



OUT FOR GOOD:

taking responsibility for resettlement

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The Prison Reform Trust aims to create a just, humane and effective penal system. We do this by inquiring into the workings of the system; informing prisoners, staff and the wider public; and by influencing parliament, government, and officials towards reform.

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This report was written by Kimmet Edgar, Andreas Aresti and Neil Cornish

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First published in 2011 by Prison Reform Trust

ISBN: 978-1-908504-01-2

Photo credit: Andrew Aitchison www.prisonimage.org

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FOREWORD

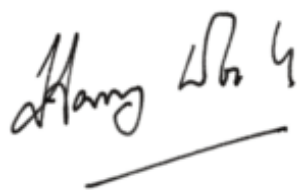
Prisons have a duty to hold prisoners safely in custody, but their duties to the public go much further than mere warehousing. Their duties include a responsibility, when ever possible, to release those who have been committed to custody in a state of mind that means they are less likely, and certainly not more likely, to reoffend. This aim is more likely to be achieved if a greater emphasis is placed, throughout the Prison Service, on preparing prisoners for their eventual return to the community. Again offenders are more likely to behave responsibly, both while serving their sentence and after their release, if they are given the opportunity to serve their sentence in a constructive way. It therefore makes sense that throughout the period prisoners are serving their sentence efforts are made to ensure that the circumstances exist which will divert them from reoffending.

Responsibility should become a central concept of penal policy – the responsibility of the Prison Service to provide so far as is practical constructive conditions in which a sentence is served and the responsibility of the prisoners to respond positively when constructive opportunities are made available to them while in prison and after their release.

If prisoners are unable to exercise responsibility during their sentence, the likely outcome is a creeping and all pervading dependency by prisoners on the prison authorities during their sentence and an inability to exercise responsibility after their release. So prisoners should be given the opportunity to make choices and be held responsible for the choices they make. In this way responsibility is being placed on prisoners to make positive use of their sentence.

Prisons have an unenviable record of failing to reduce reoffending. Almost half of sentenced prisoners reoffend within a year of release. Our prisons are not achieving the aim of reducing reoffending and therefore they are failing to protect the public. Some of the blame for that must fall on overcrowding, which in turn is due to the excessive use of custody. There are profound restrictions on what can be done by the Prison Service during a short sentence. The position is clear: nothing positive can be achieved by a short sentence, other than to mark the nature of the offence. The more money we spend on building prisons the less money there will be to focus on education and rehabilitating and reforming prisoners.

Against this background, this report brings together a wealth of evidence to demonstrate the importance of enabling prisoners to take responsibility for their decisions about their own resettlement. It shows what can be achieved when prisoners have access to the information they need to be a full partner in the process of making decisions about their resettlement. It describes the impact of peer advice, good links with the community and more meaningful contact with their families. Treating prisoners as responsible – and making full use of their knowledge and skills as well as their hopes and ambitions – suggests a blueprint for prisons that encourages former prisoners to lead law-abiding on release with the prospects of being *Out for Good*.



Lord Woolf of Barnes, chair of the Prison Reform Trust

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Prison Reform Trust is grateful to the Pilgrim Trust for kindly supporting this study.

We gained wide-ranging insights into the challenges of resettlement and their solutions from people in prison and from consultations with a number of experts, including:

Sarah Salmon	Action for Prisoners' Families
Wendy Cranmer	BeOn Site Project Manager
Mark Blake	BTEC
Karen Buck	The Buck Project, Buckinghamshire
Vanessa Geffen	Catch 22
Alice Evans	Homeless Link
Sarah Davies	NOMS
Sue Rex and George Barrett	Offender Engagement Programme
Gill Pugh	Ormiston Trust
Carwyn Gravel	PrisonerActionNet
Nina Champion	Prisoners Education Trust
Paula Atherton and Neil Frackleton	Sefton CVS
Rob Owen	St Giles Trust
Chris Stacey	UNLOCK: The National Association of Reformed Offenders

We are grateful to these individuals, the organisations they work for, and the prisons which granted us access for this study. Their support was vital in preparing this report. The Prisoners Education Trust kindly shared data about resettlement, drawn from a 2012 survey in Inside Time of 532 prisoners, and we thank Pat Jones, Susan Simmonds and Nina Champion for this important evidence.

We are grateful to colleagues Paul Addae Anderson, Tony Callaghan, Francesca Cooney, Geoff Dobson, and Juliet Lyon; and also to Clara Odamo for her comments on a draft.

INTRODUCTION

Each year, about 90,000 people are released from prison after serving a determinate sentence. Most people in prison, and prison staff, are working towards resettlement. While prisoners hope to be 'out for good', reconviction rates show that around half of those released will have re-offended and been sentenced again within a year. Many will return to custody. The Prison Reform Trust, supported by the Pilgrim Trust, has conducted this applied research, drawing in large part on the views and experience of prisoners, to determine what makes for effective resettlement.

Resettlement policies

Almost half of adults released from prison (47%) are reconvicted within one year of release; the rate is 57% for those serving sentences of less than 12 months (Prison Reform Trust, Bromley Briefings, June 2012: 26). reoffending carries high social and economic costs. Hence, reducing the risk of reoffending by ex-prisoners is a high priority for government. Resettlement – the re-integration of people after prison – is a linchpin for reducing reoffending. Resettlement has been given a new emphasis by the commitment of the Coalition Government to a 'rehabilitation revolution'. However, increasing financial pressures have led to cuts to public spending which include those services that support resettlement. This creates tensions in the system where, for example, increased time in cell will cut across efforts to prepare for release.

Out for Good: aims and methods

The Prison Reform Trust has worked, over 18 months, to build an evidence base about effective resettlement policy and practice. *Out for Good* shows how practice can be improved by identifying the lessons from some existing schemes. The primary focus has been on employment and training; housing; the contribution of families; and drug and alcohol treatment – all of which work better with inter-agency co-operation.

We take as our starting point that prison staff need to involve prisoners in their own resettlement and encourage them to take responsibility for addressing the challenges they will face on release. *Out for Good* has highlighted opportunities that encourage self-reliance and develop prisoners' capacity to help others, for example, through programmes that train them to provide housing and employment advice and information to their peers.

Peer researchers (former prisoners) have been involved in this project from the outset – reviewing the literature, drafting the key questions, and conducting interviews with staff and prisoners. Peer research methods (which were pioneered by SOVA and Sheffield Hallam University) make use of the insights of people who have had similar experiences to those being interviewed.

In a report published by Prison Reform Trust and Clinks, a peer researcher reflected on his involvement in the project:

"I felt an immense amount of pride at being involved in the project and being able to channel the negative experiences of 'ex-prisoner' into something positive. I wanted to prove as a peer researcher that I could do a good job. If somebody has faith in you, you want to show them that their faith in you was appropriate, and I suppose many other peer researchers in the future may feel like that, and thus, should be given the chance."

(Clinks/Prison Reform Trust, 2010: 44)

The study gathered the views of prison governors and staff, prisoners, voluntary sector providers and others. In the course of the fieldwork, we visited nine prisons; held discussion groups with about 40 prisoners and 30 staff, and interviewed 34 individual prisoners, and a wide range of staff from the prison service and the voluntary sector. Unless otherwise indicated, the quotes in this report are from these interviews with prisoners and staff.

In addition to these prison visits, we made use of quantitative data, provided to us by the Prisoners Education Trust, from its Inside Time survey of 532 prisoners on their plans for resettlement. We discussed the study with voluntary sector providers of resettlement services for prisoners. We also conducted a literature review, examining research on the practical challenges of finding employment and housing, and re-building relationships with families and others.

Structure of the report

This report begins with a discussion on how prisoners can be engaged in their own resettlement, in the sense of providing opportunities for people in prison to make decisions and take responsibility. It highlights how working in partnership with offenders contributes to a commitment to desist from further offending. The next section focuses on how people in prison can prepare themselves for release. The sections that follow explore the areas of housing, personal finances, relationships with families, employment and training, and drug and alcohol misuse. A subsequent section draws out lessons from staff in prisons and the voluntary sector about how to engage prisoners. The final section brings together the conclusions and recommendations arising from *Out for Good* applied research.

INVOLVING PRISONERS IN THEIR RESETTLEMENT

After release from prison, some people continue to pose a risk. But focusing solely on their risk stigmatises them and excludes them from productive roles in society. Many people coming out of prison have profound needs. But a welfare approach that manages the social needs of offenders without their input makes them even more dependent. What is needed is a commitment to work with the person – not just to do things to, or for them. Alongside the ethos of controlling risk and managing ‘cases’, prisons and services need to develop the skill of sharing responsibility with the person who is preparing for his or her resettlement.

Engaging with offenders means encouraging them to make choices about the practical challenges they will face on release. Prisons, probation, and the voluntary sector can do more to support those choices with help and advice which are suited to the person’s interests and needs. Thus, ways of working with offenders that allow them scope to exercise responsibility are crucial to resettlement in order to balance the emphasis on risk and need.

Desistance

Desistance is the process of abstaining from crime among those who previously had engaged in a sustained pattern of offending.

(Maruna, 2010: 1)

Desistance theory focuses on the reasons someone decides to stop offending. Changes in the way offenders see themselves can support a shift to a socially productive lifestyle. “To desist from crime, ex-offenders need to develop a coherent pro-social identity for themselves,” (Maruna, 2001: 7). They can be helped to do this by providing them with opportunities to exercise personal responsibility and to make choices about their future.

Engaging with offenders promotes desistance in a number of ways. It:

- focuses on the person’s abilities, skills, and motivation.
Individuals who desist from crime usually are very motivated to change their lives and feel confident that they can turn things around. (Maruna, 2010: 2)
- shows the person that they can make a valuable contribution to society.
Offenders who find ways to contribute to society, their community, or their families, appear to be more successful at giving up crime. For instance, the opportunity to mentor, assist or enhance the life of other people. (Ibid.: 2)
- promotes acceptance by the community outside.
Individuals who feel like they are a welcomed part of society are less likely to offend than those who feel stigmatised. (Ibid.: 3)

The question is: how can criminal justice agencies adapt their styles of working to motivate offenders?

Surveying Prisoners Crime Reduction, a survey by the Ministry of Justice, found that 97% of 1,435 prisoners surveyed said they wanted to stop offending: 67% strongly agreed; 30% agreed (MoJ, SPCR, 2005-06: B39). Similarly, a survey of 532 prisoners by the Prisoners Education Trust found that three quarters (76%) said that they intended to seek work when they returned to the community. Almost half (44%) expressed interest in volunteering (Prisoners Education Trust, 2011).

The Clinks/Prison Reform Trust project, *Double Trouble*, explored the resettlement of people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. The study found that preventing reoffending depended on the person's motivation and focus on meaningful, positive changes in their lives:

Many respondents stressed that successful resettlement depends, to a large extent, on the individual's personal commitment and determination to make it a success.

(Clinks/Prison Reform Trust, 2010: 4)

How prisoners can be engaged in resettlement

Engaging prisoners in preparing for resettlement should make use of opportunities in the prison for people to make a positive contribution (active citizenship - see Prison Reform Trust: *Time Well Spent*).

A prime example was the Focus on Resettlement pilot project, which is described in the green paper, *Breaking the Cycle*, as follows:

The FOR (Focus on Resettlement) programme ... aims to increase offenders' motivation to become committed and active in setting their own agenda for change and to increase their take-up of services that would help with resettlement upon release.

(MoJ: Green Paper Evidence Report: 61; citing Clancy et al., 2006)

Another example, the *Road to Resettlement* at HMYOI Swinfen Hall, helped young prisoners to structure their preparation for release. The *Road to Resettlement* was a workbook developed by young prisoners, discussing the problems that lead to offending and suggesting practical solutions. Prisoners also served as wing mentors, to guide people through it. Each young person received a personal copy on induction so they could set priorities, choose alternative solutions, and work at their own pace.

Release on temporary licence (ROTL) requires a degree of responsibility, as time outside the prison depends on mutual trust. One form of ROTL enables the prisoner to volunteer for charitable causes. These opportunities link the prison to the voluntary agencies in the community – responsibility for the prison's relationship with the local community is shared between the prisoner on ROTL and the prison.

Challenges for services to engage with prisoners –

The ideal of engaging prisoners in their resettlement faces a serious challenge: can they be trusted to make choices when many lack skills to engage with statutory services, or have few job skills, or are unable to take responsibility for their lives? A rule of thumb might be to allow people to help themselves (and others) when they can, and target support towards people who need it most. But it is clear that a more individual and personal approach is needed to help people to develop a greater capacity for responsibility.

A second challenge is to ensure the prison continues to meet its duties of care. While offenders should be given more choice, checks must be made to ensure that prisons address needs brought about by imprisonment, such as the loss of stable housing or unemployment. Developing self-reliance in prisoners should not be an excuse for prison staff to do less, or, indeed for fewer staff.

Another part of the challenge is to ensure prisoners receive the information they need, and in a form they can access. The prisons inspectorate's prisoner surveys in local prisons show that only:

- 28% know who to contact in the prison to get help with accommodation
- 26%, for help with finding a job
- 20%, to access health services on release, and
- 17%, to get help with personal finances.

(HMCIP, 2012: local prisons comparator, page 116)

Although not everyone who completes the inspectorate's survey will need help in these areas, these figures suggest a consistent failure to provide the links people in prison need to make informed choices.

A recent study of resettlement for Muslim offenders found that 95% of respondents did not know of any Muslim organisations, apart from Muslim Youth Helpline, that could give them support; and 71% said they did not know of other (non-faith) services, or how to contact them (MYH, 2011: 21 and 23). These findings highlight the fact that people are unlikely to contact services relevant to their needs if they lack basic information about the service.

Resettlement services also need to take account of developments in prisoner consultation. Consulting prisoners is quickly expanding in prisons, but to what extent are their views sought and taken into account in devising resettlement policy and establishing commissioning arrangements?

Expectations of prisons

The premise of *Out for Good* was that people in prison should be encouraged to take responsibility for their resettlement. Prisoners should be supported in making decisions about their lives in the community: where they will live; how they will gain a legitimate income; how they will rebuild their family ties, or form new ones. Offenders should be helped to make choices about finding support for mental health needs, substance misuse, finance and debt, and education.

Engaging prisoners requires a flexible approach which can adapt to the individual's personal priorities. In preparation for the fieldwork, the *Out for Good* team developed a draft list of expectations, to test the extent to which resettlement interventions promoted genuine engagement with relevant support for people in, or released from, prison. These expectations were:

- 1) The resettlement service promotes inter-agency co-operation.
 - Each agency has good links, reaching into the prison and linking prisoners to mainstream services and agencies in the community.
 - Inter-agency co-operation has established protocols and lines of communication to ensure that prisoners benefit from a collaborative approach by all agencies involved, and that they provide individualised support.
 - By their nature, some organisations have a specific focus, whereas others have a more general remit. Specialist agencies should be able to show that they work well with others; e.g. a voluntary organisation can demonstrate good relations with the prison and with other agencies in the community.

2) The resettlement service engages with offenders and builds on their active involvement.

- The intervention can demonstrate how prisoners are consulted . . .
 - strategically, contributing collectively to policy development and improvements in practice
 - personally, having input into their own sentence management.
- The style of engaging with offenders views them as partners. The relationship is based on doing things with them, rather than to, or for, them. This is evidenced by the agencies' willingness to share information and jointly address problems with the offender.

3) The resettlement service accepts people at their level and works at the person's own pace.

- The agency is not 'cherry-picking' in order to achieve good outcomes.
- The intervention can demonstrate flexibility that enables prisoners to proceed at their own pace.
- The agency is consistent in implementing its Equality Impact Assessment.
- The agency demonstrates competence in responding to learning disabilities, learning difficulties, speech and language problems, and mental health needs.

These expectations were then tested in interviews with prisoners, voluntary sector providers, and prison staff.

PRISONERS PREPARING FOR RESETTLEMENT

Background

Imprisonment is designed to take away choices, at least those choices which might endanger the public. It is therefore necessarily de-humanising. But it might also take away other choices, so that prisons can be run safely. There should be no need to take away further choices; doing so could weaken the person's ability to cope with responsibility on release.

(Pryor, 2001: 1)

In *The Responsible Prisoner*, former prison governor Stephen Pryor argued that prisoners must retain their responsibilities while in custody to make resettlement work (see also McNeill and Weaver, 2010). When experience of prison has institutionalised someone, 'weakening the person's ability to cope' on release, he or she needs to re-learn how to take responsibility. As Pryor highlights, irresponsibility breeds irresponsibility and imprisonment takes away one's responsibility. Therefore there is a particular need to encourage personal responsibility and a sense of usefulness or belonging.

Many respondents believed that it was important for the prisoner to be actively involved in his or her resettlement:

It'd be a good thing to give the inmate that's ready to go, say a couple of months before his release, someone who's working with him [but] let him do the work, let him phone up the hostels...let him talk to these people. Why should someone else try and do it for him? That way he'll be feeling a bit more responsible.

(Prisoner interviewed for *Out for Good*)

Promoting Responsibility

We find it is the pro-active prisoners who have all the 'luck'.

(St Giles Trust peer support worker)

Taking responsibility for resettlement increases a sense of self-worth. Equally, it appears that encouraging self-reliance can motivate the person to take steps to prepare adequately for resettlement (McNeill and Weaver, 2010; Pryor, 2001). This was articulated by a woman in an open prison:

You have to ask why people end up in prison in the first place. It's because they haven't taken responsibility in the past. Putting them into prison just takes their responsibility away. It means they can just float through the sentence. If you don't choose to take responsibility, you still get fed; you still have a roof; you are still babied. This is a self-help prison. You ask to come to a prison like this [resettlement prison]. You know what you are taking on when you choose to come here. Some people are perfectly capable of exercising responsibility.

Over half of the respondents in the *Out for Good* interviews said that they had been pro-active in their resettlement. Taking responsibility for resettlement well in advance of release was linked to one's motivation and determination to succeed (Clinks/Prison Reform Trust, 2010). Some prisoners said they relied on their own resources to get

things sorted out, for example making use of personal contacts to deal with practical problems. One man talked about how he was still running his business while in prison with the help of friends on the outside. Others described how they maintained contact with former employers and either secured employment for their release or kept their old jobs.

I'm working for a chap in Northants. I'm the only carpenter he's had working for him, he won't have nobody else....I'm good at my trade and he wouldn't take on anyone else.

However, in stark contrast, many people were going to face complex and inter-connected problems after release. For some of these individuals, a lack of support inhibited their efforts and motivation to organise their own resettlement. One person spoke about his negative experience with a specialist service provider when asked how helpful they had been:

Not at all, I've seen her once from the job centre, she gave me a job [lead] and they don't even touch prisoners. I've been having a look in the papers I see they are laying people off at 35 or 40 years old. I've got no chance... I don't think I will find a job out there.

In contrast, when support was ineffective or even obstructive, others became more independent and self-reliant, despite harbouring adverse feelings about their lack of support:

I've done everything off my own back to help myself, so I've sorted out my housing, I've sorted out my college course hopefully, the CARATS team here have provided me with the same support in Birmingham. So, the prison haven't done anything for me and can't help me as I've done it all myself...I've had to do it all off my own back. I've had to use all my own resources, for example they have a group in here called TRIBAL which is meant to deal with your education needs. Now on my release I wanted to go to college....I put in 15 general apps to get an appointment with this said department and I didn't get a response.... [so] when I was on home leave from prison [I rang] them [college] to get an application form.

Institutionalisation: the impact of prison on personal responsibility –

A common factor for the prisoners interviewed as part of this study was the negative impact of the time spent in prison. A few said that their sentence had given them space to de-tox; a few said that before going to prison they were self-destructive and needed to get away from the pressures outside. But for the majority, time in prison had made worse the main areas that they would have to address – accommodation, acceptance, self-esteem, family relationships, employability, and debt – in order to resettle.

I don't think the prison is helping me; it's just destroying my life.

They could have a missus out there with a kid, 18 months, do your nine months, but in that nine months they might have found a new partner. It's very stressful and when they get released they're put into a bail hostel. They're more inclined to do class A drugs to kill the pain, to self medicate as such. They've not just lost their liberty, they've sort of lost everything, and if you're in a relationship with a partner, and you've got children and a family life and that breaks up, then it's not just an added pain or an added thing to deal with, but it's like a little punishment in itself.

It's a waste of a life. I've been coming in and out of here most of my life now. I've lost my family, my kids, it's just a waste. I've had enough of it.

Women prisoners, speaking at a discussion group convened for this project, discussed the impact of imprisonment on self-esteem:

If you are not happy taking responsibility, it might be because your confidence has taken a blow by coming to prison.

I've got a job to go out to and a family. I've been in for four months. But when I go on home leaves, my confidence is really low.

For a lot of people, it is not laziness. You get depression. You lose your drive. You feel you can't do it. You talk about 'lazy'; some people are scared.

Helping people get ready for release

Whilst professional relationships are important in promoting desistance, most offenders are influenced to change by the people closest to them. The quality of the relationships with these 'significant others' (family and friends) can strengthen the person's resolution to desist (McNeill and Weaver, 2010; see also, Hough, 2010). Social networks can also make the links the person needs to get practical support to turn away from crime.

The prison environment can play a critical role in supporting or hindering people's motivation to be actively involved in their resettlement (Hough, 2010; Pryor, 2001). The prison regime, resettlement services and the attitude of prison staff, and others working to facilitate resettlement are critical. Work with offenders should aim to promote and support offenders' own efforts to stop offending, and this work needs to respect and foster the offender's agency (Hough, 2010; McNeill, 2006).

Prison can encourage responsibility and facilitate a pro-active role by prisoners in resettlement. To do this, prison staff need to:

- prevent unnecessary interference with the person which blocks their attempts to be pro-active and take responsibility
- recognise areas in which the person can be allowed to make decisions and
- identify ways in which some individuals need support.

Removing obstacles –

Many people who wanted to take responsible steps to prepare for release said that their efforts had been hindered by the prison. Specific problems mentioned included a restricted prison regime, a lack of support from staff, and ineffective or inadequate resources or services available. Some found that staff would not engage with them:

I've found the whole experience exceedingly frustrating. If you're pro-active like myself, and you want to get on in life and you want to achieve certain goals, not waste your time while you're here, I find everything I try and do, you hit a brick wall. It's very hard to get a response to anything. It's very hard not to get passed from pillar to post all the time, and all you're trying to do is get on.

A number of respondents stated that the prison restricted or obstructed their attempts to manage their resettlement, sometimes through a lack of resources and facilities. For

some, a desire to take part in treatment programmes, education or vocational training was thwarted because they were on short term sentences, which they believed meant that they were not given the opportunity to take advantage of these services/programmes.

For some short-term prisoners, taking the necessary steps to prepare for release was a physical impossibility. One person, who was serving a 10 month sentence, described how most of the time he was locked in his cell, with little being done to assist him with his resettlement. For him the prison's focus was on 'risk' and 'control', rather than preparing prisoners for release.

For others, their involvement was determined to some extent by the quality and range of programmes available. For example, some stated that the low level educational courses on offer at the prison were of no benefit to them as they were already educated to a particular standard:

I've looked at the various courses here and a lot are done at such a low level that anyone with half an ounce of intelligence.....I understand that maybe 40 – 50% of people suffer with numeracy and literacy, but then you've got half that have got the capacity to learn at a higher level. I've gone along and done courses here that are mind-numbing and soul-destroying and basic.

Personal Story: Kenny

Kenny, a 34 year old Traveller, was returned to prison for breach of his licence conditions.

What offenders can do for themselves

Kenny felt he was prevented from being pro-active while in on a short sentence. He was determined to find work on release, because being employed kept him out of trouble:

I will try and get a job, but if I don't find work, I'll go back to crime. I'm easily led, so if I'm in with the wrong crowd I could get in trouble....

Asked about the financial situation he would face after release, Kenny said:

I will have some issues as I haven't got a job or benefits sorted, but I will get by. I'll do what I have to do....not much I can do here.

He said the wing he was on originally was 'a 22 hour bang-up'. After he had showered, waited in the phone queue to speak to his family, cleaned his cell out and spoken to an officer about his immediate needs, he had no time left to make contact with others who could help him prepare for release.

What the prison and the offender do together

Kenny was grateful for the steps the prison had taken to acknowledge his particular needs as a Traveller. The prison provided some extra funding for phone calls to his family, as mobile phones are more expensive to ring. Further, the prison regularly held a Travellers' consultation meeting. Kenny thought this was a very good idea, but he had not yet attended.

How the prison promotes and supports a pro-active approach

In his previous time in prison, Kenny had done a victim awareness course, which he said had made him think about the impact of his actions on his victim and their family. He had also done a parenting course which helped him to consider where his parenting skills needed improvement. However, Kenny felt that he was unlikely to benefit from courses or pre-release support during his recall:

Short sentences are no good as you are just banged up on the wing. It takes four to five weeks to get on a course, if you can get on...

Despite the many restrictions prisons place on attempts to be responsible about resettlement, many people attempted to take the first steps by putting in applications to see specialist service providers e.g. Job Centre Plus, housing officer, or, where they existed, going to see the Information, Advice, and Guidance team.

Personal Story: Robbie

Robbie, 33, was serving a 10 week sentence and was due for release in five. He had been in prison twice previously: 10 years ago, and then more recently.

What offenders can do for themselves

Robbie felt that the main thing he needed to do was find work after release:

I would love to be able to walk out of here and like have a job, or set up for a job, even if it was voluntary work, if I knew that I was going to be able to get a job.

Robbie has responded to the chance to do training in prison by reducing his dependence on methadone:

I was on 60ml of methadone two weeks ago, I'm on 25ml now, I've dropped down more than half, I want to get clean because I used to work for an appliance repair company and I want to get my job back.

What the prison and the offender do together

Robbie felt that many prisoners like him needed more help and support which would encourage them to be more pro-active:

That's the thing, you see, there's certain people who are clever enough to deal with these things and there's certain people who ain't. I mean, I ain't stupid; I can read and write but I can't spell. You don't want to start squealing at the door, but some people need help. They should have more help for the people that can't get the message through to them when they get in, and then they'll be back on the streets committing crime. I think what they could do, throughout the sentence the prisoners that need the help the most, help them fill their forms in, showing them the way the system goes, and what they can do when they get out, taking it a bit further. I know it's like they're doing a bit for you, but when we're in here we can't really do a lot. Personally I wouldn't know how to write a letter to someone out there, like my solicitor. Like, I could write to my family, but with writing to my solicitor or for a grant, or to try and get housing, I wouldn't know how to go about it; it's not really shown to you.

How the prison promotes and supports a pro-active approach

Robbie thought the prison should help him to set some realistic goals and then support his efforts to achieve them:

I think they should help you rehabilitate yourself, just like opportunities for when you leave prison, so you've got goals, something to look forward to, something that you can get yourself set into, so rather than thinking, oh the only way I'm going to get my money is by going back out and robbing and doing that.

He acknowledged that being in prison had helped steer him off drugs:

The good thing about it is that it has helped me to get clean. It's taken me a long time to get to where I am now, so in that sense, so being in prison has helped me. . . being in prison has helped me get off the drugs, but that's the only help.

Many prisoners said that the application process was often a frustrating experience as requests were not responded to, or dealt with effectively. To overcome these barriers prisoners used other strategies to achieve their aims, illustrating how important one's determination is in prison. For one person trying to get on a Railtrack training course, approaching the course leader in the hallway was the only way to get things done:

For a month and a half I've been putting in an application to talk to this guy about the railway, just to get an idea of what it's all about. Not a word, not even answered my app yet. I cornered him one day in the hallway, and said, "Hey, have you been getting my apps?" He said, "Oh yeah, you're on the list...I'll see you before you go." But I only heard something cos I cornered him...

Sharing responsibility with the offender –

Finding housing or a job are examples of things where responsibility should be shared between statutory agency professionals and prisoners. It would be counter-productive for someone to find accommodation, only then to be told by an offender manager that the location was unsuitable.

In one prison visited as part of the *Out for Good* research, the ROTL scheme [release on temporary licence] had two phases: the first involved doing community work on a voluntary basis; the second phase involved securing paid work in society. While the first phase was perceived in a positive light, the second was criticised due to the difficulties the men faced trying to secure employment. In this instance, the men felt they needed some assistance from prison staff, as there was only so much they could do unassisted:

I came in from doing my five month's community work, and I went and spoke to one of the working out officers. And they said, 'Look, this is the situation and it's down to you to go and find your own job at stage two.' Ok yeah, fine, I understand that they can't mollycoddle everyone to do all that. But I can't drive; we are in the middle of nowhere; in the current climate there's not much work out there. I know it's hard for people who haven't got a criminal record and that to get work out there, so we haven't really got much of a chance to be honest. I think they [the prison] could do more to engage with companies.

Despite this, a number of respondents commented on the benefits of ROTL and its role in preparing them to be more responsible. For some people, ROTL enabled them to rebuild their relationships with their families. For others, ROTL enabled them to use their social networks to secure employment post-release and adjust to conventional life:

[ROTL] yeah they're a good idea, cos otherwise you walk out the door and every thing's changed. . . I've made sure I've got all my ROTLs sorted out, so I've made sure I've got somewhere to stay [on release] somewhere that's suitable. I've also been in contact with the people I used to work for before I went away. They said they would give me a job when I get out.

Self-help –

The quality of the prison regime can encourage or hinder people who want to take steps, independently, to prepare for release. In one prison, which the prisoners described as a 'self-help prison', the regime encouraged individuals to take responsibility for their resettlement. The prisoners valued the fact that the prison allowed them to make their own decisions; they were left to their own devices, and encouraged to be pro-active. The respondents believed such an approach was a good way of preparing them for release:

When you first come in they say it's like a do-it-yourself prison. They tell you the rules, but after that they tell you this is how it is. So no one's coming to your door and saying, 'Do you need this?' or telling you what to do. You have to chase it up yourself. I think it's good because it gets you ready for outside, because when you are in B cats and C cats everything's put through your door, so when I come here I had to get used to all that so it does prepare you in certain ways.

Personal Story: Zahir

Zahir, a Muslim man in his early thirties, was adamant that he wanted to stop offending. He spoke highly of the help he had received while in prison, specifically drug treatment. But he also believed that he should have received more practical help to prepare for his release.

What offenders can do for themselves

I've been rebuilding bridges on home leaves. That's helped, going home and getting involved with families a bit more and getting involved family a bit more: nephews, nieces and things like that.

Zahir was determined to help himself when he got out and not rely too much on others:

I'm going to do it myself. I'm not just going to rely on them [probation] to help me. I'm going to try and get out there and go and get more information. I know I'm not the only client, so I'm going to try and do whatever I can do myself, too.

Zahir also made good use of home leave to search for a job:

I done a bit, because you know that new shopping centre? I went and registered on my home leaves. So I done a bit. I didn't do as much as I probably can..

What the prison and the offender do together

CARATS, I think CARATS are very, very good, you know. As soon as I come here they interviewed me and constantly, every two or three weeks they contacted me to see if I'm alright, and they booked me an appointment to go and see the DIP team outside.

The prison:

helped me get my home leaves and paperwork approved and done. I haven't really been messed about with my home leaves, so that's one thing, so that's helped me build ties with my family.

Zahir was particularly grateful for the advice he had received from the IAG (peer support):

You know these peer support they're very helpful, they're very good. If you go up to them and you've got this problem and they take you into the office, they helped me open up a bank account, and all that, and the peer supporters opened it all up for me.

How the prison promotes and supports a pro-active approach

Zahir cited RAPt as a programme he received in prison which transformed his understanding of drugs.

That course [RAPt] really did help me. If I hadn't done that course I think I'd have probably thought that dealing drugs was alright. Like, when I got sentenced it still didn't hit me thinking, right I've got sentenced but I thought I haven't really done any damage; I don't deserve that much bird. But when I actually done the programme, very intense, I done it and I thought wow, that opened my eyes up.

Zahir had also benefited from training provided in the prison:

I got offered Foundation Training Course that they do here for five weeks. It's like a bit of computing, CSCS card, help with accommodation and how to prepare for work interviews.

Institutionalisation – learned dependency – can occur quickly in prisons that restrict opportunities for exercising responsibility. Self-reliance does not come naturally to those who have been totally dependent on prisons during their sentence. For those in this self-help prison, overcoming this transitional period and adjusting to the new regime was a little difficult at first:

I came from a double A cat....and in there whenever you want something done you've got to ask them. Whereas, in here you have to do everything for yourself. So it's a bit hard coming from a prison where you've got to do everything through the Guvs [prison officers] to doing everything for yourself because obviously you're not sure how to do it.

However, after initial adjustments, the benefits of a self-help approach are manifest. It enhances the individual's sense of self. It prepares the person for release by motivating him to be independent and take responsibility for himself. As Stephen Pryor recognised, early steps towards taking responsibility in prison reinforce these behaviour patterns and prepare the individual for life after prison. Here is how one person described this process:

Yes, they are influencing you to pick yourself up and want to do something, because it makes you more active. So when you leave the gate you're going to be more active because you've been doing certain little things for yourself. Having everything done for you and then you come out and then probably do the same thing again. Yeah, in here, it's alright.

Supported responsibility –

Some people require more support to make decisions than others. The idea of 'supported responsibility' arose from situations where the person needed advice in making choices or practical help to follow through on decisions.

An example of supported responsibility was provided by peer support workers. People in one prison spoke positively about the IAG, run by peers, how helpful the 'staff' had been and how they encouraged them to be pro-active.

Before coming to prison I had a place, but coming here, it got taken away so I had to make sure that before I get out there is somewhere in place for me to go. I came here [IAG] to speak to them directly and told them exactly where I would like to go, [and] where I would like not to go, and if they could make it possible to get a look around those places.

The IAG unit here, the cons who work here, they've been good and all that. They've helped me fill out forms, to get signed on, forms to get a new doctor, forms about housing. Yeah, the cons downstairs, they've helped me right out. It is a good idea because you can talk to them, I mean you can talk to some of the screws and that, but they [peer support workers] are more likely to help you because you're in the same boat.

Personal Story: Gary

Gary was a 22 year old man, coming to the end of a five year sentence for a firearms offence. He stated that he does not communicate with his family. He was negative about the prison's failure to support him in getting ready to resettle. Gary felt that he did not fit in outside, and he felt emotionally comfortable and stable inside prison.

I don't like it out there. . . . See, [for you] the outside, that's reality, that's normal. Going on a five day holiday is nice – but you can't wait to get back to reality. That's normal. When I'm in prison, this is reality; this is normal. When I go out there it's like I am on a five day holiday. I can't wait to come back to reality. Cos this is stable. This is where my mind is set.

What offenders can do for themselves

Gary was adamant that he wanted to stop offending:

I don't want to go back to my old lifestyle. If I do, I will be dead or a Lifer; I will be serving Life.

Gary wanted to go into higher education on release:

I rang the colleges up to check for placements. They said there are placements and I should get my applications in as soon as possible. I spoke to them; they received my application and they sent a letter back with dates.

What the prison and the offender do together

Gary stated that he had mental health problems. Throughout his sentence, he said the most consistent support he had received had been from the in-reach mental health team. But Gary was concerned that the conditions for his release were such that he was in danger of being recalled:

If things don't work out, I will end up back in prison. I'm on a three-year licence – the slightest thing, with recalls, I would be back in for three years. . . . There is going to be a big list of things I can't do.

How the prison promotes and supports a pro-active approach

Gary found that the Information Advice and Guidance team (peer support) had been helpful in enabling him to secure accommodation and with his application to college.

You know the IAG down there, getting involved with other people, they've helped out. Yeah, they've let me use the phones, to chase everything up. Hopefully I'll get into college

Others described how the prison had built up their capabilities and self-confidence. This sense of supported responsibility was most obvious in descriptions of the PASRO course (Prisoners Addressing Substance Related Offending). One man explained how it had influenced his preparations for resettlement:

I will have some structure in my life. . . . I've done PASRO, and it teaches you to take little steps instead of setting yourself up to fail. Since I took PASRO, I've got my accommodation, my kids, I've got a better relationship with my mum. Instead of taking that big step and failing all the time, thinking, sod this, it's taking little steps up the ladder. I'm achieving the things I've set myself in life. PASRO is a brilliant course. If you got your head wrapped round it and you really want to change, it's a brilliant course.

This person illustrates how taking responsibility for oneself is a step by step process that evolves over time as one develops self-efficacy (Bandura, 2001). The structure encouraged his belief in his ability to succeed, and overcome his drug addiction. This clearly has a variety of positive implications, in particular for his sense of self.

Others described a similar process of growing belief in their abilities and skills, developed through going to education.

Balancing what a person can do for themselves with ways the prison can support them depends on a concept of shared responsibility. This model of working with offenders was briefly discussed in terms of ROTL. Sharing responsibility requires prisons to ensure that prisoners have sufficient information to make choices. It also means that resettlement work should be based on sharing the power to decide how to resolve problems the person might face on release. This might require a significant culture shift in some prisons. Finally, finding the right balance entails an individual approach to each person.

Prison staff could learn from the personalised approach in health and social services. For example, a budget for services can be based on the patient's own priorities and views on what is needed. Clearly, prisons cannot work alone to provide a service which meets individual needs. The scale of differences requires flexibility and support that fits each person as an individual, and this can only come from inter-agency collaboration.

HOUSING

Unless the challenge of reintegrating homeless prisoners into mainstream society is addressed the most predictable outcome is that homeless prisoners will continue to move between the street and the prison cell returning repeatedly to a costly system of imprisonment ...

(Mairéad Seymour, Prison Service Journal, July 2006)

I think a lot of it starts with yourself but obviously there are other external variables that you don't have any control over. Like if people come in here and they lose that council house because they can't afford to pay for the rent, I think it's even more difficult. I think in a way it can be even a bit more spiteful because they've not just lost their liberty, they've sort of lost everything.

(Out for Good respondent, 33 years old, serving a three-month sentence)

Facts (Bromley Briefings, June 2012)

Around one-third of women prisoners lose their homes, and often their possessions, whilst in prison.

Just 11% of women received help with housing matters. A Prisons Inspectorate survey found that 38% of women in prison did not have accommodation arranged on release.

75% of 'prolific and other priority offenders' were found to have a housing need compared to 30% for the general offender population.

Many prisoners do not receive advice on housing. A Big Issue survey of its vendors found that 13% had received housing advice and the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee found that only 19% of prisoners received advice or guidance about accommodation.

Prisoners held in large prisons are much less likely to receive help arranging accommodation than those held in small prisons.

The Revolving Doors Agency found that 49% of prisoners with mental health problems had no fixed address on leaving prison. Of those who had a secure tenancy before going to prison, 40% lost it on release.

Problems with accommodation associated with time in prison

Homelessness –

15% of prisoners in the Surveying Prisoners Crime Reduction (SPCR) study reported being homeless before entering prison – including temporary accommodation or sleeping rough (Ministry of Justice, 2012). SPCR also found that prisoners serving sentences of less than 12 months were twice as likely as those serving longer sentences to have been homeless prior to custody (17% to 8%).

Three of the 27 prisoners who were asked by the Out of Trouble team about their housing said that they had no place to go to; and two others said their accommodation was very uncertain.

They kick you out the door and that's it, you've got to find your way to the train station, and then find your own accommodation and all that. More or less, that's how I feel. I know they say that CARATs or someone can help find accommodation for you, but although they might have told me about that and I've not had anyone come to my cell and say do you need accommodation or that, they've just left me on the wing.

Where I live there is just one place for homeless people. And there's nowhere else I can think of, so my best bet is a wing and a prayer with my mum. I don't know yet if even that's happening, so there's nothing. It's scary, really, cos you get kicked out of here, and I just don't know what I'm going to do next. They give you a travel warrant to the least value – a bus or . . . gets you back and that's it.

Offending –

Homelessness and prison are linked: time in prison can cause unstable housing, and homelessness can lead to reoffending (Crow, 2006). The SPCR survey found that people with previous custodial experience were over three times more likely to have been homeless before their current sentence than those who had not served a previous sentence (Ministry of Justice, 2012).

In addition, a pattern of offending can contribute to problems finding suitable accommodation. Offenders who are homeless upon entering prison have a much higher reconviction rate within one year of release, with 79% being reconvicted, compared to 47% who have accommodation (Ministry of Justice (2012) Research Summary 3/12: Accommodation, homelessness and reoffending of prisoners, page 1). Harper and Chitty (2005) found that three weeks before their release dates, 29% of prisoners did not have an address to go to.

Before coming to prison I had a place, but coming here, it got taken away so I had to make sure that before I get out there is somewhere in place for me to go.

They come see me two days before I got out and said, 'Go to this place in Luton there's an interview for you.' Got out, I went to the place for my interview. They couldn't help me. They just said just keep going back every day. . . . So I ended up living on the streets in a tent. I ended up with pneumonia over Christmas. Then I was in hospital and because I missed two appointments, my probation officer recalled me. Ended up coming back, getting out after 28 days, still homeless, I just had enough. Last year I was 15 stone and when I come back I was 67 key [kilos]. I lost five stone in under nine weeks. Not eating, sleeping in a tent. I went out, shoplifted. I knew I would get caught, I wanted to get caught cos I knew, as mad as it sounds, I was better off back in here cos I knew I had a bed, a roof over my head and my meals. I would have ended up dying.

Studies of people who are homeless consistently demonstrate that a lack of housing is never an isolated problem. Services to find stable accommodation need to take into account the complex problems faced by people who are homeless. In this light, offending is one symptom of a complex range of needs which must all be addressed in finding suitable housing. One such study, funded by the ESRC and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (Herriot Watt University, 2012) looked at the social circumstances of homeless people:

Low-threshold homelessness support is supposed to be for people whose main problem is homelessness, but in reality people's lives are far from this straightforward. Some 25% of the people in our research had as many as 16 different problems, including homelessness. Low threshold services weren't set up to deal with this level of complexity.

(Kathleen Kelly, The Guardian, 12 Sept 2011)

Practical challenges in finding housing

A previous Prison Reform Trust report, *Double Trouble*, found that accommodation was seen as a foundation from which other resettlement aims could be pursued:

The prisoners and ex-prisoners said in interviews that having stable, suitable accommodation after leaving prison was their first and most essential requirement. Without a place to live, they said, they had no chance of making any kind of progress in other spheres of their lives.

(Clinks/Prison Reform Trust, 2010: 16)

Housing overlaps with many practical challenges people face after release from prison:

- eligibility for a Job Seekers Allowance is based on a fixed address
- finding a job and keeping it depend on stable housing
- loss of housing puts a strain on personal finances
- the quality, nature and extent of family relationships depend not only on where the person lives, but the suitability of their accommodation
- women in particular can be prevented from reuniting with their young children if their accommodation is considered unsuitable
- housing can either provide the person with a fresh chance to desist or return them to the same environment in which they committed the crime.

Jobs –

Niven and Olagundaye (2002) found that 31% of those who had an address to go to had paid work set up, in contrast to only 9% of those who did not have a place to live on release. Out for Good found diverse circumstances linking housing to jobs.

When I got out last year . . . I went down the job centre and when I put in for a job, no one would employ me. This time, I have got accommodation. . . And then I'll take a step towards work. I know once I've got a roof over my head I can set myself up with a job, eventually getting my own place, having my kids stay with me on weekends; setting myself little goals. But without a permanent address, it's a bit up and down.

I'd love to have my own bedsit, somewhere my own mail can be sent, knowing that I could leave my clothes there and that they wouldn't get burgled or touched, . . . and then start getting myself back into work.

Open prisons are nowhere near our homes. Hostels aren't near our homes, either. And some people might have a job promised, but that's nowhere near the hostel. So they can either take the job and be homeless or the hostel and be unemployed.

Finances –

The financial commitments entailed in paying rent, a mortgage, or drawing on housing benefit, are interrupted by time in prison. A few of the prisoners interviewed discussed the financial implications of their housing, which could mean owing rent arrears after release, or other debts, or coming out to linked financial problems, such as repairing damage caused while the person was in prison (as in the final example, below).

Housing benefit is payable for 52 weeks for remand prisoners, and for 13 weeks for convicted prisoners where the time in prison is unlikely to exceed 13 weeks. A 25 year old white man, serving a 15 month sentence, stated that his sister had paid for his rent during his sentence. Although he tried to find a solution, he was advised that there was no way his flat could be paid for by housing benefit:

I asked the prison what could have been done, like with housing benefits until I am here, because anyone keeping my place where I am living, and the answer was easy, 'Just ask after going out'.

Meantime, his debt rose and he was powerless to offset the rising costs through his prison income.

You see I'm kinda fortunate. I've got a flat to go out to when I get out, which I hope I'm going to because now they're looking at taking me to court to take my flat off me for rent arrears which have built up since I've been in here, while I've been on recall. . . . by the time I get out in December again my debt's going to be over £5000.

When I came in at the beginning of this sentence, my house got broken into, everything in my house was robbed. So I worked with my MAPPA supervisor, got my tools back, bought a TV, bought a stereo, bought everything else. And then two months later, I'm back inside after false allegations. So I'm writing to the housing people for months on end to say, 'Is my house secure, is my house secured?' In August I received a letter from them saying, 'Oh, by the way, someone broke your window and we had to board up your window back in March.' So I don't even know if stuff's still there in my house.

He explained further that his tools are essential to his employment; if they were stolen he expects to have serious trouble finding work.

For others, the main financial problem was the deposit required for private accommodation, as reported by a 38 year old man:

I think I have to re-locate, to find somewhere. It's that difficult to get anything. And even if you do find something, like a little room, it's just deposit money. Where am I going to find £500? You just hit a brick wall with that.

This echoed a finding from a report by the DWP. A local authority responded to a DWP consultation, expressing concern over the resettlement of offenders:

The system should be aiming to fully rehabilitate ex-offenders, helping them back into work, and supporting them as they start work and manage their own finances. 'Exempt accommodation' for these people has rents that are so high that if they find work they can no longer afford to live there, so as their need for support continues they cannot access it as they are forced into mainstream

accommodation. Either that or they never get back into full-time work and never leave supported accommodation. Move-on accommodation should have lower rents so that these people can access support while getting back into society.

(DWP, 2010: 37)

Relationships –

Time in prison can undermine relationships, and that can result in a loss of housing. In particular, a loss of accommodation caused by imprisonment makes it very difficult to sustain relationships with children.

Everything got chucked on me first day I got out last year, telling me my daughter was going into care if I went back to the address. I couldn't see my daughter.

I'm going to have to go on the [housing] list, and they said that I should get better priority to get a flat. You see, I live with my brother but I don't want to impose on him. I had the flat and everything with a bird before I came away, but obviously all that's done and dusted, you can't expect people to wait around forever.

Before, I was at my ex-girlfriend's and then we broke up and then I went back to my mum's and it's been like that. I haven't had my own place.

Structural obstacles to housing –

Homeless Link found that people in need of housing who have other needs find themselves subject to conflicting demands from those who should be providing help (Homeless Link, 2011). *Out for Good* interviews revealed situations in which poor communication between departments led to unnecessary loss of housing.

When I came in I saw a bloke from the social on induction, and I just said to him, 'Social are paying my rent.' He went, 'Alright then', filled a bit of paper in and sent it off. But last year when I was here they did that, but the people at the other end didn't send the cheques. So I lost my place over it last year.

Prisons operate on a national structure: housing support is delivered locally. A woman in prison in north-east England might be able to access very effective accommodation support to find places in the north-east, but if she is from Devon, a flat in Newcastle is unlikely to help her.

David was interviewed in south-east England, where he was completing his sentence; but his home was in Sheffield.

This is what half the problem is, because all the resettlement departments are geared up purely for people from the local area or London or the South. They have all the information, they have places they've used before, contacts etc. It's new to them [prisoners outside the area]. I don't think it happens on a regular basis so they're not used to dealing with it.

David was due to be released on a Friday, in two weeks. He had contacted a hostel near Sheffield and they could offer him an interview for a place on the Monday after his release. The probation office in Sheffield required him to report to them on the day of his release. David's most urgent problem was that he had nowhere to stay between the probation appointment midday Friday and the possibility of a hostel place on Monday. David's sister, Paula, had a flat in Liverpool, and she was willing to let him stay for a couple of nights. But probation officers insisted that he report to them first, in Sheffield.

He said he was expected to travel from London to Sheffield, then go to Paula's in Liverpool for the weekend, then return to Sheffield on Monday morning, in hopes of gaining a place in the hostel.

Now I'm a bit concerned about recall, so I don't want to start kicking off at probation and say look you're highly irresponsible, you've left me to walk the streets for three or four days, you're irresponsible and then they go, right, well you're in breach of your licence already and they say right we're going to send you back, so I can't express those things how I'd like to express because I don't want to get their backs up and get sent back.

Sensible housing policies are unlikely to improve the situation in the absence of resources. Homeless Link published evidence of a startling decrease in the resources available to support people in crisis.

"Homeless Link's survey of needs and provision found that 63% of services that had funding cuts had reduced staffing levels, closed services and/or reduced their contact time with clients. Over the last year that amounts to a loss of 1,169 bed spaces."

(Kathleen Kelly, The Guardian, 12 September, 2011)

Risk level –

A few people observed that support services have a priority to work with those deemed most at risk of reoffending. To people deemed to present lower risk, that structure offered a perverse incentive:

They knew I was getting out homeless and probation did nothing to help me – absolutely nothing. I said to my probation officer, 'Where do you want me to go – a park bench?' She said 'No'. 'Well you just said because I'm not MAPPa you can't help me with housing. Does that mean if I go and commit more offences and become MAPPa you can help?'

Fully independent accommodation, in the absence of support, can set up some released prisoners to fail. For many, their chances of resettlement hinge on being provided with a balance of structured responsibility and support. A report by Homeless Link described the benefits of an environment in which the person's free time was limited:

"Many clients we spoke to talked about the importance of structure in daily life. It came in many forms, from work, client groups, volunteering, education and training, to meaningful activity like gardening. Clients shared how structure and regular activity contribute to confidence and self-esteem, helped provide distance away from previous associates and places which can trigger old behaviours."

(Homeless Link, 2011: 15)

This was reflected in one prisoner's gratitude that he had a place in a hostel, precisely because it would provide him with the structure he would need:

Yeah it's a hostel. What they do is, I help out round the hostel, and they pay me for helping out, for doing chores in the garden, cleaning and like that. What they do is they put the money aside, then after six to twelve weeks they set me up to me own flat and that, so I can see the kids and that, which is brilliant.

Hostels –

As a national resource designed to support people through the transition from prison to life outside, hostels (approved premises) should be extremely valuable. But almost without exception, the prisoners' comments on hostels were negative.

If you go to these hostels, you're dependent on the prison to set you up a place; I'm dependent on that person, you're in a hostel. If you're in a hostel you are going to use drugs. I'm telling you, you are going to use drugs. If you leave the hostel, you are going back to prison. This is where you have to reside when you're out. You have to go there for however long my licence is: six months or three months. You're putting me where the drugs are and telling me I have to stay there. That can't make sense. That's not helping me. I've just come off drugs; I've been clean; and you lot are going to make me take drugs again. You just put me where the drugs are. That is no help. That is no good.

If it was a matter of a hostel or staying in prison I'd stay in prison, like with tag as well. No, I'd never go to a hostel, I'd rather stay in prison rather than go to a hostel, they just end up recalling you, you end up doing more of your sentence, I know loads of people who've been to hostels and they've got recalled.

The main problem seemed to be that hostels brought people with offending and (often) drug-taking lifestyles together under one roof. They should support people as they look for work and start jobs. They should be equipped to promote personal responsibility and encourage people to move on from supported housing to independence.

Effective work on accommodation: solutions

Enabling prisoners to find solutions –

Enabling a prisoner to take responsibility for resolving accommodation problems means that prison staff must carefully consider what they can do to encourage prisoners to make decisions; ensure that prisoners are supported in the decisions they do make; and minimise the extent to which prison systems obstruct people from trying to resolve their problems.

Finding suitable accommodation from within a prison is inevitably difficult, but staff could do more to help, by: providing secure access to the internet; improving lines of communication with the outside; ensuring that up to date information is available to all prisoners; and facilitating peer support work schemes.

Many prisoners who described their attempts to prepare for release felt that the criminal justice system had been obstructive.

I asked for housing support and they said, 'You need to come back nearer to your release.' So I wrote to various hostels etc., etc., saying these are my circumstances. I then collated all my information then went down there and said, 'This is the one I want to get into, second choices; can you then deal with this?' They said, 'Yes.' Now it's a week before my release, and I've only just got an answer now that says, 'You've got an interview at this place, which is four days after your release'. . . .

A second prisoner felt that the obstacles were being raised by his local authority:

I wrote to the services to say I was getting out. There's no money; every where's full. I've written to the DIP offices; wrote to my ex-probation officer; to the council. I'm on the council waiting list but I have been for the last 10 years. Nothing changes with the council – they've taken me off the list and put me back on so many times.

Many prisoners expressed a determination to tackle problems assertively when they got out. Some of these were acutely aware that there were far better options for finding accommodation once released from prison.

I think what they need is more help out there for people so they can set them up with accommodation – landlords that will take social. In the prison, they do everything they can to help you, but it's when you walk out that gate.

Information and advice –

An important part of the prison's role is providing people with the information they need to make informed decisions. This role is performed in some prisons by peer support workers, e.g., through the St Giles Trust Information Advice and Guidance service. Information must be matched to the particular situation of each prisoner.

One person described how the peer support workers had identified his housing needs, informed him of the services provided, and offered him choices:

I come out – anytime from next week – on HDC, which is a tag. Then getting housing – they've put me into BASS which is a shared house for between two and four people. So while you're on a tag you'll have your own room but share a kitchen and a bathroom. You got to stick to your hours and all that. You got a caseworker who comes I think once a week to see how things are going. They've got me a house in that sense. . . . Once my tag finishes, they have to find me accommodation to live permanently, after the tag, which I've found very helpful. Because they've asked me where would I like to live after the tag, where to live while on the tag, so far it's been very helpful. . . . I came to IAG to speak to them and directly told them exactly where I would like to go where I would not like to go, and if they can make it possible for me to get a look around those places to go.

A second prisoner stressed the importance of being kept informed of developments. He described how the resettlement staff had advised him about hostels that met his needs. Then they reassured him by keeping him up to date:

They kept me informed if things happened, they've been over to see me straightaway. I said to her, 'I'm a bit worried, as I'm out in six weeks, that I will walk out in November homeless again.' And I said, 'I know I'll be back in jail within a week.' She said, 'No this time what we will do if they don't have a space, they will get me into another hostel, a temporary hostel until the place comes up where I want to go'. They have been absolutely brilliant.

A third prisoner, speaking about the way he would like resettlement services to operate, focused on providing information in time for the prisoner to take action:

Just give people an understanding of things that they can basically apply for, like signing on, helping them with housing. Because a week ago, someone must have come in, I think they'd been letting people know about housing for about three and a half weeks, and it was coming up to the week for him to go home and they still hadn't found nowhere for him to go home to. So basically when he was coming out he was going to be homeless unless they had found him somewhere on the day of his release. But it was like the next day he was getting released and nothing had got sorted out. So I think they could maybe up that a notch or let people apply for it earlier, like say a month earlier before they leave, or two months before they leave, so they've already got that for when they leave to make it easier.

Advocacy –

In prison, advocacy refers to liaison services between the prison and the local authority and other service providers in the community. The advocacy can be provided by prison staff, the voluntary sector, or by other prisoners.

One person said that the prison had prepared for his release by setting up a meeting with the local housing association:

I'm going to live at my mum's for a month, but after that I have to find my own place, so what they've done for me is they've wrote a letter to my council and explained my situation and given me a letter to take back, a copy. . . What happened was, I was on the waiting list for council, but they got rid of the general waiting list, so I have to basically go to my housing office when I get out with that letter, and then, they've already got a copy so they already know the situation, so then go in there, and see if they can sort me some sort of decent accommodation, a sort of decent hostel, or even, like what I've been doing, I've been having a look for my own places, that I could rent, and get the council to pay for it.

The same person also worked with a probation officer:

When I go back, probation will hopefully help me out, and I've told them my situation about becoming homeless, and he told me as soon as you get released they said they'll get me an interview with the housing probation officer there, so when I've been on my home leaves I've been explaining my situation, so basically he already knows about it, so he's been getting things in place, so he told me when I get released, I'll have an interview with the housing woman, she's a probation woman but she deals with housing and she dealt with me before, too.

The peer support workers were widely regarded as helpful in advocating on behalf of prisoners in need of housing support. One prisoner argued that he had done most of the work himself, aided by the training he had received as a peer support worker.

I used to work in IAG (in another prison) with St Giles, it was a good programme. That's how I know what to do. I rung the numbers, write things down, job done. I don't need them to do it for me. . . . Without it, I'd be homeless; I wouldn't know what to do about benefits or anything.

A prisoner made the point that some people need others to advocate on their behalf more than others:

You get out, you still need all of these things to sort out. Getting a place, you got to go to the job centre. A lot of people can't do these things. Some people find it hard.

Other prisoners cited voluntary sector agencies as helpful advocates:

They have that Hope Housing. They come to see me a while ago. They seemed pretty good. A woman came to see me with a list of places. She even said she'd meet me – she gave me a number – when I get out she'd come to meet me and go to the council place and all that and sort things out if I needed it.

One person felt that a voluntary sector worker, advocating on his behalf, had transformed his experience of being a prisoner:

For me, I've just lost my house. I got no house now. I was lost. When I came in, I saw Barbara, from Porchlight. Her main thing is hostels and stuff. She took me on board and made relevant phone calls. I had money out there to pay my arrears. Just of peace of mind what she done for me . . . and easier access. You have to go through the application system and all that but just to know that someone is doing something about it can take a massive weight off your shoulders. On top of all the housing issues with me, that lady asking me, 'Why's the council done that?' A little bit of compassion is important to me; people you can just go to and say what your problem is and whatever. I've got eleven months left. . . . Barbara didn't have to do that and I really respect her for what she done. There's only so many hostels out there. She's helped me in ringing the council and helped arrange to pay me arrears.

Links to local authorities –

Local authorities have duties regarding people who are homeless or soon to become so. It is in the interests of a local authority to identify vulnerable prisoners well in advance of their release. The authority can take responsibility for the prisoner before his/her release, rather than picking up the pieces after the prisoner has been released and presents him/herself as homeless to a local housing office.

The ideal relationship of prisons and the local community was summarised by the Local Government Association:

“While it may be possible for a NOMS regional office to ‘contract’ for a certain number of places for offenders with a variety of institutions, the need to tailor a package of measures for an individual will require close liaison to ensure the joining-up of services, e.g., housing, social services, benefits and education around individual offender needs.”

(LGA, 2005: 19-20)

In every way that prisoners prepare for housing needs on release, links with the local authority are crucial. One woman commented on a negative attitude she had encountered:

As an old age pensioner, I am not considered a priority by my home authority. I wrote to them well in advance of my release date, only to receive the advice, 'go along to the office when you get out'.

Others backed up the importance of communicating with the local council. A 32 year old black African man; recalled to prison explained:

If you're going for resettlement, before you get out, they should put you in touch with your local council. I don't think they do a lot of that. If you put someone in touch with their local council and local housing associations and what not, it gives you a better chance of getting out and having somewhere to go.

Family relationships –

Out for Good's interviews echoed other studies showing that it is thanks to their families that many prisoners have accommodation after release. Twelve of 27 people asked about their housing arrangements explained that their families had held their housing for them during their time in prison; a further four said that though they needed housing, they could stay temporarily with family members. Thus, 16 of the 27 had some assurance of accommodation through the support of their family.

I've been living with my mum at the moment. So my housing benefit's still being paid because I've got joint housing benefit with me, my mum and sister. So everything's fine, everything's fine.

Mine is slightly easier because obviously I've got a wife and a house to go back to, so it's not a problem.

One person explained that the support of his mother would give him more time to face up to the challenges in the community. Without that support, he would have to solve problems of housing, debt, unemployment, and drug dependency all at once after release.

When I leave jail, yeah, I don't want nothing from them. It depends on me. If it goes wrong, it's me; no one else. I go home to my mum. No one in my house uses drugs. I was the only person from my house that uses drugs. Not everyone has that support. It's different for different people. I go back there. I'll work gradually to my goal.

Whilst some people in prison need more assistance than others, the *Out for Good* interviews demonstrate that prisoners want to take an active part in their resettlement. For many housing is the top priority. Prisoners said they were willing to face the difficulties that often arise as a result of spending time in prison. However, in order to secure and keep a job, sort out finances and work on improving sometimes strained family relationships, they felt that work has to start very early on in the process in order to secure housing. To enable prisoners to be pro-active, they need better access to information and advice and a supportive plan that involves good links between the prison and sources of support in the community.

PERSONAL FINANCES

Time is Money, a report on the financial exclusion of offenders and their families, was published by Prison Reform Trust and Unlock, the National Association of Reformed Offenders in 2010. *Time is Money* found that almost two-thirds of prisoners said that they had struggled to pay bills or were in real financial trouble before prison (PRT, UNLOCK, 2010).

Facts (Bromley Briefings, June 2012)

Assessments for 2007 suggest over 23,000 offenders had financial problems linked to their offending.

48% of people in prison have a history of debt which can cause problems for both prisoners and families on release.

Over four in five former prisoners said it was harder to get insurance and four-fifths said that, when they did get insurance, they were charged more.

40% of prisoners and 64% of former prisoners feel that their debts had worsened during their sentence. Over half of prisoners' families have had to borrow money since the imprisonment of their relative.

Out for Good found similar evidence that many offenders were already in debt prior to imprisonment.

Money wise, I'm £9,000 in debt out there but apart from that I'm alright, I'll pay that off slowly but surely.

I probably will have money issues. I still owe the job centre where I had a loan about four years ago. I don't think they've taken it back. I need a loan to get some clothes, to sort my housing out.

A survey of 133 prisoners by the Legal Services Research Centre found that 16% said that their debts had worsened, or that they had fallen into debt, during their time in prison; and housing was a significant factor (LSRC, 2009: 12). *Time is Money* found that 40% of prisoners, and 64% of former prisoners, felt that their debts had worsened during their sentence (PRT, UNLOCK, 2010.)

Taking responsibility for personal finances

A man interviewed in the *Out for Good* study explained that he had been able to maintain his flat outside, but only because his sister had continued to pay the rent. Another said that he was facing rent arrears for the time he was in prison on a recall. He expressed frustration that he was prevented from negotiating with his creditors as his debt rose. A third person, a father of two, explained that paying back for the rent would have serious consequences for the family's budget.

I know we'll be in rent arrears; there's going to be a management programme to pay that back. And that will pretty much be it. It's not just the debts, we are not going to have a lot of money.

Of the 96 people surveyed in prison for Time is Money, almost two-thirds (63%) felt that money would be a major problem for them upon release (PRT / UNLOCK, 2010: 39). Looking ahead to release, housing costs were a major financial concern for some prisoners interviewed in *Out for Good*:

If you were looking for housing you wouldn't want to go to a halfway house, so you'd look in the paper and see what's up for rent and find the deposit. But I wouldn't be able to find the deposit because I haven't got the deposit and I haven't got a job.

The capacity to exercise personal responsibility in managing one's finances is very restricted while in prison. The obstacles that prevent a prisoner from trying to be accountable for debts and preparing to keep to a budget on release create a kind of financial limbo. Against this background, the typical advice about financial problems appears to be: wait till you get out; then deal with it.

I have six weeks of mail waiting for me at home. God know what horrors are in there. My credit card company might say, 'We're closing you down'. I'm not in a position to ask anybody else to do that. It creates so much tension.

The *Out for Good* interviews also demonstrated that the obstacles to managing personal finances affect people in individual ways, as in the following two examples:

The first is a man whose partner is currently managing their debts outside. He would like to be in a position to help, given that he was the main breadwinner prior to his imprisonment, but the pay for working in prison is meagre:

My finances are becoming reasonably dire. I know there are people if they are in the establishment long term who are doing jobs for proper remuneration and managing to bank money, but I understand that is people who have been given sentences of six to eight years or longer. With shorter sentences – anything under 12 months or maybe two years - you get the financial impact and the trauma but there isn't any way to sort that before release.

The second is a single man, over 65:

They stop your old age pension if you're over 65. I can understand stopping part of it but they stop the lot. But you still have all the household expenditure; your council tax, your mortgage if you've got one, the electricity. Stopping the whole pension – they say it's for food and lodging. They are taking your money and creating problems for me. I still have to pay those bills. That is wrong, that is making life harder for older people. You still have to pay your council tax and everything else. It would be different if they stopped half your pension.

He was asked what he could be doing from prison to resolve those problems.

I've got to wait till I get out. You can't actually get money into your bank account. You can't have a cheque, so you can't get transfer money into your account. So you can start having cheques bounce even if you have got money in your account, because you can't actually do anything.

From different perspectives, these two support the more widely held view among prisoners that prison is very effective in preventing people from managing their finances, and therefore they must wait till release to begin to exercise financial responsibility.

When I'm outside I can find the work and make money and then pay for everything. But until now my debts have been the worst thing for me.

As prison prevents people from taking responsibility for their finances, much of the burden inevitably falls upon their families.

The prison . . . suggested I write to them [creditors] and say I'm in prison. I didn't think that was wise, so I got my sister to pay the minimum. I think there should be some way to sort this out from inside. When you go out there could be all sorts of bills and things unpaid.

There's been some financial problems and my other half has just managed to keep her head above water and that little bit of money we had put aside is now gone because of loss of earnings for the year I've been in.

Four of the 34 respondents in the *Out for Good* study said that on release from prison they would be destitute.

Asked if he had had any help with finances, one said he had applied for

...a community care grant. I need that because I lost my flat last year and I lost everything in it. Now, all I've got is what I've got in prison.

I got out of prison last time and it took me I think two months to get benefits. How do they expect you to live on that? I don't know. . . . I've got nowhere to go when I get out. Just dossing when I get out till I can find somewhere.

I got no clothes when I get out there, cos all my stuff was stolen from where I was living. I've just got a pair of jeans, t-shirt and trainers, so if it's cold when I go out...

Peer advice in one prison, and a wrap-round resettlement service in another helped people with their finances in various ways. Information, advice and guidance, IAG, was run by prisoner volunteers who had been trained by the St Giles Trust.

IAG, they're the people who sort it all out, they sort out your housing, they sort out your bank account, they sort out your citizenship card, and they help you if you're in debt, like, this is probably one of the best prisons I've been to, like, they're doing stuff and they do it quick, like the last three weeks I've had loads of appointments . . . I've had to see the job centre lady for signing on again and to keep my housing benefit going.

Two days before I was sentenced, the bank decided to close all my accounts . . . I thought, what can I do? There was nothing I could do to change banks in two days. I was hoping I wouldn't go to prison, but what was I going to do about my direct debits? Then I discovered, through the IAG about the Co-op. But it took me six weeks to get that process. I came to IAG to make the phone calls to the bank . . . It has been an uphill struggle, but it's not been the prison's fault. IAG have been helpful. They've allowed me to set up the account with Coop. That has been the one golden nugget. But I don't know how many prisoners are aware of the help they can get from IAG.

Before March 2012, people had to wait until after they were released to apply for benefits. The gap between their discharge from prison and the start of their benefits may have been a month, two months, or even longer. It was impossible for the £46 they received as a discharge grant to bridge this gap. Since March 2012, the Freshstart policy means that they can have their job seekers' interviews while inside, report to the job centre immediately after release, and start their benefits right away. *Out for Good* fieldwork was completed before the policy change, and it is too early to say whether it will achieve the aim of reducing the 'finance gap'. To avoid any unintended consequences, this new system needs to be kept under review by the Department for Work and Pensions and the Ministry of Justice.

As in other challenges to be faced after release, the capacity to take responsibility for finances depends in large part on being provided with sufficient information to make intelligent choices. *Time is Money* reported that only 6% of people in prison received advice on day-to-day money management (Prison Reform Trust, UNLOCK, 2010: 41).

Many prisoners were aware that a criminal conviction would increase their insurance premiums. But some commented that prisoners were lacking the information they needed to maintain their insurance:

I've had to fight for information. For example, prisoners face problems like they can't get insurance, they can't get a bank account, they can't get loans. There's very little information. I actually saw a tiny leaflet on the wall which you could hardly read, and I could see it was prepared by Unlock, I asked for that to be photocopied. Because a lot of prisoners will leave here in a motorcar, without insurance. If you don't declare it you won't be insured. I know I need that information, I've been asking for it. But a lot of people are blissfully unaware.

FAMILY

My marriage survived the sentence, but not the release. When I returned home it soon became evident that things had changed. Instead of my wife and children relying on me for everything, they had become independent, self sufficient. They had learnt to live without me. I felt surplus to needs.... Perhaps we should concentrate more on the emotional challenges of release, and not just the material things.

(Former prisoner, quoted in Loucks, Prison Reform Trust, 2005: 11)

“Criminal Justice System needs to see families as a resource which are part of the solution.”

(MoJ / DCSF, 2007: 17)

Facts (Bromley Briefings, June 2012)

There were approximately 200,000 children in England and Wales who had a parent in prison at some point in 2009.

In 2006, more children were affected by the imprisonment of a parent than by divorce in the family.

Prisoners’ families are vulnerable to financial instability, poverty, debt and potential housing disruption, and it is estimated that the average personal cost to relatives of a prisoner is £175 per month, although these figures are conservative estimates and likely to be higher.

Prison governors receive no specific funding to meet the costs of family support work, parenting courses, family visitor centres or supervised play areas. This means any family provision must come from a governor’s already stretched and shrinking general prison budget.

Prisoners’ families, including their children, often experience increased financial, housing, emotional and health problems during a sentence.

Children of prisoners have about three times the risk of mental health problems and/or anti-social/delinquent behaviour compared to other children.

Families’ role in resettlement

Families can have a powerful, positive influence on resettlement. The families of prisoners cover a wide range of relationships, and their role is partly determined by whether they are parents, siblings, children, extended family; and by whether the prisoner is a child, or an adult male or female.

The role played by a family depends on whom the person in prison sees as their family. Prisons sometimes base their work with families on stereotypes. For example, a Prison Reform Trust project on young offenders’ relationships with their children found that many young offender institutions took ‘family’ to mean the parents of the offender – not their children.

... a survey of male prisoners in HMP Camphill carried out for Action for Prisoners' Families found that 51% of prisoners were visited by their parents, 46% received visits from their partners, 42% from siblings and only 36% from children.

(Mills, 2005: 4)

A defining factor of the family's influence on resettlement is the prisoner's gender. The *Corston Review* described differences in the problems women offenders were likely to face, differences that are not fully acknowledged in working with them on their resettlement. Many women offenders were previously the primary carer for dependent children.

Breaking the Cycle, the government's green paper, recognised the importance of diverting women offenders who do not pose a risk to the public away from custody. But greater attention is needed, in resettlement policy, to the circumstances women offenders are likely to face. Each resettlement pathway should be re-considered in view of how it relates to women who offend. Despite the reference to the *Corston Review*, the green paper neglected the gender differences that need to be taken into account in rehabilitation and resettlement. There are also some cultural differences in the concept of family – rarely taken into account in a prison's family policies.

The family's previous relations may have been directly linked to the offence:

- a family member may have encouraged the person to commit the offence
- a family member may have been the victim; or, at least, the offence might have occurred within the family home
- family relations may have been broken off following the offence.

In any case, the family is likely to have experienced negative consequences as a result of offending behaviour.

Families and reoffending

Promoting separate interventions for resettlement creates a false picture that an individual's life can be neatly parcelled into silos. Families often enable ex-offenders to access a wide range of resources: facilitating practical solutions, affecting attitudes, negotiating the return to the community, and motivating offenders to take action on problems with drug misuse or mental health. The practical benefits of family ties, such as access to jobs or accommodation, have dominated research on the role of the family in reducing reoffending.

Some of the *Out for Good* respondents stated that through their family they had assurances of accommodation, employment, and income:

What I've done is I've got my girlfriend to contact the job centre and pick up a letter from them so that when I come out on the 18th I've got an interview for the 22nd and they do training courses from the job centre and things like that.

I do all the gardening anyway on the out, landscape gardening. I designed my mum's garden, and her friend come round and said, 'Can you do my garden?' And I was like, 'Yeah, course I can. You just get me the stuff.' I've got a little portfolio, like I've got about five gardens I've done.

My dad owns his own decorating company so I've got something to go into.

Families were also frequently cited in questions about housing. In some cases, the family had maintained the prisoner's address; in other situations, a place in the family home was likely to be a short-term arrangement.

I want to stay with my brother, get straight on the housing, get a little flat in Didcot where my brother lives, that'll do me.

At a deeper level, families are often crucial in rebuilding esteem and giving the person the confidence that they are capable of desistance. The people who mean the most to the offender give their lives a meaning and direction. Shadd Maruna's work on desistance demonstrates that offenders who devote themselves to raising their children or caring for elderly parents find that crime and imprisonment is incompatible with such roles (Maruna, 2010).

To conclude the interviews with prisoners, we asked what they were most looking forward to on release. Time with families was by far the most common response.

Seeing my children. That's the most important thing in my life.

Seeing my missus and my kids. I can't wait to see my little boy's face. He'll be three next year. He is at the age running around; magical! He lights up my life. And my baby. Babies do baby type stuff but by the time I see him he'll be trying to stand up. Being back in my little unit is going to be brilliant and after that I really don't care.

I'm looking forward to maybe getting to my mum's, really. Looking forward to her saying I can go there and get a room there and settle down a bit. Fresh start – there's always a fresh start. Different place; different faces; a new challenge.

Children were mentioned most often in the *Out for Good* interviews with reference to a personal commitment to stop offending.

Yes, definitely, since I've had my kids that's made me grow up and it's made me realise that anything I do is going to affect them, so anything that I do I've got to think first, basically.

Prison never stopped me thinking I don't want to go to prison. The fact that I had children changed the way I thought. Cos I thought what is really going on? I can't be using drugs: my kids grow up and see me using drugs. I can't be in prison cos in prison I can't look after my kids. I don't want no one else looking after my kids. They need both their parents. Every time you go to prison, they changed. And you're not seeing that time and it's not coming back. And it's crucial times. You might have been there and there is something you would have taught them, which you didn't get to teach them. They need to know that in their life, so you have to be there.

The times I've been in jail before they haven't really been enough of a deterrent for me, because obviously I didn't have my kids then. And I'm thinking, 'Hang on a minute, this is alright: three meals a day, roof over my head, no nagging from the missus', so it does have its upsides. It's bearable, but now I've been away for two years and three months now and this has killed me. This one's done it; I'm not doing no more after this. Without meaning to sound too coarse, I know that I'm not going to come back to prison. I mean I've been away from my kids for two years now and that's killed me more than anything else. I mean obviously I've watched my daughter grow up with photographs and that's about it and speaking to her on the phone.

I had to fight to get myself off methadone. ... I know there's other people who are too scared to do it. I've got two boys out there, I've got things to live for. I want to better myself. I only started using hard drugs at 30. I'm 35. I want to leave that behind. It's not too late for me to sort myself out.

One thing that's keeping me sane here is my children.

Relationships with children could also inspire the person to be more pro-active in resolving problems with resettlement, and specifically housing. A small number of prisoners said that finding a place to live was a first step in rebuilding relationships with their children.

I know once I've got a roof over my head I can set myself up with a job, eventually getting my own place, having my kids stay with me on weekends.

The duties to support a child and parent them bring out a sense of responsibility and altruism. But concern for family can encourage altruism in different ways in different relationships. One person told us:

Since I've been in jail, I've done nearly three years now, but 17 years ago I had a massive big row with my family and I didn't talk with my family for 17 years. But it's only on this sentence that I've started talking to my family, and I ain't seen my dad for 17 years. Now, my dad's 81 on Monday and he's going downhill very, very fast. Now, I would love to spend the next six months after coming out of jail being a carer for my dad. I'd love it. My mum's still there, just to take the pressure off my mum.

The family could also inspire the person to change in particular ways, or to pay greater attention to factors that could lead them back into crime:

I'm preparing myself a lot. Preparing myself inside, knowing I've got to be a better person for my partner. Drinking was a big issue with me and the only person who can prepare myself not to do that is me. My partner has made it clear that if I start again I will lose her and the kids. And I know that in my heart. The only problems I have is if someone close to me dies cos that will push me towards having a drink. Severe stress, too, but I can't really see that.

All the people on the wing think I'm that mad having dropped down so much methadone, and come down that far, but I want to come out of here a clean man. I want to make my mum proud. I don't know how long she's got.

The impact of offending on the person's family could inspire remorseful feelings:

I can do my time here but I'm thinking I've gotta stop putting my mum through this again. I've gotta stop doing that. Tell me what's wrong with me and if anything that's more of an incentive for me to do the right thing, than anything else really, than the punishment of the crime, or the prison. I'm hurting other people who love me, because they're affected as well. It's not just me being affected by being in prison and you as the taxpayer as well. Obviously the people who love me they're affected as well. They're in jail with me as well if that makes sense. I think that's quite difficult, I think that can also be a good catalyst as well, if that makes sense you know to stay out of trouble and do the right thing.

Part of the complexity of the families' role in resettlement is that some may influence the prisoner in negative ways. One person interviewed for *Out for Good* said:

I only talk to my mum anyway, I only talk to my mum and my sister, the rest of my family are wrong 'uns so I just keep away from them.

Another described a town visit he regretted taking:

The town visit, my dad begged me to book him one. He said, 'I want to take you out'. I said, 'If you drink or anything like that I will make my own way back to the prison'. I had to pay for everything myself, and I gave him money on top of that. He's a joke. The cheek of it, after he walked me back to prison, he asked me for more money. He done bird himself. He's 45, 46 and living his life like a 21 year old.

Family ties can motivate offenders away from offending. The impact of their punishment on their families can cause them to reconsider their lifestyles. The acceptance by their families can improve their self-esteem and confidence about facing the future. These influences – though difficult to measure – may be more important than the instrumental role families can play in providing access to jobs or housing, or alleviating financial stress.

Supporting families' positive role in resettlement

"In November 2009 the Ministry of Justice and the Department of Children, Schools and Families published 'Reducing reoffending: supporting families, creating better futures', a framework for improving the local delivery of support for the families of offenders. It sets out how the 'Think Family' approach can make a difference for these children and families at each stage of the criminal justice system, from arrest to the end of sentence and beyond, if the key agencies work together. The framework was developed in partnership with the third sector and highlights the role of the sector in working with these families and in helping to make the case for investing in them as part of a wider agenda to tackle social exclusion."

(Pitts, 2011: 20)

People whose family ties are intact, strong and supportive when they are released are more likely to sense a commitment to society; offenders who have no family support are more likely to feel excluded (see Forest and Hay, 2011: 489).

Unless prohibited for safeguarding reasons, most families should be engaged at an early stage in resettlement, to the extent that they want to be involved. In broad terms, the reasons prisons should do far more to engage with families are:

- families can motivate desistance, by inspiring and sustaining an offender's commitment to stop offending
- families are an important resource in providing solutions to practical problems the person will face after release
- as a matter of respect, prisons and probation need to involve families in any decision about the offender which will affect the family.

However, the wishes of prisoners and their families should be respected. One of the men interviewed for *Out for Good* acknowledged that he had much to do to rebuild the trust of his family. But, asked what the prison could do to help, he replied:

It's a sensitive subject. They can't really get involved with it. It's too sensitive.

The capacity of families to contribute –

The extent to which families can make a positive contribution to resettlement depends on their capacity to help. The families of many offenders are already under financial pressure, before the sentence, and the imprisonment of a relative is likely to worsen their financial situation.

Cambridge University and the Ormiston Trust conducted a survey of 54 families while the father was inside; and followed up 40 fathers and 49 mothers up to six months after release. The study found that:

- mothers were slightly more likely to be in a job after the man's release from prison (17.5% before the man's imprisonment rising to 22.5% after)
- men were less likely to be employed after prison than they had been before (55% before, to 34.2% after prison)
- 60.5% of fathers were receiving benefits before prison; but this rose to 79.5% of fathers post-prison; the proportion of mothers receiving benefits did not change
- mothers' mean weekly income rose by about £30 but the men's income fell by over £100: thus the combined mean weekly income fell by almost £80 from before prison to after.

(Lösel, F, Pugh, G, et al., 2012: 47)

The reliance on families to meet practical needs for resettlement, particularly accommodation and finances, can lead them to feel that they are only valued as a means of solving the prisoners' problems – they may sense that their value to criminal justice practitioners is merely instrumental.

HMP Norwich Visitors Centre:

The visitors centre is run by the Ormiston and Children Families Trust. Ormiston have a high profile presence at the prisoner's induction, publicising the centre's services. The centre offers a personal induction for every first time visitor, an Ormiston DVD providing information on visits, an Ofsted registered crèche for children up to eight years old, baby bonding sessions for fathers (with health visitors present), Storybook Dads and twice weekly child and family visits. Debbie Campbell, the services manager, feels that more could be done to bring the prisoner and the family together at the sentence planning stage. She also believes that visitors centres should 'reach out' into the community more, citing the strong links that have been made between the Jigsaw Visitors Centre at HMP Leeds and the NHS in West Yorkshire.

Although most families can be supportive and inspire the person to lead a more law-abiding life, there are situations in which reconciliation with the family should not be an aim of the resettlement process:

My son he went into care at a young age, because I was in prison. I know where he is but I choose not to see him at the moment because of the drugs. He's permanently adopted now, but I know where he's at. I'm not meant to but I wrote a

letter to the judge saying let him live with this woman and I would take myself out the case and walk away from it. I don't see him at the moment but I know where he is. But I took myself out the case. I thought it was better for him. At the time, I was a heavy drug user; I was doing about two or three grand a week at the time, on heroin and crack at the time.

Involving families in resettlement –

A study by Visher and Travis concluded that 'at the heart of a successful transition is a personal decision to change', but this needs to be accompanied by acceptance by family, friends and neighbours (cited in Crow, 2006: 13). By modelling non-criminal values, and accepting the person while challenging harmful behaviour, families can motivate offenders to try to lead a law-abiding life on release.

Part of being resettled involves rebuilding relationships with those who care. Phillips (2011) highlighted the need in some families for repairing conflicts while the person is inside. She suggested that prisoners who wish to rebuild relationships may need support to help them and their families.

HMP Kennett Partnership project

The Sefton Council for Voluntary Services (SCVS) acts as a central co-ordination point for agencies wanting to work with prisoners at HMP Kennett. PSS Impact Plus and Barnardos work with children and families, providing support for them at every stage of the resettlement process for the prisoner.

PSS Impact Plus manages the Visitors Centre at HMP Kennett but also runs a Visitors Forum to help visitors to develop services, and a practical support group for families. PSS also offers both one to one therapeutic help and groupwork for children with a father in prison. The partnership has forged links with schools, family and children's centres and primary health care teams throughout the Merseyside area.

Within the prison Barnardos deliver a range of Family Link Work Services, including Family Days, Family Literacy and Parenting classes and support for prisoners at pathway meetings. Action for Prisoners Families have suggested that the emerging profile of HMP Kennett's partnership and of the PSS Impact Plus is very much in line with government thinking (Seamus Walsh, HMP Kennett nomination for Prisoner Action Net Awards 2010).

The *Out for Good* interviews brought out prisoners' thoughts about the importance – and difficulty – of rebuilding relationships which had been undermined by prison.

I focus purely on a foundation, my inner circle, myself and my loved ones. You have to focus on that because they're suffering through my being here. There are cracks in my foundation which I have to repair.

Rebuilding relationships was often made more difficult by the ways the prisoner's offending had affected his or her loved ones:

Yeah, I've got family problems. I said about my mum. I've lived with her in the past but I've done a lot of things wrong and that. Like police come round kicking the door off and stuff. Not good.

Other respondents recognised that their relationships had undergone changes in the time they were away:

I feel that there could be some difficulties out there, because obviously I've been away from my partner for a long time. We've both changed because we were both just coming off the drugs when I came to prison. She's set in her ways now, so it could be a little bit confrontational at times.

It's hard keeping in contact from here anyway, by letter or phone calls; stamps cost money, the telephones are really, really expensive, astronomically expensive but it's not encouraging people to maintain them family ties and them family values and that family interaction is even more difficult when they get out and I think that's going to hamper their resettlement as well because they'll feel like an alien going back because you won't have spent much time with them.

You're always thrown out at the deep end. You have been in prison for a number of years. Bang, you're living with your wife. You haven't seen her for two years but now you're living with her. You've got your children running around you and you have the responsibilities of life; plus the pressures of supervision. There should be more resettlement in the sense of going home for a day and a night.

Whether it was appropriate for the family to help with jobs or housing depended to some extent on the quality of their relationship. For some, the reliance on family accommodation was bound up with tense relationships and therefore unstable.

My mum's willing to take me back for a month and I've been away for a little while, so eventually we sort of talked and got things together, she's not fully trusting of me yet, because she knows it's happened before, I've come out, so after that month is over that's where I'm going to be stuck.

A joint review by the Ministry of Justice/Department for Children, Schools and Families found:

"There is little acknowledgement that prisoners' through-care support is crucial to a child's well-being and we saw cases where there is some support to offenders as parents inside but little or even none on the outside following release. Equally, transition points within the criminal justice system are particularly weak: a family may get some support at the point of arrest, but then none during imprisonment."

(MoJ / DCSF, 2007: 14)

"Families have a substantive role in supporting prisoner needs, in some cases bringing information about voluntary sector agencies and social networks and in highlighting problem areas and suggesting alternatives when speaking on behalf of their children to prison and probation officers. In many cases young people in prison need to be guided and supported in the decisions they make or programmes they agree to attend. Most of the families in this research wanted direct contact with personal officers so they could help make the right decisions in the best interests of their children."

(Samota, 2011: 25)

HMP and YOI Parc

Since 2005 Parc Supporting Families (PSF) has been developing 'innovative ways to establish, maintain and enhance family ties' by encouraging 'active citizenship, reducing the likelihood of reoffending, promoting low cost rehabilitative services from the voluntary and private sectors and developing bespoke programmes for offenders and PSF staff' (Ellis, S HMP Parc *Family Interventions*)

Parc Supporting Families has links to over 47 external agencies who are involved with:

The Family Interventions Unit. The FIU opened in November 2010, and is a 60 bed living unit where prisoners focus on repairing and taking responsibility for relationships. Prisoners take ownership of various family related activities on the unit, helping to develop programmes and provide information to new residents. It is thought to be the only unit of its kind in the world.

The Learning Together Club. One evening a month children under 15 are able to bring in their homework to complete with their father and Parc provides resources for all the school curriculum and key stages. The work of the Learning Together Club was highlighted in 2010 by a BBC Documentary 'My Dad in Prison', and has been nominated for the Marsh Trust Award for 'outstanding work with Children and Families' and the Prisoner Action Net Relationships Award.

MPACT. Moving Parents and Children Together is a pilot project developed in conjunction with Action on Addiction. The programme consists of 12 sessions and works with the whole family focusing on the impact of, and support that is required for, prisoners who misuse substances within a family setting. The programme has been evaluated by the Mental Health Research and Development Unit at the University of Bath.

Parc Supporting Families also has:

- an integrated visits centre
- 24 hour telephone support for families
- two supervised play areas
- a free bus shuttle service for families
- e-mail a prisoner facility
- family centred visits
- specialist engagement visits for those prisoners on the vulnerable persons unit
- a range of courses to build family relationships, including parenting courses, the Safe Ground Fathers Inside Course, the Family Man Course, a Focus on Families Course (which looks at the challenges for the family after release) and the Time for Families Course.

Out for Good promoted greater involvement of families as early as possible in a prison sentence, so that they feel a part of the preparations for release. One prisoner commented:

I think it'd be an amazing idea. It'd bring them closer together, they'd know the boundaries won't they, so they'd know what the rules of the game and it'd bring them closer together at the same time and when the person goes back to their cell and reflects about it they can think right I need to get a job, I need to stay off the drugs, I need to stop going downtown and being immature, or whatever, I think it'd be great idea, but I'd reckon it'd never happen because it'd be too much resources for them to actually do that, I mean I know this is a holding prison so it's a different type of regime here.

Another respondent suggested that prisons could do far more to enhance family contact:

For a start for people who are serving longer sentences they should have some sort of course where they're introduced back to their family, their kids. They've got nothing like that here. Even if they extend their visits, give them longer visits with them, give them a chance to get to know them again. They've got nothing like that here; that's one thing that they need in these places.

Prisons can also do more to facilitate family relationships through greater use of home leave.

This whole family issue I'm good with that. I've had home leaves, I've built my bridges and trust back. My family understand that I did the crime and I did the time, but they still love me regardless, so I've got no family problems. I've been on home leave spent time with my family, relaxed.

I have been on home leaves, and yes, actually, a very nice thing because I've seen my sister, my nephew, my friends, we had such a nice time. It was the first time after my first time inside. It was alright, that's something new. I was surprised, just to see the family.

Cultural differences in resettlement processes can also be mediated by families. For example, the family expectations about resettlement can be affected by their culture.

Double Trouble recommended that prisons do far more to involve families in the decision-making about resettlement, well in advance of the person's release date:

Prisons must seek to engage the family as partners in the resettlement process, given families' potential contribution to resolving practical problems faced by newly released prisoners, and bearing in mind the positive impact that family support and responsibilities can have on offenders' sense of belonging and on their motivation to change.

(Clinks/Prison Reform Trust, 2010: 5)

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

The problems start after release . . .

The green paper, *Breaking the Cycle*, stressed how important it is that people who have treatment in prison continue to receive help and support after prison. *Breaking the Cycle* acknowledges that prisoners who serve less than a year do not receive supervision after release and have limited time while in prison to benefit from prison programmes (Stewart, 2008).

Facts (Bromley Briefings, June 2012)

Shoplifting, burglary, vehicle crime and theft can be linked to drug misuse. Over half of prisoners (55%) report committing offences connected to their drug taking, with the need for money to buy drugs the most commonly cited factor.

81% of people arrested who used heroin and/or crack at least once a week said they committed an acquisitive crime in the previous 12 months, compared with 30% of other arrestees.

Between a third and a half of new receptions into prison are estimated to be problem drug users (equivalent to between 45,000 and 65,000 prisoners in England and Wales).

Almost one in five (19%) of the 3,489 prisoners interviewed for the *Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction* study who had ever used heroin reported first using heroin in prison.

Prisoners being held in large prisons find it easier to get illegal drugs than those in small prisons (38% compared to 26%). They are also less likely to know who to contact to get help with drug addiction.

Drug treatment programmes in prison, especially psycho-social programmes and therapeutic communities, were associated with a 26% reduction in criminal behaviour.

Nearly two-thirds of sentenced men (63%) and two-fifths of sentenced women (39%) admit to hazardous drinking which carries the risk of physical or mental harm. Of these, about half have a severe alcohol dependency.

Of the prisons inspected in 2010-11, just under half had no alcohol-related services or programmes available. The Inspectorate found that at every stage in prison, the needs of prisoners with alcohol problems are less likely to be either assessed or met than those with illicit drug problems. Services for alcohol users were very limited, particularly for those who did not also use illicit drugs.

The misuse of drugs and or alcohol typically combines with other difficulties to increase the risks of reoffending. For example, a recent summary of the SPCR evidence found:

Prisoners who reported needing help with a drug or alcohol problem were also more likely to report needing help finding a place to live when they leave prison.

(Ministry of Justice, 2012: SPCR Research Summary 3/12: 1)

29% of those who stated that they needed help with a drug problem said that they were homeless before custody, compared to 9% of those who did not require this help. (MoJ 2012: 4)

A thematic report by HM Prisons Inspectorate, *Alcohol Services in Prisons: an Unmet Need*, (2010A) found that nearly half of the prisoners they surveyed (44%) said that they had emotional or mental health problems in addition to problems with alcohol. Women were far more likely to report overlapping problems of alcohol misuse and emotional or mental health needs.

The impact of multiple needs which include drug or alcohol misuse on offending highlights the importance of finding support outside the criminal justice system when people are released:

Local authorities have a statutory duty to assess an individual's need for services identified in the resettlement plan. If the need for these services is there, there is a duty to provide them. For adults, this assessment is also the gateway to assessments by other agencies. If, during the assessment process, it appears to the local authority that there may be a need for the provision of health or housing services, the local authority has a responsibility to notify the relevant PCT or housing department and require it to assist in the making of the assessment.

(The Bradley Review, 2009: 114)

The people interviewed for *Out for Good* confirmed that the pressure to take drugs or to abuse alcohol hits them after they have been released from prison:

There's bad influences. I know people out there – call them friends, acquaintances – they see you when you first come out and they think, 'Yeah' even to tap you up for the bit of money you got to score some drugs. It helps them out and they don't care, do they? They got an addiction to feed: nothing bothers them.

If you're addicted to drugs, it's a lot easier to deal with when you're here than when you get back out there. When you get back out there, you know the people you know – otherwise you wouldn't have been around it in the first place. Now you've got access to all these people again, with no help to guide you to say that's not what you're supposed to do.

Two respondents explained that they hoped to be given a methadone maintenance prescription on release, and they were anxious that no such arrangements had yet been confirmed.

They're gonna have to provide me with a script, a methadone script, go to your chemist and they've got to give me one of them because I can't see the doctor until the Tuesday and they've got to give me an appointment with them, and I don't find out until the day I go out, whether they've done that, which can be a bit nerve wracking for me like because I'm on methadone. I'm still wondering, it would be handy to know in advance with things like that that this stuff is set up, because I could get to the day and they might say, 'We've missed you out, it ain't been set up.' What can I do about it? I'll walk out that gate then I'm left with what money to spend what money I've got then may go back to thieving to get some drugs to get myself straight, and one of the things is I get released on a Friday so I ain't going to be able to sort anything out.

Problem alcohol misuse is not often addressed

A Prison Reform Trust briefing, published in 2004, reported that almost two in three men in prison (63%) and two-fifths of sentenced women (39%) stated that they had been involved in hazardous drinking. Of these, about half had a severe alcohol dependency (Prison Reform Trust, 2004).

HM Prisons Inspectorate found that the needs of prisoners who have alcohol problems were less likely to be assessed or met than people who have problems with substance misuse (HMCIP, 2010B). The inspectorate concluded that services in prison for alcohol users were particularly limited for people who did not also use illicit drugs. Just under half of the prisons inspected in 2010-2011 had no alcohol services available (HMCIP, 2010B).

One respondent told *Out for Good*:

I'm a classic recidivist in the sense that I repeatedly get done for drunk driving. The likelihood of me getting done again is high...I see prison as an inconvenience, not a deterrent... The prison should have investigated my issues with alcohol in-depth. ... Even the help I have asked for hasn't come through....I did try to get into detox, because of my alcohol issues, and they said no, they weren't helpful.

Another person explained that his problem alcohol consumption lay at the heart of his offending:

I'm preparing myself [for release] a lot. Preparing myself inside, knowing I've got to be a better person for my partner. Drinking was a big issue with me and the only person who can prepare myself not to do that is me. I know in my head I can't drink. Alcohol doesn't agree with me. If I drink I put myself at risk of reoffending. That's the only preparation I can make for my resettlement.

A project by Women in Prison, *Women Moving Forward*, designed to draw on the experience and expertise of women prisoners, heard them explain the impact of alcohol misuse on their lives:

[The women] . . . thought that there is support for drug users in prison but no support for people who use alcohol or are alcohol dependent. They thought there should be access to librium, but also emotional and peer support for alcohol use. They had previously found that AA meetings were almost secret, and not widely publicised in the prison, so few people had access to them. Women thought there should be more support, and more widely available and publicised in prison.

(Women in Prison: *Women Moving Forward*)

One woman asked: "What about women with alcohol problems? CARATs don't touch us and there's nothing else available!" (*Women Moving Forward*, Women in Prison).

Programmes that boost personal responsibility

Drug services in prison are delivered by the CARATs programme: counselling, assessment, referral, advice and throughcare. Prisoners who had had access to CARATs staff tended to rate this programme very highly.

Well, I have drug issues, and the substance misuse team here have been brilliant, they've been really good, really focused, really helpful and always there as and when you need them, now if that's a negative side of something I bring to prison, then they've been very positive and pro-active where they've been concerned. Yep, the CARATs department here have made contact and set me up with the DIP team in Maidstone, and that's all sorted.

Some prisoners reported that they needed help and could not access it.

I'm only doing a short sentence. People take priority above me. I put down to see CARAT workers, and try to get into rehab when I get released, and they're saying there's no funding. Very poor: nothing – I've had no help. I've put in complaints about CARATs workers, and I seen my CARAT worker yesterday on the landing and she said she was too embarrassed to come and see me cos they didn't have enough staff – that was her actual words. If someone comes in before you, you get pushed down and they get more services.

Others described how they had taken responsibility for getting themselves off drugs and ready for release:

I did the detox myself when I come in here. I've had my release date papers, that's all I've had, nothing else. They haven't said to me, 'We can help you out when you get out.' I have spoke to CARATs. I actively spoke to them myself, and said, 'If I'm still on a bit of methadone when I get out of here, then I don't want to have to go on your waiting list, and have to use while I'm waiting on the waiting list. I want to be able to leave the prison and then go straight to the regional DIP.' And then they can prescribe me, so I don't have to commit crime and end up coming back here on licence, for another five weeks, but it's my own steps.

One course, Prisoners Addressing Substance Related Offending (PASRO) is ideally suited to working with prisoners at their own level and helping them to develop a structured way of dealing with problems.

Asked about the affects of the PASRO course on his motivation, one person told *Out for Good*:

That's the first thing it helps you with. Like I said, we're in prison, there's not the access to drugs. So now, what happens is you go to these courses. When you join them you have to do VDTs [Voluntary Drug Testing]. You're not going to pass the course unless you pass all your VDTs. So this is your drive. . . . See, when you pass your first VDT, you're happy. It feels nice. You pass the next one. Every time you pass one it's more motivation, cos you realise one week gone, two weeks gone, three weeks gone. I ain't used drugs. I don't need to use drugs. It makes you believe you can come off the drugs. Then, before you know it, you are off the drugs.

Another explained how PASRO was particularly good at working with each person at his or her own level:

I've done PASRO Prisoners Addressing Substance Misuse and Offending and it teaches you to take little steps instead of setting yourself up to fail. Since I took PASRO, I've got my accommodation, my kids, I've got a better relationship with my mum. Instead of taking that big step and failing all the time, thinking, sod this, it's taking little steps up the ladder. I'm achieving the things I've set myself in life. PASRO is a brilliant course. If you got your head wrapped round it and you really want to change, it's a brilliant course.

RAPt (The Rehabilitation of Addicted Prisoners Trust) was also highly regarded by those prisoners who commented on any experience with it:

RAPt, is that resettlement? That really helped me, that really helped me open my eyes. ... When I done RAPt and certain people told me about their lives and the work, and the videos that we've seen, I just thought to myself, that's bad, so it made me look differently towards dealing drugs and stuff.

The misuse of drugs and or alcohol typically combines with other needs to increase the risks of reoffending. Almost two in three men in prison and two-fifths of sentenced women have previously been involved in hazardous drinking. Drug treatment, courses, and support inside prison, including RAPt, PASRO and CARATs were highly regarded by many prisoners, while others noted the need for more support for alcohol misuse. To reduce the risk of reoffending, people whose drug or alcohol misuse has been identified in prison must continue to receive help and support after prison.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Prisoners are simply a wasted resource – thousands of hours of manpower sitting idle.

Kenneth Clarke (The Independent, 3 January 2012)

In these places, even though we find ourselves in these situations, there are brilliant writers, artists, people that have created everything. Everybody somewhere inside them has got something that they're good at, but they don't look to find that in people or to help them.

(Prisoner, interviewed for *Out for Good*)

Facts (Bromley Briefings, June 2012)

In 2010-11 26% of prisoners entered employment on release from prison.

37% of prisoners did not expect to return to their jobs upon release.

32% of prisoners interviewed for the *Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction* study reported being in paid employment in the four weeks before custody. 13% reported never having had a job.

Prisoners who reported having been employed at some point in the year before custody were less likely to be reconvicted in the year after release than those who didn't report having been employed (40% compared with 65%).

Women prisoners are often inadequately prepared for release. Only 24% of women with a prior skill had the chance to put their skills into practice through prison work.

The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (2012) has reformed the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) by extending the maximum sentence that can become “spent” from 30 months to four years and significantly reducing the period before which fines, community orders and short custodial sentences become spent. When implemented, under the new system they will start from the point when an offender completes their sentence, rather than at the date of their conviction.

Out for Good gathered in-depth evidence from a small sample of prisoners about their role in making decisions about the full range of problems they might face on release. *Out for Good* was not an evaluation of programmes in prison to help prisoners into jobs. Equally, the impact of a prison sentence on one's chances of finding reliable and satisfying employment would require a distinct study.

The interviews and focus groups conducted for *Out for Good* shed some light on the opportunities and obstacles prisoners face in making decisions about finding work. Some of the themes we explored with prisoners were:

- what problems they expected to encounter in seeking work
- whether they had received help and advice about jobs that were relevant to their needs
- what steps they felt they could take while in prison to ensure that they were ready to take employment after release.

The descriptions of efforts to become job-ready also raised wider questions about the match between the support provided and their needs and interests. For example:

- To what extent did the job training inside fit the kinds of jobs they would like?
- What attempts were made to identify their particular skills prior to providing help with job searches?
- Were services to prepare people for job searches based on the types of work they were likely to find?

Employment and offending

Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (Ministry of Justice, SPCR, 2010) found that 68% of 1,435 prisoners surveyed reported that having a job would be important in helping them stop reoffending and 48% reported needing help finding a job on release from prison.

There is strong evidence of an association between employment and reduced offending, although it is difficult to determine a causal relationship. Studies show that offending diminishes when offenders gain employment (Farrington et al, 1986; Sarno et al. 2000), and people who had a job before coming to prison were less likely to re-offend after release (SPCR, 2010).

A resettlement survey in England and Wales (May et al., 2008) found that work experience after release was related to reoffending rates. The lowest one-year reoffending rate (45%) was for those with a paid job to go to, over 10% lower than those with training or education arranged for release (56%). The few who said they did not want to work had the highest average reoffending rate (75%) (cited in MoJ, green paper *Evidence Report*: 60).

A prisoner interviewed for *Out for Good* drew a contrast between the stability of a full-time job and the uncertainties of making money illegally:

I'd go back to being an electrician, because it's safer, and it's steady money that I get every week, so I could provide for my family. And I know I'm not going to get in trouble, going back to the way I was before. You make a lot of money at once, but then comes the problems. When you actually work for it you appreciate it and spend it more wisely, if that makes sense?

Prospects for employment after release

Recent research shows that 51% of prisoners had been in employment in the year before custody (Ministry of Justice, March 2012). This is lower than the UK general employment rate, which was 75% in 2006 for those of working age. Furthermore, 13% had never been in paid employment (Ibid.).

According to a survey by Niven and Olagundaye (2002) 24% of prisoners interviewed said they had a paid job arranged after release. In 2010-11 only one in four prisoners (26%) entered employment on release from prison (Prison Reform Trust, Bromley Briefings, June, 2012: 63).

Irregular or low quality employment is another disadvantage which many prisoners have faced. In Stewart's (2008) study of newly sentenced prisoners, only 33% were in employment in the four weeks before their custody began. Unemployment was eight times higher among people entering prison than in the general population (Clinks / Prison Reform Trust, 2010).

The Prisoners Education Trust's survey of 532 prisoners (PET, 2011) explored prisoners' hopes for release and their perspectives on the barriers they were likely to face. Prisoners were asked about their plans for after release. The survey listed a range of options and allowed for multiple responses. Three-quarters (76%) said they would like to find a job; and over half (56%) said they were interested in going self-employed. Many (44%) expressed an interest in voluntary work.

About two-thirds of the prisoners interviewed for *Out for Good* expected that they would seek work when released. Very few said that they were going into training or further education. One of the people interviewed was retired. Two of 34 stated an intention to sign-on for Job Seekers Allowance (and gave no indication of wishing to find work). About one in three of those who expected to seek work already had a confirmed job set up; mostly through family links or previous employers.

Many respondents expressed a strong desire to enter employment as soon as possible after release:

I said I don't want to be on JSA for long, I would prefer to get a job. I don't want to be stuck on it for a long time.

I'll do whatever, as long as I'm getting paid and can provide for my family, I'd even empty bins, it doesn't matter what it is and as long as I'm getting paid and I've got a nine to five job, then I'm happy.

Most prisoners were fairly confident that they could find work. A small minority expressed the view that much as they would like to work, and adaptable as they might be about what they could do, it was highly unlikely that anyone would hire them.

I have worked in the past and done jobs, warehouse jobs and things. I've done quite a few jobs. But when I was out, I was looking for a job last year for about six months or seven months and I just couldn't get nothing; especially for ex-offenders.

Conversely, many prisoners described how they had taken responsibility for their future employment prospects. One explained that he was pursuing education while in prison because he felt it would enhance his job performance, and he was already assured of a job on release:

I'm doing literacy, level 2 in numeracy and literacy, because I've got a job when I get out. I had a job before I came to prison; I was a welder. I was doing it with my friend's uncle. I was going to college three days a week and working two days a week and at weekends. But he's saying basically when I come out I can have a full time job. He's gonna keep me on still, he's willing to take me back.

Another had a job offer as a result of a lead he had been given by a fellow prisoner.

Research has identified factors that hinder offenders in finding and keeping employment. These include:

- lack of basic skills and formal qualifications
- maintaining a place to live within reach of the job
- poor physical health (sometimes complicated by substance misuse)
- attitudes and prejudices (stigmatising ex-offenders)
- whether a job search should be through specialist or mainstream services
- keeping good relations with employers.

A survey by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development showed that people with a criminal record are part of the “core jobless group” that more than 60% of employers deliberately exclude when recruiting (PRT: Bromley Briefings, June 2012: 63).

Out for Good interviews discussed the obstacles to employment that prisoners expected to find. The two most commonly cited were the legal requirement to disclose a criminal conviction (cited by 13, or half of those for whom a job was relevant) and the state of the economy.

When does your sentence stop? I'm on licence till 2013, but my CRB checks will throw that up for ten years, so when does the person's sentence stop? When does the person stop paying the debt? Is it when he's sunk and actually lost his house because he can't pay his mortgage because he can't work? Yes the employer has a right to know; but doesn't the individual have a right to get back to work and get on with his life?

A few who were concerned about disclosing their offence felt that that requirement channelled them towards certain types of employment:

I do think I'll face problems when I get out because the charge I'm on is theft by employee, so it doesn't look good; does it? So I think finding work will be a problem. However, if I'm going into the construction industry or become self employed, which is probably the best way round it, I don't think there's really that many questions asked.

One of the options considered to avoid having to disclose offences was self-employment. Four people stated that they planned to start up a business. However, there was no clear evidence that the challenges of self-employment had been discussed with prisoners.

Obviously with the disclosure and that finding a job will be pretty hard. That's why I'm going self-employed.

I do really want to go self employed but everyone has to start off at the bottom, don't they, so I'm probably going to have to start off working for someone just so I can get the money and the tools, and then hopefully in a couple of years I can start working for myself.

The current state of society outside at the moment isn't good for starting your own business.

Out for Good also heard from prisoners who felt uncertain about a job due to the economy. The Office for National Statistics reported, in May 2012, that UK unemployment was 2.63 million, with a jobless rate of 8.2%. Almost 900,000 had been unemployed for more than a year. The number of people working part-time because they could not find full-time employment was 1.42 million. (BBC News, 16 May, 2012).

I know in the current climate there's not a lot of work out there, I know it's hard for people who haven't got a criminal record and that to get work out there, so we haven't really got much of a chance to be honest.

Structural obstacles encountered by prisoners –

The *Out for Good* interviews revealed a range of ways that rules, structures, or policies hindered prisoners in seeking work. A number of prisoners commented on the low levels of capacity in the services provided. One man, in an open prison, said that, out of over 400 men too few were allowed to work in the community:

There's the working out scheme which is for longer term people here. If you've been here for more than a year I think it is, then you can do community work, then you can do paint work if you've got a job set up. I mean that's a good scheme, but someone said there's only 11 people doing it at the moment, which isn't exactly encouraging.

One structural obstacle was the mismatch between national, regional and local services. While prisons are a national resource, the employment services available are, for the most part, localised. Thus, a prisoner in south-east England who was planning to return to his home in the north-east found no relevant help in finding a job.

I don't know what the job market is in Newcastle at the moment. I've got no access to any of that in here, so I can't proactively do anything. . . . Now, other than being in Ford [open prison] I could not be further away from where I live. So how on earth that is resettling me I do not know.

Two men described obstacles in finding a job from an approved premises (hostel).

Someone in a hostel can't even get a job. They are not allowed to get a job. The rules they've set up, in order to get a job you have to break the rules. The hours – it's only nine to five. . . . That is not resettling people back into the community. You want us to get jobs so we don't commit crime, but at the same time you tell us we cannot get a job. So, what do you want us to do?

If they put you in a hostel you can't work because hostels, you've gotta be signing on to get housing benefit and if you're signing on then you can't work legally. But if you go into a hostel working then they charge you £100 whatever it is a week, and if you don't get paid for two weeks then when you're getting paid, most of your pay is going to them before you can get a place to stay.

A woman in an open prison described how policies regarding release on temporary licence (ROTL) discouraged people from finding work.

I have been in a long time. It doesn't look good on my cv. So I wanted to do some work as a volunteer. I looked in the Yellow Pages and found six to eight possible places to work. I phoned them. Three said they would see me. Then the prison said

that I couldn't be a volunteer at the business, because it wasn't charitable. So then I went to education. I thought if it wasn't volunteering, perhaps I could get it as training. But then the cost came into it. The prison said if it was training, then the place I would work would have to pay my travel expenses. I was already having to explain that I was a prisoner. It just seemed designed to make things harder.

Another person at an open prison explained that the prison's policies had meant he had not attempted to find work while on temporary release:

I've only got six months on my sentence. When I come here I had six months and of that six months I had to first wait 28 days. Then you have to do three months voluntary [work] and by then it was time for me to go. So if I done three months voluntary, then you have to find a proper paid job. But it's not that easy – by then it was the end of my sentence. If I'd come here a year ago, when I should have, then I'd have had a better chance.

A final structural problem, albeit cited by only a few respondents, was that being in prison prevented them from seeking a job.

Being in jail now it is kind of hard to resolve those problems. You don't have access to a lot of things in jail. I could go to the education department but I couldn't go online. You don't have internet.

My problems start when I get out. It's very limited what anyone could do in here.

Another person explained that after release, his hope was ...

To try to get some normality back in my life, some structure. And for me, in essence, that's working. If an individual hasn't got structure, hasn't got a job . . . that's it. The biggest punishment in prison is lack of structure; or, there's structure there, but there's no meaningful role for a prisoner in prison. It strips you of an identity, of self-esteem, and that's half the things that need building up for these people to go back out. This system strips it away from you. It takes away your identity.

Finding work while inside

The Prisoners Education Trust survey also explored prisoners' views on sources of support in looking for work. Three-quarters (75%) said they would rely on the Job Centre; 55% said they would turn to their families; a similar number (54%) said they would turn to a recruitment agency. Slightly fewer cited a voluntary organisation, a Back to Work scheme or the prison resettlement unit. Just under one in five (18%) mentioned the virtual campus, but this potential source of help was not available in all prisons. The survey also asked prisoners which they believed would be most helpful and which would be least helpful. The Job Centre was rated most helpful by a third of respondents, but it was also rated least helpful by 28%. Families and friends were seen as most helpful by over a quarter (28%).

Niven and Olagundaye (2002) found that over half of those prisoners with jobs or training arranged on release had achieved this because of pre-existing contacts through friends or family (39%), or a former employer (16%), highlighting the importance of sustaining such links during imprisonment. Just over one eighth (13%) had managed to make their arrangements through prison job clubs, pre-release programmes, prison education departments, a probation officer, or the employment service (Crow, 2006).

Out for Good asked if the person had received help in finding employment; and 32 people responded. Half (16) said that they had not received help in finding work. Another 12 explained that the help was not relevant to their needs. (Many of these already had a job lined up.) Four respondents (just over 12% of those interviewed) said that they had been helped while in prison.

I have got myself an employment history so that's going to help. But with regards to jobs and training, I think I'll be ok. And with regards to the prison coming and asking me about it, there's been no interaction. They haven't come and asked me about that, and I think it'd be good for someone to come and ask me about that.

Staff from the Job Centre were singled out by prisoners for criticism about their attitude towards prisoners who genuinely want to find work.

I was sent to that lady from the job centre; she cannot even do her job properly. She comes here saying to me, 'What are you gonna do?', so I said, 'What are you gonna do for me?' She gives me this number with a company's name on it. She won't let me use her phone, so I have to go back to the wing to use my money to make a phone call. I phone the people up and he says, 'Are you totally mad? This is a butcher's and if you think I'm going to have prisoners running around with knives, think again.' And she gave me the phone number, so what's the point in going for a job?

They just literally tell you what jobs you can apply for and about benefits. It's as if they're pushing you towards the benefit system, rather than trying to get you a job sort of thing.

Others, however, perceived a degree of understanding from job centre staff in the community:

Job Centre Plus ... you look in there and they can point you in the right direction, but they know what it's like. As soon as you tell them you just come from prison it's just, 'Sign-on' sign the benefits form.

Timpson

Timpson worked with prison industries to set up special training workshops for offenders. Serving prisoners are trained in shoe repair while in prison and those who complete the course are in a strong position to obtain work with Timpson after release. The first Timpson academy opened at HMP Liverpool and another was recently opened in HMP Blantyre House. James Timpson, Managing Director, believes that prison works for his company as well as for the former prisoners on his payroll. As a result, he's always looking for his next 'superstar' employee.

'I find the staff we've recruited from prisons are among the best colleagues we've got. We see this as a great way of not only helping people but of getting people to work for us. We simply recruit people who we feel deserve a chance. I think the best way to avoid people going back to prison is to give them a good job.'

John Timpson commented:

"We have seen some real success. We are about to open our fifth prison workshop and 16 of our shops are now managed by people recruited from prison. Out of nearly 300 men and women who have joined us over the last four years we only know of seven who have re-offended. But it isn't just the statistics that tell me we are making a difference, I receive regular evidence during my shop visits whenever one of our recruits from prison talks about their life-changing experience."

(Timpson, The Telegraph, 7 May 2012)

Timpson has also produced a guide for employers which sets out principles for successfully hiring people coming out of prison (Timpson, 2011). The guide covers reasons for employing ex-offenders, how to recruit, train and supervise them, the benefits of mentoring, how to work with prisons, relations with the media, and how to overcome problems that might arise.

Helpful preparation for work in prisons and job satisfaction –

In their review of research on 'what works' Harper and Chitty (2005: 21) suggest that the mere fact of having a job may not be the crucial factor in reducing reoffending. Other important aspects are the stability and quality of the job and the personal satisfaction that goes with it.

BeOnsite

BeOnsite provides disadvantaged people with relevant building industry training

Training with a range of partner organisations specifically tailored to each job role and industry needs, BeOnsite works directly with the supply chain to understand what the skills are and then organises bespoke training using employer-led provision. This collaborative approach, working with industry, government and training providers ensures the industry gets the training provision it needs, the individuals gain sustainable skills and a career, and the UK remains competitive.

(Source: BeOnsite)

Two warnings came from research on employment by Webster et al. Support towards finding employment can backfire if prisoners are set up to fail:

Raising job expectations through training without any serious prospect of a job on release may be actively damaging rather than just ineffective. This makes tailoring interventions to the local job market and/or employer involvement in programmes key success factors. Also, employment in prison workshops does not appear to increase the chances of employment on release.

(Webster et al., 2001: 19)

The *Out for Good* interviews yielded a variety of suggestions about how prisons could change the way they prepare people for employment. The interviews did not systematically collect prisoners' views on how to improve. However, some people suggested in their interviews that prisons could do far more to place people into jobs – or at least set up job interviews:

With the resettlement thing, if it's done properly, they could be phoning these other places up. This guy's done this, he's addressed this, he's looked into this, he hasn't been any trouble on the wing, he's not in any trouble. Can we maybe give him a chance, even if it's part-time, let him get his foot in the door? And see how he works out. If it doesn't work out, get rid of him, fair enough, but it's not going to hurt to give the man a chance. If everything he's doing is good, maybe he wants to try, let's give him that opportunity.

It would have been good to have some arranged jobs or interviews for the day of your release, that type of thing, rather than saying the day after your release you just go and sign-on, is there a way they could forward plan a few interviews for people, even if it's just part-time at some supermarkets or things like that.

I think the prison could be doing a lot to help people find jobs. They offer you a lot of training and education but they don't offer you . . . with some training they give you a job afterwards they give you the option. But all they do here is give you the qualification. It's for you to do your own work and it's hard enough to find a job coming from jail. The jail could do a whole lot more.

A longstanding problem with resettlement was the period between the day of release and the first receipt of benefits. This 'finance gap' occurred because prisoners had to wait until they were released before applying for benefits. The Government has addressed this problem, and since May 2012 people leaving prison will be referred immediately to the work programme. Claims will be assessed before release. One aim of the change in policy is to increase the number of people entering work immediately after prison.

The policy will treat ex-offenders differently from other claimants, as ex-offenders will be required to go onto the work programme. The policy is supported by evidence that a job can help prevent reoffending. But other evidence shows that many prisoners lack qualifications for many jobs; and that prisoners are more likely than the general population to have learning disabilities, mental health problems or other health needs that are incompatible with full-time employment. Employment opportunities can also be limited by license and reporting conditions, the prejudices of some employers, and the offenders' duty to disclose under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.

The main difficulty with the scheme is that it is not voluntary. People leaving prison are placed under additional requirements and must engage with the jobs market to continue receiving benefits. Anyone who is not willing or able to cooperate will be sanctioned and will lose their benefits. *Out for Good* has shown the importance of ensuring that people leaving prison have opportunities to make decisions that fit their resettlement needs. People leaving prison have other urgent needs, such as finding accommodation, accessing drug treatment, or re-building family relationships. A scheme that takes away choice from people and makes access to benefits dependent on compliance could be counterproductive. As it develops, the work programme should take account of the particular difficulties faced by people leaving prison.

The challenges in finding jobs for people coming out of prison mean that full employment for everyone leaving prison is unrealistic. High unemployment, employer stereotyping of former offenders, and different skills levels, show a need to recognise and support alternatives to full-time employment. Former prisoners should also be helped to find opportunities to volunteer, take part in peer mentoring, or provide information, advice, and guidance, as the St Giles Trust provides. Such non-paid roles not only prepare the person for employment, they have inherent value in reintegrating people into their communities and giving them a chance to make amends (see Phillips, 2011).

TRAINING

Prison is not just a punishment; it's a place of opportunities if you choose to access them.

(Prisoner, interviewed for *Out for Good*)

Facts (PRT: Bromley Briefings, June 2012)

Post-release, only a third (36%) of people leaving prison go into a job, educational course or training

Half of prisoners lacked the skills required by 96% of jobs

48% of prisoners are at, or below, the level expected of an 11 year old in reading, 65% in numeracy and 82% in writing.

47% of prisoners say they have no qualifications.

The challenge of finding a job after prison is compounded, for many prisoners, by a lack of employable skills. Although the relationship is far from clear, there are links between the level of qualifications and the risk of reoffending. SPCR found that 60% of people leaving prison with no qualifications were reconvicted, in contrast to 45% of those who had qualifications (MoJ: SPCR, 2010: 118).

As a respondent told the *Out for Good* team:

I think the main thing is employment or getting back into training so you have something to do and don't go back to your old lifestyle.

In mid-2011, the Coalition Government announced a review of vocational training in prison, intended to ensure that the skills taught to offenders are matched to the requirements of employers. John Hayes, Minister of Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning, linked training to employment:

Our goal is to make sure offenders understand there are viable alternatives to criminality. Rehabilitation through education works best when there is a strong link to meaningful work. I want to ensure that, for as many ex-offenders as possible, release is not followed by re-arrest, but by employment and re-integration into law-abiding society.

(John Hayes, 18 May, 2011)

In 2010, a study identified a range of problems which undermined the aim of making prisoners more employable. "Problems that obstruct efficient functioning of prison ETE [education, training and employment]:"

- poor targeting of need
- lack of incentives to learn
- absence of rounded assessment of offender's skills, needs and aspirations
- difficulties experienced as a result of the prison regime
- lack of links between education and training inside and outside prisons.

(Huggins, 2010: 12)

All of these problems were reported in the *Out for Good* study. A number of respondents commented that target-driven education and training resulted in poor targeting of need:

They say, 'Get your Level 2.' I was getting 95% passes on them, but they won't let me take the exam. It's like they want you to keep on the course, because you know, once you've passed there's no one to fill the space on their course. It's a really odd system. I know people who've been on the course for months, and then they give you another test.

I had to fight tooth and nail to get on the bottom rung of the education which was to do your numeracy and literacy level 1. Now I've already done A-levels, but I had to do that in order to get into the education system.

Another person explained that he would be looking for agency work upon release and considered that forklift training would increase his options.

They offer a forklift course but they insist on everyone taking the course to have a level two in numeracy and literacy. Now, when you look outside, because I phoned two companies outside, there is no national requirement to do a level two numeracy and literacy to do forklift. . . . And because of the time constraints, by the time I'd gotten the level two numeracy . . . I'd be fine if they gave me the test I would have been fine, but you have to do four or five weeks.

Implied in Huggins' list is a tendency in prisons to focus on the risks presented by a prisoner rather than skills and interests; operational requirements taking priority over learning; and a failure to connect learning opportunities inside prison with resettlement. For example, operational needs result in people being transferred between prisons, disrupting their learning:

According to the National Audit Office, one third of courses started in prison are not completed, half of which are as a direct result of the release or transfer of prisoners, wasting an estimated £30 million annually. This problem also serves to reinforce the negative experiences of education which the majority of offenders encounter.

(National Skills Forum, 2009: 9)

A few prisoners told *Out for Good* that the training opportunities were not adequate for the demands of the job market outside. One said they needed more of:

Education and training, outside education and training or qualifications etc. that are actually worth something. What they do at the moment is, they give you these basic qualifications that in the real world aren't really worth anything. They're not worth the paper they're written on, no one recognises them. What help is it going to do?

I'd have more practical courses for the construction industry and I'd have them at a higher attained level because what they're teaching you at the moment is basic, obsolete. It's not something that would be used in the real world.

The Virtual Campus

The virtual campus allows prisoners access to web-based material including careers advice, CV development tools, advice on managing debts or family difficulties, and accredited course study. A secure web-based resettlement tool can enable prisoners to resolve obstacles to resettlement and to prepare themselves for the labour market. It also provides a means of sending secure, checked electronic messages to prospective employers and learning providers post-release. The system offers particular advantages in the efficiency of learning delivery. Partnerships have been established with providers of prison education and the Open University, so that learners can complete online courses. There are over 1000 learners on the Virtual Campus and for many of these people the experiences has been transformational.

(Prisoners Education Trust)

Some prisoners highlighted the lack of training places as the major obstacle. For example, in one prison holding 1200 men, there was a bricklaying workshop. It had a capacity of 20. On the day of our visit, only five men were on the course. This is supported by a number of reports on other establishments by the prisons inspectorate:

There were insufficient activity places but of those available, only 60% were occupied.

(HMCIP: Isis, 2011: 5-6)

Education only worked at two-thirds capacity. Prisoners spent between 16 and 20 hours locked in their cells each day and we found a third of prisoners locked up during the working day.

(HMCIP: Durham, 2011: 5)

Conversely:

Perhaps Stafford's most significant achievement was that as a training prison, its work to provide a meaningful and purposeful training regime was very good. There were some needless restrictions to the amount of association time available, but there was sufficient activity for all prisoners and those places that were available were properly utilised.

(HMCIP: Stafford: 2011: 6)

Out for Good interviews revealed other problems getting access to training:

The only thing I wanted to do was brush up on Excel just for accounts and stuff like that, so I went to Tribal. I said, 'I don't want a full time IT course. I work in the library; I just want to pop in and do Excel.' I was twelfth on the list. That was four months ago, and I went in the other day and I was 36th on the list.

I tried to start a CSCS course, health and safety course, because I was going to try that to go into labouring and that, so I could be an electrician, and do a bit of labouring, all in one sort of thing, to get more money, but they said I'm not here long enough to do the course.

Positive experiences of training in prison

A majority of prisoners understand that a lack of qualifications prevents them from getting into satisfying work. 53% of men in prison (58% of women) cited unemployment and a lack of skills as problems that contribute to their reoffending (PRT: Bromley Briefings, Dec 2011: 63). SPCR found that training was a common feature in most prisoners' resettlement needs. 48% mentioned a need for help finding a job; 42% cited their need for qualifications; and 41%, work-related skills (quoted in Pitts, 2011). A respondent for *Out for Good* spoke positively about the training he had received because he accepted that he lacked employable skills.

It's a five week course basically. So that's what I'm doing, because that's probably the only thing that I could do. I can't go out and get a job straightaway because, apart from working in prison, I've never worked outside. I ain't got many qualifications because I was suspended from school at 15/16, so this is the only option for me.

Another described how the prison had provided various training opportunities in response to his efforts to improve his job chances on release:

I've done my level 2 and 3 theory course in plumbing, numeracy, and literacy. I was working in the kitchens [in a previous prison]. I did my level 2 food hygiene; I've done my CSCS course as well.

AimHigher

Every prisoner entering the prison is introduced to the project by the project team and given the opportunity to sign up. Those who sign-up are allocated a mentor and together the mentee and mentor work together to develop a Personal Development Plan (PDP). This is an extensive document that encourages the mentee to explore ideas for their future, their existing strengths and weaknesses, their skills and experiences as well as future goals and the steps needed to achieve them.

Offenders are able to set themselves short, mid and long-term goals and the creation of an action plan to reach them. It provides informed, relevant and valued practical support. The scheme is owned by the participants and, consequently, encourages buy-in by those who participate. It promotes positive role models, commitment, motivation and credibility.

The project works for the following reasons.

The project is proactive inside prison and reactive outside.

It gives clear focus to an offender's time in prison.

Critical elements of the project are peer-led and delivered.

It provides offenders with a positive and achievable plan to take away from prison.

(Source: Huggins, paraphrased)

Aimhigher has given me hope and opportunities and that has given me a clear view of my future and what I need to do to succeed without crime.

(Sven, AimHigher)

One person, who felt the prison had really helped him, explained that the support he had received taught him to be realistic about his prospects and take small, positive steps:

This prison, I think they've done what they can really. They offered me what's available for me. They've got me a course to do, so it's alright. Because I went there looking for a job, and they said that it's not that easy to get a job, but there's things you can do to work your way round it. So, in a way it's alright, when I looked at the brochure it made sense, it does cover a lot of things, how to prepare CVs, how to do job interviews, computer skills, and things like that.

The National Grid

The National Grid Training Scheme is an exceptional example of how a private company can promote sustainable employment among suitably trained former prisoners. The programme is working with over 22 prisons, with adults and young offenders. The pre-release programme runs in partnership with National Grid's contractors, who provide jobs and support for successful trainees when they leave prison.

Over 2,000 offenders have gone through the National Grid Young Offender Programme. The reoffending rate is only 7%, compared with the national average of over 70%, resulting in a significant saving to taxpayers in the United Kingdom. Every trainee is offered support and mentoring both pre and post release in order to ease the transition from prison life to the world of work.

Recruiting people who have been in prison as employees must make good business sense. Dr Mary Harris of the National Grid Young Offender Training Scheme said:

"We are talking about real jobs - this is not a charitable process - that are going towards the bottom lines of our companies. Their motivation has to be as high, or higher, than people who come to us through regular routes."

This same person considered it helpful that the prison encouraged his initiative:

It prepares you like, gets you ready for outside innit, gets you more responsibilities. Like, say you had a job interview now or you went and got an application. That's something you have to fill in yourself; you can't just go and ask a peer support worker. So when you get used to doing applications in here it makes it a bit easier, so that when you get one out there you know what to do.

Out for Good interviewed others who reported very positive experiences of training. One of the prisons offered a rail repair and maintenance programme. A man interviewed there cited the course as an inspiration.

I still want to do my railway test while I'm in here cos when I get out if I have a place, within two or three weeks I'll be working on the railway. I'd enjoy it. I'd find it satisfying.

At another establishment, prisoners cited a high-tech laundry, and a motor mechanics shop. One respondent mentioned training he had taken to become an electrician:

What I was doing I was taking up the floorboards and we were re-routing the whole house. . . Like, I had to put the wire all the way through the floor and the cables and we had to drill a hole in the wall like this and run the wire through and cement it all back up, and hook it all up . . . I've enjoyed it because it's something I didn't know and it's something I've learnt and it's something I've taken time out to learn for myself.

These comments support the idea that good quality, satisfying jobs markedly increase the person's motivation to stay in employment and not risk losing it through reoffending. In addition, training can encourage offenders by giving them a fresh sense of direction. One respondent described the unexpected benefits of an assessment by the prison education department:

Because I doubt myself I doubt my abilities, in the jobs I could go for. I always think, "That's too complicated". I go for quite easy jobs, low pay. I know I should push myself further. It's kind of opened my eyes. In eight years, I haven't forgotten much. In fact I've probably learned more. My English is a good A-Level standard. Maths is a high GCSE standard. I thought I'd forgotten everything. So that's a pretty good thing. It's made me realise my own strengths, which I knew I had, I just started to doubt them over the years. It opened my eyes to say if I want to go to college it's not going to be too difficult.

Prisoners interviewed for *Out for Good* perceived a strong link between taking constructive steps to find work and self-esteem:

If somebody's doing some training and they ask you about the time you've been in prison, you can have little skills to explain that, doing role plays for job interviews. Because not only is that it helping them planning for the future, but it's also giving them some aspirations for the future, some confidence, but it's also offering something more constructive for them to do in here and for the future.

Increasing opportunities for training –

A man interviewed in a local prison described the high level of training he had received while inside. His qualifications not only allowed him to help the prison with its health and safety requirements; he was also supported by the prison in training others:

I'm a qualified BICS person. I give them information around the jail, what equipment to use, using health and safety data sheets, that kind of thing. I'm a practitioner of industrial cleaning: British Institution of Cleaning Science. You deal with any kind of machinery cleaning, bio-cleaning. You train other prisoners up to get the qualifications to do it.

Within the group of people interviewed was a variety of employable skills, including carpenters, electricians, painter and decorators, industrial cleaners, and plumbers. Some respondents believed that prisons could make much better use of this wealth of experience, as prisoners could train their peers in basic skills:

I've been a plumber and a drainage technician for years, and I've got more

qualifications in plumbing and drainage than the guy who they pay a yearly wage who walks around here. There's been about four or five occasions where I've actually told the plumber, 'Do it this way and it'll be working', when he's been scratching his head for about three hours. . . . I could actually teach other inmates, give them a bit of a trade.

Professionalising - you got a lot of qualified tradesmen, men with really robust skills in particular trades, which they choose to ignore. I'm a fully qualified electrician. When it comes to installations here – I've done all that stuff as competent as the works department yet that's ignored. I'm not unique in that. You've got people from all walks of life, all skills, and it's a resource that is not tapped.

You get electricians who get sent to prison. If you have an electrician as an inmate, what a better way to give him but to teach other people! Keep him occupied, keep the people he's teaching occupied and using the skills that he's got. Plus they change the standards every year and it keeps him up to date so he knows what to do. I think this prison could keep up with things like that. Hands-on stuff is very important. Not everyone is academic.

A second suggestion about how to increase the training provision was to attract greater involvement by industry. We have already cited the example of Timpson and the National Grid, who manage training workshops in prison, from which they can recruit people with the greatest potential. One person described how he used his initiative earlier in his sentence:

I wrote loads of letters to local industries and said listen you've got an untapped workforce here, who you can get to know over a three or four month period before they get out, short termers, who we can train to a level so that they can walk straight into your jobs when they get out, some were doing forklift course, NVQs 1 and 2, which is waste management, and they started employing people straight from the jail, and it worked well for a while.

Good quality, satisfying jobs markedly increase the person's motivation to stay in employment and not risk losing it through reoffending. But only one in four prisoners enters employment on release from prison. Most of those access jobs primarily through family or friends, or maintaining contact with previous employers.

A survey by the Prisoners Education Trust found that three-quarters would like to find a job. One of the main obstacles is a lack of skills. The examples of Timpson and the National Grid show that it is possible to increase the provision of training in prisons by attracting greater involvement by industry.

The Clink

The Clink is an award-winning restaurant within HMP High Down. It was established in 2009 by Alberto Crisco with the support of Governor Peter Dawson to provide high quality training for prisoners in hospitality. It represents a genuine opportunity for change, offering prisoners the chance to gain food preparation, food service and cleaning qualifications as well as experience within a working restaurant. As part of the programme, graduates receive dedicated support from a mentor to seek full-time employment within the hospitality sector as well as help to secure accommodation, obtain financial help, open a bank account and anything else to ease their reintegration back into society. (Source: www.theclinkcharity.com)

As of July 2012, 85 prisoners were trained in The Clink, 25 of whom have stepped into full time employment upon release. One graduate commented, "This is where my life-changing career path began – I saw how well organised and structured the kitchen was, and wanted to be a part of it," says Ross. "When I was released, my mentor got me an interview at a four-star hotel and a few days later I got a call to say they would take me on as an apprentice." (Source: Paul Ross, the *Guardian*, 3 July 2012: 'High Down prison chefs show Gordon Ramsay how it's done') The charity has signed up 120 companies that have agreed to take on graduates in a wide variety of jobs, including catering, food delivery and customer service.

Recently, the charity confirmed that it will open a second restaurant, The Clink Cymru, with HMP Cardiff in September.

ENGAGING PRISONERS: LEARNING FROM PRACTICE

The *Out for Good* team visited a range of prisons to investigate examples of work with prisoners that encouraged them to use initiative and take responsibility for their post-release plans. These visits were not intended to yield a comprehensive audit of all effective resettlement services within prisons and there are obviously other sites that could have been profiled. The aim was to develop and test ideas about how services can better engage with offenders, by speaking to prison staff and experts from the voluntary sector.

Principles of effective engagement with offenders

At a seminar organised by Clinks, Fergus McNeill described how commissioning could promote desistance (McNeill, 2010). To be most effective, it was important that commissioning recognises that change belongs to the individual; services must be able to mediate links for the offender into the community; and central to this process is resolving conflicts between the offender and his or her community. The last of these is rarely recognised or addressed in practice.

Co-ordination of services –

In a discussion group for *Out for Good*, women prisoners said they needed:

Better communication between different departments and with outside agencies. It would help to get consistent messages: we are always being told different things.

Vanessa Geffen, who is managing a mentoring pilot project for Catch 22, described the way the mentoring scheme builds bridges between the prisoner and organisations outside which have general functions. In co-ordinating the pilot, Catch 22 entered into partnership with eight mentoring providers, including SOVA, Derby Race Equality Council, and Re-think.

In a local prison visited in gathering data for this report, offender managers recognised that part of their role was to build and promote links to the community. The prison saw offender managers as the hub that links the various services which are individually relevant to the offender. This was designed to work against the tendency for prisoners to get piecemeal support delivered by services in silos:

People get patchy help, like a job, but no place to live, or drug treatment but no job. . .

At the same prison, the head of offender management described efforts to draw on diverse expertise in preparing a package of support after release:

Education works closely with the resettlement team. They are excellent and highly skilled at the full continuum of learning disabilities. We release people to certain premises which are equipped to work with severe learning disabilities; and others for mental illness. But they are very expensive.

An effective model of co-ordinating resources drawn from the community, so that they serve prisoners efficiently, is run by Sefton Community Voluntary Service (CVS). Sefton CVS works in partnership with two prisons, as the broker between voluntary sector agencies in the community and the prison:

...acting as a central co-ordination point within [this prison], supporting existing partnerships and working in the wider community to support positive outcomes for offenders. This is achieved by providing access to a diverse range of services, support and opportunities both within [the prison] and through the gate.

Sefton CVS has a role in the community linking it to diverse groups, offering a flexible and comprehensive range of support, any aspect of which might be useful to an individual offender. Working with prisons enables them to contribute their expertise in drawing on community resources to meet very specific needs.

A range of services –

A resettlement manager at a local prison explained:

We don't work in silos anymore. There are so many things to do with each offender, so we need a wrap around service, like a social network of support.

A local prison we visited was setting up workshops delivered by specialist groups from the community. These cover topics such as: homelessness; keeping tenancies; benefits; employability; parenting; and alcohol relapse prevention. The participation of local community services and the variety of topics meant that prisoners could choose workshops that they felt were most relevant to them. The aim was to provide a wide enough range of subjects to cover the multiple needs of people soon to be released.

Chris Stacey, Head of Projects and Services at UNLOCK, stated, “Good resettlement programmes ‘normalise’ the person. They are not constantly aimed at ex-offenders.” His point suggests that full resettlement occurs when people have sufficient openings into mainstream services that they are no longer defined as a distinct group on the basis of their offence history.

This would mean that services were aware of situations in which the person’s status as an ex-offender required specialist help, and where that status was irrelevant to the support they needed. As Chris Stacey explained:

You only need to label someone an ex-offender when that status is directly relevant to the kind of support, advice or help you are providing. The ideal framework might be to engage most prisoners and ex-offenders in direct work with the mainstream providers, but make the providers more offender-aware. In addition, the mainstream provider should have ready access to specialist advice from experts in the implications of a criminal conviction. ... An illustration is the job broker: in the community, a job broker takes your list of skills and identifies job opportunities matching that skills audit. An ex-offender specialist has the unique skill of being expert in the implications of the criminal conviction, including the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. To help the ex-offender find work, the job broker has got to be mainstream, but able to call on the knowledge of the specialist.

Genuine consultation with offenders –

Time and again prisoners say that what matters is being made to feel valued. You don't achieve that through ticking a box.

(Resettlement team member at a local prison)

Prisoners themselves can play an important role in the rehabilitation and resettlement process by mobilising the prisoner's own sense of agency in desistance from crime. This counterbalances a widespread belief that rehabilitation programmes are something that is 'done' to offenders."

(Boyce et al., 2009: 1)

The SPCR survey (2010) found that most offenders want to stop offending. Reducing reoffending remains a high priority for the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). Yet there is little consensus between the two groups – offenders and NOMS – about the best way to achieve that result. Of course, on release from prison, people have other goals, such as to rebuild family ties, find a job, or settle back into their community. In working on practical steps, it might be that NOMS' priorities differ from the offender's. How do we bridge the gap and enable the offender's goals to complement NOMS' objectives?

Service and policy can be improved and made more relevant to offenders' interests and needs through feedback from service users in groups. Offenders should be centrally involved in decisions which affect them personally, so service user involvement also has implications for the relationship between statutory services and individual offenders.

At an open prison, *Out for Good* observed an induction, conducted in an informal, relaxed manner that encouraged new prisoners to express their interests. The approach was carefully designed to encourage engagement. A governor said, "Its style is very conversational. The priorities come from the man himself." At the time of the visit, this prison had an officer whose role was to encourage offenders to engage with the prison and whose duties included the promotion of active citizenship.

When prisons or services base their work on controlling 'risks' or managing 'cases', prisoners are not consulted about their plans for release, or their views are not taken into account in making plans. Lemos and Bacon explained how this imbalance undermines the aim of working with offenders:

People's real aspirations may not have even been mentioned to support workers, so staff do nothing to help them achieve their goals . . . Many keyworking sessions - supposedly to discuss support plans and goals - are sterile and pointless, endlessly revisiting long-standing goals and noting depressingly little progress. It's hardly a dynamic way to meet personal aspirations.

(Lemos and Bacon, 2008: 27)

Lemos and Bacon explained how service user input applies in working with individuals. It requires service providers

...to work with service users to define a new approach to support planning. Users would not only be able to decide what their goals were, but also when and how they worked on their support plan, and whether or not a support worker would be present. The idea is to shift the balance of power away from staff.

(*Ibid.*)

One voluntary sector agency was scathing about a tendency in statutory services to standardise services at the cost of sensitivity to personal circumstances. “We don’t go for a sheep dip approach.” A prison resettlement team member added that a benefit of treating each person individually is that it helps to respond appropriately to different cultural needs and achieve equality of treatment:

The core is about the individuality of the person: getting to grips with different cultures. It’s partly about understanding difference, e.g. ethnicity, gay, disability, transgender. Our practice needs to respond individually. If you treat the person on an individual basis you deal with their differences.

In the context of policy, User Voice has been at the forefront of a drive towards greater prisoner say in regimes and prison policy. One of the open prisons we visited holds a prison council every two months. Sub-committees are active during the interval, and any representative can bring up to three concerns to each meeting.

There are advantages of direct meetings between prisoners and prison governors; not least that these serve as the governors’ eyes and ears, giving them direct knowledge of some of the urgent concerns of prisoners. However, where prisoner feedback can be facilitated by independent third parties, further benefits may emerge, as prisoners feel safer about disclosing their views.

Sefton CVS reported that they systematically gather feedback from prisoners to improve their services:

SCVS have held offender focus groups to discuss perception and accessibility of third sector services. Feedback has helped us to promote services more effectively and address gaps to respond to additional needs in a more flexible way. We audit the needs of the prisoners so that we can broker services, on behalf of the prison, to attract the appropriate voluntary sector agency.

Thus, the role played by a third sector agency in asking prisoners about their experience of services helps to tailor the help provided.

A prisoner at a women’s discussion group observed, “Some people are perfectly capable of taking responsibility but probation says they have to go into a hostel, where you’re babied.” A genuine commitment to working with prisoners as partners, supporting them in making decisions about their lives, transforms the working relationship and builds trust. Anyone whose involvement with the criminal justice system has been marred by blame, coercion, and punishment will need time to develop trust in those who have been assigned to work with them.

In addition to a relationship based on trust, sharing responsibility requires the sharing of information. Prisoners and their families depend on prison and probation staff for the information they need to make sensible decisions.

Matching the support to the person’s capacities –

A basic dilemma about enabling prisoners to take responsibility is that some are much more self-reliant than others. Asked what they felt are the characteristics of effective resettlement, one resettlement team member responded, “First, a capacity to engage at the level that they are at; support them where they are.”

Out for Good found some evidence of prisons targeting individuals who were in more urgent need of support. At one local prison, a governor explained:

At a certain time before release we have made it more focused so it works with those prisoners who really need our support. . . . We concentrate the resource on who needs it most. With job seekers we target people who haven't worked.

The image that the prison population can be divided into one group, who are self-reliant and can be left to get on with it, and another group who need support – may appear to be an efficient way of distributing scarce public resources. But the capacity for taking responsibility varies in different contexts and changes over time.

The Buck Project deliberately approaches prisoners at points in their sentence when they are more likely to be receptive. The peer mentor “makes first contact about halfway into the sentence: after they have settled in and well before they face the preparations for release: aiming for the point at which prisoners are most open to changing their lifestyles.”

Most staff we met understood that simply doing things for prisoners was likely to mean that they would be released more dependent and institutionalised than ever. In broad terms, there was a consensus that self-reliance should be fostered because the outcomes were more likely to be good for society. Gill Pugh, interviewed for *Out for Good* commented:

The prisoner who says, 'I'm going to make something of my life and I know it's down to me,' is more likely to be successful than those who say, 'I will need you to find me a house; I will need you to find me a job.'

At a Clinks seminar addressed by Fergus McNeill, he suggested that people can learn to be more responsible when they are given responsibility:

Some people will need to be carried; some will walk with assistance; some can walk unaided; and some could run if left alone. In some senses, the person needs to start behaving in accountable, responsible ways, in order that they might become responsible.

(McNeill, Clinks seminar, 7 November, 2011)

Similarly, a prisoner with learning difficulties might struggle to write an application form, but be extremely well-informed about job opportunities in construction. For this reason, *Out for Good* proposed that good resettlement programmes should demonstrate that they can work with individuals at their level and at their own pace.

The resettlement team at a local prison south-west of London was asked how they determined the prisoner's capacity. They replied:

You can't know the balance. Do you let them do it and then set them up to fail? Do you do it for them and disempower them? If you are good with people, and you know your clients it's about being sensitive and building them up step by step.

The changes in a person's competencies underline the importance of approaches which work with individuals and adapt to their specific needs and interests.

A balance of encouragement and challenges –

The resettlement team in the local prison south-west of London explained that part of their work is to be realistic with the offender and challenge misconceptions about the future:

We try to match prisoner's needs to what's available. We did a needs analysis of 160 coming in over three days. They wanted work in construction or tourism, but those kind of jobs just aren't out there. It's about matching the level of skills to the jobs that are available.

Their approach demonstrated a systematic method of monitoring prisoners' interests against their evidence about the job market.

Similarly, Sefton CVS said, "We try to keep the expectations practical and achievable." The paid mentors working on the pilot project in Sefton described the balance in their approach:

Our job is to get to know the guys personally. We focus on the positives a lot. What skills have you used? We also manage their expectations, keep them real. We challenge them all the time, giving them feedback on their plans. We need to be challenging within the support. The people we work with want the boundaries.

Working with someone at their own level requires the service provider to manage the high potential for relapses within the process of desistance, rather than to resort to coercion and punishment (which will increase resistance). Policies that treat all relapses as breaches of conditions do more to increase the prison population through recalls than they do to reduce reoffending by supporting desistance. Leon Digard concluded from a study of people recalled to prison:

Disregard for procedural fairness may decrease offenders' levels of mental well-being, engagement in their management, motivation to forge new lives, and respect for authorities and the civic values they represent. It may inhibit the maintenance of an effective probation/client relationship and increase resistance.

(Digard, 2011: 10)

Peer support workers and mentors –

At an East Midlands prison, the mentoring pilot project builds on good inter-agency co-operation through a variety of organisations tied into the project by established protocols. The mentoring pilot in Sefton has also worked on good communication as a means of building partnerships, which is as important with police, probation and prison staff as with community volunteers. Both projects recognise that, in offering mentoring to a prisoner, there needs to be a well-defined beginning, middle and end to the role. For example, in the East Midlands, the prisoner is interviewed six weeks prior to release in order to establish the person's most urgent needs.

In principle, the mentoring pilot project was granted permission to make use of former offenders as mentors. Peer mentoring was believed to enhance the rapport between the prisoner and his mentor, as the mentor had been through similar experiences. Sefton CVS suggested that peer mentoring can bridge the cultural gap between offenders and support agencies:

You get the response that we don't know what it's like. One mentor told us 'We live in two different worlds'. Peer mentors bring the two worlds together. Peer mentors are living proof that they can change things and they can make good decisions in their lives.

The personal relationships, typical of mentoring, can make it possible to allow self-reliance and responsibility, when the person is capable, and provide support when the person needs it. the East Midlands Mentoring Project co-ordinator said:

Too often it's assumed that people know how to handle Job Centres, housing providers etc. Many prisoners know they lack the skills to do this and the mentor supports the capacities that they already have. Most mentoring training is about identifying the skills someone already has and supporting them.

The *Road to Resettlement* pilot project, at Swinfen Hall YOI, made good use of peer support. Prisoners received a workbook to help them to structure their preparations for release. On each wing there were prisoners trained to advise others who were using the workbooks.

Similarly, the Buck Project uses peer mentors to encourage prisoners to shape their plans for life after release.

The Buck project provides continuity, by making contact inside and continuing the support immediately after release. With strong plans, well-suited to the prisoner's strengths and opportunities, the prisoner 'hits the ground running'. It helps that mentoring is personal; and that the mentor has been there themselves.

Supporting people in pursuing their aims –

In one prison, a member of the resettlement team claimed, "As for access to jobs, the onus is on the prisoner: we're not resourced."

Sharing responsibility could be used as a pretext for making prisoners meet financial costs in preparing for release. The argument that prisoners should be encouraged to take responsibility for decisions about what they will do upon release should not imply that prisons can do even less than they are now to support people who need help. In one prison we visited, the prisoners felt that they received little support in preparing for release. For example, they wanted far more help in finding a job. However, the same prisoners valued the extent to which they were allowed to sort out their own problems; they felt that having to take responsibility in this way was a good preparation for meeting the challenges they would soon face.

Sefton CVS told us, "We don't do it to the offender. We say 'It's your resettlement. How do you want us to help you?'"

At a local prison, the resettlement team was conscious of the need to provide information in different formats to accommodate a range of capacities:

Some people are more able to access support than others. We try to match the information to the person's specific needs so as not to bombard them.

However, the same prison conceded that the first shortcoming is the lack of a comprehensive means of identifying people who need extra support.

Main barriers, from the perspective of service providers

In discussing resettlement services with staff from prisons and the voluntary sector, *Out for Good* explored the barriers that prevented effective resettlement. This analysis is based on comments made in semi-structured interviews and is included to convey some of the perceptions of people who work in and with prisons. The comments are no more than indicative and may highlight possibilities for further, systematic research.

Three barriers cited by prison staff and their voluntary sector partners were: the multiple needs of the prison population; restrictive policies and practices; and stigma.

Multiple needs of the prison population –

A member of a local prison resettlement team observed that prisons do better in preparing people for release if they have sentences over a year. He believed that part of the explanation is that many people who receive short sentences have multiple, deep-rooted needs.

The Prison Service manages those serving over 12 months very well, but it is not good with short-term revolving door prisoners. . . . Practically, we get them an appointment for housing and then find that they do not turn up. . . . We do a construction skills course but you need a certain level of education, such as maths.

An added problem is that there is little incentive for someone serving a short sentence to work at making their time meaningful.

If someone who is serving less than 12 months does not want to engage, there is not much chance of working with them.

Another obstacle is that some offenders may have life goals that their support workers believe to be unrealistic. As one resettlement officer suggested, “Most do not have the qualifications that match what they want to do with their lives.”

All prisoners – on remand, or serving short to very long sentences – may face very complex circumstances that hinder efforts to reduce their reoffending. A service provider made the point that complex needs do not provide a simple relationship between support and a reduction in offending:

Any intervention might be very good, yet - due to the multiplicity of factors - the reoffending outcomes might be poor.

It is difficult to engage with people as individuals when policies define them according to a single category. For example, applying different service policies to people by the length of their sentence ignores their individual factors. Further, some people in the voluntary sector raised questions about the effects of labelling people: was a label counter-productive if it prevented the person from positive change?

Chris Stacey, from UNLOCK, explained that people were torn when they wanted to be a citizen, but were constantly being put in situations which defined them as ex-offenders. In similar terms, at a conference about people who were multiply-excluded, Julian Corner, Chief Executive of the Lankelly Chase Foundation, asked, “does the label prevent the person getting out of social exclusion? We need to get away from labels and focus on what people need.”

Restrictive policies and practices –

Processes to enhance security were singled out by many respondents as a major obstacle. There were no obvious differences in the responses from the voluntary and statutory sectors on this theme. However, it was clear that the balance between protecting the public and enabling the offender to take responsibility was rarely easy to achieve. Concern about security imposed time constraints on useful projects and restricted the opportunities that could be made available to prisoners.

Asked if there was a tension between rehabilitative aims and security, one prison staff member responded:

They conflict all the time. You can do intensive work and get real buy in from the offender. Then probation just say no. That shoots down the offender's motivation. Security over runs everything that we do. Security and resources will always trump rehabilitation and resettlement.

(Prison resettlement team member)

The tendency to play it safe, minimise risk, and micro-manage offenders may appear to be in the public's interest. But if it means that offenders are never expected to be independent until the day their supervision ceases, such close control can easily encourage further offending. Fergus McNeill concluded:

Coercion generates resistance: a system based on control through punishment will create breachable behaviours. If you mismanage compliance you will invoke resistance.

(Clinks Seminar, 7 November 2011)

The length of time it takes to process the required security clearances could seriously undermine the capacity of programmes to deliver outcomes:

One barrier is security vetting. The security process is in depth. By the time you get the community group cleared, they may only have four or five months funding left.

A consistent theme was that the prison wall was very effective in keeping potentially helpful community resources out:

Security has been a barrier: the PSO states that anyone who comes in has to go through vetting and barring. The MOJ desires greater community engagement but the PSO bars people. The voluntary sector could contribute far more, except for the barriers raised by the prisons.

In addition, pressures on statutory sector staff foster a reluctance to work with offenders who appear to present any risk of reoffending.

The corporate manslaughter law extends to placements in the community. That has made people twitchy about taking risks. We have become risk averse, and it prevents us from providing the opportunities that we need to take with these men.

Stigma –

Managing risk contributed to another obstacle when it led to the impression that all prisoners were dangerous. For example, the risk-averse ethos meant that some opportunities which could help prisoners were not open to practitioners:

Access to drug agencies as a drug user is a problem. It's not equality. We cannot ROTL an ex-drug user to a hospital placement. We need to balance equal access to very specific risk factors.

Security issues also create challenges by restricting the movements and actions of Peer Advisors in the course of their work and imposing transfers at short notice, meaning some never complete their NVQ qualification.

The impact of risk on social reintegration can be felt long after the person is released. A housing charity, interviewed as part of *Out for Good* explained how the status of ex-offender could affect access to housing:

Barriers and exclusions typically arise at the stage where someone is moving from a hostel to general needs housing. For example, some general needs housing providers impose a two year ban on offenders.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Promoting personal responsibility by motivating prisoners to make decisions about how to resolve the practical problems they will face on release is the key to effective resettlement. Services support those choices by accessing help and advice which are suited to the person's interests and needs. Thus, engaging offenders is crucial to resettlement.

The prison can play a critical role by either motivating people to be actively involved or restricting their role. Opportunities to take responsibility regarding resettlement increase the person's sense of self-worth. They also motivate the person to take steps to prepare adequately for resettlement and focus their attention on areas where preparation is urgently needed.

Resettlement services also need to take account of developments in service user input. Service user involvement is quickly expanding in prisons, but the views of users of resettlement services are rarely sought and taken into account in devising resettlement policy or commissioning services.

Over half of the respondents in the *Out for Good* interviews said that they had been pro-active in their resettlement. But self-reliance does not come naturally to those who have been totally dependent during their sentence. Specific obstacles to taking responsibility included a restricted prison regime, a lack of support from staff, and ineffective or inadequate resources or services available.

For example, the task of finding suitable accommodation is inevitably made more difficult within prison, due to: lack of access to the internet; restricted communication with the outside; lack of current information; and limited support. The capacity to exercise personal responsibility in managing one's finances is very restricted while in prison. The obstacles that prevent a prisoner from trying to be accountable for debts and preparing to keep to a budget on release create a kind of financial limbo.

In some areas, the approach to resettlement must be based on the concept of sharing responsibility. Resettlement work should be based on joint decisions to resolve problems the person might face on release. As part of sharing responsibility, prison staff must ensure that prisoners have sufficient information to make choices. Finding the right balance entails an individual approach to each person. This might require a significant culture shift in some prisons.

Some people require more support to make decisions than others. The idea of supported responsibility arose from situations in which the offender depended on support to exercise choice in their resettlement. At a local prison, the resettlement team was conscious of the need to provide information in different formats to accommodate a range of capacities. Another example of supported responsibility was the information, advice and guidance service run by prisoners trained by the St Giles Trust. The peer support workers were widely regarded as helpful in advocating on behalf of prisoners in need of housing support.

Families often support the person across a wide range of problems: facilitating practical solutions, affecting attitudes, negotiating the return to the community, and encouraging offenders to take action on problems with drug misuse or mental health. At a deeper level, families are often crucial in rebuilding esteem and rebuilding the person's confidence that they are capable of desistance. This influence, though difficult to measure, may be more important than the instrumental role families can play in terms of jobs, finances, or housing.

Many prisoners expressed a strong desire to find work as soon as possible after release. However, they were also aware of the obstacles they would face, notably the legal requirement to disclose a criminal conviction and the state of the economy.

The comments made by respondents about training suggest that good quality, satisfying jobs markedly increase the person's motivation to stay in employment and not risk losing it through reoffending. In addition, training can encourage offenders by giving them a fresh sense of direction.

A genuine commitment to working with prisoners as partners and supporting them in making decisions about their lives transforms the working relationship and builds trust. One prison had set up workshops which drew on expertise from the community. These covered topics such as: homelessness; keeping tenancies; benefits; employability; parenting; and alcohol relapse prevention.

The mentoring project built on good inter-agency co-operation through a variety of organisations tied into the project by established protocols. It depended on good communication as a means of building partnerships, which was as important with police, probation and prison staff as with community volunteers. The personal relationships, typical of mentoring, can make it possible to allow self-reliance and responsibility, when the person is capable, and provide support when the person needs it.

Working with someone at their own level requires the service provider to manage the high potential for relapses within the process of desistance, rather than to resort to coercion and punishment which is likely to increase resistance.

It is vital that commissioning recognises that decisions made by people after they are released from prison are central to whether or not they will re-offend; services must be able to mediate links for the offender into the community; and central to this process is resolving conflicts between the offender and his or her community.

Enabling a prisoner to take responsibility for resolving resettlement problems means that prison staff must carefully consider: how they can enable prisoners to make decisions; how they can support prisoners in the decisions they do make; and how to minimise the extent to which prison systems obstruct people from trying to resolve their own difficulties.

Prisoners' recommendations for improving resettlement services

The first set of recommendations arising from *Out for Good* are based on respondents' answers to the question: what would a good resettlement programme include? In keeping with the principle of shared responsibility, prisoners' suggestions are quoted verbatim and grouped under eight themes.

Start early with an individual approach –

First thing: resettlement should start from the minute you get here, not at the end when you're about to go, because that's too late. If you start telling people things early you can see who is going to go out there and be ok and who is not. It is never too early to start resettling back into the community. Because we don't want them to live in jail, we want them to live in the community. So we need to start imposing that on them from the minute they get here.

I think it should be a factor from day one regardless of the length of your sentence. I know they are trying to do it with offending behaviour work. But I think the entire prison experience could be structured in a way that identifies needs, strengths and weaknesses. People could work on their weaknesses. People could maybe share their strengths. Professionalising - you got a lot of qualified tradesmen, men with really robust skills in particular trades . . . You've got people from all walks of life, all skills, and it's a resource that is not tapped.

How to live on a day to day basis - life skills – depending on the length of the person's sentence. It's not that straightforward. Some people come out of prison and they're on their own. Give them a plan for themselves that they have worked on, to keep themselves rehabilitated. Their own ideas, that have influenced their own lives. One to one work, like a life coach so they feel good about themselves and don't feel daunted by the world. I think that's the worst thing when people get out and they're in a worse position and they feel they have no choice but to live the life they did. Upon release you definitely need to deal with the individual who is being released.

I think maybe just before they go out have a proper meeting, like a proper action plan with lots of different agencies, so if they're on drugs, like the drug rehabilitation person, a probation officer if they're on probation, the accommodation person if they need housing and with them all sit down and come up with a proper action plan and put it in black and white for them, so that they're not getting to the gate and thinking, 'fucking hell what am I going to do now?'

A drop in centre; a way of organising the few things that are left for people who are due to get out. Creating a space, so that not only would we get the cons with their last three months, but that catchment of 20 cons with 12 weeks left could be seen by somebody who helps them organise their spending, their money, their saving, how to cook, how to keep their flat tidy, how to work with the social, what they can claim, driving theory test. Get all the people in that building and each week, a new course would start.

I'd say more staff. More staff to take on more people. Limited staff, limited number of people they can see on a daily basis, in terms of everything they should do. Prison is short-staffed. The less staff, the less opportunity prisoners get. . . . I don't know how many resettlement officers are in this jail but there's 1,200 inmates. They can't deal with every person's individual needs on a daily basis.

What's needed isn't a new strategy: it is to implement the current strategy. Personal officer work is good in theory but doesn't happen; individual treatment – doesn't happen. We should be encouraged to develop clear ideas about what we want to do [out there] and how we are going to finance that. There should also be funding available to the person to help them get training.

Improve information and open lines of communication with support outside –

Make them familiar with all the agencies they've got out there. Have those people come here; have contact with them from here. There should be free phone numbers to speak with these agencies on your phone. You should be able to talk to these people from in prison. Don't wait till you get out.

Help them with housing, maybe trying to find maybe a job in that field, with other companies, phoning up other companies, saying, 'Listen, I've got this person here who's been doing resettlement here for the last few months, good reports from his prison employer, he's looking for employment when he gets out.' Give him the opportunity, that's all he's asking.

If you're going for resettlement, before you get out, they should put you in touch with your local council. I don't think they do a lot of that. If you put someone in touch with their local council and local housing associations, it gives you a better chance of getting out and having somewhere to go.

You could get information in a better place. I've been in the information room and I've watched a couple of guys watching the strong man competition. If there was a dedicated person to go round with the information they've got, I think that would be better than having a few leaflets on the table.

Better communication between different departments and with outside agencies. It would help to get consistent messages: we are always being told different things.

Motivate prisoners –

It's all about inspiring people. Bobbie Cummines is relatively unique, but there are other success stories out there. I would want more, I suppose criminals who've made it, who've turned their lives around, to come back in to be able to give a lecture, or talk to inspire. And that's not really happening. Yes, they will say security implications and so on, but not when there's a man who has an MBE and has been out of trouble for many, many years. I think it must come from the governors.

Drugs: I would say they do what they can. But I would build it up a lot more. You need a lot more help. A lot more CARAT officers to begin with. And just make sure everybody's been seen – some people can go out of here; in their cell, do their time and not see nobody. The day ends and they don't know about the applications, don't know; they think no one cares for them.

I would say do RAPt. RAPt covers a lot of stuff, if it was done properly . . . The group work, every single person, even up to the peer supporters, like me, were really taking it seriously. It was really effective, and it opened my eyes up to other people's experiences, so I think RAPt is something that they should always keep in prisons. I think they should do it in more prisons.

Rehabilitate people so they can feel more comfortable when they go out into society, because some people have been in prison so many years that they don't want to go out and face the world. They could be helped with counselling.

I'd have a video showing each person what they've actually done when they've got out of prison. [You could] have it from three different angles: Show one person who goes out, where he's been good and he looks for a job or whatever, and then another person who goes out and he maybe offends or might steal something but doesn't get caught from it, and then you get another person who does a lot of stuff and then actually gets caught from it, so you're showing them from different angles, so you wouldn't know what to expect from anybody coming out of prison, because they could be one of those three. . . . That'd be quite a good idea, because it'd make you think which one of those people am I going to be, like three different people going out, like this happening, this happening and that happening, like the person who stole a little something and didn't come back to prison, like the one who got out and got a job and the one who is obviously violent and ends up back in prison.

Enhance the use of open conditions and Release on Temporary Licence –

I wouldn't change much really, I'd give them ROTL, like people who are successful on two or three ROTLs, have a few ROTLs and then re-assess you. Like, I've had ROTLs for two years, and if I was a danger to the public I've had about 24 ROTLs of five days, plus I've had three town visits a month in that time. I think it's a bit pointless on keeping someone in prison for two years who's already shown that he's not a danger to the public, I mean, what is the point? They should then give early release or something, like say you went and got work and you had everything ready to go, like I can't see why they then can't release you.

You've got to think of a way of getting them back in the community, people with long term sentences. . . . You need to get them a job before they leave here, get them into the run of things, have work out there and so they can come back here at night. Get people to a D cat where they can work outside the prison, get them used to being back in society again; ROTL's a good thing.

While they're on ROTL, bring them in once a week, sit them down to phone companies in that type of field, and say listen I've got a prisoner coming out in a few weeks time, is there any way we can get them in there for an interview? If he's got a job, if he doesn't have to sign-on he's got a chance.

Focus training on employable skills –

I would do things like NVQ level, forklift driving courses, something where you learn and then you know what to do. . . . In prison I think you should be learning something, because the prison is for the people to change into good side. Yes, training things that's the best that you can do.

It's a bit like if you're in college or something, you would try to tailor something for the individual. I know that is going to be difficult. But I think there ought to be – someone should be employed and look at the individual and tailor something – not just, 'You can go and rip up rags'. If you want to be a heavy goods vehicle driver, try at least help the person on the way to it. It wouldn't take that much to apply personal skills.

Put six to eight men in there, get them working out, get them jobs, if they're earning £300 a week get them to pay room and board, charge them £50 a week, give them a tenner or fifteen quid a week for canteen and put the rest in a savings account for them for when you get out, so they can say ok, when I get out I can get a place, I don't have to buy my tools, I don't have to sign-on, I got job prospects, I got something to help me, I'm not saying that everyone's gonna pass, but you never know, give them the opportunity, it can't be any worse than it is now.

Prepping people more job wise; if they can arrange job interviews and things like that or at least talk to people about what they want to do job wise. It would have been good to have some arranged jobs or interviews for the day of your release, rather than saying the day after your release you just go and sign-on. Is there a way they could forward plan a few interviews for people, even if it's just part-time at some supermarkets or things like that?

I'd have more practical courses for the construction industry and I'd have them at a higher attained level because what they're teaching you at the moment is basic, obsolete, it's not something that would be used in the real world. Effectively in a place like this, you could do it all, so I'd have a lot more courses of that type on offer here because they have empty buildings. So why don't they do bricklaying, sparkies, carpentry here? More people could become multi-skilled.

Use the whole prison here as a recycle centre. I'd turn the whole jail into it, and I'd go to every council in here if I was the governor of this jail and I'd say, 'We'll have your council wagons that's going in landfill; we'll bring them all here and we'll sort it out. We'll have all your rubbish for nothing; please, just drop it off for all of us.' They've got one in Holland, they've got a big recycle place in Holland, massive it is, and it's run by prisons, and when they burn the stuff off when it's no good, it goes into this new power station that they've built, but it only takes oil and household rubbish. This one in Holland it's running at a profit, because it's run by prisoners, the only thing that comes in is the dustcarts, garden rubbish, biofuel. You've only gotta separate it, and that's where the manpower comes in, and once you've separated it it's done, it can start doing itself, you could run all your fleet of cars from here, from the methane from the grass and the garden rubbish.

The kitchens are not used effectively as a lot of the time they are not in use and when they things (cooking, preparation) take far too long. If you have effective staff and someone in charge, in the know, you could cut down on the cooking/preparation time for prison meals and use the kitchens, staffed mainly by prisoners as a catering business, serving the community. Not only do you bring in revenue, the prisoners are also gaining skills.

Target help with finding housing –

Housing first, a dedicated housing unit. Build up proper contacts with people outside, people that are prepared to take ex-prisoners.

I'd make sure they had a place to stay, first and foremost, and not a hostel, but if my only option is a hostel then so be it, but I wouldn't be throwing them out the door with nothing, or saying here's this number, maybe they'll have a bed in two weeks time, six months before their release, if they are NFA [No Fixed Abode], get them outside to do a resettlement programme, get them outside on a ROTL.

Facilitate improved contact with families –

Once you're in the D cat I can't understand why you can't have mobile phones. . . . They say it's about drug dealing, but most people have got a phone in jail because they can't afford to speak to their bird on the thing, so they phone their bird up, their missus, and speak to them. ... That's another thing I'd do; it'd make people closer to their family and that, if they had better access to talking to them, like if it was a mobile phone and they said you could have three numbers and you can only call three numbers, so that they knew that you are talking to family.

Line up reliable support for after release –

The problems start outside. The help is needed at the point of release. How you would set it up, I don't know. But people walk out the door; they don't trust probation – don't see them as being there to help them. And I think they feel they have been thrown back to the wolves and all that they will have is a consequence if they do something wrong. I don't think they feel they have any assistance when they leave.

Summary recommendations

Building on the evidence, the Prison Reform Trust recommends:

Government

- Most of the solutions to effective resettlement do not lie behind bars. Government should ensure that its departments and local authorities work together to put in place the housing, employment, health and social care and family support shown by the findings of this report, and other evidence, to be pivotal to successful rehabilitation.
- As part of its rehabilitation strategy, the Ministry of Justice should address public attitudes by emphasising that ex-offenders have served their sentence and paid their debt and therefore should be accepted back into society.

The National Offender Management Service (NOMS)

- The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) should ensure that people are released from prison less, not more, likely to offend.
- NOMS should consider piloting a payment by results model which fully recognises the offender as a responsible stakeholder. For example, former prisoners who did not re-offend could be consulted about which services contributed the most to their successful reintegration.

- Commissioning arrangements should require providers to show how they will engage offenders and enable them to take responsibility for resettlement.
- Contracts with programmes and services must specify how they will make use of offender input.
- Prisoners should have secure access, through the internet, to resources that can help with resettlement. They should supplement, rather than replace, face-to-face work with staff.
- All prisons should have procedures in place to set up bank accounts for prisoners, and these should be advertised widely through the prison.
- Resettlement plans must include a strategy for working with families, and address the impact of imprisonment on children.
- Every prison should have a family contact manager who is suitably trained and qualified to support families and make sure their views about their family member are incorporated in sentence and resettlement planning.
- All staff should be offered training in:
 - understanding the impact on children and families of the imprisonment of a parent, carer or close relative
 - treating families and the public with sensitivity and respect; and
 - security and visits staff should have training in child protection procedures.
- Women who have experienced domestic violence or sex work should have access to relevant support services, which should be well promoted to prisoners and staff.
- Resettlement teams and voluntary organisations should demonstrate sensitivity to cultural differences and provide a diverse range of opportunities.

Prison Governors and Directors

- The whole prison should see resettlement as central to its role. Preparing people for release is the responsibility of everyone in prison.
- Every prison should have a comprehensive resettlement strategy that is linked into the other core functions and widely disseminated within the prison.
- Prison governors and directors should place the concept of sharing responsibility for resettlement between staff members and individual prisoners at the heart of their resettlement strategy.
- In prisons from which people will be released into the community, the governor or director should establish a prisoners' resettlement committee. In this forum, representatives can regularly meet service providers from the community and senior managers from the prison to inform policies and provision.
- Effective resettlement work entails specialist skills which are widely available among community organisations. Every resettlement team should develop links to community-based organisations with the expertise prisoners need, including housing, finance and debt, and employment. Sefton CVS provides a model of how this can be done.

- Prison governors and directors should routinely conduct surveys of prisoners to establish the nature of their resettlement needs. Resettlement teams should also regularly consult data drawn from induction interviews. Every prison should make use of exit interviews to establish where there is room for improvement.
- Prison staff should improve systems for conveying information to prisoners which is current and relevant to resettlement. A variety of measures should be used, which include one-stop shops, information booths, greater use of peer support, information produced in easier-read format and scope for community organisations to enter the prison, including regular resettlement days where the services can contact prisoners directly.
- Resettlement open days, clinics, or surgeries should be offered to all prisoners at least one month prior to their release date. HMP Winchester runs a good model.
- Resettlement teams should make greater use of peer advisers, following the example of the St Giles Trust.
- Where certain groups, such as vulnerable prisoners or people with learning disabilities, are excluded from support, staff should ensure that their needs are met in other ways.
- Prison staff should do more to encourage prisoners to open bank accounts and gain insurance.
- Prison governors or directors should provide training in financial capability, drawing, for example, on the expertise of Citizens Advice.
- Families should be consulted about resettlement. Families should be involved at an early stage in resettlement, to the extent that they want to be unless safeguarding arrangements preclude this.
- Prison governors or directors should ensure that workshops develop skills that lead to real jobs. Such workshops should be full. A higher proportion of prisoners than currently should be in education, training or work.
- Prison governors or directors should use their discretion to make increased use of release on temporary licence, in particular for people serving long sentences and within six months of their release.

Employers

- Training provision in prisons should be expanded by attracting greater involvement of local industry.
- Employers should contribute to resettlement by expanding job opportunities for people on release, following the lead given by National Grid and Timpson.

Probation

- Probation Trusts should commission services to meet vulnerable prisoners at the gate as in the St Giles Trust's peer mentoring programme.

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GLOSSARY

- APF** Action for Prisoners' Families:
(APF) works for the benefit of prisoners' and offenders' families by representing the views of families and those who work with them and by promoting effective work with families.
- CARATs** Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare services:
CARATs provides a range of interventions, including: initial assessment following referral; advice to prisoners with substance misuse problems; liaison with health care both in prison and in the community; care plan assessments; drawing up a care plan for the prisoner; one-to-one counselling and group work services; assessment for intensive treatment programmes in prison; throughcare linking with community drug treatment services; ensuring, where required, prisoners are offered post release support for up to a maximum of 8 weeks.
- CLINKS** *supporting voluntary organisations that work with offenders and their families:*
Clinks is a national organisation which supports, represents and campaigns for the voluntary and community sector working with offenders. Clinks' work includes campaigning, influencing policy and practice, and promoting opportunities for the VCS to develop or expand their work with offenders. Clinks' aim is to ensure the voluntary sector and all those with whom it works, are informed and engaged in order to transform the lives of offenders and their communities.
- CRB** Criminal Records Bureau:
enables organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors to make safer recruitment decisions by identifying candidates who may be unsuitable for certain work, especially that involve children or vulnerable adults.
- BASS** Accommodation and Support Services for Bail and Home Detention Curfew:
BASS is a government contract that provides accommodation and support services to people who would normally be living in the community on bail or Home Detention Curfew (HDC) but do not otherwise have a suitable address - or they need some extra support during the period of their bail or HDC licence.
- DCSF** Department for Children, Schools and Families
- DoH** Department of Health
- DIP** Drug Interventions Programme:
The Drug Interventions Programme was introduced in April 2003, with the aim of developing and integrating measures for directing adult drug-misusing offenders out of crime and into drug treatment. The programme brings together a number of agencies including the police, the courts, the Prison and Probation Services, treatment providers, aftercare support services, government departments and Drug Action Teams (DATs).
- DWP** Department for Work and Pensions
- ESRC** Economic and Social Research Council
- ETE** Education, Training and Employment

HDC Home Detention Curfew:
Prisoners can be released under HDC if their sentences exceed three months, and their prison governor is satisfied that they do not pose a risk to the public. The prison carries out eligibility assessments before prisoners are released on a HDC and Probation Officers check the suitability of the curfew address provided by the prisoner before release.

IAG Information, Advice and Guidance:
IAG is a set of skills that are accredited by an NVQ (National Vocational Qualification), including:
- The provision of accurate, up to date and objective information about personal and lifestyle issues, learning and career opportunities, progression routes, choices, where to find help and advice, and how to access it
- The provision of advice through activities that help people to gather, understand and interpret information and apply it to their own situation
- The provision of impartial guidance and specialist support to help people understand themselves and their needs, confront barriers, resolve conflicts, develop new perspectives and make progress

ICT Information and Communication Technology:
ICT includes the use of computers, consoles, email, secure relay messaging, inter-active whiteboards, and access to secure online learning technologies and content.

JSA Job Seekers Allowance

LGA Local Government Association

MAPPA Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements:
Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) are a set of statutory arrangements to assess and manage the risk posed by certain sexual and violent offenders, established the Criminal Justice Act 2003. MAPPA bring together the Police, Probation and Prison Services.

MoJ Ministry of Justice

Nacro The National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
Nacro is the largest charity in England and Wales dedicated to reducing crime, helping over 83,000 people each year. Nacro's team of over 2,000 staff and volunteers work with a network of partners through projects in 300 communities. Nacro's work focuses on three areas: Preventing people getting into trouble, through projects to steer young people away from drugs and crime and provide them with new skills; Managing offenders – working with people in prison, on licence and serving community sentences; and Resettling prisoners – helping people find a place to live, and the chance of education, training and a job.

NOMS National Offender Management Service

PASRO Prisoners Addressing Substance Related Offending
or **P-ASRO** Prison – Addressing Substance Related Offending

PET Prisoners Education Trust
The Prisoners Education Trust, founded in 1989, provides access to broader learning opportunities for prisoners to enhance their chances of building a better life after release. Its aims are to offer prisoners access to, and support for, the widest range of education and training opportunities; and to promote to policy makers and the public the importance of offender education.

- PSO Prison Service Order
Detailed guidance to governors covering a wide range of aspects of the treatment of prisoners, prison conditions and the regime. PSOs include both advice and mandatory instructions about how governors should manage the prison. PSOs are not legally binding.
- PSW Peer Support Worker
In *Out for Good*, the role refers primarily to the peer support workers trained by the St Giles Trust:
The Peer Advice Project aims to meet the large demand for advice services amongst the prison population by using an under-used resource - serving prisoners themselves. It trains serving prisoners to NVQ Level 3 in Information, Advice and Guidance and enables them to help other prisoners by gaining valuable practical experience as part of the vocational element of the course
- RAPt The Rehabilitation for Addicted Prisoners Trust (RAPt):
helps people with drug and alcohol dependence, both in prison and in the community, move towards, achieve and maintain positive and fulfilling drug-free and crime-free lives.
- ROTL Release on Temporary Licence:
ROTL means being able to leave the prison for a short time. There are four types of licence:
Special purposes, for a few hours, e.g., for medical treatment
Resettlement days, e.g., community service projects or visits with families
Resettlement overnight release, e.g., to spend time at the home address
Childcare resettlement, for primary carers of dependent children
- SDP Short Duration Programme: an offending behaviour course
- SOVA Sova is a charity that works in the heart of communities in England and Wales to help people steer clear of crime. We do this by making sure that when people find themselves in difficult situations that they have someone on their side to help them make better choices so they can stay out of trouble and build better lives.
- SPCR Surveying Prisoners Crime Reduction:
SPCR is a Home Office survey, a longitudinal cohort study of adult prisoners sentenced to between one month and four years in England and Wales in 2005 and 2006, covering:
Accommodation and homelessness
Disabilities
Pre-custody employment, training and education
Prisoners' childhood and family backgrounds
- User Voice Only offenders can stop re-offending.
User Voice was founded in 2009 by Mark Johnson. Its mission is to engage those who have experience of the criminal justice system in bringing about reform and to reduce offending. The work of User Voice is led and delivered by ex-offenders who foster dialogue between users and providers of services within the criminal justice system. It enables unheard voices to make a difference, to urge policy-makers and people with power who make decisions to listen.
- YJB Youth Justice Board
The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) is an executive non-departmental public body which:
Oversees the youth justice system in England and Wales; Works to prevent offending and reoffending by children and young people under the age of 18; Ensures that custody for them is safe, secure, and addresses the causes of their offending behaviour.
- YOI Young Offender Institution

Almost half of adults released from prison are reconvicted within one year of release; the rate is 57% for those serving sentences of less than 12 months.

After release from prison, some people continue to pose a risk. But defining them on the basis of their risk pre-judges them and excludes them from productive roles in society. Many people coming out of prison have profound needs. But a welfare approach that manages the social needs of offenders without their input makes them even more dependent. What is needed is a commitment to work with the person – not just to do things to, or for them. Alongside the ethos of controlling risk and managing ‘cases’, prisons and services need to develop the skill of sharing responsibility with the person who is preparing for resettlement.

Out for Good brings together a wealth of evidence to demonstrate the importance of enabling prisoners to take responsibility for their decisions about their own resettlement. It shows what can be achieved when people in prison have access to the information they need to be full partners in the process of making decisions about their resettlement. It describes the impact of peer advice, good links with the community and more meaningful contact with their families. Treating prisoners as responsible – and making full use of their knowledge and skills as well as their hopes and ambitions – suggests a blueprint for prisons that encourages former prisoners to lead law-abiding on release with the prospect of being out for good.