement with the PART service. The project monitoring showed that the average (mean) length of support for all cases was just over four months. However there was a large degree of variation, with a range from nine days to nearly 18 months although only four clients were supported for over 12 months.

Some clients were supported for a relatively short time by PART because the service lost contact with them (for example, following ECL, see above), whilst in other cases clients failed to keep appointments or return calls. Some clients engaged intermittently, they would miss appointments which would have to be rearranged and sometimes this would result in their losing accommodation or not receiving benefits. Nevertheless PART attempted to continue to work with clients for many months if there was a possibility of engagement. Case Study 4.1 (see Box) provides a good example of the amount of work that could be undertaken with a client despite poor engagement and also without a positive outcome at the end. Where PART workers felt that they were no longer able to support the client because they were not engaging with the service at all, then the decision would be made to close the case. Wherever possible, the PART worker would try to contact the client to explain the decision and to ensure that the client was happy with it but this was often not possible.

Case study 4.1: Mr S

Mr S had been in and out of prison for 15 years. Mr S had a history of heroin use and was prescribed Methadone in prison; he also had an alcohol problem.

PART supported Mr S for just over four months - two months pre-release and nine weeks post-release. The PART worker met with Mr S six times in prison and twice post-release. A total of 125 telephone calls were made on behalf of Mr S (of these, 34 calls were to Mr S himself). The PART worker also contacted Mr S by text message (3) and letter (3).

As Mr S was already on a waiting list for accommodation, the PART worker arranged to bid for

properties on his behalf. Mr S was offered a property six weeks before his release but was unable to take up the offer as he could not pay the rent whilst in prison. PART made referrals to three supported housing providers and he was offered hostel accommodation. Mr S said he would prefer to stay with a friend because he was worried about coming into contact with drug users in a hostel.

Mr S did not take up the accommodation arranged for him but instead moved in with a friend, he was reminded about his housing appointment but he did not attend, he also failed to turn up for a rearranged appointment. The PART worker learned from Mr S's solicitor that he had no money and nowhere to stay. Mr S was advised to present himself as homeless at housing options and the PART worker offered to accompany him. The PART worker discovered that Mr S had not been attending DIP appointments; that he was a MAPPA 2¹⁹ client; and, that the police suspected that he was using drugs again and re-offending to pay for them.

The PART worker arranged for Mr S's benefits to be paid that afternoon and found him accommodation as he had asked, but he declined the offer as he did not like the area. The PART worker then discovered that Mr S had moved in with a female friend who had children and that social services had become involved as the children were at risk. The PART worker again offered to try to find him accommodation and arranged an appointment to discuss his housing situation. The PART worker continued to try to find him appropriate accommodation whilst encouraging him to keep appointments and carry on bidding for properties.

Things continued in much the same way for another six weeks. Mr S missed appointments with DIP, PART and with housing providers; he appeared to be drinking again. There were suspicions that he had abused one of his partners. As it was imperative for Mr S to move out of his partner's home, the PART worker continued to try to support him but eventually the case was closed as Mr S was not engaging fully with services and had refused the accommodation PART had secured for him (more than once).

For the most part, those service users who were interviewed said they were satisfied with the length and intensity of support - a few said that they had not needed any further support from any agency but most had at least one other support worker in place. Some clients said they could contact PART again if they needed help, although it should be noted that they also said they would not know how to do this as they no longer had contact details for their PART worker. There were a few cases where service users seemed a little confused as to whether their case was closed or not. Case records show that letters had been sent out to clients trying to make contact but the service had never received a response so had signed the client off. It is possible that these clients had simply not read the letters which highlights the need to sign off clients personally wherever possible.

PART workers had mixed views about the intensity and duration of support. Whilst they felt that some people did not require support for more than a couple of weeks once they had been accommodated and referred to other support providers, they believed others would have benefited from more intensive support than PART could provide, and sometimes over a longer period than the maximum eight months PART intended to

¹⁹ MAPPA are the statutory arrangements for managing sexual and violent offenders. MAPPA is not a statutory body in itself but is a mechanism through which agencies can better discharge their statutory responsibilities and protect the public in a co-ordinated manner. Agencies at all times retain their full statutory responsibilities and obligations. For more information go to:
<http://www.probation.homeoffice.gov.uk/files/pdf/MAPPA%20Guidance%202007%20Veriosn%202.0.pdf>

support people. Whilst PART sought to enable people to do things for themselves (see below) PART workers thought some clients would have benefited from more face to face contact and that this might have helped them engage better with the service.

...it is about being needs led and individual but I think there were some cases that were particularly difficult where the client didn't engage where we could have done with more staff time – there were other clients who only needed a couple of weeks post release – they were quite capable but just didn't know how to go about things...(PART worker)

Approach of the PART service

Most of the service users interviewed said they liked their PART worker and found them helpful and friendly. Importantly, most also said that the PART worker had done what they had said they would do and felt that PART could not have done much more for them.

He did what he said he was going to – he didn't say that he was going to do owt and not do it... There was nothing else he could do really, he did everything he could...(Service user)

Two clients were not happy with the support they had received from PART. In both cases they were being supported by other services, had not engaged consistently with PART and also had a local reputation making it difficult to identify housing for them. Nonetheless, they felt let down particularly by the lack of accommodation available (both had had to resort to sleeping rough):

[The worker] came to visit me once a month before I came out of prison promising that they would have a property for me...I didn't hear nought for another flipping three months...four months, until I got a flipping so-called property – and then [they] want to engage with me, what the fucks good that to me?...You know, if I was a worker, say I like was [Shelter worker] and I were a worker, I'd be on everybody's case, me, you know what I mean. It's like, when you are a drug dealer, you know where to get cheap good quality drugs from, right, so if you are housing worker, you should have contacts with good housing and stuff you know... (Service user)

Service users also remarked on the approach and attitude of the workers which appeared to have had a very positive impact on some clients. It was the nature of the relationship that appeared to be making a difference to some people. Often people were quite sceptical about services and their motives (feeling that welfare services existed for their own ends rather than to really support their clients). It was therefore very important that PART clients trusted their worker – and this appeared to have been achieved in the majority of cases. The PART staff also appeared to motivate people and helped them to make some progress in achieving their goals.

[PART worker] has made me do what I wanted to do, [PART worker] has been my rock sort of thing. Before I had help out of prison I wouldn't have given a shit, I would have been the same person I was before... but [the PART

worker] *is pushing me in the right directions...Amazing difference. [The PART worker]'s helped me get somewhere in life. (Service user)*

I came off the booze for one reason - for [PART worker]...I was half cut, I messed it up, housing advice, came here drunk...got locked up for a breach on my ASBO again...I thought I've done it again, I've messed it up, I'm going to be thrown out..[but] I thought I'd just go and see [PART worker] – I can see a good heart a mile off...so I am sat here feeling guilty as shit...and [PART worker] gave me a kick up the backside...which is what I needed. I didn't need slinging out and I didn't need comforting...[PART worker] said 'Look, you've got to take responsibility for your own actions, we can only help you so far, you've got to work with us'...I said 'I am sorry'...and ever since then I've been sorted and I've done it...[PART worker] counselled me, not pacified me or molly coddled me...thank you, that is what I needed. (Service user)

It was clear that some service users were less motivated than others and needed encouragement to engage with their PART worker and other agencies. As noted above, some clients required intensive support, for example, they needed the PART worker to arrange appointments for them, to remind them about appointments and accompany them to meetings. Others needed assistance with benefits and a PART worker to advocate for them; others required help with bidding for properties. However, the PART workers had to balance these needs with the need to encourage and enable clients to take responsibility. One way of doing this was to make it quite clear what the respective roles and responsibilities of the client and clients advocate were.

There are boundaries around what is appropriate and acceptable – respect works both ways. And you have to manage expectations – you get clients saying 'you said you'd do this and that' so then we have to look at the information we gave them and be very clear about what we do etc – that went out in our information pack from late last year – we had to develop that because clients were expecting us to do all the running around...we tell them that we are there to enable them to do things, we won't be around for ever.... but we became much clearer about that and decided that it was best to write it down... (PART worker)

There was general agreement among service users and PART workers that a service such as PART could only work effectively if clients were motivated to change and to accept the support available and to work with the PART worker.

...it is setting them on the right path as long as they are walking it with you and engaging...to do it. The bottom line is that it is about them engaging with you and taking some responsibility for their behaviour, engaging and changing their behaviour and lifestyle. You can have any service but if the individual isn't motivated or doesn't engage with you it doesn't matter...(PART worker)

Agency representatives generally agreed that the PART workers were professional and had few complaints about their approach. However, a couple of agency representatives

reported that they had not enjoyed good working relations with all the PART workers, finding some easier to work with than others.

Geographical coverage of the service

The PART service was set up to work across the five local authority areas in West Yorkshire. This was quite a challenge given that the team was based in Leeds and only consisted of two main support workers. Although the PART workers did not raise this as a major problem themselves, one former PART worker and a couple of agency respondents felt that it was difficult for the PART workers to work across five areas as it took time for them to familiarise themselves with a large range of agencies and individuals as well as learn about the different housing and accommodation options available in each area. Another problem mentioned by agency respondents was that the PART workers did not have their own transport and that this was bound to have an effect on their ability to work with a dispersed client group.

The job was originally advertised as essential car user and I understood that most of the work would be done – using a car to get around. But then they decided to use public transport ...Getting people to appointments is such a big part of the support and saying to someone ‘come on let’s get the bus’ especially if they have mental health issues or drug or alcohol issues – you know it might just be too much especially if the appointment is in Bradford or wherever – I once had to get the bus to Kettlewell in Wakefield and that is miles away...I think it took an hour and 45 minutes to get there. (Agency representative)

I feel that the use of public transport possibly limits the service...bearing in mind that PART covers such a massive area...the trains are quite good but the buses are dreadful...and some parts of West Yorkshire are remote...I just think it would be easier, especially when clients have mobility issues...(Agency representative)

A couple of agency respondent also felt that the service might work more effectively in Leeds where the PART service was based. They thought that service users could then drop in to the Shelter offices should they need to speak to someone (people did not always have credit on their mobile telephones). This was not an issue raised by service users or PART workers. However, one service user who was released with no accommodation to go to explained that he had contacted PART for help a week or so after he was released by visiting the office. This client was accepted onto the PART scheme and assisted to find both temporary and, then later, permanent accommodation.

I got 12 months...I thought I was going to get Probation...but I went to Probation and I didn’t...so I went to the Shelter offices...[the PART worker] explained they usually only take people from prison but I would have qualified for help if everything had been clearer in prison...(Service user)

Inter-agency working

For the most part, it appeared that inter-agency work within the prison was successful and had continued to develop over the period of the pilot as agencies became more familiar with each other's work. In particular the PART workers had developed good working relations with CARATs and the SORT team. The latter were particularly appreciative of the PART service as they were a very small team and struggled to cope with the number of prisoners requiring resettlement support. Nevertheless, there were problems from time to time. It appeared that some services, in particular, CARATs, and to some extent, SORT, were overstretched and this affected their ability to liaise with PART and/or make referrals early enough. The other problem was that a range of agencies worked within the prison, and that PART clients were often supported by a number of these. The following quote illustrates the complexity of service provision within the prison.

I'm not sure how many agencies work in the prison – I think there are about 30 active but lots come in on request. The wings can refer and so can all the departments...based in the prison there's PHAS, the Credit Union – the debt worker...some come in every couple of weeks like St George's Crypt, Foundation Housing come in quite a lot. Homestart work a lot with Jigsaw and AA are based in the prison all the time...We have SOVA that comes in as well...they do a bit of everything, jobs, training...(Agency representative)

There was no centralised system in place to record interventions with individual prisoners and this made some overlap and duplication of effort inevitable. Further, as the PART workers were not based in the prison every day, they had less opportunity to liaise informally with other agencies within the prison. There were cases where more than one agency worker had been waiting to meet clients at the gate. In one case, PART and another agency had both arranged accommodation in two different projects for one client who was being released on ECL. The client did not take up the accommodation arranged and instead accessed emergency accommodation which resulted in two bed spaces being wasted. Clients were anxious and often felt they had been let down by services in the past, and so sought and accepted all the help they could get in order to ensure they received at least some help. However, it was also evident that there was sometimes a lack of effective communication between the various agencies working in HMP Leeds as well as the added complication of ECL, resulted in confusion.

It would be really helpful to know who is doing what with who...I mean the lads [prisoners], they'd have ten people working with them if they could and they'd say nothing, just hoping that they'd get a result at the end of it...(Agency representative)

Although inter-agency working in the prison was mainly regarded as successful, the nature of the prison service and frequent changes in senior staff resulted in a situation where it was difficult to secure and maintain effective communication at the higher level.

...the bureaucracy was awful, there were budget cuts and the turnover is so quick – especially among senior staff... so communication is not very

good...by the time we found out there was a new gov in charge of resettlement and arranged to meet [them][they were] leaving – [they were] only there about six months...that was quite difficult... I suppose they have so many competing demands an external agency is not the most important thing. (PART worker)

It was also evident that not all agencies had a clear understanding of the PART service, its target group, the role of the PART workers; or how the PART service fitted in with the work of other agencies. This appeared to be particularly the case for agencies working in the community. One agency which worked with PART a number of times believed that the service had been established specifically to work with offenders released under ECL and that (as noted above) PART was a 'meet at the gate service'. On the other hand, a couple of other agency representatives, including one who worked in the prison, suggested that it would be a good idea if PART had provided a 'meet at the gate service'. It should be remembered that PART worked with numerous agencies across five local authority areas, and it is understandable that not all agencies and all their workers would be aware of exactly what the PART service did. However, it did appear that the lack of understanding caused confusion and led some agencies to think that PART was not delivering the service they believed it was supposed to.

The different levels of joint working with other agencies in the community were highlighted in the section on longer term support above. In addition, the assessment of the referral and assessment process also highlighted problems with information sharing, particularly from statutory agencies with regard to offending information. In summary, one of the PART workers felt that the service might have been more effective if specific service level agreements would have been in place with key agencies, or even better, if the project had been set up within a partnership framework.

It could have worked better – if it had been part of a partnership project where you have a drug agency on board so you are not relying on referring someone – so a partnership with DIP...so that someone had actually bought into the service – and maybe some health because there is a huge lack of mental health services and it takes ages and you have to go through the GP and people won't talk to their GPs and.....sometimes people aren't ready but perhaps if we had easier access to services it might have helped...you didn't like to get them to talk about things because you knew it would be difficult to access services... But PART would have had to be much bigger and cost a lot more...You need good quality resettlement. The only way to do that is to have all the agencies working together – there is a lot of talk about it but not a lot going on – all agencies are happy to work with one another until you say 'what about this referral then?' (PART worker)

Conclusion

Most service users appreciated the housing support provided by PART pre-release but there were problems in securing accommodation in part because of the shortage of appropriate accommodation and/or support services. The support provided by PART post release, in particular meeting clients at the prison on release, was seen to be very

important by many service users and most agencies. Not all clients wanted or required ongoing support from PART but it appears that those who required it were supported for an appropriate period. Whilst it was important that individual clients were motivated to change and take some responsibility for their actions, it was evident that PART continued to try to support some individuals who did not engage fully with the service for some months. The approach of PART workers was generally regarded as professional and friendly and a couple of clients remarked that the support of PART workers and their commitment to them had given them the motivation to move on with their lives. A few agency representatives felt that it was difficult for a small team of workers to work across a wide geographical area and in five different local authority areas. Whilst inter-agency work in the prison had developed well over the pilot period, there were clearly some problems with information sharing and communication. It was also evident that not all agencies in the community had a clear understanding of the PART service and its aims and objectives although most agencies appreciated the need for, and contribution of, the PART service.

5 Outcomes for PART service users

Introduction

This chapter examines the outcomes arising from the work of the PART service. Measuring outcomes is a difficult task as PART worked alongside other agencies to deliver a package of resettlement support making it problematic to disentangle the impact of one agency above another. In addition, the project operated within a specific social and political context where resources were constrained for this group (see previous chapter). Finally, the agency of the individual in the process of resettlement cannot be ignored: it is important to consider the degree to which the ex-prisoner is ready and able to engage with resettlement services. With these caveats noted, this chapter describes the accommodation and resettlement outcomes for PART clients at two key points in time. Firstly, below, the PART project monitoring allows us to examine the situation of service users at the point of case closure. Secondly, resettlement pathways are explored in more detail, and over a longer period of time post-PART, through the experiences of the longitudinal group of service users. The detailed information on reconviction rates for the longitudinal group is explored in Chapter 6.

Case closures and status on leaving

The PART project guidelines anticipated that clients would be supported for an average of six months and up to a maximum of eight months following release from prison. As detailed in Chapter 4, PART users were supported for an average (mean) length of just over four months, two months less than originally expected. This appeared to be explained by two factors, firstly, that project workers often closed cases where the client was being adequately supported by a housing worker in their accommodation setting, and secondly, due to the high level of disengagement of clients. The average time supported for those cases where the case was closed as the support plan had been completed (see below) rose to 5.5 months.

Reasons for closing cases

The client monitoring system asked PART workers to record the main reasons for ending support to clients. Table 5.1 shows that approximately a fifth of service users (21%) completed their support plan and the project signed them off as they were progressing well and settled in accommodation. A further 7 per cent of clients were signed off as another agency was providing an appropriate service (usually at an earlier stage than above) and to continue support would have resulted in duplication of effort. In two cases (1%), the PART service user's tenancy was saved whilst they were in prison and no further support was required. Adding these three categories together, it can be suggested that nearly three in ten cases resulted in a clear positive outcome. In addition, there were a number of cases (4%) where the service user suggested that the support could end as they were happy with their situation, this would suggest a satisfactory outcome for the user but did not necessarily concur with the assessment of the PART worker. Despite this caveat, these four scenarios (representing 32% of the service users) could be argued to represent successful outcomes at the point of case closure and are highlighted in Table 5.1 for this reason.

Table 5.1: Reasons for leaving the service

Reason for leaving	Number (%)
Client disengaged	98 (49%)
<i>Completed support plan/ signed off as settled/ on track</i>	41 (21%)
<i>Other support in place from more appropriate service</i>	13 (7%)
Transferred to another prison	11 (6%)
Declined more support (client dissatisfied with situation)	10 (5%)
<i>Declined more support (client happy with situation)</i>	7 (4%)
Project closed	5 (3%)
Back in prison	4 (2%)
Sentenced to longer prison term (whilst in prison)	3 (2%)
<i>Tenancy saved in prison</i>	2 (1%)
No more housing/ support options available	2 (1%)
Client in psychiatric hospital	1 (<1%)
Client deceased	1 (<1%)
Client too high risk to continue work	1 (<1%)
Total	199 (100%)

Source: Project records. Bold italics are used to highlight positive outcomes for the service.

In half of cases (49%), the PART service lost contact with the client following their release into the community. Chapter 4 explained that a major challenge for the service was client engagement chiefly reflecting the chaotic nature of many people’s lives on release from prison. The PART service would attempt to contact the clients on a number of occasions before closing a case. In some cases contact was lost on release due to the client receiving ECL with no contact details being available. It should not be presumed that the outcome for all these service users was a negative one, as PART may have provided useful information and advice in prison and also arranged temporary accommodation on release for some (see below). In particular, the tracking of the longitudinal sample explored in the next section allowed an examination of the complexity of outcomes for both those who completed their support plans and also those who disengaged.

In some cases, the outcome was difficult or impossible for PART to have had any impact upon. In eleven cases (6%), the client was transferred to another prison after the service had assessed and begun working with them in prison. In another few cases (2%), the client was sentenced to a longer prison term whilst in prison. In one case, the client died.

A number of other reasons were recorded for ending the case. In ten cases (5%), the client declined any further support from PART. In four cases, the client was in prison having committed new offences. In two cases, no further housing or support options appeared to be available, and in one case the client was in psychiatric hospital, or was assessed as being too high risk to continue work.

Simple bi-variate analysis was undertaken to identify whether clients with certain socio-demographic characteristics at referral were associated with a successful outcome (as defined by the four highlighted categories in Table 5.1). Interestingly, a successful outcome at case closure was *not* significantly associated with any of the following key variables: age group; ethnic group; whether people had temporary accommodation

available to them on release or not²⁰; number of previous sentences; type of offending history (violent/ sexual crimes etc); whether they being supported by other support agencies at referral or not, or; whether the client had mental health problems, drug misuse problems or physical health problems.

Accommodation status at case closure

One of the central aims of the PART service was to help clients to avoid homelessness on release from prison. Chapter 3 outlined how all clients had an accommodation issue at referral, with 63 per cent having no accommodation at all that they could go to on release. Another 30 per cent identified a temporary but not settled arrangement, most commonly staying with friends or relatives. A key measure of the success of PART therefore would be the extent to which they could identify appropriate accommodation for their clients.

It is important to understand that the assessment of PART's success depends on one's definition of 'homelessness'. Homelessness may be differently defined according to the legislative or official definitions, agency or service users' assessments. Different agencies or service users might also define homelessness as relating to different accommodation circumstances. At one end of a continuum of understandings, homelessness might be defined as when someone has no shelter and is sleeping rough; at the other end, it could be argued that someone remains homeless unless they have secure housing (tenancy or owner occupied) which they refer to as 'home'. In between, people may live in supported accommodation and call this 'home', or they may utilise hostels that they feel are of such a low quality that they might consider sleeping rough instead. Under the homelessness legislation, someone is considered homeless when they are without any accommodation in the UK which they have a legal right to occupy (including if they cannot gain access to their accommodation, or be reasonably expected to live in the accommodation (for example, due to a risk of violence)). Local authorities have a duty to help secure 'settled housing' for households, this is usually in the form of social housing although it may also be private rented accommodation with the agreement of the household²¹.

A distinction may be made between settled housing and settled accommodation. The previous Government's Public Service Agreement (PSA 16) NI 143 stated that offenders under Probation supervision should be living in 'settled and suitable accommodation' at the end of their order or licence. Here, settled accommodation was defined as including permanent, independent housing, bail/ Probation hostels and supported housing. Suitability referred both to the accommodation (quality, relationships, overcrowding etc) and the location (access to criminal contacts etc). Finally, at the European level, a useful typology of homelessness and housing exclusion (ETHOS) has been developed which identifies four categories:

- Roofless – people living rough and staying in a night shelter
- Houseless – including people in homeless hostels and supported accommodation

²⁰ This was the most robust measure of accommodation status of the client.

²¹ The Government is presently consulting on the role of social housing and whether private rented sector accommodation might represent a discharge of the homeless duty without the agreement of the household (DCLG, 2010).

- Insecure – including living with family or friends on a temporary basis, people under threat of eviction or violence
- Inadequate – including people living in unfit housing

Table 5.2 shows the different types of accommodation that PART users were living at case closure. One in eight (12%) of PART users were living in some form of settled housing at case closure, that is their own tenancy in either the social or private rented sector. A further fifth (20%) of clients were living in settled accommodation, albeit situations that required move-on to settled housing at some point in the future (who could therefore also be described as ‘houseless’ under ETHOS). Adding these two categories together, it can be concluded that approximately a third of clients were in settled accommodation according to the PSA16 N1 143 definition. It is possible that this proportion may have been higher as the accommodation status was unknown for a quarter (26%) of PART users.

On paper, potentially less positive outcomes were recorded for the other PART clients. Just over a fifth (22%) of clients was living with friends or relatives (including parents). However, it should be pointed out that occasionally these arrangements might be suitable – the qualitative interviewing (see next section) for example identified one young client who was settled living with a parent. A further fifth (20%) were in prison at case closure – either having returned to prison (14%) or not yet been released (6%). Only one client was known to be sleeping rough at time of case closure.

Table 5.2: Accommodation status on leaving

Accommodation status	Number (%)
Settled housing	
Council housing (own tenancy)	9 (5%)
Private rented (own tenancy)	6 (3%)
Housing association housing (own tenancy)	5 (3%)
Settled housing (unspecified)	3 (2%)
Settled accommodation/ houseless	
Supported Accommodation	20 (10%)
Hostel	15 (8%)
Council temporary accommodation	4 (2%)
Insecure	
Staying with friends or relatives	36 (18%)
Staying with parents	8 (4%)
Roofless	
Rough sleeping	1 (1%)
In custody	
Prison	28 (14%)
Not yet released/ transferred prison/ new sentence	11 (6%)
Other	
Unknown	52 (26%)
Other	1 (1%)
Total	199 (100%)

Source: Project records.

As would be expected, clients where a positive outcome (highlighted responses in Table 5.1²²) was recorded at case closure were significantly more likely to be living in settled housing (74% versus 26%) or settled accommodation/ hostels (64%, 36%), than those who had a less positive outcome. Similarly, those with a less positive outcome were more likely to be living in insecure accommodation (family or friends) (80%, 20%) or to be in prison (72%, 28%) at case closure. This does however also highlight that accommodation status alone does not indicate successful resettlement, for example, in a few cases people were in a tenancy but not engaging with the service on other elements of support.

Having temporary accommodation available to people on release (recorded at the time of referral) was significantly²³ associated with different accommodation outcomes at case closure – in particular these clients were more likely to be living with friends or relatives (48% of those who had some temporary arrangement at referral compared to 14 per cent of those who did not). There was also a weak association with having committed offences against women²⁴. However, as with success at case closure, accommodation outcome was not significantly associated with a range of socio-demographic characteristics and offending histories at referral²⁵.

Information on whether temporary accommodation was arranged for PART clients for them to access on their day of release was available for about half of users. Table 5.3 shows that accommodation was identified for nearly two thirds (64%) of the group. However, in some cases (14%), this temporary accommodation place was not taken up on release. This included a couple of people who arrived at a hostel and decided that day or the next that they would prefer to access alternative arrangements, usually staying with family and friends on a temporary basis. PART workers explained (see Chapter 4) that some clients also opted for going to stay with family or friends rather than access temporary accommodation. In some cases, it was not possible to access accommodation for release (also see Chapter 4).

Table 5.3: Temporary accommodation arranged on leaving prison?

	Number (%)
Yes	51 (50%)
No	31 (30%)
Arranged but not taken up	14 (14%)
Not needed	7 (7%)
Total	103 (100%)

Source: Project records. Data were missing for 96 service users.

As explained in Chapter 4, PART workers did not routinely support clients to make a homelessness application with the local authority, rather this was utilised when other options were not available or a client was particularly vulnerable. Full information on

²² This analysis was also undertaken for just cases closed by the PART workers as support plan completed but there were no different findings.

²³ Chi Sq=0.002

²⁴ Chi Sq = 0.096

²⁵ Age group; ethnic group; number of previous sentences; type of offending history (violent/ sexual crimes etc); whether they had support at referral or not, or; whether the client had mental health problems, drug misuse problems or physical health problems at referral.

these applications was not available but it was known that 20 applications were supported in the second half of the project (from May 2009)²⁶. Data on the outcome of these cases were known in 14 cases – with 11 of these cases being successful. This indicates a high degree of success in supporting clients with homelessness applications.

Other outcomes at case closure

Data on other outcomes was also collected for the second half of the project (from May 2009, 112 clients).

In terms of economic status, perhaps unsurprisingly given the client profile, it was only recorded that one client had obtained full-time work (as a shop-fitter) and one further person was working part-time (agency construction work) of those clients who left after May 2009. Two further people were known to be undertaking voluntary work. No clients were recorded as obtaining any qualifications since leaving prison (which is unsurprising given that the average length of support was four months).

PART workers were asked to record any known offending, convictions and stays in prison during the period of support. Ten clients (of the 108 leaving the project from May 2009) were reported as having offended at least once. Eight of these were known to have received a conviction, whilst five people were known to have been in prison. In addition, Table 5.2 showed that 28 clients were in prison at case closure. Offending data is looked at in more detail for the longitudinal group in Chapter 6.

Table 5.4 shows the support being provided by agencies to PART clients at the time of case closure, compared to support received at referral. Although data was only available for 55 cases, a clear pattern is evident. Firstly, no clients were then being supported by Probation alone (with two supported by them as part of multiple agencies) compared to over a third of clients at referral. Secondly, clients were more likely to be supported by DIP workers, housing support workers or multiple agencies. This is unsurprising given the nature of the PART service and the role of DIP in supporting people in the first few months of their release from prison. It is notable that social workers or mental health workers were playing a very minimal role in supporting clients (four clients were supported by social workers as part of 'multiple agencies' on closure).

²⁶ At this point, the PART team had a full complement of staff and the evaluation team and staff agreed the addition of a 'case closure' form to collect additional data at the time of a client leaving. Analysis covers 112 cases which were closed between May 2009 and September 2010.

Table 5.4: Support from agencies at referral and case closure

	Number at referral (%)	Number at case closure (%)
Probation	42 (36%)	-
Not receiving any other support service	39 (33%)	6 (11%)
DIP	11 (9%)	20 (36%)
Multiple agencies ¹	7 (6%)	15 (27%)
Drug worker (not from DIP)	5 (4%)	1 (2%)
CARATs	4 (3%)	-
Community Psychiatric Nurse/other mental health service	3 (3%)	-
Other forms of support	3 (3%)	1(2%)
Homelessness service	2 (2%)	-
Housing support worker	1 (1%)	6 (11%)
WCCYP worker	-	2 (4%)
Unspecified worker	-	12 (2%)

Source: *Referral*: Project records. Records were incomplete or missing for 75/192 service users. ¹ e.g. Probation and DIP, Probation, DIP and housing support services. Closure: 55 clients. Data missing for 57/112 clients who left since May 2009. Multiple agencies included Probation, public protection officer, housing support, DIP, alcohol workers, social workers, counsellor.

The monitoring forms also asked PART project workers to identify a range of positive outcomes, as well as whether clients were assessed as needing this support²⁷, that are routinely collected under the Supporting People (SP) Programme Outcomes Data²⁸ (see Chapter 6 for comparison with other SP schemes). Table 5.5 shows that data was only available for 71 cases so the percentages needed to be treated with some caution. Nevertheless, the responses indicate the types of support that workers identified in the client group and the extent, if only broadly, to which the workers assessed that positive outcomes had been achieved over the period of PART support.

Three areas were identified as particular support needs: better managing substance misuse problems (68% of PART clients); maintaining accommodation/ avoiding eviction (59%), and maximising the income of clients (55%). In addition, about a third were identified as needing help to establish contact with external services, and a fifth to help manage their mental health. Considering these key areas, over half of clients with these support needs were recorded as having a positive outcome for establishing contact with external services (64%) and maximising income (56%). Slightly lower proportions received positive outcomes in maintaining accommodation (40%), better managing substance misuse (35%), and only 13 per cent were recorded as having a positive outcome with respect to better managing their mental health. Smaller numbers were recorded as needing support in other areas, with the proportion of needs being met differing

²⁷ This was a professional assessment and may not have included people who did have a longer term need for support (for example with finding a job) but were not ready to be assisted with this.

²⁸ In 2003, the Government introduced the Supporting People Programme which provides funding to deliver accommodation and housing related services to ex-offenders, alongside other groups of people with support needs. Supporting People is a devolved programme with strategic spending decisions made by local authorities based on local assessment of need. Since April 2009, Supporting People has been an unringfenced grant and, since April 2010, has been paid through Area Based Grant. The (Supporting People) Outcomes Data, is comprised of short exit interviews with people leaving housing support services. It is designed to determine their housing situations, their economic position and general well-being.

depending on the area. For example, all seven people had positive outcomes in establishing better contact with family or friends, whilst only one of the nine people needing help with training and /or education had obtained a positive outcome by case closure.

Table 5.5: Support needed, and positive outcomes, for clients leaving the service

	Needed support in this area (Number of clients (%))	Positive outcome in this area (Number of clients (%))	Proportion of needs met by service (%)
Maximise/d income, including receipt of the correct welfare benefits?	39 (55%)	22 (31%)	56%
Reduce/d their overall debt?	2 (3%)	0 (0%)	0%
Obtain/ed paid work?	5 (7%)	2 (3%)	40%
Participate/d in training and/ or education?	9 (13%)	1 (1%)	11%
Participate/d in leisure/ cultural/ faith and/or informal learning activities?	6 (8%)	2 (3%)	33%
Participate/d in any work-like activities e.g. voluntary work?	9 (13%)	2 (3%)	22%
Establish/ed contact with external services?	22 (31%)	14 (20%)	64%
Establish/ed contact with family and/ or friends?	7 (10%)	7 (10%)	100%
Better manage/d their physical health?	9 (13%)	2 (3%)	22%
Better manage/d their mental health?	15 (21%)	2 (3%)	13%
Better manage/d any substance misuse issues?	48 (68%)	17 (24%)	35%
Maintain/ed their accommodation and avoid/ed eviction?	42 (59%)	17 (24%)	40%
Comply/ied with statutory orders and related processes in relation to offending behaviour?	12 (17%)	5 (7%)	42%
Better manage/d self-harm?	3 (4%)	0 (0%)	0%
Avoid/ed causing harm to others?	2 (3%)	2 (3%)	100%
Minimise/d harm/ risk of harm from others?	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	100%
Develop/ed confidence and ability to have greater choice/ control /involvement?	12 (17%)	5 (7%)	42%

Source: Project records. Data available for 71 clients; data missing for 41/112 clients who left service from May 2009. Please note that numbers are relatively small and therefore %s should be treated cautiously.

Conclusion

The above outcomes were reported by the PART service at the point of case closure. As observed, at case closure, the majority of PART users were still living in temporary accommodation, albeit often settled and with appropriate support in place. A minority had moved onto permanent accommodation and appeared settled, again with support in place as required. On the other hand, a high proportion had disengaged from the service and outcomes were less positive or unknown.

Longer term outcomes: Evidence from the longitudinal group

This second section of the chapter focuses on the longer term outcomes of the sample of PART users who took part in the eighteen month longitudinal tracking study. As detailed in Chapter 1, 22 service users were recruited to a longitudinal group, interviewed in depth and then tracked at two further points (about 6-9 months after the first interview, and then after a further 6-9 months). Thirteen people were successfully tracked in person at

Stage 2, and interviewed in depth, and ten of these thirteen people were also interviewed at Stage 3. Where an interview was not possible, service users gave their consent for us to contact key informants for updates on their status. In total, information was collected on the progress of 19 of the 22 service users at Stage 2 and 15 people at Stage 3. In addition, a further five interviews were undertaken with new respondents at Stage 3, with these people providing retrospective data on their resettlement progress.

This longitudinal interview sample provides an important opportunity to track the resettlement progress of people over time, providing details on both accommodation and offending outcomes, and the relationship between these two and other resettlement factors. As detailed in Chapter 2, whilst some studies have collected longer term data on reconvictions, no qualitative longitudinal studies have been conducted to date. The former method allows statistical associations to be observed between accommodation and offending outcomes. In the present study, the value of the qualitative work is in providing insights into these relationships and an understanding of the different stages of the resettlement process.

Appendix 1 provides an overview of the progress made by each of the 27 interviewees (anonymously recorded as Case A through to Case AA). Their status at interview Stages 1, 2 and 3 is given. In addition, the nature of PART support is described and the recorded outcome at the point of case closure. Finally, an assessment was made of their outcome at the end of Stage 3.

Table 5.6 summarises some of this data. This table shows the status of the client as recorded by the PART team at the point of case closure (see Table 5.1). In addition, of those clients whose support plan was completed, it is identified whether they were in settled or temporary accommodation at this point. It can be noted that 15 of the 27 interviewees were recorded as clients who had completed their support with PART, whilst only just over a fifth of the overall sample was recorded as this status. The longitudinal sample was therefore more likely to be comprised of those people who had achieved a positive outcome with PART, than the full sample. Nonetheless, the longitudinal sample also contained 10 people who had disengaged from the PART service (plus one who moved prison and another whose case was closed when the project closed). This sample, therefore, whilst not representative of the full PART sample, provides an opportunity to track the longer term outcomes of cases which were recorded as having positive outcomes at case closure as well as those whose status at case closure was less positive.

In addition, Table 5.6 also shows the final resettlement status of each client at the end of the longitudinal tracking period. The research team defined these resettlement outcomes following a detailed analysis of all information available on the cases. This information included interviews with service users as well as other information collected on the user by key informants, analysis of project case notes and criminal re-conviction data (see Chapter 1 for details of the methods). The data indicated that past service users occupied one of three final resettlement outcomes:

Resettled – a service user was defined as resettled when three conditions were met:

- the person was living in settled housing, that is their own tenancy in the social or private rented sector, or living in a stable family environment (returned to live with partner or, in one case, had been living with their mother for two years) and;
- the available evidence showed that there had been no offending since leaving prison or much reduced offending during the period, and;
- the client stated that they were relatively well settled more generally, for example, having addressed or cut down their drug use, their health having improved or stabilised and key social contacts being in place.
- it should be noted that quite a low threshold for resettlement was used – clients did not need to be in employment or education, and they might still be using drugs/ alcohol but at a reduced rate.

Partial resettlement – a service user was defined as having achieved a partial resettlement outcome when:

- the client was satisfied with their current temporary accommodation (defined as hostels or supported accommodation) or were in longer term accommodation but the tenant did not feel settled in this accommodation, and;
- the client had achieved some positive outcomes (e.g reduced drug use or reduced offending) but;
- there were still some areas of life for which the client identified as ongoing problems (e.g. problematic drug use or ongoing offending).

Failed resettlement – a service user was defined as not being resettled when:

- they were not in settled housing or appropriate temporary accommodation, and;
- they had few or no positive outcomes in other areas.

Table 5.6: Matrix of client longer-term outcomes, by status at PART case closure

Status recorded by PART at case closure	Resettled (at end of tracking period)	Partially resettled (at end of tracking period)	Failed resettlement (at end of tracking period)
Support plan completed/ tenancy saved – in settled housing	Mr D Mr G Mr M Mr T	Mr L	Mr I
Support plan completed – in suitable temporary accommodation	Mr B Mr H Mr U Mr F*	Mr A Mr C Mr Y Mr Z	Mr P
Client disengaged / declined more assistance from project before support completed	Mr J Mr K	Mr R Mr X	Mr E Mr S Mr N Mr W Mr V Mr Q
Project closed	-	Mr AA	-

O – No information; * at parents home

Note: Letters represent each case; more information is provided on each case in Appendix 1.

Table 5.6 shows that each client has been allocated to one of nine main categories (Boxes 1 to 9 reading across rows). The first row shows those clients who had achieved a positive outcome at case closure which included being in settled housing²⁹. Box 1 records those clients who were still resettled at the end of the tracking period (4/6 clients who were in this category at case closure); Box 2 shows that one person who at case closure had been in settled housing was only partially resettled at the end of the longitudinal period (in an unsettled housing situation), and for one person, a failed resettlement outcome was attributed at the end of the tracking period (NFA/ prison) (Box 3).

Similarly, the second row of Table 5.6 shows those clients who had completed their PART support plan at case closure and were living in suitable temporary accommodation³⁰. Box five records that four clients who could have been categorised as being partially resettled at case closure were fully resettled at the end of the tracking period, including moving from temporary accommodation to settled housing. Box 6 shows four clients who were partially resettled at the end of the tracking period which indicated that they were still living in a temporary accommodation setting (three clients) or their settled housing was at risk of failing (Mr C). One person (Case P) had a failed resettlement outcome at the end of the tracking period (Box 6).

Finally, the third row of the Table shows the progress of those people who disengaged from the PART support. In two cases, clients had managed to resettle themselves without the assistance of PART (Box 7), another two were partially resettled (Box 8), whilst six former clients were categorised as 'failed' resettlements as they were still living chaotic lifestyles both in terms of having a lack of appropriate accommodation as well as re-offending and/or continued problematic drug use (Box 9).

In summary, Table 5.6 indicates that 12 of the 15 people who completed their PART support plan had maintained or improved upon their resettlement status at the end of the tracking period (Boxes 1, 4, 5). Although the qualitative nature of the longitudinal work limits the extent to which conclusions can be drawn from this information, the high rate of success of clients following PART support was very encouraging, and as described below, strongly suggests that an early resettlement outcome potentially sets people up to continue their resettlement path. Similarly, six of the ten people who did not complete their support plan had a failed resettlement outcome at the end of the tracking period (Box 9), indicating that instability on release from prison may make it harder for people to achieve positive outcomes at a later stage. Exceptions to both of these outcomes indicate that some people's resettlement fails despite early positive outcomes, and that some will succeed even without a positive intervention from a project like PART.

Factors affecting resettlement

The remainder of this chapter examines the process of resettlement for the longitudinal group in more detail. An important point to make at the outset was that the interviewing revealed how difficult it was for people to achieve full resettlement. Resettlement was not instantly achieved on moving into a tenancy, nor did those in temporary

²⁹ This approximated to having a resettled outcome at case closure, although the PART service categories were slightly different to those used by the researchers.

³⁰ This approximated to being partially resettled at case closure, although again the categorisation was slightly different.

accommodation simply have to wait for permanent housing to be allocated. Rather a whole range of factors needed to be in place to enable someone to resettle into the community. Equally, the absence or faltering of some factors put successful resettlement at risk. Below, the factors that appeared to facilitate or mitigate against this process are outlined. Case studies are also described in detail, illustrating the complexity and fragility of resettlement.

Analysis indicated that there were a number of different types of factors affecting the progress of resettlement. After Edgar (2009)³¹, at least four main levels affecting resettlement were identified:

- *Structural level* – these included the impacts of socio-economic processes which shaped the nature of housing available, labour market opportunities and national level welfare state structures;
- *Institutional level* – the way services were delivered impacted on people’s resettlement, including the coordination of services, specific discharge procedures from institutions and access/ allocation mechanisms for housing and other services;
- *Relationship/ social network level* - people’s path to resettlement appeared to be influenced by their relationship situation, family relationships, wider support networks and the nature of relationships with support workers;
- *Personal level* – resettlement was also influenced by people’s personal situation, including personal events or histories that had affected people such as bereavement or a lack of family support following being in care as a child; addiction issues; as well as personal levels of resilience and determination.

Factors affecting the resettlement process: Structural level

Availability of appropriate settled housing:

Settled housing is a pre-requisite to effective resettlement. As identified in Chapter 4, the availability of longer term housing options across West Yorkshire was relatively constrained. Although people did not have to wait for a year or more as may be the case in London, the high demand for social housing meant that people often had to wait for a number of months before a tenancy was found (for example, Mr B [see case study 5.1] and Mr H [see Table 5.6]). The main impact of this was that people had to be able to cope with living in temporary accommodation or with friends or relatives for this period. Some found this easier to do than others (see temporary accommodation section and social network sections below). Others opted to be resettled into private rented sector accommodation as this could often be found more quickly than social housing.

In a number of cases, the lack of availability of furnished properties in the social housing sector caused problems in the resettlement process. For example, Mr H had to move into his flat without cooking facilities and most furnishings and carpets. Fortunately his previous hostel had helped him apply for a community care grant so this situation was mainly resolved – although he was only awarded £350 and only had a microwave to cook with at the point of the second interview. Mr L experienced longer term problems as he

³¹ Edgar identified four main risk factors in the causation of homelessness: structural level, institutional level, relationship and personal level.

moved to a new tenancy following support from PART and support from other agencies had ceased – at interview three, he had already spent three months with no cooking facilities, was struggling to decorate a flat that had been let in a poor state of decor and felt that he might be at risk of losing the flat as his substance misuse problems had recently worsened. This situation might have been avoided if the flat had been let furnished and in good decor and/or if support workers had still been in place (see below).

Those who had been resettled into private rented sector property tended to be relatively happy with the quality of the accommodation including furnishings available.

Nonetheless, there were two examples of difficulties with sustaining these types of tenancies related to the type of housing available in this sector/ mode of delivery. Mr I lost his tenancy following the police breaking down his door – this appeared to be a case of mistaken identity – but the landlord had been unaware that the tenant was an ex-offender and evicted him as a result. It is possible that a social housing tenancy may have been sustained in a similar situation. Some private landlords may be less tolerant of people with criminal backgrounds. In the case of Mr X, he was sharing accommodation and this was less than suitable due to his house-mates although fortunately he reported that he was due to move to a different tenancy in the near future. In both these cases, the private landlords had been sourced by a social agency for ex-prisoners (in one case working with PART, in the other following disengagement from PART).

Neighbourhoods/ locations:

The location of accommodation was also reported by ex-prisoners to have affected resettlement outcomes. For those resettled, they tended to report that they were satisfied with the location of their housing, sometimes because it was in an area that was well-known to them and liked by them (often close to family), in other cases the tenancy was in a new area but one they liked (Mr H). For a few people, the location of allocated properties had led to a failed tenancy. In the case of Mr N (see case study 5.3), he experienced harassment from local drug dealers and felt very unsafe in the local area – agencies persuaded him to voluntarily give up the tenancy (rather than abandon it) but the lack of other alternatives meant that he then ended up homeless. He expressed a desire to move to a different local authority area to make a fresh start.

Operation of labour markets:

As described above, most of those resettled were unemployed or unable to work due to ill-health. Two people in this group were working, one had found a job himself via the Job Centre and one explained that he was just doing odd-jobs, mainly for friends and family, for cash-in-hand payments. A third person was undertaking voluntary work with a previous employer. Others explained that they were actively looking for work or hoping to look for work when they felt more resettled but that there were significant barriers to obtaining employment due to employer attitudes towards ex-offenders, their relative lack of recent work experience and also often low levels of educational achievements. It was clear that most people struggled to obtain suitable employment, and faced an uphill battle to achieve a resettlement that included moving into sustainable employment.

Poverty/ reliance on welfare benefits:

Linked to the lack of opportunities to move into paid employment, it was important to note that whilst some service users were relatively well settled in their accommodation,

many were finding it hard to cope financially in their tenancies. Some interviewees explained that it was difficult to pay their bills and find money for food and other essentials on current benefit levels. As can be seen in the case of Mr B (case study 5.1), he felt that he was only coping financially because he received Disability Living Allowance and this gave him a bit more flexibility in terms of making ends meet. Only one person was known to have abandoned a tenancy in rent arrears during the tracking period (Mr S), but housing histories revealed that this had occurred to people in the past and a risk remained of this occurring in the future.

Factors affecting the resettlement process: Institutional level

Prison discharge procedures:

Prison discharge procedures impacted directly on early resettlement outcomes. In particular, arrangements for End of Custody Licence (ECL) (also see Chapter 4) meant that some people left prison early, at short notice, without enough time to inform PART and other agencies nor to make suitable arrangements for accommodation for release (especially as people could not claim benefits for this period of time). Mr N and Mr P were both released on ECL and slept rough for a number of weeks. More generally, people explained that they often felt unprepared to leave prison – as short-term prisoners they rarely engaged in rehabilitation schemes although a few had attended short-term courses.

Role of appropriate temporary accommodation:

Most of the interviewees who successfully resettled appeared to have accessed temporary accommodation on release that broadly suited their needs. In some cases this involved specialist accommodation that enabled people to address their substance misuse issues (e.g. Mr AA; Mr U). In other cases, people accessed referral based hostels for homeless people which they felt, although not perfect, offered adequate accommodation and support to enable them to attempt a fresh start (Mr B; Mr D; Mr H). Some people moved from one hostel or night shelter to another (Mr A; Mr C) in order to access appropriate accommodation. It appeared crucial that temporary accommodation was appropriate to people's needs as people often had to remain in this accommodation for a number of months before a chance of a move on opportunity arose. Respondents therefore had to like the hostel (e.g. Mr B who was reluctant to leave his hostel) or at least feel able to cope with living there (e.g. Mr H who kept himself to himself in the hostel). It appeared that people had often put in a lot of effort in to make these placements effective, in particular ensuring that they chose their friendships carefully (see social networks below). They were also more likely to feel settled if they had a supportive key worker (see relationship with support worker below).

However, in some cases, temporary accommodation had not been available on release – in the cases of Mr N and Mr P, as well as being released ECL, PART and/or other services had not been able to access temporary accommodation for them. This was partly due to a lack of accommodation but also partly due to them being banned or having arrears with some establishments restricting the range of possible placements. In addition, Mr P was reluctant to access a couple of options due to prior poor experiences. In both cases, Mr N and Mr P presented with complex and chaotic lifestyles, including heavy drug taking, which impacted negatively on their early and later resettlement outcomes. In the case of

Mr X, a temporary accommodation placement was found in one local authority but he decided that he wanted to return to his home town where no temporary accommodation was available, resulting in him sleeping in a friend's unheated garage for six weeks during the winter-time. In one case (Mr E), he had been allocated to a hostel with a strict drugs policy, and whilst he had liked this hostel, he eventually failed the drugs tests and had to leave. Mr P also commented that he had failed previously in a drug-free hostel and wished for a placement at a hostel that 'give you half a chance'.

Many of the resettled and partially resettled interviewees explained that they would have been at high risk of sleeping rough if PART/ other services had not found them somewhere to live on release from prison. Others would have been able to stay with friends for a short period of time only. Some had left prison on other occasions with no fixed abode and felt that this had a direct impact on their likelihood of reoffending. Sleeping rough in particular gave people no incentive to try and resettle and taking drugs often felt like the only option to make life bearable, with people then resorting to petty crime to support their drug habit.

Operation of benefit system:

A number of problems in resettlement appeared to be caused by problems with the operation of the welfare benefit system. Mr E, for example, experienced considerable problems in obtaining income benefits following release from prison at the time of the second interview and explained he had been without money for six weeks and had been shop-lifting to manage this situation. For others, hold-ups with obtaining Housing Benefit appeared to cause some issues. This was not helped by some people having to move between temporary accommodation settings.

Housing management policies:

Whilst benefit rules allow tenancies to be continued during short prison terms, this did not appear to automatically occur and PART or other agencies sometimes had to intervene to ensure that the tenancy was not lost. This was often complicated by the fact that people may also be experiencing difficulties with their tenancy including arrears. In two cases (Mr D and Mr T), tenancies were previous ones which PART helped sustain over the prison sentence.

As detailed in Chapter 4, in some cases, it was very difficult for PART or another agency to access accommodation for people with complex histories and chaotic behaviour. Some people were banned from certain premises or from being allocated further tenancies. These bans were often temporary and offenders had to wait until these were lifted, but such bans contributed to some people resorting to sleeping rough. For example, when Mr I lost his private sector tenancy due to the police break-in (see earlier), the social agency which identified the accommodation unfortunately was unable to allocate another tenancy as this would have been against their policy. Another example was Mr P who hoped to return to a hostel he liked but he understood that he had to wait for six months as he had rent arrears from his previous stay (as he had not informed the hostel when he went back into prison last time).

Sufficient support:

For many of the longitudinal group, successful resettlement was partly dependent on an effective support package being put into place and continuing for as long as it was needed. This is highlighted in the case study of Mr A who was receiving reasonably long term tenancy support from a mental health worker. It was also important that people knew they could re-engage with the PART service (or other services) – for example, Mr H experienced problems early in his tenancy and popped back into the Shelter office for support. In the case of Mr L, he had received relatively intensive support from PART and also later from Probation and drug workers but PART withdrew when Probation became involved and, by the third interview, he was no longer receiving support from anyone and was struggling to sustain his new tenancy. Mr L did not seem to know who to contact at this point.

However, the presence of support alone was not enough to secure full resettlement. For example, Mr A had a hostel support worker who visited weekly, and was in contact with a drugs worker, but was still struggling with drug and mental health issues and did not feel ready to move onto a permanent tenancy. Chapter 4 identified that access to some services, for example specialist mental health services was often difficult to secure. In addition, a few people were relatively independent and did not appear to need much support. For example, Mr J was not in contact with formal services by the third interview (and only had DIP for some time following release and PART with whom they disengaged) but had managed to move on and was coping relatively well relying on their own resources and support of informal networks (see below).

Factors affecting the resettlement process: Relationship/ social network level

Family relationships:

The presence of effective support networks has been shown to be associated with successful resettlement (see Chapter 1). For both Mr J and Mr K, the key issue appeared to be re-establishing a relationship with a previous partner that they could return to live with. In the case of Mr H, he had formed a new partnership by the second interview, and by the final interview, he had moved in with her and they had become engaged: this made him very hopeful for the future. Being in a relationship was not a sufficient condition for resettlement, however, for example Mr C had explained that he had wanted to establish a new relationship at the second interview – by the third he had done so but had also reoffended and was awaiting sentencing.

Interviewer: *How happy are you with life overall at the moment?*

Respondent: *I would say nine out of 10... Having this place, seeing my kids again and actually settling down, I've been in this relationship for three and a half months, and she is a lovely woman. (Service user)*

Relationships with children were seen as central to resettlement for a couple of people. For Mr H, re-establishing contact with his children appeared to be the key driver for him settling down and finding a flat. Once contact was renewed, this appeared to provide an added impetus for him to remain resettled and work towards gaining employment. For Mr L, contact with children was also key – PART had assisted with re-establishing contact arrangements via the courts and this was working well at the second interview. However,

by the third interview, agency support had ended and contact with his children had been halted due to Mr L's increased alcohol consumption – he explained this was affecting him adversely, especially as he had recently moved from a bedsit to a one bedroom flat so the children could stay.

Relationships with parents could also be key to resettlement. Mr F, who was aged 24, had returned to live with his mother on leaving prison – he explained that he had wanted to move out of the parental home but the PART worker had persuaded him to stay put and that, in hindsight, this had been the right decision (although he had not appreciated this at the time and had disengaged because he did not seem to be making any progress with identifying independent housing). In the case of Mr D and Mr H, they were both now living near to their parents and this appeared to provide them with some reassurance. Following a stay in a rehabilitation hostel, Mr U stated he was planning on moving back to Scotland to live with parents – records showed that his offending had completely ceased, compared to thirteen convictions in the year prior to his most recent prison sentence. On the other hand, it appeared that in a number of cases the death of a parent or parents had had a very detrimental effect on people's lives. Mr K explained that, although settled now, the death of his parents a few years ago had set him back considerably - he had been determined to change then but had ended up back in prison and thought this was something to do with it. Mr C and Mr E had both lost their mothers recently, and Mr I used to live with his father until he died and he subsequently found himself potentially homeless on release.

Wider social networks:

Many people explained that they had had to try to change their friendship groups on leaving prison to lessen the pressure to resume drug use and offending behaviour. Some had appeared to have achieved this, for example Mr K explained he had simply 'got rid' of his old friends. However, for others, this was more of a struggle especially when people faced set-backs in their resettlement. For example, Mr I had lost his tenancy and following a period of sleeping rough returned to his former neighbourhood as two friends had offered him a couch to sleep on. Even for Mr B, who was doing well in his tenancy, staying away from old friends was difficult – he explained his closest friend also took drugs but this friend's family also gave him support, had helped him furnish his flat and had him around for meals, so it was difficult for him to move on from the friendship. He was receiving help from his mental health worker to try to access new social groups to make a new set of friends.

Relationship with support worker/s:

As highlighted in Chapter 4, for some people a good relationship with a PART worker – or another worker – made a difference to their lives. They explained that they were more likely to make an effort to resettle, although for some this effect was more long-lived than for others. For example, Mr Q had been very impressed with the PART worker but had then failed to attend a number of appointments with housing providers that they had arranged. Mr Q was banned from one hostel and had been asked to leave a number of others and his behaviour was often disruptive, presenting challenges for the resettlement process. PART eventually closed his case as he was not engaging with the support. In contrast, Mr L described that the PART worker had made a huge difference to his life, he really felt supported and made an extra effort to control his drinking because of this.

Factors affecting the resettlement process: Personal level

Substance misuse:

The majority of interviewees in the longitudinal group, as well as in the full PART sample, had substance misuse problems that threatened to undermine any progress with resettlement. It was unsurprising that all of those people for whom resettlement failed had unresolved drug misuse issues. Further, in these cases, their addiction appeared to rule their lives and had done so for many years. A high level of drug use would, typically, necessitate some criminal activity usually shop-lifting. In addition, people's behaviour whilst using could be challenging, leading to temporary or permanent bans from some services, further limiting their resettlement options.

When you've got nothing in your life, there is always that voice in your head to go and have another go [with drugs], it's not that easy just to stop, as much as you want to stop, I means it's not a nice life... (Service user)

Some had managed to control their substance misuse with a combination of appropriate support and their own determination (see below). For example, one resettled respondent had stopped taking hard drugs, although was still using cannabis explained:

I'm just fucking sick of it, I've had enough of living like that...waking up every morning and having to get the money to score and then finding a score – that can take two or three hours – it's not a life that - it's fucking horrible. (Service user)

Motivation to change:

People's own self-determination also appeared to be a key factor in resettlement. A number of resettled people explained that they were simply fed up of repeating the cycle of offending and prison, and very much wanted to change this time. It is possible they were therefore more open to the support that was offered to them.

Before I used to get out without anywhere to go and just went to friends or got out and just got back on drugs straight away because to be honest I wasn't interested...but this time around I really wanted to make a go of things so...I tried to get all the help that I could get...in the past I didn't even look for help because I was not that bothered...I think I'd had enough of drugs, of not being settled...I have been taking drugs since I was thirteen and have spent most of my time in prison and in hostels and in bedsits...this time I really wanted to make a change so I got in touch with people right away....(Service user)

It's yourself, it's if you want to do it, then do it, don't go bothering anyone else with your problems, well certain problems, but if you can manage on your own. I got through it, I had to, three kids...you have got to help yourself before anyone else can help you really, if you want to just stay as you are and not change the person you are, stay in the rut that you are in....More or less everything I've done, I've done myself. Plus I've had that incentive where I've had to do it because I didn't want to stay in a rut, the person I was

before, I needed to change my lifestyle and the person I were. And now things are a lot better, I've come through the other side. (Service user)

The impact of PART on resettlement paths

The above section described a wide range of influences on the resettlement processes. It is important to note that PART was able to address these issues to varying extents, and sometimes not at all. The structural factors, in particular, were very difficult for PART to exert much influence over – for example, they were only able to access the housing and temporary accommodation settings available in any given area. Whilst a service such as PART could help people to attempt to find employment or maximise their benefits, the underlying structural problems meant that ex-prisoners were likely to experience barriers to employment and have to live on low incomes.

PART also had limited direct influence over some institutional factors such as prison discharge policies or housing allocation mechanisms. Nonetheless, here they could, and did, assist people to negotiate the often complex service network in any one area. The main role of PART was being able to identify and apply to the full range of accommodation and support agencies on behalf of the client, and also challenge exclusion policies in some instances (including homelessness applications). In particular, PART's ability to assist people into appropriate temporary accommodation appeared to provide the starting blocks for a successful resettlement path for many. Successful inter-agency working could also help people to access a range of other support services to assist their resettlement.

PART could also help people to negotiate family and other support networks. This appeared to be quite important in some cases, for example, helping people to re-establish contact with children or to improve a relationship with a parent or grandparent. This type of support was however more of a feature of their intensive case work rather than typical for the whole case load. PART obviously could not change people's social situation fundamentally – many people's pasts included very disrupted childhoods and bereavements and these losses would never be addressed by a short-term project like PART – although referral to other relevant support agencies was still undertaken where possible.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the outcomes for PART service users, both in the short-term at the end of the period of support from the service, and longer term for the longitudinal sample. Analysis of the full PART caseload showed that approaching a third of service users had achieved a positive outcome by case closure. Approximately one in eight service users were living in some form of settled housing at case closure, with a further fifth living in a formal temporary accommodation setting. About half of PART cases had, however, disengaged from the service by case closure. A fifth of clients were in prison at this point, whilst over another fifth were in insecure accommodation. Accommodation outcomes at this point were unknown for over a quarter of the sample.

Analysis of the longitudinal data found that most of the people who completed their PART support plan at case closure had maintained or improved upon their resettlement status

at the end of the eighteen month tracking period. Conversely, most of the people who did not complete their support plan at case closure had a failed resettlement outcome at the end of the tracking period. Whilst there were exceptions to these rules, the data was suggestive that once a client had been set upon a positive resettlement path they had a good chance of maintaining or improving on their situation in the longer term. The tracking work also showed that many factors appeared to affect resettlement outcomes, some of which PART was able to influence, whilst others were difficult to influence and would limit the effectiveness of the work of any agency.

Case study 5.1: Mr B (Successful resettlement)

For the two years prior to his most recent sentence, Mr B had not had any settled accommodation, mainly rather living with friends who were also drug users. He had had settled housing for seven years some time ago but this had broken down due to mental health problems and drug use.

Mr B was supported by PART in prison to apply for both permanent and temporary accommodation on his release. He was disappointed that a flat could not be arranged for release but accepted a referral-only hostel place. Mr B was offered a 'meet at the gate' service but declined saying that he would be okay to get to the hostel himself which he did. The PART worker stayed in touch until it appeared that Mr B was settled in the hostel and had a support worker in place who was continuing to pursue resettlement options.

Mr B was assisted by the hostel support worker to find a flat in an area near to family and friends. The support worker also identified a specialist mental health worker to provide ongoing floating support to Mr B in his new flat. He was also in contact with a drugs worker in his locality. He was waiting to see a counsellor to assist with longer term issues that contributed to his offending and drug use.

Mr B explained that he felt settled in his flat. He felt that having a flat had helped to break the cycle of drug use and offending. He also considered that having an excellent support worker in the hostel had made a big difference, and whilst he had originally wished for a flat immediately, he now felt that this interim support had been beneficial to him. In fact, he had been so settled at the hostel he had felt a scared of moving on. Nevertheless he did so successfully and also felt that he had a good relationship with his mental health worker who was supporting him in his tenancy.

Mr B had been convicted of five offences in the year prior to his last prison stay, however he had not committed any offences in the 10 months since release. He was reducing his methadone intake and was not using heroin but explained he was still using some crack and speed with friends.

Although Mr B was settled he was aware that he needed to go further with addressing his drug misuse. He was due to be signed off soon by his drugs worker but thought it might be better for him to continue with this support. He was managing with paying the bills but felt this was mainly due to his receiving Disability Living Allowance and without this that he would find it difficult to manage financially. He was hoping to start a training course in the near future.

Mr B appeared to have been very well supported by three agencies, with appropriate temporary and permanent accommodation being identified, and this along with his own determination to break the cycle, meant that he was doing well in his tenancy. However, he did identify a number of risk factors that might jeopardise his current situation including the need for ongoing drug support. He also felt he needed counselling to help him address underlying issues.

Case study 5.2: Mr A (Partial resettlement)

Mr A had been homeless before prison, sleeping rough or staying with friends on a temporary basis. He had experiences of leaving prison before and going straight back onto drugs in large part because of his homelessness.

On leaving prison on this occasion, PART helped find him a place in a short-term hostel. This was not ideal for him due to other residents using drugs but with the help of PART (working alongside a drugs agency), he was moved to a more appropriate hostel within two months which allocated him a move-on bedsit within a week. Mr A was offered a permanent flat quite early on but turned it down due to its location as it was in a block of flats with drug users and dealers. He was happy to wait for suitable move-on accommodation.

At the first interview, Mr A explained he felt quite settled in the bedsit and that, although he had had a few lapses with drugs, he was doing much better this time post-release than for a long time. He was also undertaking some voluntary work.

PART closed Mr A's case as he was making good progress and had a housing support worker who was helping him manage his bedsit and with move on opportunities.

When reinterviewed at stage 2, Mr A was still living in his supported accommodation but hoping to move onto a more intensive placement in the short future. He believed he needed to move to address his offending and substance misuse issues fully. This was borne out by the fact that Mr A had reoffended since leaving prison. He had also been the victim of a burglary.

Information from key informants at stage 3 indicated that Mr A had moved to a more intensive placement in another part of the country.

Case study 5.3: Mr N (Failed resettlement)

Mr N had shared a tenancy with a partner a year or so ago, but had been of no fixed abode for the six to nine months prior to his last prison sentence. Mr N had also experienced periods of homelessness prior to this, had been in care as a child and started taking drugs as a teenager.

Mr N received ECL and there was no accommodation arranged for his release. Mr N had reapplied to his previous landlord and PART had followed this up but no accommodation was available at this point. Mr N was also banned from some of his hostels due to his alleged behaviour so alternative options were limited. PART explored accommodation possibilities in another local authority but this did not result in a positive outcome.

Mr N stated that he had to sleep rough and in bin-shutes for two months until his previous landlord found him a property. During this period, Mr N experienced depression and other mental health problems. He was also using prescription and illegal drugs and alcohol heavily.

Unfortunately, the tenancy he was allocated was unfurnished and this made it difficult for Mr N to settle. Further, Mr N experienced harassment from local drug dealers and felt very unsafe in his home. He was persuaded by another agency to voluntarily give up his tenancy (to improve his chances of being allocated another tenancy later). However, accommodation options remained limited and Mr N ended up back in prison, and again was released from prison with no accommodation. This was followed by another period of being of no fixed abode. At the end of the eighteen month tracking period, it was believed that Mr N had moved to another local authority as he had experienced further difficulties with accessing services in his local authority.

PART contact ended whilst Mr N was still in his tenancy before the severe problems with the tenancy were apparent and also following low levels of engagement.

Mr N was only interviewed once but at this point he was very frustrated with the limited options available to him, felt that most services had not been helpful and suggested that he might need some form of supported accommodation in another local authority area.

6 Evaluating the success of PART

This penultimate chapter considers the success of the PART service utilising two key methods. Firstly, the costs of the PART service are presented and an assessment made of the impact of the project on reconviction rates and whether this resulted in cost savings. Secondly, the chapter considers the success of PART as compared to two similar situations. The outcomes from Supporting People funded accommodation and housing related schemes for ex-offenders in West Yorkshire, are reviewed and compared to PART. Further, the experiences of other ex-prisoners in West Yorkshire are explored, drawing on focus groups and interviews conducted for this study.

Costs of the service

In addition to the well-rehearsed difficulties of evaluating criminal justice interventions in general, it is well known that there are many barriers to estimating the 'returns' on resettlement projects in particular (Metropolitan Police, 2010). Resettlement, and its accommodation component in particular, is a complex matter with many closely-related factors playing a part³². Delivering improvements in access to accommodation may contribute to improvements of outcomes across a variety of aspects of an offender's life including offending but may only be effective if accompanied by success in tackling other issues associated with it such as substance misuse and/or lack of job readiness. This interaction between outcomes has been noted in other studies such as the economic evaluation of the Drug Treatment Outcomes Research Study (Davies et al, 2009).

The working hypothesis on which the PART project is based is that providing housing support services to clients making the transition from prison to the community can improve the prospects of their achieving stable accommodation outcomes which may, in turn, contribute to a reduction in the likelihood of their re-offending and reconviction.

Reconviction rates are very high for those offenders who have been to prison, especially for those who have served only short terms of imprisonment. Table 6.1, based on evidence from the cohort of prisoners released in 2000, shows that of the 10,329 prisoners released after serving a sentence of less than 12 months, about 30 per cent had been reconvicted within three months. Within six months the proportion had reached 44 per cent and after a year it was 58 per cent. Further, recent findings from Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (MoJ, 2010b³³) showed that those with accommodation problems are likely to be reconvicted at a higher rate: 15 per cent of prisoners were homeless prior to custody and of this (previously homeless) group 79 per cent had been reconvicted within a year of release compared with 47 per cent of those who had accommodation³⁴. Given that this survey included those with sentences of up to four years, it is possible that the reconviction rate of homeless short-term prisoners might be even higher than this.

³² This is evident also from the literature on the closely-related area of interventions with Prolific and Priority Offenders: Dawson & Cuppleditch (2007),

³³ 1,435 prisoners in England and Wales who had been sentenced in 2005/6 to between one month and four years custody.

³⁴ MoJ (2010) pp.5-6; 118.

Reducing reconviction rates for this group brings a potentially high return since many such individuals can be expected to be reconvicted on multiple occasions into the future. However, it is important to note that the returns are sensitive to the types of offences involved. Particularly in the case of those who have been imprisoned for short periods only, the likelihood is that reconvictions will be for comparatively minor offences such as theft and bail or breach of order offences. The economic and social costs associated with such offence types³⁵ are much lower than they are for violent or sexual offences and this makes it more difficult to demonstrate convincingly that project returns are sufficient to justify implementation costs.

Table 6.1: Reconviction rates for those serving less than 12 months custody

Interval following release	Proportion of 10,329 offenders sentenced to <12 months custody in the 2000 cohort who had been reconvicted after different lengths of time
After 3 months	29.6%
After 6 months	44.0%
After 9 months	52.1%
After 1 year	58.0%
After two years	69.4%

Source: MoJ (2010b) at p. 96

The purpose of this section is to explore the link between the outcomes achieved through the PART project relative to the costs of its implementation. The approach used is based on standard economic evaluation methodology of the kind used by government departments appraising and evaluating policy options (Treasury , 2007). It is closely related also to the methodology for estimating the Social Return on Investment (SROI)³⁶.

The first part of this section looks at the costs of implementing the PART project. The second part looks at the benefits of the project in terms of cost savings in the area of crime reduction. The third section presents some case studies on possible cost reductions.

Costs of implementing PART

The budget for the first three years of the project is summarised in Table 6.2. This covers the period October 2007 until September 2010. The budget was projected to remain quite stable across the three years, the principal exception being recruitment costs (which were limited to the first year³⁷) and an allowance for a small increase in salaries each year. Evaluation costs have been excluded from the summary since they are not associated with service delivery.

³⁵ As estimated by Home Office economists: Brand & Price (2000); Dubourg et al (2005).

³⁶ This methodology is set out in a number of guides available through: www.thesroinetwork.org

³⁷ Staffing changes in the second year involved further recruitment costs. These costs were not anticipated in the project budget and have been excluded.

Table 6.2: Budget for first three years of PART Project

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Years 1+2+3
Salaries	97,723	103,176	108,090	308,989
Staff-related*	11,011	6,291	6,478	23,780
Total staff costs	108,734	109,467	114,568	322,769
Rent	7,500	7,500	7,500	22,500
Indirect organisation	17,940	17,745	18,476	54,161
Other non-staff	6,909	4,785	4,904	16,598
Total non-staff	32,349	30,030	30,880	93,259
Total staff + non-staff	141,083	139,497	145,448	426,028

* Includes one-off recruitment costs of £5k in year 1

The overhead component in the budget is quite low and may be an underestimate of the true resource burden of the project. There is no reference, for example, to costs associated with staff absence, illness, training etc. Nor is there reference to senior management inputs beyond those attributable to the Team Leader. A Shelter Service Manager, for example, was responsible for overseeing progress of the project as part of her role and their costs are not included.

The budget is restricted to Shelter's costs. From a wider social cost perspective it would be appropriate to add any costs incurred by other agencies. For example, where Shelter workers met clients in prison there were costs of providing meeting room space, which has a high opportunity cost because of the very high overhead costs of maintaining a secure environment. In addition it is quite likely that resettlement teams in prisons or local authority housing agencies would have received more correspondence and calls than otherwise as a by-product of the project. Making estimates of the scale of such costs is generally disproportionately high, so they are usually excluded.

The principal component of spending is staff salaries. The staffing level anticipated in the budget comprised a Team Leader plus two PART workers plus part-time secretarial support. This was to run for the three years of the project. During the early stages, there was a slight delay in recruiting the Team Leader. During this time, the role was covered by someone else. Likewise there was some staff turnover during the three year life of the project (see Chapter 1 for details). Some costs for supporting the expenses of a volunteer were also included. The net result is that it seems appropriate to treat the staffing component of the budget as a good guide to the costs of staffing the project.

Evolution of service delivery

As identified in Chapter 1, the project documentation envisaged an operational caseload of 80 clients per annum, with the two workers each having a caseload of around 15 at any one time. During the first year the number of referrals took time to build up. Of the 63 recorded for year one in the database, 38 (or 60%) were referred during the final quarter of the year. In the second year the first two quarters the referral rate was again rather slow initially but increased during the second half of the year to give a total of 74. The slowing in the first half of the year was attributable to staffing issues.

Over the three years for which the programme ran a total of 192 individuals³⁸ were assessed and support given. It was noted in Chapter 3 that a further 122 referrals were received but not, for a variety of reasons, fully assessed. Given the loss of referrals inevitable during the set up and wind down phases of the project this achievement of around 80 per cent of full target numbers seems reasonable. Even during the busiest time (year 2) the number of referrals was around 10 per cent below target, however. This suggests that future projects of this kind, should they adopt the same approach, might plausibly aim for a caseload nearer 70 than 80 per annum.

Unit costs

With a total number of 192 individuals participating in the project, dividing total project costs of £426k by this number gives an average cost per participant of £2,219. The contact logs of clients revealed that the costs of support varied widely across clients with some requiring just a few phone calls or e-mails while others involved lengthy meetings requiring the time of project staff and other agencies. The mean times taken by these various types of support work have not been estimated, but it was evident that the cost of some client's support would have been higher than £2,219, and some lower.

It is difficult to make any judgment about this level of unit costs. One obvious comparator would be the Supporting People (SP) programme delivered by local authorities and aimed at vulnerable client groups including offenders (see later section). However the methodology used to compute the costs of SP cannot be readily adapted for the PART project. The SP method is to distinguish the annual costs of ongoing support (per household) and the costs of 'events'³⁹. The provision of PART has elements of both in it. The report on SP costs and benefits in England (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2009, following the methods used in earlier studies, notably DCLG, 2006 and ODPM, 2004) derives a figure of £65,405 per annum per household for existing SP packages⁴⁰, comprising the basic support package cost of £22,496 plus 'event' costs of £42,909. The latter derive principally from the costs associated with reconviction, although this level of costs seems high in relation to the kinds of reconviction records of PART participants. These figures include the costs of providing accommodation as well as the cost of provision of advice, so are not at all comparable with the estimated unit cost of delivering PART.

Two other possible comparators are the SP programmes running in Scotland and Wales. The review of the costs and benefits of the Scottish programme identified the costs associated with supporting 'People at risk of offending' amounted to a total of £1.6m in 2004/5. Dividing this total by the 359 clients for whom risk of offending (as distinct, for example, from using drugs or alcohol) was identified as their primary characteristic suggests a unit cost of £4,460 per client. The report (Tribal Consulting, 2007) warns expressly that this unit cost may be inappropriate because the assignment of primary characteristics may not match spending flows congruently with client groups. Interestingly, however, a somewhat similar figure of £3,940 per client was obtained for the SP

³⁸ A total of 199 referrals were assessed but this consisted of 192 individuals.

³⁹ 'Events' refer to 'one-off' events or contingencies, such as a conviction, which result in a temporary increase in support costs. The cost of responding to such events is adjusted for the risk of its occurrence.

⁴⁰ See section 3.2.6 of the DCLG Report of 2009.

programme in Wales by Matrix (2006). These figures include a wider range of service provision than applies in the PART programme, so again they cannot be compared directly with the unit cost of PART.

Crime reduction savings

The main method utilised in this analysis was to compare the conviction rates of PART clients in the 12 month period pre- and post- conviction. It did not prove possible to utilise a randomised control trial (RCT) in which potential clients would be assigned at random either to a PART intervention group (offered support) or to a control group (receiving no support) making comparisons between groups possible. Similarly, it would be problematic to compare simply the rates of reconvictions with national data on those released after serving less than 12 months in custody (as described above). This is because PART clients were not likely to be typical of all short-term prisoners. Prisoners were only referred to PART if they confronted prospective accommodation issues on release, almost certainly excluding disproportionately the lower risk part of the prisoner cohort. This 'selection bias' would mean that the PART group represent a higher homelessness and reconviction risk than prisoners in general. This would tend to obscure any achievements because PART clients would be expected to do less well than 'easier' groups with fewer accommodation problems. A further indication that the PART participants were likely to present a greater challenge than normal was the high rate (83%) of drug and/or alcohol problems (in the full PART group and the longitudinal group). It is a proportion that is significantly higher than reported by prisoners covered by the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (MoJ, 2010b)⁴¹.

The tracking of reconviction outcomes was difficult. The authoritative source of data on convictions is the Police National Computer database (referred to normally as 'PNC') which contains information about all previous arrests and convictions as well as any impending offences⁴². Permission to access PNC data on convictions was only available for the sub-group of 28 clients interviewed as part of the research (see Chapter 1). This group agreed to the compilation of information about their convictions between the start of 2007 and May 2010. For a quarter (7 of the 28) of them this window was sufficiently wide to enable offending to be documented for both the 12 month interval before they had entered prison and for the 12 months following their release. In these cases it was possible not only to measure the 12-month reconviction outcome but also to make comparisons of the content of offending before and after their time in prison. For the remaining 21 cases, where follow-up was less than 12 months, estimates of reconvictions over 12 months were constructed for purposes of illustration.

The pattern of offence types revealed by the analysis of the PNC data (in Table 6.3) was comparable with the sort of offence pattern found for the 2009 cohort of drug offenders (Home Office, 2010, at Table 3). The most common offence types were theft (mostly

⁴¹ Amongst this latter group, 64% reported having used drugs during the four weeks prior to custody. The reconviction rate for this group (62% within two years) was twice that for those who had never used drugs (30%) or not used them for at least a year before custody (33%). Although the questions about substance abuse were phrased differently it seems likely that substance issues were a problem for a higher proportion of the PART group than for prisoners as a whole, and thus likely to make them unusually high reconviction risks.

⁴² It includes a full disposal history showing the sentence handed-down for each offence. It covers convictions and cautions and details of any recent arrests.

shoplifting), breaches of an order (such as an ASBO or a conditional discharge) and bail-related offences. The information on convictions drawn from PNC data is limited to offences that were proven, so excludes offences that were not reported to the police and offences where the offender was not identified. The total number of convictions for the sample of 28 offenders was 223 during the 12 months prior to imprisonment and 119 during the follow-up period (lasting up to 12 months) following release.

Table 6.3: Convictions and reconvictions of interview sample by offence type

	12 months prior to imprisonment: % of offences	Follow-up period of up to 12 months post release: % of offences
Shoplifting	38%	46%
Breach of order (e.g. ASBO)	23%	29%
Failure to surrender to bail	10%	10%
Driving offences	5%	1%
Drunk & disorderly	5%	3%
Drug offences	5%	3%

Reconviction data on longitudinal sample

In five of the seven cases where the full 12 month follow-up period had elapsed there were reconvictions, the number of reconvictions ranging from one to 25, with a mean of 11.4 (Table 6.4). Although this 12-month reconviction rate (71%) seems high the sample size is very low, and much too low to regard as a reliable guide to the proportion of the whole sample likely to have been reconvicted. In addition, as stressed earlier, the PART clients as a whole are regarded as a very high risk group. In the remaining 21 cases where the post-release review period was less than 12 months, the average duration of the period post-release was 8.3 months. In 55 per cent of these cases there had been a reconviction and the average number of convictions in these cases was 4.7.

Table 6.4: Reconviction records of interview sample

	Cases	Number of cases with reconviction	% of cases with reconviction*	Average number of convictions for those reconvicted
Full follow-up period of 12 months	7	5	71.4%	11.4 (=57/5)
Follow-up < 12 months	21	11	55.0%	4.7 (=52/11)
Total interview sample (average duration of follow-up period: 8.26 months)	28	16	59.2%	6.6 (=105/16)

*Excluding the offender still in prison in May 2010

The average duration 'at risk' of re-conviction for the interview sample was eight months. A proportionate adjustment to the post-release reconvictions was made on the assumption that the rate at which reconvictions occurred remained constant. Thus the number of reconvictions was increased by 50 per cent, as shown in the third row of Table 6.4.

The finding from this is that the offending rate is lower post release than it was pre-imprisonment. If offending had continued at the same rate then 223 offences might have been expected in the post-release phase as compared with the 180 based on observation (adjusted for duration). This would be consistent with a reduction of 43 in the number of reconvictions. If this reduction were repeated across the full set of 192 PART participants the total saving might have been of the order of 295 offences (=43*192/28).

Another way of analysing the reconvictions data is to estimate the cost saving represented by the crime reduction impact. Using the Home Office estimates of the economic and social costs of crime (Dubourg et al, 2005) it is possible to assign aggregate costs to the offences pre and post prison. These figures include the average cost of such offences to victims, the cost to the criminal justice system of processing them and the costs of precautions taken to prevent them. As Table 6.5 illustrates this suggests that the cost saving is larger (in percentage terms) than the reduction in the number of offences⁴³. After adjustment for the duration of the post-release period at risk, the estimated cost of offences is only just over half (52%) of the cost of offences committed prior to prison. If this cost saving is multiplied up by 192/28 to take account of the whole PART sample then the saving would be of the order of £468,610⁴⁴.

Table 6.5: Cost of convictions before and after prison

	Number of offences	Total Costs of offences, £
Offences during 12 months prior to prison	223	£142,394
Offences in period (up to 12 months) post release	119	£49,370
Offences post release adjusted for average duration (8 months)	180	£74,055

Of course it would not be appropriate to attribute all of any such saving to the PART project. It is the provision of suitable accommodation, as well as the advice and support supplied to clients, which contributes to the improved outcome, and it would be extremely difficult to separate out the respective contributions of the two components. Nevertheless this does demonstrate that the project can broadly potentially give rise to benefits on a scale that is sufficient to offset the costs of its implementation.

Case studies

A third stage was to conduct two case studies as a means of demonstrating the potential savings from successful support. The two individuals at issue were amongst those with convictions for comparatively more serious offences than many others in the group of 28 for whom convictions data were available. In one case there had been a conviction for violence against the person and in the other a conviction for a sexual offence. Neither individual had been convicted since release, although it should be noted that in the case of

⁴³ This fall in the average cost of offences occurs in part because convictions for more costly offences, such as serious wounding and sexual offences, occur less frequently.

⁴⁴ An important caveat should be noted here as just over 50% of the longitudinal completed their support plan but only 32% of the full sample had a positive outcome at case closure (see Chapter 5). This means that the longitudinal group may have performed better than the full group as a whole and therefore the savings may have been lower than the £468,610.

the second individual the release date limited the follow-up period to four months⁴⁵, and the time elapsing before reconviction is typically longer for sexual offences than for other sorts of offence types.

As can be seen from the case summaries in Table 6.6 these individuals benefited from the support provided as is evidenced by the fact that both had remained in stable hostel accommodation since release. Both individuals remained at some risk of offending because neither was employed and both have mental health and substance misuse issues. But both had remained free of reconviction over the follow-up period. A repetition of the offending from the 12 months prior to imprisonment would have imposed economic and social costs of the order of £1,500 (for a common assault) and £32,000 (for a sexual offence) using Dubourg et al (2005).

Table 6.6: Case study summaries

	Case 1	Case 2
Number of convictions in 12 months pre-imprisonment	5	1
Most serious conviction in 12 months pre-imprisonment	Minor assault	Sexual offence
Number of convictions in 12 months post-release (or to May 2010 if shorter)	0	0
Age band	41-50	31-40
Duration of PART support (weeks)	28	25
Accommodation prior to prison	Friends/relatives	Friends/relatives
Length of stay in previous accommodation (years)	2	3
Accommodation status post release	hostel	hostel
Number of previous sentences	10	3
Economic status pre-imprisonment	benefits	Benefits
Economic status at case closure	Illness/disability	Job seeker
Still in allocated accommodation?	yes	Yes

In the studies of the Supporting People (SP) programme referred to above (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2006, 2009) the benefits delivered via reductions in the likelihood of reconviction are estimated at a saving of £10,327 per household per annum and a further £1,459 as a result of eliminating the risk of homelessness. Since the SP programme is more far-reaching than PART, it would be expected to deliver greater benefits. In the two case studies here, a significant resource saving is likely to have been made as a result of the individuals both being in settled accommodation and neither having any reconvictions.

As a further illustration of the potential benefits to be realised in individual cases, in five of the 28 interview sample cases a previously prolific offender had not been reconvicted by the end of the follow-up analysis of PNC data. The most striking example is the client who had 13 convictions in the period prior to imprisonment but no reconvictions during a full 12 months following release. Other cases were as follows: 11 offences in 12 months prior and none in the follow-up period which was limited to nine months; 22 offences in 12 months and none in eight months follow-up post-release; 12 prior followed by none during

⁴⁵ The person was followed up longitudinally and it appeared they still had not offended at the end of the 12 months (based on self-reports and the fact that the former client was settled).

six month follow-up and, in the final instance, 16 in 12 months prior and none in the seven month follow-up period.

Conclusion

The PNC data on the interview sample are to be collected again in 2011. This will enable further review of the reconviction outcomes for the interview group and calculation of a full twelve month reconviction rate for the group. The difficulty will remain however that it cannot be assumed that the PART sample is representative of offenders imprisoned for durations of less than 12 months. The PART group will tend to be at higher risk than others of reconviction precisely because they have been identified as likely to benefit from accommodation support.

Supporting People: Comparing outcomes for housing support services working with people with a history of offending in 2008/9

Housing support services funded by Supporting People primarily seek to maximise independent living among people with a history of offending. There are three main ways in which these services do this:

Prevent someone who has settled housing from losing their tenancy by using mobile workers who visit them in their home (for example stopping loss of housing linked to rent arrears, anti-social behaviour, mental health problems, or problematic drug use). The mobile workers are usually described as a floating support service.

Provide someone who has recently left prison with a place in shared, supported accommodation which has been purpose built (or adapted) for former offenders and has specialist staff. These services are designed to 'move on' offenders by bringing them to a point where they can live independently through a range of housing related support and/or helping with access to welfare benefits, employment, education, social services and NHS support and help with problematic drug or alcohol use.

Provide floating support services that enable resettlement of people with a history of offending directly into private rented or social rented housing. In this model, ex-offenders are helped to access ordinary rented housing immediately and floating support is used to tackle any issues that might threaten their capacity to live independently.

Many housing support services will also have a role in promoting 'positive' behaviour that is associated with reductions in offending. Alongside maximising housing stability, this also includes encouraging an end or reduction in problematic drinking and drug use, support with mental health problems and promotion of positive, meaningful activity, including education, training, work-related activities like volunteering and facilitating access to paid work.

In 2008/9, approximately 5,393 people⁴⁶ with a history of offending were recorded as having received support from short term⁴⁷ Supporting People funded services in England.

⁴⁶ There may be an element of double counting in these data. However it is not possible to estimate its extent as no personal identifiers are within the publicly available data.

⁴⁷ Up to two years.

This group represented 9.3 per cent of all the people receiving support. It is important to note that these 5,393 people were composed of two groups:

- People who were *primarily* described as offenders or at risk of offending, this group represented 44 per cent⁴⁸ of all the people with a history of offending receiving housing support services.
- People who were *primarily* described as belonging to other client groups. Of the 5,939 offenders, 29 per cent were primarily described as ‘single homeless people with support needs’, 10 per cent were primarily described as people with ‘drug problems’, 5 per cent as ‘young people at risk’, 4 per cent as ‘people with mental health problems’ and 2 per cent as ‘people sleeping rough’, the remaining 6 per cent were primarily described as belonging to a wide range of other client groups.

People with a history of offending were most likely to use accommodation based supported housing services (i.e. a hostel or a cluster of flats on a shared site with resident support workers) with 41 per cent of all people with a history of offending using these services. The next most common category of services were tenancy sustainment and resettlement services (both of which provided floating support services to people in their own homes), which were used by 39 per cent of people with a history of offending. The remaining 20 per cent of people with a history used a wide range services, including services not specifically designed for their needs, such as direct access accommodation, hostels for single homeless people and foyers.

Table 6.7 shows the broad type of support service being used and the typical duration for which these services worked with people with a history of offending. As can be seen, there was considerable variation in how long people with a history of offending used services for, but typically this group were using both accommodation based and floating support services for between four and eight months. This was longer than the typical period of contact for people using the PART service. Duration of contact was typically shorter for homelessness services (but these are often designed as very short term interventions, including direct access and outreach services). The other services used varied considerably in design and function, but contact periods were again typically quite long.

Table 6.7: Broad types of service used and duration of service use by people with a history of offending using housing support services in England in 2008/9

Broad type of service	Number	Percentage	Average time for which services used in months (mean)	Median time for which services used in months
Accommodation based	2,215	41%	8	4.6
Floating support	2,109	39%	8	4.8
Homelessness	901	17%	3	1.6
Other	158	3%	8	4.4
Total	5,383	100%	7	4.0

Source: Supporting People Outcomes Data 2008/9 Data were missing for 556 cases.

⁴⁸ 43.7% in total, 42.1% had a primary client group classification of ‘offender or at risk of offending’ and 1.6% had a primary client group classification of ‘mentally disordered offender’.

The outcomes data on people with a history of offending recorded a range of information on the support needs⁴⁹ that these people had and what kinds of support they had been provided with. There were also data on whether these individuals had stayed with services until they made a planned move to independent housing or whether their use of services had come to an unplanned end (i.e. the service had lost contact prior to independent living being sustained or enabled). Data at the national level is presented in Appendix 2. The remainder of this section focuses on the Supporting People data for West Yorkshire.

Comparing service outcomes from West Yorkshire Supporting People service and PART

It is possible to contrast the identified needs and service outcomes for people with a history of offending using Supporting People funded services in West Yorkshire in 2008/9 (for 372 users) with the needs identified by PART for its service users and the outcomes for service users that PART was able to deliver (Table 6.2). This is a broadly comparable geographical area where both Supporting People services and PART faced comparable structures of housing and employment provision. Before doing so, it is important to note a number of important caveats to this comparison:

- The PART service was primarily a ‘link’ scheme in terms of attempting to ensure that people leaving prison were able to access accommodation and other support services, alongside providing direct support themselves as appropriate. The majority of PART users had no accommodation they could access on release. Supporting People services (accommodation-based and floating support), although often working with homeless people, were usually supporting people in some form of temporary or permanent accommodation. It is possible, therefore, that they had a better basis from which to commence their work.
- Related to the above, the PART service tended to pass over clients to other support workers when they were settled into accommodation, so outcomes were sometimes being measured after a relatively short period of time and in the early days of the work of other agencies in providing ongoing support to clients. People with a history of offending using housing support services in 2008/9 often used those services for a longer period of time than the four month average reported among PART service users.
- The PART project was a less intensive service than some Supporting People services which worked with people on a weekly basis or more often in accommodation based services. The previous section shows that the unit cost of the service was lower than average Supporting People intervention.
- In both cases, the data was supplied by project workers on both the needs identified and whether they had been met. The workers in the Supporting People services were used to returning this data on an annual basis and it was normalised into the routine of service delivery because it was a condition of the service receiving Supporting People funding, whilst this was a one-off data exercise for the PART workers. It is likely that data collection methods differed which would account for some differences.

Table 6.8 shows that Supporting People services quite often reported certain needs were present among their service users at a higher rate than was reported in PART project

⁴⁹ See Table 5.5 and later in this chapter for a full list.

records. In particular, users of Supporting People services in West Yorkshire were much more likely to be identified as having the following sets of need:

- Participation in training and/or education [13% of PART users, 64% of housing support service users]
- Development of confidence and ability to have greater choice and control [17% of PART users, 64% of housing support service users]
- Compliance with statutory orders [17% of PART service users, 62% of housing support service users]
- Access to social support from family and friends [10% of PART service users, 52% of housing support service users]
- Debt management [3% of PART service users, 41% of housing support service users]
- Help related to physical health [13% of PART service users, 43% of housing support service users]
- Help in obtaining paid work [7% of PART service users, 35% of housing support service users]

PART service users were more likely to have identified needs for support with problematic drug and alcohol use (68% of PART service users, 61% of housing support service users, based on the data shown in Table 5.5⁵⁰). This was the only area of support in which PART service users were more likely to have an identified need than people with a history of offending using housing support services in 2008/9.

In a number of areas, successful outcomes were reported more frequently among people with a history of offending using Supporting People services in West Yorkshire than among PART service users. In particular, higher rates of successful outcomes were reported in respect of the following areas by Supporting People services:

- Better management of self-harm [0% of PART service users, 79% of housing support service users]
- Debt management [0% of PART service users, 60% of housing support service users]
- Management of mental health [13% of PART service users, 67% of housing support service users]
- Help with physical health [22% of PART service users, 74% of housing support service users]
- Participation in work-like activities [22% of PART service users, 59% of housing support service users]
- Participation in education and training [11% of PART service users, 47% of housing support service users]
- Participation in leisure/cultural/ faith and/or informal learning activities [33% of PART services users, 69% of housing support service users]
- Development of confidence and ability to have greater choice and control [42% of PART service users, 74% of housing support service users]

⁵⁰ It should be noted that the original PART assessment information identified that 83% had a substance misuse problem of some sort, however this question asked about whether people needed support with this issue by the project.

- Compliance with statutory orders [42% of PART service users, 73% of housing support service users]
- Help with problematic drug and alcohol use [35% of PART service users, 61% housing support service users]
- Tenancy sustainment [40% of PART service users, 60% of housing support service users]

Table 6.8: Differences between identified needs and outcomes between PART users and people with a history of offending using Supporting People funded services in West Yorkshire in 2008/9

Support need	Proportion of PART service users with this need	Proportion of Supporting People service users with this need	Difference in identified need between users of Supporting People services and PART users	Proportion of all PART service users with this need who had need met	Proportion of all Supporting People users with this need who had need met	Difference between outcomes for users of Supporting People services and PART users
Maximise/d income, including receipt of the correct welfare benefits?	55%	61%	+6%	56%	61%	+5%
Reduce/d their overall debt?	3%	41%	+38%	0%	60%	+60%
Obtain/ed paid work?	7%	35%	+28%	40%	53%	+13%
Participate/d in training and/or education?	13%	64%	+51%	11%	47%	+36%
Participate/d in leisure/ cultural/ faith and/or informal learning activities?	8%	25%	+17%	33%	69%	+36%
Participate/d in any work-like activities eg voluntary work?	13%	16%	+3%	22%	59%	+37%
Establish/ed contact with family and/ or friends?	10%	52%	+42%	100%	83%	-17%
Better manage/d their physical health?	13%	43%	+30%	22%	74%	+52%
Better manage/d their mental health?	21%	32%	+11%	13%	67%	+54%
Better manage/d any substance misuse issues? (Problematic drug and alcohol use)	68%	61%	-7%	35%	61%	+26%
Maintain/ed their accommodation and avoid/ed eviction? (Tenancy sustainment)	59%	73%	+14%	40%	60%	+20%
Comply/ied with statutory orders and related processes in relation to offending behaviour?	17%	62%	+45%	42%	73%	+31%
Better manage/d self-harm?	4%	9%	+5%	0%	79%	+79%
Avoid/ed causing harm to others?	3%	24%	+21%	100%	72%	-28%
Minimise/d harm/ risk of harm from others?	1%	23%	+22%	100%	73%	-27%
Develop/ed confidence and ability to have greater choice/control/involvement?	17%	64%	+47%	42%	74%	+32%

Source: Project Records and Outcomes Data for 2008/9. Base for PART service users is 71. Base for people with a history of offending using Supporting People services in West Yorkshire in 2008/9 is 372.

Again, it is important to stress that the comparison shown in Table 6.8 should be treated with some caution given the above caveats. It is possible that some of the differences shown may reflect differences in resources, length of time a client was supported, different intensity of support and different starting and end points for the service.

Planned and unplanned moves: the rates at which housing support services lost contact with people with a history of offending in 2008/9

Among PART service users, the client monitoring system showed that 32 per cent had either successfully exited to settled accommodation, been referred to another service (often a housing support services funded by Supporting People) been maintained in a pre-existing tenancy or requested that support end because they were content with their living situation.

The outcomes data records whether the 372 people with a history of offending using housing support services in West Yorkshire in 2008/9 made 'planned moves' on from that service. A 'planned move' refers to a next stage in someone's life that has been organised or facilitated with this assistance of a Supporting People service. So for example, a 'planned move' might occur into a social rented or private rented let or into supported housing. The data for 2008/9 showed that 55 per cent of people in West Yorkshire with a history of offending had made 'planned moves' at the point at which they stopped using housing support services. This was higher than the rates at which a planned outcome was reported among PART service users (32%), but still showed that in just under one half of cases, people with a history of offending were ceasing contact with housing support services in West Yorkshire in an *unplanned way*.

At national level, unplanned service exits from housing support services were associated with problematic drug and alcohol use. Among people with problematic drug or alcohol use, 54 per cent were reported as having made an unplanned move. By comparison, 43 per cent of people who were not reported as having problematic drug or alcohol use made an unplanned move⁵¹. It should be noted that the vast majority (84%) of PART users had substance misuse issues which would predict a level of unplanned service exits closer to 54 per cent than 43 per cent. No other associations were found, there being, for example, no associations with age group or mental health related support needs and unplanned moves.

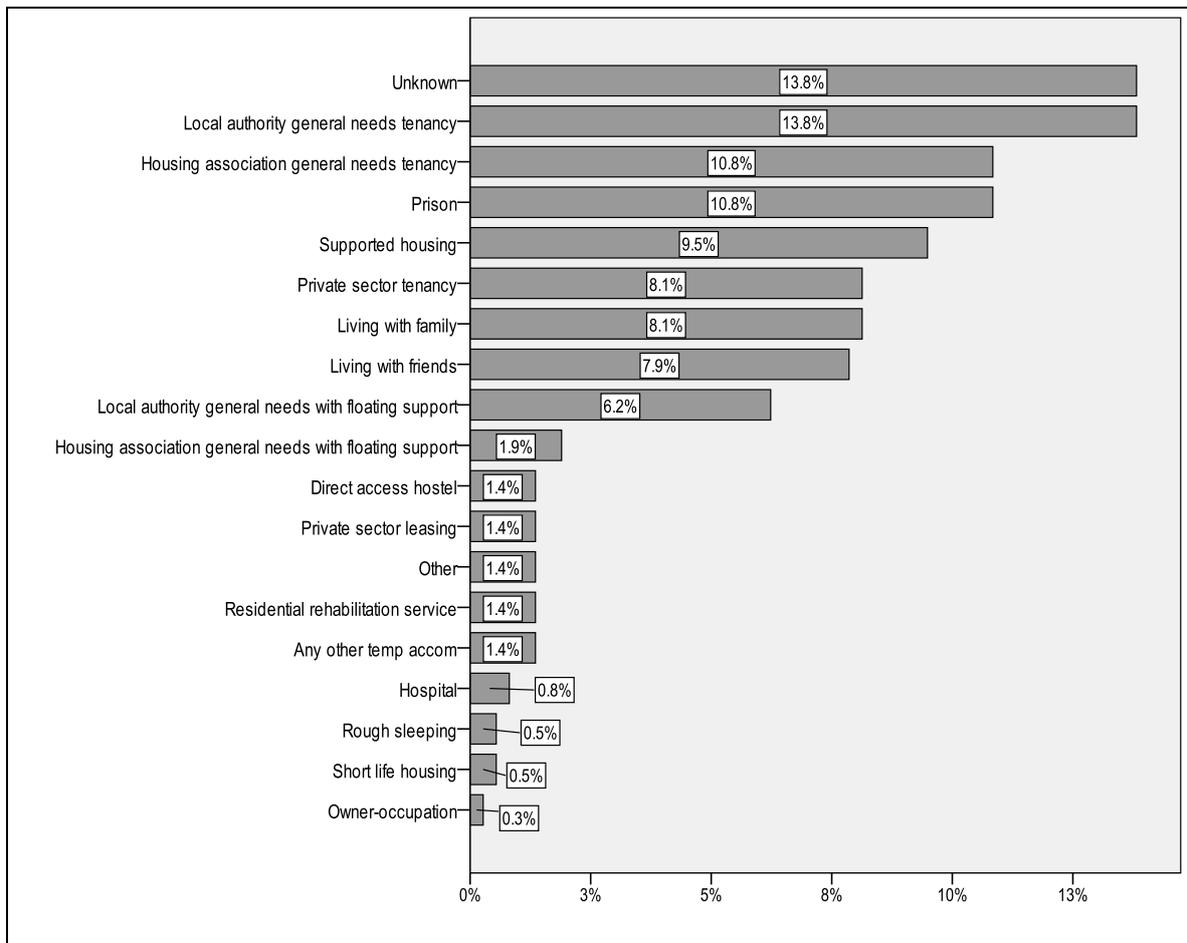
The outcomes data contains information on housing destinations on leaving housing support services and these data are largely complete for the people with a history of offending using services in West Yorkshire in 2008/9. As can be seen in Figure 5.3, the housing outcomes for this group were highly variable. In 14 per cent of cases, the housing destination was unknown and in a minority of cases, it was highly undesirable (for example sleeping rough or a direct access shelter). Social landlord lets were the main source of accommodation at 33 per cent⁵², this level was much higher than would be found among former offenders at risk of homelessness in London and the South where pressure on the social rented stock is much higher (Pleace and Minton, 2009). There was quite heavy reliance on family and friends (16%) which might not always provide a sustainable housing

⁵¹ Statistically significant at the 95 per cent level of confidence

⁵² Includes households that were receiving floating support services in local authority and housing association general needs lets, see Figure X.3.

solution because conditions may not be adequate and there is some risk of relationship breakdown. Use of the private rented sector was not very common and again this was in marked contrast to the situation in London and the South in which it is often the predominant tenure used to house ex-offenders at risk of homelessness (Pleace and Minton, 2009).

Figure 6.1: Accommodation at service exit among people with a history of offending using housing support services funded by Supporting People in West Yorkshire in 2008/9



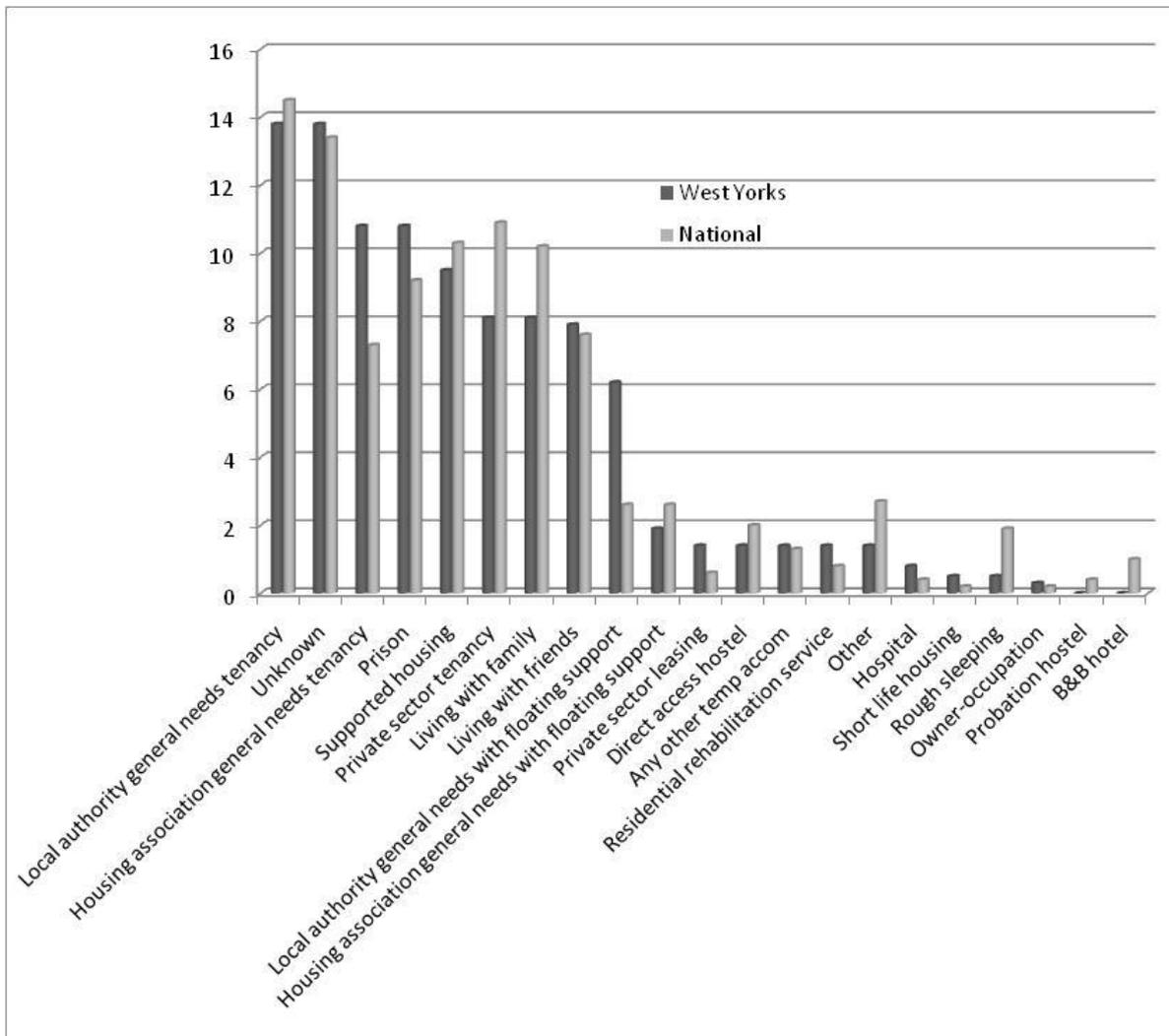
Source: Supporting People Outcomes Data, 2008/9. Base: 372.

Looking at outcomes for people with a history of offending using Supporting People services at national level in 2008/9, it can be seen there was little difference between overall outcomes for people with a history of offending and those reported in West Yorkshire (Figure 6.2). There was a slightly higher rate of private rented sector use nationally (11% compared to 9%) and a higher rate of living with family (10% compared to 8%), but the distribution of outcomes was generally very similar to that reported in West Yorkshire.

The mixed success of housing support services in working with people with a history of offending is again evident from these figures. The outcomes data shows, for example, that at national level, 9 per cent of people with a history of offending were returned to prison following contact with a housing support service (the figure for West Yorkshire was 11%). While known cases of actual homelessness were not common, it was not clear, at national

level, where 13 per cent of service users had gone when their contact with services ceased.

Figure 6.2: Accommodation at service exit among people with a history of offending using housing support services funded by Supporting People in West Yorkshire in 2008/9



Source: Supporting People Outcomes Data, 2008/9. Base: 372 (West Yorks), 5,393 (National)

Experiences of other ex-prisoners in West Yorkshire

This section sets out the views and experiences of other ex-prisoners in West Yorkshire who had not received help from PART. As detailed in Chapter 1, a combination of focus groups and face to face interviews were undertaken with 27 individuals using other services for offenders and/or (ex-) homeless people in Bradford, Wakefield, Huddersfield and Leeds. At the time of interviews, respondents were living in a range of accommodation including hostels, supported housing, independent tenancies or with friends or family.

Support in prison

The main issue to emerge from respondents was the lack of support in prison to try and address accommodation options for prisoners on release. Several difficulties were identified. One problem discussed was that the number of prisoners was too large in proportion to the staff time available dedicated to dealing with accommodation issues.

Some respondents with experience of short sentences noted that they were often released before there was any realistic prospect of support:

When it's coming up to release date people come up to you and say they will come and see you and sort something out, but by the time release comes you're out before anything has been sorted. You're having to sort things out for yourself. If you have family and friends it's not so bad but if you have no social network..... And if you do drugs, you end up with these people and end up using just to keep a roof over your head. It's a vicious circle. (Ex-prisoner, non-PART user)

However, other respondents noted that people with longer term sentences (over twelve months) also face difficulties in this regard:

Some in prison have done a lengthy sentence and they are clean. If they could get the support. Get accommodation set up before they come out a lot of them wouldn't relapse. If you go back to where you were, with all those people, it's inevitable you're going to relapse. There needs to be that support mechanism as soon as you land in jail. Someone to sort out accommodation or put your name on for a place like this. It's just a grey area, it doesn't happen. (Ex-prisoner, non-PART user)

A further difficulty respondents commented upon was the process of filling in applications to request help with accommodation issues or other forms of support.

Interviewer: *What would have helped?*

Respondent: *There needs to be more information. If you don't know, then you're missing things you really need to know. You only have a small block to write in when you fill in an application. But you always seem to have loads of stuff that you can't put down. There's a sense of urgency there. (Ex-prisoner, non-PART user)*

The process of trying to request help in prison was described as long winded and confusing. It also excluded prisoners with literacy problems, who either had to rely on others for help or not raise support issues.

Interviewer: *What about getting help inside? Say filling out applications?*

Respondent: *Well like me, I'm dyslexic. I used to be shy and embarrassed about asking. But now I'm more open about it. There's people out there who'll help you. If you don't say anything they don't know. One of the officers used to help me write letters - instead of a cell mate to write it, because if you can't read you don't know what they're putting, you know what I mean? (Ex-prisoner, non-PART user)*

The majority of respondents felt strongly that greater access to information in prison about accommodation and other support options would be very helpful.

You're not told anything at all. If you don't know how to access these services then you're stuck. There's no one to tell you as you walk out of the gate: 'talk to these people'. There's nothing. It would be good to have someone inside going round lads (that have) just (been) sent to prison and asking if [they] need help. Even just a card with a number on it so you could have it in your pocket. But I don't know, because with me, I was in, I was out and I was just going to use again and that was it. And that was when I was using. But now that I'm clean, I wouldn't have a clue what to do if I came out again. (Ex-prisoner, non-PART user)

The latter quote also summarises a point made by a number of respondents that an early input of information about accommodation would be valuable, soon after people arrived in prison.

Support immediately on release

The overwhelming view from respondents, especially those who had experience of short sentences under twelve months, was of the lack of help on leaving prison:

I'm there all the time. Have been for years and never once have I had accommodation help, out of what...forty, fifty sentences that I've done in the last ten years. I've never had accommodation at the end of it. (Ex-prisoner, non-PART user)

In terms of accommodation on release, many respondents noted their reliance on options such as friends and family for help, sofa surfing or hostel provision. Several respondents explained that they had resorted to sleeping rough.

In spite of similar difficulties for respondents with experience of longer sentences, a number of the latter did comment on the support that could be provided by probation, and the routes into accommodation and support that this service could assist with. Some respondents were very positive about the help they had received from probation. However, as the following discussion shows, others were more circumspect:

Respondent 1: *I've spoken to a lot of people that have done long sentences and it doesn't matter how much you've done inside - rehabilitation, the only help they'll give is a bail hostel. For a lot of people that's just setting you up to fail. Nine times out of ten they just breach.*

Respondent 2: *They're putting you back in to that community.*

Respondent 3: *That's it. You're surrounded by all the people that are doing the same kind of things that you got into trouble for in the first place. It's just not helping you is it? (Ex-prisoner, non-PART user)*

Further, a number of respondents also discussed the help they had received in trying to find accommodation from other support services such as DIP, or mental health services:

There's a lot of worry with housing. But with mental health you get the support. I was getting alcohol work, with the mental health worker. I was doing anger management. There are people there. If you want the help, and

are sincere about it and getting yourself out of a rut, then you can get that help. But my mental health worker enquired about housing for me. Which was very good. (Ex-prisoner, non-PART user)

Nevertheless, although housing was the most significant issue raised, other factors were also discussed. A further concern was being able to register with a GP, and also getting scripts in place quickly on release.

If you have scripts and that, you need more help with that. If they can't get it after coming out then they're just going to use again aren't they? I've been clean now for nine months. But I need a doctor. It's hard to register with one. (Ex-prisoner, non-PART user)

Again, access to information, both in prison and on release, seemed key. For example, although St Anne's Resource Centre in Leeds offers a service whereby homeless people can register for a GP, it was noted by the respondent above that he only found out about this when he approached St Anne's directly.

Longer term support

As noted above, many respondents commented on support they were getting from a range of workers in different agencies. However, attitudes towards the help they had received varied tremendously. Some respondents were very positive about the help they received from agencies. A couple of respondents discussed the help they had received in making the transition from very insecure accommodation on release through to permanent housing solutions. In part, these transitions were viewed as stemming from a personal desire to achieve change, linked with support from agencies (see next section: Outcomes of Support).

It was clear that the majority valued continued contact with some form of longer term support to enable them to try and maintain greater stability and avoid a return to more chaotic lifestyles. A couple of respondents noted that even though they had secured permanent accommodation with housing associations, they still liked to use the drop in centres and other facilities they had relied upon on release. One of the biggest challenges appeared to be the attempt to break away from social networks where substance misuse was rife.

Interviewer: *Have you had any help from probation?*

Respondent: *In the past, yeah. They found me a bedsit, but old lifestyles are hard to change. They put you on to DIP and they think that's going to be OK. But they don't understand that you're just going to go back into the same lifestyle. (Ex-prisoner, non-PART user)*

One solution was for people to move to different neighbourhoods, or different towns or cities in an attempt to break away from cycles of recidivism, and three respondents discussed their own experiences of this option in some detail. Intensive support was required in these cases since individuals were moving away from social networks – even if these networks were part of the problem.

I lived on an estate where drugs were rife and I have a son so I had to move – just somewhere new. It's like taking on a new identity. It's a fresh start, somewhere not associated with drug use. Not old haunts. So it has to be somewhere new where people can start again. (Ex-prisoner, non-PART user)

However, other respondents were much more critical of the help they had received. A prevailing view amongst these latter respondents was that individual support workers within agencies appeared not to care about what happened to them, as long as they'd 'ticked the boxes'.

That's just a pointless exercise. They do their thing and are gone. I had one who contacted me in prison and then it was eight weeks before she contacted me again. And they don't talk to each other. You just become another number. Or their work load is too much. They may care, but... (Ex-prisoner, non-PART user)

Outcomes of Support

The overwhelming view from respondents across the five groups was the difficulty in securing accommodation on release, and the role this difficulty played in attempts by respondents to break patterns of reoffending. In particular, respondents in Huddersfield and Wakefield commented on the lack of accommodation options available for people coming out of prison (although a female respondent also discussed the lack of temporary accommodation for women in Leeds, in contrast with the prevailing view that this latter city did have a number of options available).

There was a view that the only realistic alternatives to rough sleeping amongst respondents where no help was available from family members were sofa surfing or hostel accommodation. However, the potential dangers of both latter types of temporary accommodation for slipping back into substance misuse and reoffending were highlighted by several respondents, since this meant socialising or contact with other drug users.

Give me a chance, give me that first foot on the ladder, and I'll climb the rest of the way myself- because that is the biggest stumbling block. If you're on the streets, you're associating with criminals and alcoholics, because they are the people who spend the day on the street. The only people you meet on the streets are people in the same situation as you. (Ex-prisoner, non-PART user)

Two respondents with experience of rough sleeping were frank that prison was a preferable option to their existence on the streets.

Listen. I cherish going to jail because it's somewhere to live. There's meals, I get my rent paid. If I had a bit more freedom I'd be laughing. If someone stuck me in a Cat D. jail I'd live there for the rest of my life. Because you've got more in there than you have out here. (Ex-prisoner, non-PART user)

However, in a couple of instances respondents who tended to be older (in their 40s or 50s) noted that they had successfully left behind cycles of reoffending, and had established long term tenancies, principally as council or housing association tenants (and who were also

continuing to use other support services, for example, to address mental health issues). These respondents noted that they had achieved these circumstances through their own efforts, and a desire to alter their lifestyles:

I was determined to get my own flat. I had help at [homeless hostel], but they can only do so much. At the end of the day it's really down to you. I had to bid every week. Down at the housing office – they need to see that you are bidding. (Ex-prisoner, non-PART user)

However, younger respondents were more likely to highlight the value of some sort of support on release from prison, especially a 'meet at the gate' type of service, with continued support thereafter. One respondent with considerable experience of offending and spells in prison noted a new service called 'Start to Finish'⁵³. This service aimed to support prisoners to make the transition back into the community. It works with prisoners with drug issues on sentences of twelve months or less in either HMP Leeds or New Hall.

Inter-agency working

Although some respondents cited examples of strong links between agencies, respondents tended to focus upon the role provided by individual key workers in facilitating and supporting individuals if they were in contact with several organisations:

I see a DIP worker at the moment. I see a key worker once a month and the DIP worker sits in. And I've got two people there in my corner. Then I've got probation on side at the moment. But I would say I'm lucky because I've got a probation officer that cares. (Ex-prisoner, non-PART user)

Establishing a rapport with one or two key workers, who would act on their behalf, or sit in with people when they visited other agencies, was especially valued:

You need one support worker. One person who will work from you from the off. You have that one person you see on a regular basis, not just all the different agencies. You can build up a good relationship with, and follow it through. A bit like Start to Finish. You need to get on with them. To build a good relationship so you can tell them if you can't cope, can't manage debts. Cos if you're not honest about what you need how can people help you? (Ex-prisoner, non-PART user)

Conclusion

There was an overwhelming view from respondents of the difficulty of changing patterns of behaviour without adequate support, particularly accommodation, immediately on release from prison, summarised by a respondent as:

....all it takes is that first domino to get knocked over and the rest will fall down with it (Ex-prisoner, non-PART user)

⁵³ Start to Finish, West Yorkshire Probation Trust: <http://westyorksprobation.org.uk/content.php?pageid=555>.

A number of respondents also stressed the need for ongoing support to enable them to attempt to modify behaviour that would otherwise lead to further offending and hinder longer term resettlement.

However, respondents stressed the lack of accommodation options available in West Yorkshire that would help ex prisoners to alter behaviour leading to further reoffending. Rather, there was too much of reliance on social networks that encourage recidivism. The respondents strongly suggested that there should be a greater emphasis in prison on signposting and supporting the identification of accommodation on release. There was also an overwhelming view that there was insufficient information available in an accessible form in prisons, and that an early input of information, soon after arrival in prison, would be valuable, especially for people on shorter sentences.

Comparison to the Shelter London Prisons Project

The Shelter London Prisons Project (SLLP) was a three-year (2006-2009) pilot project designed to provide specialist housing support to women prisoners and ex-prisoners of HMP Holloway, in order to reduced homelessness and housing problems and promote longer-term stability in clients' lives. In structure, the SLLP was very similar to PART, with two client advocates employed to provide a relatively intensive support service to prisoners after their release. In addition, the project also employed two case workers in the prison – this part of the service was similar to the Shelter PHAS service in HMP Leeds, which also provided housing advice although was not part of the PART evaluation.

Comparing the client group

The main difference between the client groups of the two services was gender, with SLLP operating from a women's prison and PART from a men's prison. The SLLP service also worked with prisoners on remand and sentences of up to eight years, compared to PART's focus on prisoners with less than 12 month sentences (with the exception of those on license recall). The average age of service users was very similar (33, PART; 34, SLLP), but a higher level of users was from ethnic minority backgrounds in SLLP (41%) compared to PART (16%). A high level of support needs was recorded for both client groups, with higher levels of men with drug/ alcohol problems compared to female ex-prisoners (84%; 71%) and higher levels of mental health problems amongst women than men (70%; 49%). Similar proportions of men and women had physical health problems (38%; 41%).

Comparing the service

The SLLP service offered a similar range of support to (ex-) prisoners to the PART service. The main focus was on arranging appropriate accommodation for prisoners on their release, but also worked holistically to attempt to meet the range of client's needs, particularly focusing on ensuring that people had the correct benefits in place on release. As with PART, the SLLP client advocate service worked with prisoners prior to and following release with support particularly intensive immediately on release.

Similar challenges were also experienced by both projects but sometimes to varying extents depending on local context. Both services experienced difficulties in accessing adequate information on clients to make risk assessments and appropriate referrals in the community. It is clear that systems of information sharing within prisons need further

improvement to ensure that third sector agencies have sufficient information to support prisoners. Both services also experienced difficulties in identifying suitable accommodation for clients on release, however this was more pronounced in SLLP that was attempting to find housing for people in London. Access to social housing was highly constrained, with ex-prisoners unlikely to be allocated a property within a year or sometimes two, much longer than in West Yorkshire. Access to appropriate temporary accommodation also appeared more difficult in London due to increasing use of 'local connection' rules as well as other restrictive criteria. This meant that the SLLP service tended to refer people for homelessness assessments to a greater extent than the PART service. In both areas, statutory mental health/ social services were under considerable pressure to gate-keep their services, although this appeared to be more pronounced in London although this might have appeared so due to the higher incidence of mental health problems amongst women ex-prisoners.

Both projects found it very difficult to ensure that ex-prisoners engaged with the service post-release, particularly after temporary accommodation and benefits were arranged. Both services supported clients over a huge geographical area and this will have probably contributed to this problem.

Comparing the outcomes

Unfortunately, there was very little information available on the outcomes from the SLLP service with data available on only 35 service users at case closure, therefore any comparison with PART is very limited. However, a key similarity was noted, namely that most people were in temporary accommodation rather than permanent accommodation at case closure. The available data did however appear to indicate that higher proportions of PART leavers may have achieved some form of settled housing or accommodation by case closure. This possibly reflected the context in which the two services were working as identified above with constrained housing markets in both areas, but this particularly being the case in London. No data was available on reconvictions rates of services users in the SLLP project. The study also did not include a longitudinal element as with PART therefore it was not possible to compare longer term outcomes for clients.

Conclusion

Both services appeared to have been valued by service users, particularly for the support provided immediately post-release. They were also services valued within the two prisons, in a context where prison resettlement staff had stretched workloads. However, the success of both projects was limited by their operational context particularly regarding the provision of suitable housing and appropriate social care support, a context particularly difficult in the Capital.

7 Conclusions

Introduction

The PART project was set up as a three year pilot project (2007-2010) to provide targeted assistance to short-term (ex-) prisoners pre- and post-release to ensure that they had stable and appropriate accommodation on release as well as any other support needed for successful resettlement. The project aimed to prevent ex-prisoners facing homelessness on release, and whilst support was available up to eight months post-release, the key period of support was envisaged to be the immediate post-release period. The PART project was run by Shelter, the leading national housing and homelessness agency, and the team were recruited for their experience in providing accommodation and housing related support to vulnerable households. Although the service was primarily an accommodation one, the project also worked to support people with other resettlement issues, often via inter-agency working, and it was hoped that the project would indirectly assist with reducing recidivism for its clients. There was also a wider aim to have a positive impact on service users, agencies and the wider community.

The evaluation followed the project over its three years, collecting monitoring information, interviewing key agencies and staff and conducting longitudinal qualitative work with service users over an eighteen month period (also collecting reconviction data for this group). In addition, a cost savings exercise was undertaken, interviews conducted with other ex-prisoners in West Yorkshire and the PART project was compared to the experiences of ex-offenders utilising Supporting People services (also in West Yorkshire). This final chapter considers the key achievements of the PART service, alongside the key challenges faced, and reviews the model utilised for the service.

Key achievements

The PART project was designed essentially as a 'link' scheme bridging the prison and early resettlement period that has been shown to be highly problematic for those offenders who have no stable accommodation on release (Penfold *et al*, 2009; Pleace and Minton, 2009).

Analysis of the full PART caseload showed that approaching a third of service users had achieved a positive outcome by case closure. Approximately one in eight service users were living in some form of settled housing at this point, with a further fifth living in a formal temporary accommodation setting. It is important to note that, at the pre-release point, all PART service users either had nowhere to go to on release at all, or could only stay very temporarily with friends or family. In this context, the PART project helped to secure a positive accommodation outcome for about a third of the sample who otherwise might have been of no fixed abode on leaving.

Most service users interviewed appreciated having the support of PART pre-release to help them retain or, more usually, secure accommodation for release. Many service users had experience of leaving prison with nowhere to stay in the past and they remarked on the difference having somewhere to go had made to them. There was some variation in people's views on the importance of immediate post-support release (in particular meeting

at the gates and accompanying clients to appointments). Many agency representatives and some service users thought this was one of the most important elements of the PART service although some clients did not agree with this and preferred to be independent on release.

Importantly, the analysis of the longitudinal data found that most of the people who completed their PART support plan at case closure had maintained or improved upon their resettlement status at the end of the eighteen month tracking period. Conversely, most of the people who did not complete their support plan at case closure had a failed resettlement outcome at the end of the tracking period. Whilst there were exceptions, the data suggests that once a client had been set upon a positive resettlement path they had a good chance of maintaining or improving on their situation over the longer term. These longer-term outcomes were sometimes achieved in part through the ongoing assistance of the project; although in most cases PART handed over to other agencies to continue this resettlement process. Either way, the PART project provided a crucial role in helping people secure the building blocks for longer-term resettlement.

It was not possible to collect robust data on reconvictions from the full PART group, however analysis of the reconviction data for the longitudinal group revealed an overall reduction in reoffending in the 12 months post-release compared to the 12 months before prison. Whilst any savings arising from this could not totally be attributed to the PART project as other agencies were also supporting people, it suggests that assistance with resettlement can (and in this case does) bring some benefits in reduced recidivism.

Key challenges

Reconstructing (or constructing from scratch) a purposeful life after release from prison can be very challenging, particularly in light of the discrimination in labour, credit, housing and other markets offenders are likely to confront on release. This challenge may be intensified through peer pressure from former associates offering encouragement to return to illegal activities. The role of the PART project was to attempt to bridge this transition, but the challenges inherent in this task for both the ex-prisoner and an advocacy service such as PART cannot be over-stated.

The PART evaluation adds to body of knowledge on resettlement, confirming the structural and institutional barriers faced by ex-prisoners in attempting to resettle into the community. PART could challenge some of these institutional barriers, for example where a homelessness assessment was turned down, or a housing provider would not accept a client due to previous rent arrears (setting up a repayment plan, for example). However, PART could not influence the nature of housing and temporary accommodation available in each local authority which fundamentally impacted on resettlement outcomes. A central difficulty for the PART project was the simple lack of availability of suitable settled housing for ex-prisoners on release, meaning that most offenders were reliant on accessing hostel accommodation in the first instance (and usually for many months), which was often unpopular with users for both the shared nature of provision but more importantly the likelihood of mixing with other ex-prisoners and drug users. Some temporary accommodation projects also appeared to be much more effective than others in helping people to move on than others.

PART also had to work within the prisoner discharge procedures, with the End of Custody License creating significant problems in the middle of the project. It also assisted people to negotiate benefit issues, but could not totally prevent difficulties occurring with income benefits, community care grants, and Housing Benefit. These difficulties appeared to occur quite frequently and could cause ex-prisoners a great deal of anxiety, especially when they were already trying to cope on a minimum income. The service also supported some people to think about moving into employment and training but most people did not appear ready for this and institutional barriers including employer attitudes to ex-offenders remain considerable.

A number of recommendations for other services arise from the challenges faced by the PART service to meet people's needs. For example, accommodation providers should be required to assist people whose accommodation or tenancy fails to find alternative accommodation. Some providers clearly did this for members of the resettlement group, helping them move from one hostel to a more appropriate one, but there were also instances of providers not being able to help people following eviction and this leading to longer-term homelessness and increased recidivism and drug-use (and eventually, in at least one case, re-imprisonment). More work is also needed to encourage housing providers to undertake assessments in prison. The possibility of setting up some form of common waiting list or housing register for ex-prisoners might also be useful in terms of having one access point for accommodation rather than a service like PART having to make several applications for the same person.

One of the main problems encountered by PART, which had an impact on almost every element of the service, was poor information sharing both between agencies within the prison and those in the community. Whilst all agencies have to adhere to data protection regulations and to respect client confidentiality, it was clear that better information sharing between agencies in prison would have significantly reduced many of the problems faced by the PART service. Similarly, the lack of co-ordination of services working with prisoners (including those based within the prison and community based agencies) was sometimes an issue as there was often duplication of effort with some prisoners working with many agencies. It is clear that a high proportion of ex-prisoners have complex needs which require expertise from a number of professionals but a more integrated approach to case management and longer-term follow-up would be highly beneficial to this client group.

A particular challenge to the PART project was the continuing engagement of service users on release from prison: about half of PART cases had disengaged from the service by case closure. This was likely to reflect many factors: some people may already have received the support they considered they needed in prison (for example, information on housing options), others undoubtedly returned to previous lifestyles as soon as they left the prison gates. Many services users - who engaged with PART and the research - felt a great degree of distrust for 'do-gooding' services which they felt had let them down in the past - it is likely that some did not believe that PART could help and therefore had low motivation to engage.

In contrast to the successful resettlement reported for many of the longitudinal group, it was clear that some people struggled to cope with life on release from prison when no

accommodation was arranged. Returning to illegal drugs appeared inevitable, some slept rough whilst others managed to access lower quality hostels and night shelters or to sofa surf. One person interviewed appeared quite desperate and it was known that he had recently attempted suicide. Although he had been helped to access services, many agencies including PART were finding it extremely difficult to work with him due to his chaotic and sometimes aggressive behaviour.

Reviewing the model

The research clearly showed the complexities involved in the system of support for those leaving prison. Whilst some ex-prisoners were familiar with some hostels and agencies (particularly DIP), the complexity of service provision meant that a 'link' scheme like PART was needed to negotiate a resettlement path through the various accommodation providers, drug agencies, the criminal justice system, the benefits system and so on. As this research indicated, and is already acknowledged at the policy level, there is a need for a much more integrated approach to meeting the needs of ex-prisoners. If this was achieved, the need for targeted projects such as PART would lessen. However, whilst service coordination remains poor, the availability of link projects will remain crucial to assist ex-prisoners through the myriad of services. In the interim, service level agreements and/or joint protocols can also usefully be developed to further assist inter-agency working.

It can be concluded that the PART model met the needs of some ex-prisoners better than others. For the most part, it appeared that PART clients were satisfied with the intensity and duration of support and many remarked that the PART worker had done all they could do when the case was closed. The project adjusted the levels of support available to clients to attempt to meet the presenting needs of people – where other services were involved and providing the support required, PART would step back; where other services were absent or not meeting the client's full range of needs, they would provide a more holistic and longer term service to client. This needs-led approach however was limited by two factors. Firstly, they were unable to provide ongoing support over a number of years, and secondly, they were unable to provide very intensive levels of support to any one client. The research suggested that targeted relatively low level accommodation support on release was just what some clients needed. However, the experience of the longitudinal sample revealed that others had higher and longer term needs. It is likely that this particularly chaotic group of ex-offenders need an assertive, intensive service such as that offered to the most entrenched long-term rough sleepers in London (Hough and Rice, 2010; Teixeira, 2010) and/or a Housing First approach. The New York model of Housing First run by Pathways provides access to permanent housing coupled with floating support services and dedicated addiction and mental health services. This model takes a unique approach in offering immediate, largely unconditional access to permanent housing, i.e. while people must accept home visits from the housing support workers, there is no requirement that someone uses the mental health and addiction services on offer or that they cease to engage in problematic drug or alcohol use. This model has shown considerable success in promoting housing stability among a group of people who are very difficult to house and has been adopted as a core element of the Federal strategy to end homelessness (Johnsen and Teixeira, 2010; Tsemberis, 2010; USICH, 2010).

The scale of the PART project could also be reconsidered. The unit cost of the service was £2,200, which was lower than many Supporting People services. Despite this, the service made a considerable difference to many people's lives. In addition, it was remarkable that a small service of this nature attempted to cover the whole of West Yorkshire, while some agencies suggested a more local approach might have been more manageable. PART was not intended to provide long-term intensive support and many clients only required help to access services and accommodation pre-release and in the initial post-release period. However, others clearly required far more support. A remodelled PART project might usefully test a model of working with fewer clients but with greater intensity and following a more assertive approach (or a mixed model could usefully offer both short-term support and longer-term support dependent on need). The longitudinal tracking exercise revealed that some service users appeared much more motivated to change than others were and this was a factor in their resettlement. There were other examples of people's motivation being eroded by early or later set-backs in their resettlement and their resilience needed bolstering by external support. There is also evidence that a more intensive, personalised approach may prove cost-effective over the longer term (see for example, Hough and Rice, 2010; Jones and Pleace, 2010). Such approaches may be necessary if the most vulnerable and chaotic individuals are to be helped to avoid a repeated cycle of homelessness, reoffending and prison.

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Appendix 1: Progress of the longitudinal group

Client (age)	1 st interview	2 nd interview	3 rd interview	PART input	PART outcome	FINAL Outcome
A (30s)	In long-term supported accommodation	In long-term supported accommodation	Reportedly moved onto to specialist year long rehab project	Help finding TA and moving to more appropriate supported accommodation and help with benefits etc	Support plan complete In long-term supported accommodation	PARTIAL RESETTLEMENT Reportedly moved to rehabilitation project as he wished - had undertaken voluntary work - reduced methadone use - increased offending
B (40s)	Interviewed in prison	Own tenancy (social rented)	Own tenancy (social rented)	Helped to secure hostel accommodation	Support plan completed In hostel with support	RESETTLED Settled housing -reduced drug use -support from mental health service - no offences
C (30s)	Interviewed in prison	PRS property	PRS property	Helped into appropriate supported accommodation	Support plan completed In hostel with key worker and tenancy support worker helping with move on	PARTIAL RESETTLEMENT -settled housing -using drugs - offending at same level as before PART – also now likely to be evicted
D (30s)	Interviewed in prison	Returned to old training flat	In same flat	Managing tenancy – able to remain there	Support plan completed Returned to tenancy with support	RESETTLED -in training flat - some cash in hand work - seems settled, knows neighbours etc - returned to prison for breach of licence -drug use under control - drinking reportedly under control - offending reduced
E (30s)	Hostel	Hostel	Hostel	Helped into appropriate supported accommodation	Disengaged when in hostel	FAILED RESETTLEMENT – still living in hostels - reoffended and has been back in prison - using drugs - offending increased
F (20s)	Living with family	Living with family	Living with family	Holistic support	Not engaging fully with support	RESETTLED – stable - reduced drug use - no further offending

Client (age)	1 st interview	2 nd interview	3 rd interview	PART input	PART outcome	FINAL Outcome
G(40s)	In bail hostel	In PRS house	?	Helped into appropriate supported accommodation	In PRS tenancy case closed as not following support plan	RESETTLED - in own tenancy - returned to his previous work - no further offending
H (30s)	In own flat (social housing), no support	In own flat (social housing), no support	Just moved to live with fiancée, no other support	Support with benefits/ liaison with other agencies and referrals to temporary accommodation.	Support plan completed – in hostel with support	RESETTLED - suitable accom - drinking only socially now - no offending - in contact with his children - in relationship - actively seeking employment
I (30s)	In PRS, with support worker	Staying with friends, following sleeping rough/ evicted	Reportedly back in prison	Helped into supported accommodation. Liaison with other agencies.	Support plan completed – in PRS with support	FAILED RESETTLEMENT -had flat but lost (not sustainable) - poor health - increased offending - reportedly back in prison
J (30s)	Hostel (1 month after release)	Sharing house with partner (her tenancy, social housing)	Sharing house with partner (her tenancy, social housing)	Minimal support into hostel then he disengaged.	Disengaged – PART lost contact.	RESETTLED -living with girlfriend -reports that he is not using ‘hard’ drugs but is using cannabis - short of money - reduced offending
K (30s)	In prison	In flat (social housing)	In flat (social housing)	PART found hostel accommodation but client released early and then lost contact	Disengaged	RESETTLED - has tenancy - employed (casual) - uses drugs from time to time - reduced offending
L (20s)	In own flat (PRS)	In own flat (social housing)	In own flat (social housing)	Holistic	Support plan completed	PARTIAL RESETTLEMENT - in accommodation but few belongings -reduced reoffending - reduced alcohol use - not currently seeing his children - worried about losing flat because of problems with benefits

Client (age)	1 st interview	2 nd interview	3 rd interview	PART input	PART outcome	FINAL Outcome
M (20s)	In prison	?	?	Helped to arrange supported accommodation	Case closed as not engaging - but client had support in place (key worker and DIP worker)	RESETTLED - in supported accommodation - no reoffending to date
N (30s)	In flat (social housing) but very unhappy in that area as being harassed	Believed to be in prison	Reportedly surrendered tenancy. Believed to be accessing NFA services. Reportedly banned from many services.	Released early but PART tried to liaise with other agencies	Disengaged- client was housed and had a support worker when case closed	FAILED RESETTLEMENT -tenancy unsustainable - continued to offend - returned to prison
O (20s)	Interviewed in prison	?	?		PART had to close the case when client was transferred to another prison	N/A
P (30s)	Sleeping rough	According to information gathered from contacts and agencies the client had secured accommodation (social rented flat) but researchers failed to make contact.	No further information on his whereabouts. Unable to contact at address.	PART worked with client more than once – PART helped secure accommodation for release and on subsequent occasions PART tried to secure accommodation	Case closed - client was receiving adequate support in a hostel. Thereafter client disengaged	FAILED RESETTLEMENT -offending increased - returned to prison - periods sleeping rough/NFA
Q (50s)	NFA	Reportedly back in prison Client's C/O address boarded up	?	PART and other agencies secured accommodation but client did not engage consistently and lost accommodation	Disengaged – case closed as PART could do no more.	FAILED RESETTLEMENT – NFA - believed to have served another prison sentence

Client (age)	1 st interview	2 nd interview	3 rd interview	PART input	PART outcome	FINAL Outcome
R (30s)	Interviewed in prison	?	?	Minimal	Disengaged – released early and lost contact with the service	PARTIAL RESETTLEMENT - no reoffending
S (30s)	Interviewed in prison	Reportedly stayed with friends then had a PRS flat which he abandoned (in rent arrears) Still receiving treatment for substance dependencies.	?	Holistic	Declined more support – had offers of accommodation but turned these down and/or missed appointments	FAILED RESETTLEMENT - abandoned property - reoffended - receiving treatment for alcohol/ drugs
T (50s)	In flat (social housing)	In new social housing flat (more appropriate to needs)	In same social housing	Holistic	Settled in second flat , appropriate to his needs – with floating support	RESETTLED -in appropriate accommodation with support - still using alcohol - no offending
U (30s)	In supported accommodation	Not known but client had plans to leave the area	?	Help to secure appropriate accommodation	Support plan completed – in appropriate supported accommodation	RESETTLED no reoffending
V (30s)	In bedsit awaiting resettlement	Reported to be back in prison.	?	Holistic	Disengaged –after many months of support (more than 12 months)	FAILED RESETTLEMENT reoffended back in prison
W (30s)	N	N	Living with a relative in a one bed flat	Help with bids in prison; client did not want hostel; he disengaged on release	Disengaged	FAILED RESETTLEMENT -living with brother in one bed flat

Client (age)	1 st interview	2 nd interview	3 rd interview	PART input	PART outcome	FINAL Outcome
Y (30s)	N	N	In supported accommodation and has move on accommodation arranged	Minimal, then accommodation related	First referral – disengaged. Second referral - PART secured appropriate supported accommodation but then could not contact client	PARTIAL RESETTLEMENT -reoffended and returned to prison - evicted from supported accommodation but resettled in new temporary accommodation -now appears to be resettling well with support from housing providers
Z (30s)	N	N	Supported accommodation	Helped to find accommodation (although client very proactive in this).	Project closed	PARTIAL RESETTLEMENT -in appropriate supported accommodation
AA (40s)	N	N	Hostel	Helped to access housing related support	Success – in hostel, has undergone rehabilitation.	RESETTLED -accommodation on track - reduced offending

? indicates that it was not possible to interview the client at this stage and that no further information was available about their circumstances from case notes or from other agencies and/or contacts.

N indicates new respondents interviewed only once (towards the end of the evaluation period).

Appendix 2: Supporting People Outcomes, England

This Appendix provides information on the range of needs identified, and the extent to which these needs were met, for Supporting People services at the national level in 2008/9. Approximately 5,393 people⁵⁴ with a history of offending were recorded as having received support from short term⁵⁵ Supporting People funded services in England.

The types of support that people with a history of offending were reported as needing

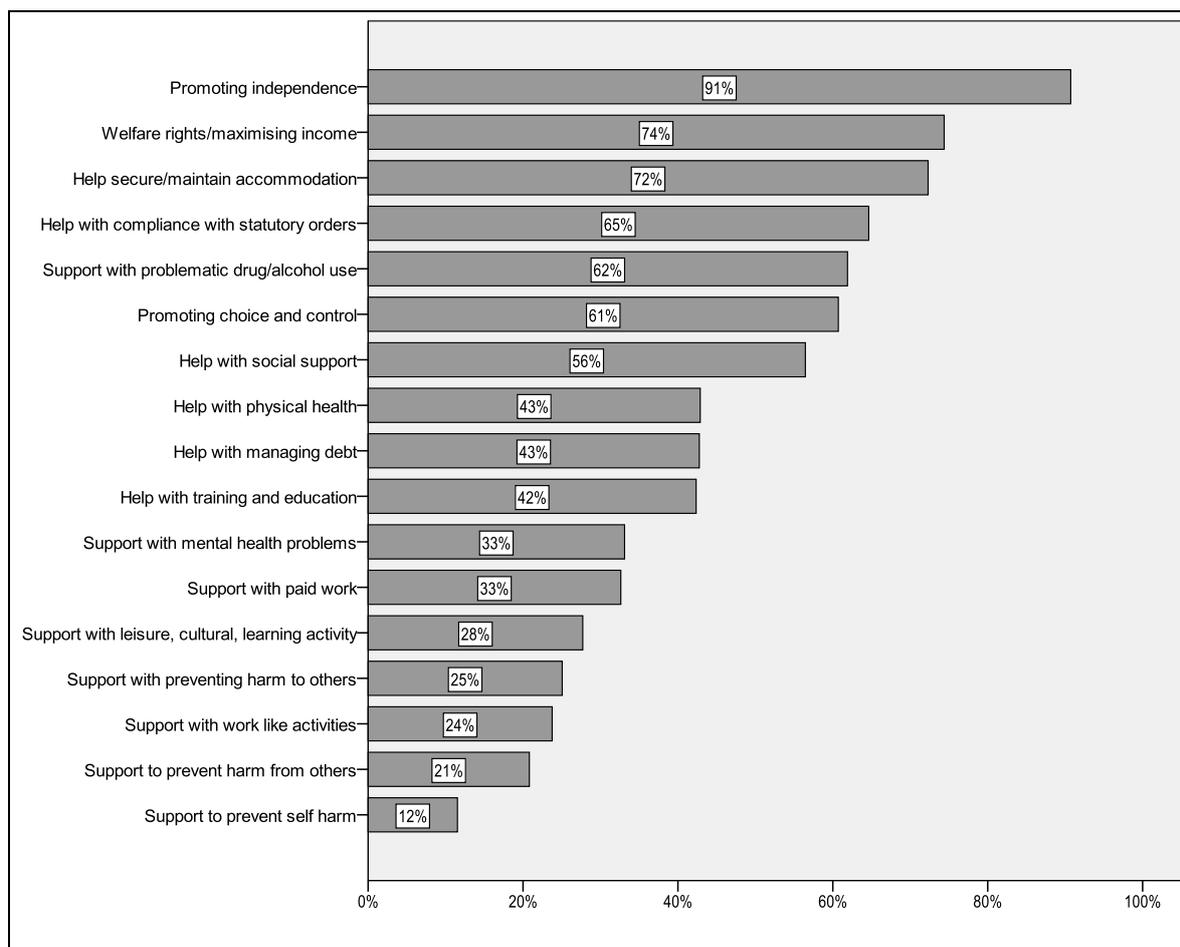
Figure A2.1 shows the range of support needs that people with a history of offending were identified as having by housing support services across England in 2008/9. As would be expected, almost all (91%) required support with promoting independence and 72 per cent needed help in securing or maintaining accommodation. Support was also commonly required with problematic drug/alcohol use (62%).

Just over half the people with a history of offending required help with social support. This would have generally involved the promotion of social support from 'positive' role models among friends and family, i.e. not associates of people with a history of offending who were currently involved in offending or problematic drug or alcohol use. As can be seen, services were quite likely to identify educational and training needs, a requirement for help in getting into paid work and/or help being required in relation to accessing work-related activity. The focus on economic activity has become increasingly widespread in housing support services in the last decade or so and it is now common for services to concern themselves with the economic as well as the social and housing situation of service users (Jones and Pleace, 2005 and 2010; Pleace and Minton, 2009).

⁵⁴ There may be an element of double counting in these data. However it is not possible to estimate its extent as no personal identifiers are within the publicly available data.

⁵⁵ Up to two years.

Figure A2.1: Commonly identified support needs among people with a history of offending reported by housing support services funded by Supporting People (2008/9).



Source: Supporting People Outcomes Data, 2008/9, Base: 5,393.

Support with compliance with statutory orders was very commonly reported and this may reflect the fact that housing support services were working with individuals on Probation⁵⁶ as well as offenders who had been convicted of offences that only resulted in short prison sentences or community sentences that did not require Probation support. This raises a wider point that needs to be borne in mind when comparing these data on service outcomes with data on PART service users. Housing support services would sometimes often be working with more people who had committed more serious offences than the people using PART, which meant the nature of the task those services faced could be different from PART. However, this difference existed in another sense that might not immediately be apparent, in that people committing more serious offences have a greater degree of resettlement provision in place, including Probation support, than was the case for offenders using PART. As the social and economic costs of crime rise, the state devotes more resources to the resettlement of offenders (Pleace and Minton, 2009), the generally lower level of resettlement support for people convicted of lesser offences was a gap that PART was specifically designed to fill (see Chapter 1).

⁵⁶ The outcomes data only record whether or not someone was an offender, they do not detail whether or not that individual had Probation support.

In comparison with PART users, rates at which a need for support with mental health and problematic drug and alcohol use were noticeably *lower* than those reported among PART users. At national level, 62 per cent of people with a history of offending were identified by housing support services as requiring support with drugs and 33 per cent with mental health problems. By contrast, 84 per cent of PART service users for whom data was available reported problematic drug and alcohol use and 52 per cent were reported as having mental health problems. This suggests PART users were often towards the higher end of support needs. This finding is compatible with other research which has suggested a ‘mutually reinforcing’ relationship between problematic drug use, offending, severe mental illness and homelessness (Kemp *et al*, 2006).

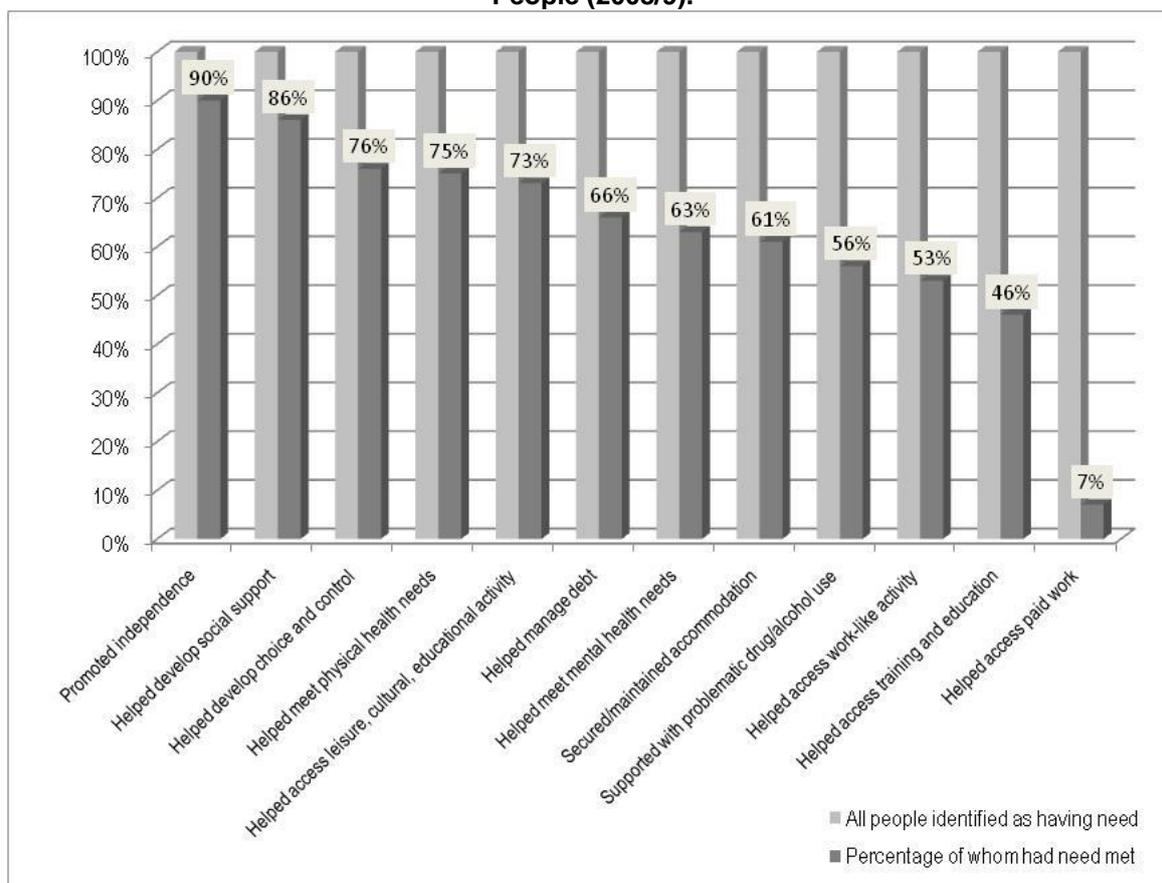
The extent to which housing support services met identified support needs

Figure A2.1 shows the extent to which housing support services reported they had met the needs of people with a history of offending. This figure is again based on the outcomes data, which was a record of whether or not housing support services had helped meet a given need or set of needs at the point at which someone with a history of offending stopped using that service.

Figure A2.1 contrasts all the people identified as having a particular sort of need by services (shown in light grey, all these figures are 100 per cent because they are all the people *identified as having a particular need*) and contrasts this with the number of people reported by those services as having that need met (shown in dark grey). So, for example, 90 per cent of the people identified as having a need for help in living a more independent life were reported as having had successful support with that need. At the other extreme, of all the people who were reported as having a need for paid work, just 7 per cent were reported as having been helped into paid work.

As can be seen, the success of housing support services when working with people with a history of offending was rather mixed. Sometimes success rates were quite high, of all the people requiring help with physical health needs, 75 per cent had received support with a successful outcome (for example being helped to register with a GP who had then provided treatment). But in some key areas that are known to threaten tenancy sustainment, such as debt management, success was not total (66% of people with an identified need had received successful help, but 34%, just over a third had *not* received successful help). Outcomes were also mixed in respect of problematic drug and alcohol use and access to education and training.

Figure A2.2: The rates at which commonly identified support needs among people with a history of offending were reported as met by housing support services funded by Supporting People (2008/9).



Source: Supporting People Outcomes Data, 2008/9. Base: 5,393.

It was notable that accommodation based services tended to report problematic drug and alcohol use at a higher rate than floating support services (68% compared to 52%). This might reflect a general tendency for these services, providing accommodation on a shared site with on-site staffing, to offer more intensive support than many (though not all) floating support services. However, the three main service types used by people with a history of offending, i.e. floating support services, accommodation based services and services primarily designed for single and street homeless people did not report significantly differing outcomes in respect of problematic drug and alcohol use.

There were few significant differences between broad service types in respect of other service outcomes. Floating support services and accommodation based services both reported similar levels of success and were also very likely to report difficulties in achieving the same specific outcomes (such as helping someone secure access to paid work). However, it was notable that floating support services tended to report a higher rate of success in securing and sustaining tenancies (71%), than either accommodation based services (45%) or homelessness services primarily designed for single and street homeless people (also 45%). There is wider evidence, although it is primarily from the USA at present, that floating support services that provide floating services to individuals who are at risk of homelessness due to high support needs in ordinary housing may be more effective in promoting tenancy sustainment than accommodation based services (Tsemberis, 2010).

It was also the case that there was no significant variation according to the region in which services were supporting people with a history of offending. Each broad service type had similar outcomes and housing support services reported the same, or very similar, outcomes across different regions of England. This included the differences in success in tenancy sustainment between floating support services and other broad service types were broadly consistent between regions.

Appendix 3: Data collected on accommodation status of offenders and former offenders

A range of data sets exist on offenders and former offenders that record details of their accommodation status. It is important to note that the Coalition government that took power in 2010 has announced an intention to review data collection across public services and local authorities. Data collection on offenders and former offenders that was in place when the Shelter PART was being evaluated is likely to undergo important revisions during the next few years. Government intends that the extent of data collection at local authority level by central government will *decrease significantly*. This is linked to the Coalition 'localism' agenda that is intended to lead to less regulation and monitoring of local authorities and public services by central government. The main data sets currently used are reviewed below.

OAsys

Data collection on offenders under probation supervision is much more extensive than data collection on former offenders whose sentences do not require probation supervision. The main data set on offenders under probation supervision is the OAsys (offender assessment system) dataset. These data are primarily intended to monitor the extent to which known risks that are associated with reconviction are being counteracted via probation support. Data on accommodation are collected within OAsys because there is (limited) evidence that housing stability, when coupled with being in paid employment and other support needs being met, is associated with a reduction in reconviction (Pleace and Minton, 2009). Like all these forms of data collection by the criminal justice system, OAsys is focused on reconviction rates and risk factors for reconviction. It is important to note that datasets like OAsys are not focused on homelessness, accommodation status or housing outcomes, they are primarily concerned with reconviction and promoting public safety.

The data collected on accommodation by OAsys include information on literal homelessness (defined as no fixed abode or residence in 'transitional' accommodation such as direct access hostel or shelter). In addition, the permanence of accommodation is recorded. 'Permanent' is quite loosely defined in OAsys as including probation hostels and supported housing (both of which are inherently 'temporary', albeit that probation hostels can accommodate someone for several months and some models of supported housing can accommodate someone for up to two years). 'Permanent' housing also includes someone having their own tenancy or being an owner occupier which is the only definition homelessness services would accept as 'permanent'. The suitability of accommodation is also recorded at two levels. First, suitability related to *housing conditions* is assessed, including housing quality and overcrowding. Second, the *suitability of location of housing, as it relates to known risks for reconviction*, including local level of criminal activity, access to criminal contacts and proximity to former victims.

Each of the indicators of accommodation status (whether or not homeless, whether permanently housed and whether suitably housed) is scored. A better accommodation situation leads to a higher score. The accommodation indicators are a few of the many

indicators fed into an overall OGRS score for an offender on probation, which is used to assess the probability of reconviction for that offender.

The OAsys data were fed into one of the National Indicators (NI 143) which supported the former Public Service Agreement (PSA) 16. PSA 16 promoted settled housing and suitable employment for vulnerable groups, including offenders under probation supervision (Pleace and Minton, 2009). NI 143 recorded 'Offenders under probation supervision living in settled and suitable accommodation at the end of their order or licence' at local authority level. However, it was announced that PSA 16 and the National Indicators were to be abolished in the Autumn of 2010. It is not clear at the time of writing whether any data will continue to be collected on this outcome at local authority level.

OAsys data are only collected during the period of probation supervision. Once an offender leaves probation, there is no monitoring of their accommodation status. This means that OAsys provides data on accommodation status and homelessness *only* for people on probation and *only* up until their probation ceases. The extent at which former offenders who were on probation become homeless once their probation support ceases is not recorded.

OAsys data, as is the case with criminal justice data more generally, are not routinely interlinked or combined with other data (Magee, 2008). OAsys is not updated with the housing outcomes for offenders after probation even if data that would allow this are available for two reasons. First, it is only designed to collect data during the period of probation supervision and second, data sharing arrangements that would facilitate updating of OAsys are not in place.

P-NOMIS

P-NOMIS (Prison - National Offender Management Information System) records basic information on the accommodation of all offenders at the point at which they start a prison sentence and at the point at which they end their sentence. The specific data collected are confined to the person's address prior to commencing sentence, whether the offender was of no-fixed abode (NFA) prior to commencing sentence and a contact address for relatives. On discharge, data are collected on the type of accommodation to which prisoners are discharged including whether they are NFA, in a probation hostel, in short term housing, supported housing or permanent accommodation.

Some of these definitions are fairly precise, but 'NFA' can potentially encompass sleeping rough, various forms of hidden homelessness such as sofa surfing and residence in emergency or direct access accommodation. A situation of NFA may also vary in duration. What this means is that when someone is recorded as NFA at the beginning and/or end of their sentence, the full meaning and potential impacts of that status are not clear from the data in P-NOMIS. For example, someone might have been NFA for just a few nights before their sentence, or only be NFA for a short period of time following their sentence. A former offender might be NFA on discharge, but almost immediately be picked up by a homelessness service or supported accommodation and helped to apply for assistance from a local authority. This might result in their receiving homelessness prevention services or, though this is less likely, in being accepted as being owed the main duty under the

legislation. In other words, someone leaving prison with NFA might cease to be homeless quite quickly.

In other cases, someone with NFA status might have high support needs, or present with challenging or anti-social behaviour that makes access to some homelessness and housing services difficult. Someone who is NFA might, for various reasons, also not approach services. Two sets of reasons why someone who is NFA on discharge might not approach services are 'thin rationality' and the 'survivalist' lifestyles that can be exhibited by some former offenders. In the former case of 'thin rationality', someone pursues other, ultimately irrational, goals rather than pursuing services and support that will address their homelessness status. The most obvious example of this is an individual focusing all their effort and resources to fuel problematic drug use. Others may find themselves adopting a 'survivalist' lifestyle because they have to expend their very limited available personal resources in meeting subsistence needs, such as food and clothing, limiting the extent to which they can pursue permanent housing solutions (McNaughton, 2008).

Finally, and importantly, some individuals who are NFA on discharge will have the social supports and other resources to quickly arrange housing for themselves. Not all those ex-offenders who are NFA will necessarily have support needs or have so few resources that their capacity to secure housing for themselves is undermined.

Asset

'Asset' is a structured assessment tool used by Youth Offending Teams in England and Wales. Like OAsys, Asset is primarily intended as a tool to assess the extent to which known risks associated with reconviction are being counteracted. As is also the case with respect to OAsys, Asset only collects data on one group of offenders, in this instance the young people who are in contact with Youth Offending Teams.

However, the information collected by Asset is in some respects more nuanced than that collected by OAsys or by P-NOMIS, this is because Asset records the *predominant* form of accommodation occupied by a young person during the last six months. OAsys does record changes in status while someone is being supervised by probation, but it is primarily a 'snapshot' of current status while P-NOMIS provides only a 'snapshot' of accommodation status *immediately* prior to and *immediately* following a prison sentence. By contrast, Asset provides information on the 'typical' accommodation situation of young people over six months. This gives a better, though by no means complete, picture of the relative degree of housing stability in young offenders lives than is available from P-NOMIS or OAsys. The data collected include:

- (predominantly) in a situation of no-fixed abode (including hidden homelessness)
- (predominantly) in a situation of living in unsuitable accommodation (unfit, overcrowded and substandard accommodation)
- (predominantly) living with other known offenders (this indicator is less focused on accommodation status than on another potential risk associated with reconviction)
- (predominantly) living a chaotic or disorganised lifestyle (the distinction between this and some of the more precarious forms of hidden homelessness, such as sofa surfing, is

not very clear, but it can be summarised as housing insecurity within a wider situation of insecurity and potential vulnerability)

- (predominantly) characterised by other housing and housing location related issues, such as social isolation, living in proximity to illegal drugs markets.

Like OAsys, Asset provides an overall 'score' for a young offenders predominant living situation over the past six months. A low score reflects a poor living situation, a higher score reflects a better living situation.

Social housing data

Social housing data collected on former offenders are fairly limited. There are data in the (Supporting People) Client Record and Outcomes data on people who are recorded as having a history of offending who make use of housing support services in England (see Chapter 6 of this report). However, this information is primarily concerned with recording service activity i.e. the range and number of services providers by housing support service providers and do not record much detail about former offenders using those services. The (very small) number of households accepted as owed the main duty under the homelessness legislation is recorded by the P1E data which is collected by local housing authorities and collated at national level by the Department of Communities and Local Government. However, these data are limited, because they only record the reason a household was accepted as owed the main duty and this data cannot be linked to information on the characteristics of that household. In addition, former offenders might be found to be owed the main duty for reasons other than their history of offending and associated vulnerability, e.g. severe mental illness, in which case their history of offending would not actually be recorded by a local authority⁵⁷. It is widely thought that ex-offenders seek to conceal their history of offending from local authorities when seeking assistance under the homelessness legislation in the belief this will improve the chances of a better outcome, though there is no clear evidence on this (Pleace and Minton, 2009).

Local level data sets

In addition to the national level datasets there are also local level data sets. These included the information collected by the HMP Leeds PHAS (Prison Housing Advice Service). This covered which area an individual was returning to on discharge, whether they were in priority need under the terms of the homelessness legislation (including whether or not there were 'intentionality' issues that a housing authority would be likely to raise), whether there was a local connection to the ex-offender's destination authority. Household composition was also recorded. In addition, the following (very) broad categorisations of support need were recorded:

- Presence or absence of 'drug issues'
- Presence or absence of 'alcohol issues'
- Presence or absence of 'health issues'
- "Children or family issues" (recorded as either present or absent)

⁵⁷<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/homelessnesstatistics/publicationhomelessness/>

- Debt, financial and benefit issues (again recorded as either present or absent)
- Employment issues (barriers to work, recorded as present or absent)

A summary of the accommodation status of each individual was also recorded, but this was a few sentences or a couple of paragraphs that was not reported in a standardised or statistically analysable form. These data were restricted to those offenders who had been referred to the PHAS service and who opted to make use of that service. Again, data collection was a 'snapshot', the accommodation status and housing outcomes for ex-offenders who had used the PHAS service was not monitored over time.

HMP Leeds also offered the SORT (Support Officers' Resettlement Team) service which recorded information on last address, landlord, location returned to on release, and the name, address and contact details for next of kin. SORT would refer offenders who were eligible to the Leeds Single Homeless Team operated by the City Council, which would, depending on assessment either accept an individual as owed the main duty under the homelessness legislation or provide preventative services. SORT also recorded whether or not an offender had outstanding rent arrears with a social landlord (which would make most social landlords refuse to house an individual) as part of an arrangement that facilitated repayment of those arrears while the offender was still serving their sentence. If a sentence was sufficiently short to mean that maintaining existing social rented or private rented housing was viable, SORT would record the relevant details to inform its contact with the landlord to try and ensure the offender did not lose their housing while they were serving their sentence.

Yorkshire and Humberside Probation Office were piloting data collection on short term offenders during the period in which Shelter PART was evaluated. This data collection was linked to the Probation Office being one of those areas in which Integrated Offender Management (IOM) was being piloted (Sandu, 2008). The data broadly mirrored those collected through OAsys, noting whether or not someone was NFA, in transient or short term accommodation, in support housing, in a probation hostel or in permanent independent housing. This system, referred to as 'Short Term Offender Analysis' was still undergoing development at the time the research was conducted, but they potentially offered a dataset on short term offenders that was broadly equivalent to OAsys. However, these data were also potentially limited in some of the ways that OAsys data were, i.e. quite restricted information was collected on a 'snapshot' basis and longer term outcomes were not monitored.

Across West Yorkshire, homelessness services, housing support services and social landlords were taking referrals and providing assistance to former inmates of HMP Leeds. Each of these services would have collected its own data on those individuals to inform its own administration. There is, however, wide variation in the nature and extent of data collection across services. Some services collect relatively extensive data, others function by requiring information from people who are reluctant to share information about themselves (this would include some drug services). These data often cannot be analysed, or collated at regional level, both because they are not collected on a compatible basis and for data protection reasons (Pleace and Bretherton, 2006).



Published by

Centre for Housing Policy

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