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THE ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE THROUGH-CARE

PART 2: SCOTTISH REVIEW

October 2013

Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the second part of a review commissioned by the Scottish Government to examine through-care practice internationally (Part One) and in Scotland (Part Two). The review took place between August and December 2012 and included an overview of research and literature on through-care in Scotland. It is also based on the views of through-care practitioners.

The aim of the review was to examine the available evidence in order to identify what constitutes effective practice in through-care provision and to draw attention to any barriers that may exist in providing this service. The review is framed within an international context where research evidence reiterates the importance of addressing practical initiatives to support reintegration, while policy recommendations are frequently driven by a reducing reoffending narrative (e.g. Steen et al, 2012).

Through-care provision aims to reduce the likelihood of future reoffending by addressing the needs of prisoners. Evidence suggests that accommodation problems, health and addiction issues and/or disrupted family relationships can increase the risk of re-offending (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002; Audit Scotland, 2011 and 2012). Prisoners may have come into the prison system with pre-existing problems (i.e. mental health problems) which, if not addressed, can be exacerbated by the experience of imprisonment; creating additional problems at the point of release. Some groups of prisoners have been identified as particularly likely to benefit from directed intervention during custody and through reintegration (i.e. women, see Commission on Women Offenders, 2012).

The review considered both voluntary and statutory supervision where prisoners sentenced to four years or longer are subject to statutory supervision post-release, while prisoners serving sentences of less than four years (the majority) can request voluntary assistance while in custody or within 12 months of their release; however few do so, those who do are generally seeking support to meet welfare needs and provision can vary across local authority area.

Short-term prisoners have high reconviction rates and multiple and complex needs but gaps remain in current through-care provision resulting in frustration for both service users and providers. These gaps may result in a service-led rather than needs-led system (Audit Scotland, 2012; McCallum, 2012) with difficulties in access to services (especially welfare and suitable housing) hindering successful reintegration. From existing evidence, the very real practical challenges facing individuals at the point of release are unlikely

to disappear until wider service issues are addressed. These tend to originate outside the criminal justice system, with agencies such as housing providers, benefits offices and job centres.

The review highlighted a number of key issues:

Effective partnership working
- Third sector agencies are perceived to have much to offer in the provision of services; when relationships between statutory (i.e. Scottish Prison Service (SPS), social work services) and third sector agencies are strong, service provision appears to be more effective and more likely to ensure consistency of support for service users.
- Opportunities to share ideas and understand roles and remits helps to develop respect, appreciation, trust and openness in relationships between agencies. Link Centres in prison were considered useful environments for this to occur, according to practitioners.
- Shared understanding of roles and remit is particularly necessary where third sector organisations were viewed as unequal partners (practitioner respondents and McLaughlin, 2012).
- Reinforcing success by prisoners during custody and on release was considered to be a good way of highlighting practice between agencies as well as motivating service users.

Barriers to effective partnership working included:
- Fragmentation of services.
- Many basic provisions are not available until the prisoner is liberated which jeopardises pre-release planning, destabilises ex-prisoners and makes a smooth transition back into the community extremely unlikely.
- There is often a lack of understanding about the role and value that different sectors have in helping to reduce reoffending. Third sector organisations could sometimes feel they were unequal partners with statutory services.
- Partnership working was described as a 'constantly changing landscape' in terms of joint work and funding arrangements, with changing personnel mitigating against the development and sustenance of effective working relationships.

Addressing release gaps
- Continuity in service provision is crucial in ensuring that prisoners can move effectively into the community and can access services at the point of need.
- Areas where prisoners frequently have specific needs include: stable accommodation, family relationships, finance and employment, alcohol

and drug problems and mental wellbeing (Lightowler, 2010; Malloch et al, 2013). This was confirmed by practitioners.

- Accessing welfare services in the community was considered by practitioners (and see also McIvor and Barry, 1998b, Audit Scotland, 2012) to be unnecessarily difficult.

Barriers to addressing release gaps included:
- Fragmented services (McIvor and Barry, 1998b; Audit Scotland, 2012) requiring workers to spend time accessing and co-ordinating social services, notably arranging appointments for housing and benefit applications at the point of release
- Problems of access to services while in prison and following release.
- Prisoners may not have any valid identification (ID) which could cause problems accessing services on release. Service providers also identified the challenges of trying to keep in contact with people who had no contact phone number and who may have provided a relatives' address.
- Released prisoners may be arrested on outstanding warrants, jeopardising employment opportunities. Workers provided examples of individuals who had left prison, secured employment and were supporting their families being remanded on outstanding warrants. Even when no action was taken on the warrant itself, this was likely to result in the loss of their job and everything the individual and through-care service had worked to achieve.

Relationship between services and needs/risks assessment
- Recent developments in Scotland attempt to counter a focus on 'risk' with one that also identifies needs (i.e. LS/CMI) and by the increasing attention given to strengths and protective factors.
- Practitioners distinguished between a focus on risk of reoffending and a focus on reintegration.

Barriers:
- Risk was viewed in various ways by through-care workers. Both in terms of risks that service users could potentially present but also the risk of reoffending that resulted from the lack of appropriate support at the point of release.
- Despite acknowledging the importance of working with families to support prisoners on release and thereby reduce potential 'risk', practitioners highlighted the lack of statutory funding to carry out this work.
- The stigma of a criminal record may hinder finding a job.

Staff selection, remit and skills

- Relationships between service users and service providers can be a crucial feature in changing behaviour but can be limited in isolation (Healy, 2010). Practical assistance is also important (McIvor and Barry, 1998a).
- Developing mentoring services may be an effective way to support service users although there is limited evidence available to draw conclusions to date.
- Personal skills and an ability to be flexible as well as practical appeared important, according to practitioners.
- Working to a strength-based approach is important and reflects evidence internationally, that service users respond to workers who identify their positive rather than negative aspects (Maruna, 2010).

Barriers

- Short term funding will hinder long term provision.

Targeting the 'right' people

- Engaging prisoners is important in ensuring access to, and contact with, services in the community.
- Third sector agencies are perceived to have a good record for maintaining contact with prisoners on release, often having more time and flexibility than statutory services (Burgess et al, 2011).
- Ensuring services are available and accessible at the point when a service user is ready to make changes in their lives was a point that practitioners considered to be important.

Although funding has been made available to support through-care services, evidence from the international review (Part One, Malloch et al, 2013) has highlighted the fragmentation that can occur when funding is short-term and third sector agencies are insufficiently provided for. One of the key findings from both reviews was the importance of exploring funding arrangements in the longer-term to ensure consistency and stability in service provision. This is also important in ensuring the collection of data to evidence good practice as well as facilitating the lengthy and on-going process of supporting prisoners' re-integration back into the community.

INTRODUCTION

This review forms Part Two of an international review of through-care practice. Part One (Malloch et al, 2013) provided a review of international literature. Part Two focuses specifically on Scotland and considers the available evidence to explore practices that work effectively to support through-care. This review provides an overview of available research and through-care practice in Scotland, highlighting key issues rather than providing a comprehensive evaluation of services. It also includes views of practitioners who provide third sector through-care provision and considers their understanding of the key issues.

There have been a number of reviews and evaluations carried out in recent years which evaluate the provision of through-care in Scotland, either in the context of specific provision (e.g. McIvor and Barry, 1998b; MacRae et al, 2006; Armstrong et al, 2011) or in the context of effective practice and challenges for the 'management of offenders' more generally (e.g. Lightowler, 2010; Sapouna et al, 2011). The consistent message is that effective responses require partnership working (between criminal justice agencies and other key agencies such as health, housing, education and employment organisations). However, recurrent attention has often been focused on the provision of programmes aimed at tackling offending behaviour as a mechanism to reduce reoffending (Sapouna, 2011). More generally, the limitations of existing provision in effectively addressing the issue of reoffending in Scotland, has recently been highlighted (Audit Scotland, 2012).

Not all prisoners are able to access programmes they may have been deemed suitable for and agencies have often provided programmes in isolation, resulting in repetition of work in design and implementation (Audit Scotland 2011 and 2012). Differences in assessment tools across criminal justice agencies has also been an obstacle to partnership working; creating problems for prisoners in terms of programme completion and for researchers attempting to evidence what appears to work in reducing reoffending. Furthermore, there is evidence that through-care services tend to be service rather than needs-led[1] (Lewis et al., 2003; Audit Scotland, 2012; McCallum, 2012).

The Social Exclusion Unit's (2002) comprehensive report *Reducing Re-offending by Ex-prisoners*, highlights the importance of addressing the

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[1] In the Resettlement Pathfinders in England and Wales, voluntary-led projects identified accommodation as the most significant problems for ex-prisoners while probation-led projects placed greater emphasis on thinking skills, attitudes, education and training.

practical needs of prisoners in several key areas, notably: provision of accommodation, timely access to welfare benefits and health-related support (including interventions for drug and/or alcohol problems; and mental health issues). However, even where government policy has been directed at tackling these problems, perceptions of 'community safety' or 'risk-aversion' can mean that agencies outside the criminal justice system are unwilling to meet the needs of prisoners on release (for example see Harding and Harding, 2006).

Despite the on-going emphasis on the need to improve provision in these areas, this review illustrates that similar challenges characterise the current experiences of through-care service users and service providers in Scotland. Audit Scotland (2012) indicated that access to, and availability of, services is variable across Scotland and support for prisoners serving short sentences should be improved, noting specifically that improvements were required in relation to housing needs. The 'complex landscape' of provision led Audit Scotland to call for 'stronger leadership at national, regional and local levels'.

The pressing practical needs of prisoners on release in Scotland were highlighted by McIvor and Barry (1998b: 45) who quote Paragraph 92 of the Social Work Service Group (1991) National Standards for social work through-care which states:

> Although many discharged prisoners may experience some emotional and social difficulties following release, practical problems concerning unemployment, accommodation and financial matters may be felt by many to constitute more pressing concerns. Unless these problems are addressed, the impact of supervision on the offender is likely to be minimal.

McIvor and Barry found that these concerns were consistent with the views of ex-prisoners in their study, noting that: "Ex-prisoners emphasised (…) the need for practical assistance to ease their transition back into society and re-integration into their local communities and believed that by focusing, often unnecessarily, upon their offending, social workers were less effective that they might otherwise have been" (*ibid:* 45). Prisoners who took part in focus groups for Audit Scotland expressed concern about the practical difficulties they were likely to face when leaving prison, particularly in relation to housing, financial support and employment, while the Commission on Women Offenders (2012: para 259) noted that: "access to safe accommodation and to benefit entitlements are the biggest concerns for women leaving prison. Failure to deal with these two issues is likely to impede progress in other areas".

Audit Scotland (2012) in their examination of reoffending, noted that there was a 'mismatch' between current practice and evidence of what is 'effective' practice. A focus on 're-offending' would appear to dominate; however, the evidence available has continually emphasised the importance of 'reintegration'. This is of particular relevance when the damaging influence of short prison sentences is examined, which goes beyond the actual period of imprisonment itself (Armstrong and Weaver, 2010). This dichotomy is also an international one. Despite the evidence from research which continually reiterates the importance of addressing practical initiatives to support reintegration, policy recommendations are frequently driven by a narrative of reoffending reduction (e.g. see Steen et al, 2012), potentially entrenching a retributive framework of 'punishment'. Support provisions in Scotland also work to develop problem-solving, social skills and emotional support (for example the allocation of funding through Public Social Partnerships and the emphasis on the development of mentoring services). However, practical difficulties can hinder work in these areas.

The review of through-care practice in Scotland is based upon an examination of research reports, policy documents, practice guidelines and other relevant literature. The findings from the documentary analysis are supported by evaluation reports of through-care provision in Scotland and exploratory interviews with representatives from third sector service-providers (two workers from Access to Industry and a focus group of 11 workers from Circle.

Background

Prisoners sentenced to four years or longer are subject to a Supervised Release Order or Extended Sentence. Local authorities' criminal justice social work departments are expected to provide a through-care service to all prisoners who are subject to statutory supervision post release. This service begins at the start of a prisoner's sentence and is managed via the Scottish Prison Service's Integrated Case Management (ICM) process.

A total of 5,600 individuals were subject to statutory through-care (in the community and in custody) as at 31 March 2012, an increase of 3 per cent from 5,400 the previous year. Of these individuals in 2011-12, 43 per cent were being supervised in the community (Scottish Government, 2012). In 2011-12, 1050 statutory through-care cases in the community were started, a similar number to 2010-11[2]; while 940 through-care (in the community) cases

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[2] The Scottish Governments statistical bulletin (Scottish Government, 2012) notes that several local authorities have acknowledged that there have been problems with recording this data in the past, and that while data quality continues to improve, any conclusions about trends over time should be treated with some caution.

were completed, an increase of 7 per cent from 880 in 2010-11. At 31 March 2012, 3,200 cases in custody were being supervised; the highest in any of the last five years.

The majority of prisoners receive sentences of less than four year and are therefore not subject to statutory supervision on release except in certain exceptional cases. They can request voluntary assistance while in custody or within 12 months of their release. Although all prisoners can ask for local authority social work services for advice and help within 12 months of release, few do so and those who do are generally seeking support to meet welfare needs. Provision can vary across local authority area.

Information on voluntary assistance was collected for the first time in 2004-05 and, from 2005-06 onwards, included data on the through-care addiction service (TAS) (which started on 1 August 2005). Numbers on voluntary assistance have fluctuated slightly over the last five years, with the highest total in 2008-09 (2,900). The number of individuals receiving voluntary assistance in 2011-12 rose slightly to just under 2,400 individuals, an increase of 1 per cent compared to 2010-11, although lower than the recent peak of over 2,500 in 2008-09 (Scottish Government, 2012).

Reconviction rates have remained reasonably consistent with 30 per cent of people convicted in 2009-10 being reconvicted within one year (Audit Scotland, 2012). Of those reconvicted within one year, the rate for those leaving prison in Scotland is 47% and for those placed on a community disposal, 39%.

Where prisoners are eligible to access statutory through-care, community social workers are involved in multi-agency integrated case management (ICM) meetings while prisoners are in custody. Contact arrangements between prisoners and relevant social workers are generally considered to be robust (McCallum, 2012). However, a significant number of prisoners are not eligible for statutory through-care and the situation for short-term prisoners on release can be highly problematic (Reid Howie Associates, 2004; Loucks, 2007; Commission for Women Offenders, 2012).

Scottish Policy Context

There have been on-going attempts in Scotland to co-ordinate services for effective offender management and to bring key agencies together to ensure

wider accountability to reduce rates of reoffending. The (then) Scottish Executive Consultation *Reduce, rehabilitate, reform: A consultation on reducing reoffending in Scotland* (Scottish Executive 2004a) highlighted the importance of an 'integrated system' and sought to consider how this could be put into effect. The consultation, as the subsequent *Criminal Justice Plan* (Scottish Executive, 2004b) reported, did not result in a consensus view on how best to reduce rates of reoffending, but did acknowledge a number of inherent weaknesses in the current system including: lack of shared objectives and accountability for reducing reoffending, poor communication and integration between criminal justice agencies, inconsistent delivery of services across Scotland and the lack of effectiveness of short term prison sentences in reducing reoffending. One of the challenges identified was the separation between custodial sentences delivered by the prison service, and community sentences and reintegration delivered by local authorities, with often poor (or systematically different) information sharing between the two.

Scotland's Criminal Justice Plan (Scottish Executive, 2004b) (the Criminal Justice Plan) aimed to improve collaborative practice between agencies to improve consistency and efficiency. The concept of Community Justice Authorities (CJAs) was intended to ensure consistent and effective delivery of criminal justice social work across local authority groupings. Other initiatives included the introduction of Home Detention Curfews for prisoners serving custodial sentences of over three months, allowing low-risk prisoners to spend the last part of their sentence in the community monitored by electronic tagging.

The 2004 Criminal Justice Plan reported on developments introduced to support transition between prison and the community noting the development of a Core Screening process for short-term prisoners to assess risks and needs while in prison; the introduction of Link centres in prisons to help prisoners prepare for their release; the introduction of a new through-care strategy to improve the system of community support for prisoners on release with an increase in funding (to £6m by 2005, Scottish Executive, 2004b: 57). Priority was to be given to long term prisoners (considered to pose the greatest risk) who would be allocated a community-based supervising officer from the start of their sentence and who would work with them and the prison authorities to help prepare for reintegration to the community.

Attention was also given to strengthening voluntary assistance for short term prisoners to help them resettle back into communities; to post release supervision of high risk offenders; to young prisoners 'who have shown a commitment to reform by attending programmes whilst in prison to address their offending or by staying in touch with the Scottish Prison Service's addiction service' (Scottish Executive 2004b: 58); the development of tools to

assess needs and risks; to merge Community Justice and SPS Accreditation panels to promote programme consistency in prisons and the community.

Since devolution, the *Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2005* introduced Community Justice Authorities[3] (CJA's) while the more recent *Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010* introduced a presumption against short-term prison sentences of less than three months, and Community Payback Orders (CPOs) which came into effect in February 2011.

Evidence from the Pathfinder projects in England and Wales has highlighted the value of volunteer mentors who provide a wide range of practical help and support, including: gathering information about local education and employment opportunities, help with the completion of application forms, accompanying prisoners to their accommodation or meetings with service providers on release. Ex-prisoners who have post-release contact with mentors on release appear to be less likely to be reconvicted than any other groups of prisoners in the study (Lewis et al, 2007). This has influenced the development of provisions in Scotland (e.g. Routes out of Prison (RooP) and in 2011 funding (of £7.5 million over three years) was made available to a range of organisations across Scotland, by the Scottish Government through the Reducing Reoffending Change Fund, to develop Public Social Partnerships (RRCF2/3 funding) and interventions that utilise a mentoring approach for 'young, prolific and/or women offenders'.

Through-care practice

Through-care should, theoretically, begin at the point of sentence, with the process starting in the prison. Prisoners on lengthy sentences prepare for release through courses and programmes in prison, and through community-based social workers, engagement with agencies concerned with housing, employment, health and other services, as well as placement in the community, periods in open conditions and home leaves. Open prisons play a significant part in this process, and for long term prisoners, performance in open conditions and home leave is used by the Parole Board to assess suitability for release on licence. However the use of open conditions has

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[3] Eight CJAs were established under the Management of Offenders etc (Scotland) Act to work with local authorities, the Scottish Prison Service and other partners to develop effective ways of working to reduce re-offending across Scotland.

significantly reduced with uncertainty surrounding the future of open prisons in Scotland (Armstrong et al, 2011).

Particular problems can arise for short term prisoners with the period in prison sufficient to disrupt their lives, but not to help them address outstanding issues (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). This is a significant problem for women and young prisoners (Criminal Justice Development Centre, 2011; Commission for Women, 2012; McCallum, 2012). Short prison sentences can have many unintended consequences, notably the disruption to the life of an individual which goes beyond the sentence imposed. Internationally (see Lightowler, 2010), evidence shows that remand is one of the most counterproductive uses of prison. The negative effects on prisoners include: increased risk of suicide and general mental distress, disintegration of social supports and family ties, acculturation into the criminal justice system. Figures for the number of prisoners on remand in Scotland continue to increase (Scottish Government, 2012).

Through-care provision can be voluntary or statutory. Voluntary through-care is available for prisoners sentenced to a custodial sentence of less than four years and when an extended sentence or a supervised release order has not been imposed. The prisoner and his/her family are entitled to access this support from the point of sentence, while they are in prison, and for up to one year after release. Statutory through-care forms part of criminal justice social work provisions and is imposed on prisoners serving a prison sentence of four years or more; or who are sentenced to an extended sentence or a supervised release order. The through-care process starts at the point when the custodial sentence is imposed. During an individual's time in custody, the criminal justice social worker will contribute to the sentence planning process by sharing information relative to the assessment of risk and identifying issues which may influence the resettlement prospects of the prisoner.

The Integrated Case Management system provides the joint case management structure between the criminal justice social work services and the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) for prisoners convicted of offences and sentenced to four years or more and subject to supervision on release, or subject to the notification requirements of the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Also included in the ICM process are those prisoners subject to supervised release orders and extended sentences regardless of the length of sentence.

An individual subject to statutory through-care will usually be released on a supervision license and be supervised by a criminal justice social worker unless they are released from prison at the end of their custodial sentence.

Licenses are strictly enforced. If the individual on license gives the supervising social worker cause for concern or is charged with a new offence, they can be reported to the Scottish Government and recalled to prison to serve the remainder of the original sentence.

The challenges for through-care provision

Many individuals in the criminal justice system have very high levels of need and unless these needs are addressed, may increase the likelihood of being reconvicted (for example where prisoners have addiction issues). The UK Government's Social Exclusion Unit's (2002) report *Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners* demonstrates the serious and chronic disadvantage and social exclusion that many prisoners experience and its association with reconviction. The Social Exclusion Unit (2002) acknowledged that the risk of re-offending is linked to housing circumstances on release, suggesting that severe accommodation problems can increase the likelihood of reoffending, a finding supported by Farrall (2002). Audit Scotland (2011) identified that individuals in the criminal justice system often have a range of needs including health or addiction problems, or broken family relationships.

The recent Commission on Women Offenders highlighted that women released from prison face significant difficulties reintegrating into society and that imprisonment may serve to further marginalise already socially excluded women. The precarious (and often totally unsuitable) nature of women's post-release accommodation has been highlighted consistently by research. A study of women accessing transitional care services (community-based drugs through-care) in Scotland found that two-thirds of female ex-prisoners were identified by staff as having housing-related needs (MacRae et al., 2006). There has been a shared recognition (Commission on Women Offenders, 2011; Community Justice Authorities, 2011) that the lack of responsibility and any consistent funding for through-care for women on short prison sentences or on remand has been a particular problem in Scotland. The disparity in service provision is exacerbated by projects with funding criteria that limits them to work with particular age groups, sentences or postcode areas. This unstructured approach can result in some women being offered multiple sources of assistance while others are not offered assistance.

The Commission on Women Offenders (2012) specifically addressed through-care in relation to the reintegration needs of women and recommended:

- Inter-agency protocols on prison discharge and homelessness should be introduced across Scotland to sustain tenancies for women in custody and to secure access to safe accommodation for every woman prisoner on release;

- The UK government, with responsibility for social security matters, should put arrangements in place to ensure that every woman prisoner is able to access benefit entitlement immediately on release to prevent financial instability;
- Community reintegration support should be available for all women during and after a prison sentence regardless of originating local area; and they should be met at the gate on release from prison by an appointed mentor.

Although access to mainstream services can be problematic for all prisoners, lack of adequate funding for accommodation support for women leaves some highly vulnerable on release (Commission on Women Offenders, 2011). This was acknowledged by the Scottish Government (2012) in response to the recommendations of the Commission on Women Offenders and mentoring services provided through the Reducing Reoffending Fund are intended to ensure that all prisoners have access to support aimed at helping community reintegration.

This underlines the crucial role of the voluntary sector in providing through-care support through group-work, one to one support and peer mentoring. The sector provides a wide range of support addressing: physical and mental well-being, housing and accommodation, drug and alcohol problems, literacy, employability, relationships with family, peers and communities, finance and budgeting, independent living.

Practical interventions are often combined with emotional support for individuals and their families while third sector organisations can also provide an advocacy role, keeping people informed of their rights and campaigning to improve provisions and responses.

The importance of the third sector in providing services aimed at reducing reoffending was set out in a paper produced for the Third Sector Research Forum (McLaughlin, 2012) which identified a number of benefits which this sector could provide including:

- Responsiveness and flexibility;
- Innovation;
- Connectivity and community assets (strong roots in local communities);
- Partnership working (ability to bring different agencies together);
- Trust and relationships.

From the existing evaluations of through-care provision in Scotland, and the views of through-care workers sought for the purpose of this review, some key themes and issues can be identified and explored:

Features of effective partnership working

The Christie Commission on the future delivery of public services (Public Services Commission, 2011) and Scottish Government response (Scottish Government, 2011) placed considerable emphasis on partnership working as a way of meeting the needs of service users. However, there is evidence of 'vertical' work being carried out in silos, rather than 'horizontal' work across different sectors. It is suggested that the system of through-care provision is disjointed with many inconsistencies caused by the absence of a strategic overview (Commission on Women Offenders, 2011; SCCCJ, 2011; Audit Scotland, 2012).

The significance of synthesising engagement with prisoners while in custody and sustaining that on release is recognised as an on-going challenge. There are challenges for third sector agencies that need to be seen as consistent and reliable within the prison context; while also being aware of the challenges that can exist for prison officers within existing regimes. When workers from third sector agencies are able to develop relationships with key prison staff, service provision appears to go more smoothly and can ensure consistency of support even when prison governors change. Similarly, prison regimes can themselves create challenges for agencies who come into the prison (for example when appointments get cancelled out-with their control), creating a need to retain credibility in the face of difficult regime characteristics.

While there could be challenges for community-based workers within the prison environment, the strengths that outside agencies brought resulted from their integration and partnership with agencies in the community. This could often involve working with several agencies to address the needs of a single service-user. Although overlaps could occur in this process, it was acknowledged that it also afforded opportunities to share expertise, learn from other workers and ensure that gaps in provision did not occur. One worker noted: "sometimes there will be overlaps and that is ok, especially when there are quite complex issues for the service user. Sometimes it is good to have overlaps to make sure everything is actually being done" (focus group participant). On the other hand, as another worker commented: "If you are truly working in partnership there won't be gaps in provision, you will know what everyone is doing" (focus group participant).

Prisoners are often more willing to engage with the voluntary rather than statutory sector on release, but the ability of workers to act on their initiative and to work 'outside agency silos' is important. A number of values were suggested as underpinning effective partnership practice including: respect for each other, appreciation for what each agency does, consideration of roles, trust, understanding, shared interest, common goal, honesty, openness. It was suggested that there can often be a lack of understanding in roles and responsibilities between the statutory and voluntary sector – but also between different voluntary agencies. Opportunities to come together to share ideas and outline roles and remits was seen as important and it appeared that Link Centres in prisons were considered useful environments for this to occur.

On occasions, workers in voluntary organisations who participated in this review did not always feel that they were listened to by the statutory sector, or that their experience and expertise was acknowledged. While it was suggested that this could be both a resource and time issue for social work, it was felt that this also indicated how the third sector could be perceived: "I sometimes find that when we do come up with information it isn't as valued as it should be, not recognised as it should be…but that can sometimes be down to individual workers. We are in an ideal position to see what is going on in a house and sometimes there is a barrier with social work and some of the families we work with close the door to them. We can be the eyes and ears for social work – and be open and honest with families".

This point was also acknowledged by McLaughlin (2012). There is often a lack of understanding about the role and value the different sectors have in helping to reduce reoffending, and a perception that some public sector organisations may view third sector agencies as unequal partners. As a result, third sector organisations can face significant hurdles when trying to deliver criminal justice initiatives in prisons or the wider community, which can have a negative impact on their ability to effectively engage with and provide support.

Partnership working was also described as a 'constantly changing landscape' in terms of joint work and funding arrangements. It was possible to develop good working relationships with a professional only to be working with someone different the following month and workers noted that time is required to develop and sustain working relationships. 'Doing' effective partnership work was considered to be primarily about forming a positive working relationship. In terms of through-care service provision, workers noted that it was important that they did not try to provide false hopes, but instead, shared information that was realistic and were honest in their dealings with service users. Third sector workers could engage with service users and in doing so, could encourage them to access services when in prison. It was considered

important to reinforce successes that had been achieved by prisoners inside prisons and following release.

Addressing release gaps

Given the importance of engagement, it is crucial that resources across the criminal justice spectrum provide available, accessible and effective interventions. In particular, it is necessary that interventions link together to ensure that once engagement takes place, service users do not fall through gaps in services when they move between different criminal justice institutions (i.e. from prison to the community) (MacRae et al, 2006). Interventions must be strategic and accessible at the point of need.

Release gaps and the challenges facing prisoners on release could clearly work to reverse any good work that had been carried out in prison. The existence of gaps in provision, and resulting frustration of service users and providers, that were associated with gaps at the point of release created real challenges that could negate the whole through-care process, according to practitioners.

Reviews from Scotland (Lightowler, 2010), as well as internationally (Malloch et al, 2013) highlight that stable accommodation, supportive family relationships and employment are three key factors in reducing reconviction rates. Addressing alcohol and drug problems and mental health problems can also reduce the risk of reoffending. In MacRae et al.'s (2006) study of Transitional Care for short-term prisoners in Scotland, almost two-thirds of ex-prisoners reported health problems (including drug and alcohol use) immediately after release, half reported accommodation problems and just under two-fifths said that they had problems related to employment. Ex-prisoners were more likely seven months after release from prison than they were shortly after release to report problems related to employment, money and family relationships, suggesting that in these respects their personal circumstances had deteriorated over time. Maguire et al. (1997) identified financial difficulties, as well as problems relating to employment and accommodation, as a principal area of concern for short-term prisoners on release. Addictions, homelessness and unemployment were the most common support needs identified by the RooP project (Criminal Justice Development Centre, 2011).

A lot of the time through-care is fragmented (McIvor and Barry, 1998b; Audit Scotland, 2012) and workers are required to spend time bringing things together, notably arranging appointments for housing and benefit applications at the point of release. It was believed by research participants that this could

be done more effectively in custody, thereby avoiding time-consuming crisis interventions at the point of release. Similarly, the operation of welfare services in the community was reportedly unnecessarily difficult.

Accommodation
Many released prisoners do not have accommodation at the point of release and end up in unsatisfactory homeless accommodation, often having lost all their possessions (see Loucks, 2007). Seventy-three per cent of prisoners interviewed by Loucks were, or expected to be, released to no fixed accommodation or had no idea where they would be placed. A number also had concerns about removal and storage of personal possessions. Accommodation is generally identified as the biggest problem facing prisoners on release (see also Audit Scotland, 2012). Prisoners often found it difficult to access housing support and advice in prison and were pessimistic about the likelihood of securing a tenancy in the areas they were returning to (see also Reid Howie Associates, 2004). Issues for remand prisoners, who could lose their accommodation and possessions without being convicted, were considered particularly significant (Loucks, 2007). The difficulties that prisoners experienced on release could also impact on service providers, who identified the challenges of trying to keep in contact with people who don't have a phone, and who may just have provided a relatives' address. Access to Industry is currently piloting a few test cases with Glasgow housing agency to ensure prioritisation of appropriate housing for prisoners on release.

While it was noted that local authorities have a statutory requirement to provide housing, there was a real frustration among community workers that released prisoners often did not get any support until the day of release when they presented themselves at housing offices to obtain accommodation (see also Loucks, 2007). This could be exacerbated for prisoners who had no valid identification (ID) with them. It was suggested that the Citizen Card could be provided during the period of custody, thus ensuring everyone had a valid ID at the point of release.

Workers, as with the Commission on Women Offenders (2012), were of the view that a supported hostel or system of scatter flats was required for women at the point of release, somewhere they could meet with services and have their needs addressed. There was a consensus that this was probably likely to be helpful for male prisoners also. The quality of homeless accommodation (particularly bed and breakfast provision) was criticised as often inadequate and sometimes dangerous. Recently released prisoners were often stigmatised and sometimes vulnerable women were harassed by male workers or other residents.

A representative of East Ayrshire Council (quoted in McCallum, 2012: 7) highlighted the difficulties facing women: "Should a woman be homeless, her accommodation needs cannot be addressed until she is released from prison. (…) Generally women will be offered homeless accommodation in a hostel until their accommodation needs can be assessed. This can be a very difficult environment for them to live in, particularly where women are also recovering from abusive relationships, mental ill health or substance misuse".

Family support
Considerable emphasis has been placed upon the importance of a 'whole families' approach (Barry, 2009; Hutton and Nugent, 2011) as a means of ensuring longer term support for prisoners on release. However, the vulnerabilities of families themselves are often overlooked and their needs are rarely addressed. They are also unlikely to seek help due to stigma or few points of contact through which they can access services. Families may also be rendered financially vulnerable due to the imprisonment of a family member or due to added responsibilities (i.e. care of grandchildren) that are not appropriately resourced (i.e. difficulties in accessing kinship care support). Statutory services within criminal justice have no statutory funding or locus to work with the families of prisoners.

Employment
The challenge of getting long-term prisoners into work is exacerbated by the stigmatisation of disclosure of unspent convictions and it has been argued that a review of the 1974 Rehabilitation of Offenders Act is required. This issue has countered attempts to support women to exit prostitution, for example where women with previous convictions for prostitution are required to reveal their conviction for a 'sexual offence' to potential employers. The Justice Secretary has stipulated that this practice should continue despite criticism from the Equal Opportunities Committee (2009).

Similarly, released prisoners may be arrested on outstanding warrants, jeopardising employment opportunities. Workers provided examples of individuals who had left prison, secured employment and were supporting their families being remanded on outstanding warrants – even though no action was taken on the warrant itself, this was likely to result in the loss of their job and everything the individual and through-care service had worked to achieve. Importantly, it could offset commitments people made while in prison i.e. – 'what's the point if that is what is going to happen when I get out…'

Workers who contributed to this review gave examples of the difficulties caused by agency bureaucracy. As one worker noted: "Our clients (not just released prisoners) aren't allowed to use the phones [in the job-centre] to make claims or apply for crisis funds. I personally have sat with a client in the

snow for two hours on a public telephone outside the building because she wasn't allowed to use their phone because 'it takes too long'". When this worker challenged the existing process, she was told: 'the system had changed so that people could relax in the comfort of their own home' and make a telephone call. As she stressed: "Well, I don't have a home for my client and she doesn't have a landline so these are just some of the immediate issues that need to be looked at and resolved and there should be a more seamless system put in place".

Access to benefits could also be problematic. Of those leaving prison, 81% claim benefit but may have to wait up to 17 days to receive this, surviving only on their discharge grant (Scottish Consortium on Crime and Criminal Justice, 2011). McCallum (2012: 7) quotes a representative from Dundee City Council who outlined the difficulties:

> A new claim cannot be submitted until the day the woman is liberated. This claim can take up to six weeks to be processed. In the meantime the women will have to rely on family or friends if they are fortunate enough to be in a position to do so. Unfortunately the majority of our clients are not, which means they then have to apply for Crisis Loans, which means they are then accruing debts which are then deducted at source from their Benefits when they eventually receive them.

The relationship between services and needs/risks assessment
Risk factors and an assessment approach to devising preventative strategies has become a dominant discourse in criminal justice and, notably, youth justice (Fraser et al, 2010). One of the dangers of looking at risk factors for offending is the potential to pre-emptively stigmatise individuals based on assumptions about what they might do in the future, rather than what they have done; potentially leading to the 'net-widening' of services. In addition, whilst many risk factors have been identified, less is known about how to robustly establish which risk factors are causes and which are merely correlations.

Recent Scottish developments such as the introduction of the LS/CMI and the development of a shared approach to risk practice have resulted from ongoing attempts to address the considerable attention placed upon 'risk' by also identifying needs. More recently, there has been an interest in incorporating strengths and protective factors in assessment and instruments that support the structured assessment of risk with attention to protective factors (Serin et al, 2010).

Risk was viewed in various ways by through-care workers. Both in terms of risks that service users could potentially present but also the risk of

reoffending that resulted from the lack of appropriate support at the point of release. One third sector worker commented: "I think social work don't see all the barriers the client has to deal with…there can be 13-14 different agencies someone has to deal with and problems arise when they can't engage – that is what we do, to advocate and try to empower them as well". While it is important to help the service users create a network of supports, the initial role of one key person is also necessary, particularly for young people; a recognition that forms the basis for the current emphasis on mentoring support.

Workers distinguished between risks of reoffending (which could be estimated from risk assessment tools[4]) and the importance of rehabilitation and reintegration into society. The latter required helping service users to form the right relationships, where 'inappropriate' behaviour could be challenged. One worker noted: "We can't continue to see people as huge risks and wave red flags – we don't want to see them in terms of risks they might be, but of what they might be able to achieve". Another worker commented: "For me, if you focus on the needs that will be the major thing that will take you forward – and a focus on needs will diminish the risks".

Staff selection, remit and skills

Qualitative research suggests that a good working relationship between the service-user and service-provider can act as a catalyst for change, especially when the individual has already taken the decision to give up crime, but it is unlikely to produce big reductions in reoffending in isolation (Healy, 2010). Practical help with issues such as unemployment and lack of accommodation appeared to be particularly welcomed (McIvor and Barry, 1998a).

Overall, studies report more benefits in cases where the worker respects and fosters the service-user's personal agency, focuses on strengths as well as needs and risk and draws up an action plan in consultation with the service-user (McNeil and Whyte, 2007). McNeil and Weaver (2010) argue that service users should be involved in co-designing interventions that affect them. When interviewed about the quality of supervision/intervention, service-users often cite empathy, respect, flexibility, the ability to listen and professionalism as the defining characteristics of an effective working relationship (McIvor and Barry, 1998a; Malloch and McIvor, 2012; Wilson, 2012). Overall, research suggests that desistance is more likely to be achieved when a 'working alliance' between service user and service provider is developed (Healy, 2010).

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[4] Although risk assessments (Risk, Need, Responsivity) use risk to decide the intensity of the intervention, while also focusing on addressing needs, practitioners seemed to consider there was some imbalance in emphasis.

Evidence from evaluations of mentoring services also indicates that mentoring is more likely to work when its goals are defined in agreement with the service user (Finnegan et al, 2010).

Workers indicated that it was important to have 'credible staff'. This, they suggested meant someone that service users could attach values to – someone who could 'get things done', 'who does what they say they will do'. Developing this trust required on-going contact and, in the case of through-care, should be established during the period of custody with agencies from the community going into the prison to meet with prisoners.

While it was noted that clear job descriptions existed in terms of required qualifications and experience, there was a consensus among workers that to be 'effective' required character and commitment for the work and toward individuals. Third sector workers stressed the importance of employing workers from a variety of backgrounds to work in the area of through-care (both third sector and statutory) – but who share a 'hunger to make changes and support people'. This meant that different resourcing skills could be drawn upon and workers could share ideas, knowledge and experience. Personal skills were seen as important, as was a sense of humour to get past the challenges that could arise.

The importance of working in a 'holistic way' and drawing very much upon a strengths-based approach was emphasised, where workers were able to detect and draw upon positive strengths in service users and reflect that strength back to the service user to help them find solutions to the challenges they face. One worker noted: "Risk assessments tend to draw upon the negative, we focus upon the positives".

Flexibility was considered key, with personal autonomy to manage time and workload. It was considered important that workers were 'not clock-watchers' and could respond to service-user needs as they occurred – often out-with the more traditional Monday-Friday, 9-5 work schedule. Third sector agencies appeared to support this flexibility with arrangements in place to maintain safe working practices. Provision could be made at weekends and workers would cover for each other as appropriate. This flexibility was considered important in ensuring that there was some leeway in intervention time-frames, in that provision could continue beyond statutory time limits if service users continued to have identified needs that would benefit from ongoing intervention, although this could be a challenge to fit within funding structures. However, it was also considered important that service users were encouraged to engage with a support plan that would take them to greater dependence, rather than create a reliance on workers.

Targeting the 'right' people

Focusing on service users' personal strengths rather than over-emphasising risks appears to be an effective way to increase motivation (Maruna, 2010). There may be a need to dispel some cynicism from prisoners by promoting positive examples of what can be realistically achieved, finding a balance between the challenges they may need to face, and what may be possible for them.

There are practical ways of encouraging people to access services, and in the prison, Induction Days can provide an opportunity for workers to meet with prisoners and tell them about the service they provide. This can be supported by the provision of leaflets and the regular presence of workers in the prison. Agency reputation and word of mouth among prisoners was also considered important.

Third sector agencies have a generally good record for maintaining engagement with service users on release. Access to Industry indicates an engagement rate in the community of 78% for adults and 80% for young prisoners – a group who are often difficult to maintain contact with on release. Workers also stressed their efficiency in linking service users into statutory services and encouraging them to attend, a finding evidenced in Burgess et al (2011). The non-obligatory relationship that was evident in non-statutory relationships could provide a motivation for engagement that lessened reluctance to approach other (statutory) services. Similarly, third sector agencies often had more time and flexibility to work with service users; it was suggested that statutory services spent a great deal of time 'fire-fighting' with less time to devote to clients over and above meeting statutory supervisory obligations (Burgess et al, 2011; Malloch and McIvor, 2012). One worker noted however: We can also help point out the positives to statutory workers and help them to work with that. We can work in partnership with social work".

The importance of individual motivation was also considered crucial. One worker noted: "Everyone in the prison is a potential service user for our service, but they also have to be at the point where they want to change. It's all very well signing someone off to attend but if they don't want to, they will be off when they get out the gate". Another worker added: "We need to be clear with someone – what do you want to change? What are you going to do differently? It's about the person exploring that and being with them, at their side for them to do things for themselves, to move on".

Funding structures
In a climate of cutback to services, local authorities are likely to reduce spending in areas that are not specified as statutory obligations. Core funding

to criminal justice social work to deliver through-care prison services is targeted at statutory services. This has a particular impact on women, most of whom are not subject to statutory supervision on release.

The complexity of funding for the voluntary sector was considerable; both in the number of sources from which funding was sought and the arrangements for funding that were often in place. A considerable amount of time was also taken up attempting to secure and maintain funding. This could cause uncertainty for staff: "You continue to give 150% but you're always wondering what is going to happen…" It would be unfortunate if third sector organisations service provision were to become determined by the funding available rather than the unmet needs of service users and the organisation's skills and experience.

The lack of long term public funding for third sector criminal justice initiatives makes the future of some projects (including statutory provisions) uncertain and inhibits the ability for organisations to plan ahead (Burgess et al, 2011). Even successful initiatives may face closure when initial sources of funding run out, resulting in the knowledge and experience they have built up being lost. Relatedly, some funding structures are less likely to allow the flexible working practices and creative approaches that often characterise third sector provision.

McLaughlin (2012) outlines the obstacles that third sector competition for funding can lead to in terms of partnership working in the sector. Some third sector organisations are reluctant to work together and share each other's resources and as a result, their service users may miss out on receiving the joined-up support they need to address their needs. Similarly, procurement processes can potentially disadvantage smaller organisations that may not have the same resources and experience as large organisations in putting together competitive tenders. McLaughlin (2012) suggests that there is a danger that the sector may become increasingly polarised with small, local organisations becoming at risk of either being displaced or taken over by large, national organisations within the sector. This could potentially result in the loss of the close links that small organisations have with the local community.

There was some concern from the third sector that there was a disparity between the need for the statutory and voluntary sectors to evidence outcomes: "The statutory sector (…) don't have to evidence outcomes. While the voluntary sector are continually evaluated – and even when your evaluation is brilliant - the money is not guaranteed. There is a huge gap there".

Related to funding arrangements was a concern about the appropriateness of outcomes: "There is a need to shift the measurements – change takes longer than six to eight weeks. We are trying to change 30-40 years of abuse, dysfunction – in six weeks? No way. That will take two to three years".

Features of effective transition from prison to the community

Flexible timing
Funding constraints can often make service provision time bound, workers indicated that 'people need to go at their own pace' and there should be flexibility in retaining contact with service users until there is no longer a need for this. Partnership working was considered likely to be more effective if it began at the point of sentence; it was not considered effective to make initial contact just before a prisoner was due for release. One worker commented: "When people should hear about the service is important – discussions about the new mentoring work emphasised the need to meet no less than six weeks pre-release. We know that it is better to start it early".

Reintegration
Reintegration back into communities is a key concept and should be the underpinning focus of through-care provision. While the 'recovery agenda' for substance users was considered useful in creating the potential for more positive self-images that service-users could aspire to, this was not considered to be the case in relation to criminal justice. As one worker noted of clients: "What is the goal they are trying to reach? To be an ex-offender – what a dreadful label".

Aftercare should form part of a comprehensive intervention package. It is also important that the services provided are appropriately sequenced: for example, employment, while critical in the longer term, is often not a realistic short-term goal until other issues and needs have been addressed.

Linking in with the whole family, where appropriate, was also considered to be an important way of supporting the development of relationships that could be sustained following release.

It was considered important that the transition process was carried out with the same worker; although in some cases joint work by co-workers could be equally effective and was a useful way to ensure someone was generally available should service-users wish to access the service.

Workers in the third sector considered it important to distinguish their role from statutory services, particularly in the prison environment where their status as an 'external agency' was stressed. One worker explained this: "If the

people you work with merely saw you as part of the prison they would struggle to work with you outside, when you are outside waiting to welcome them back into the community – they would see that as the prison following them outside – the difference is very subtle but important".

Workers highlighted the limitations posed by evaluations that emphasise 'reconviction' rates, and indicated that there were other ways in which 'outcomes' could be measured. It was considered particularly important to consider why a particular intervention works or what element of it appears to work; something, it was acknowledged, as being very difficult to capture.

Other suggested action to assist reintegration included: consistent contact arrangements, gate pick-ups, follow-up contact in the event of missed appointments, active advocacy on behalf of clients, reinforcing relapse prevention strategies, helping to establish a sustainable network of support in the community. There is evidence to suggest that support for prisoners can be made more effective by providing a 'menu' of services to which prisoners can be referred and establishing links with post-release workers prior to release; providing a 'one-stop-shop' where prisoners can meet with representatives of agencies, providing an opportunity to obtain information and make appointments (Link centres appear to be useful in this respect); introducing mechanisms to minimise the impact of prison, e.g. preventing rent arrears and making suitable arrangements for the care of children; ensuring property (in the community) is not lost or destroyed while a prisoner is serving a sentence.

Policy and practice implications

The benefits of mentoring schemes had have been identified by the Scottish Government as a way of assisting reintegration and supporting services to improve engagement with prisoners on release back into the community. However, while this is likely to have benefits for service users who access these services, the impact of mentoring, although clearly a 'promising practice' has yet to be evaluated thoroughly. From existing evidence, the very real practical challenges facing individuals at the point of release are unlikely to disappear until wider service issues are addressed. These tend to originate outside the criminal justice system, with agencies such as housing providers, benefits offices and job centres. Mentors can provide a wide range of practical help and support, including gathering information about local education and employment opportunities; assisting with the completion of application forms; and accompanying service users to their accommodation or

to meetings with service providers on release. And it would seem that ex-prisoners who had post-release contact with mentors on release did better in terms of recidivism than any other groups of prisoners (Lewis et al., 2007).

However, the provision of mentors and intensive support, without addressing these basic services, may simply transfer the responsibility for wading through bureaucratic obstacles onto third sector service providers. Clearly, having support throughout this process will be invaluable to many service users, but unless system changes occur, on-going challenges are likely to remain in place.

The particular difficulties that are created in terms of access to safe accommodation, and timely receipt of benefits are consistent features of reports and evaluations of initiatives aimed at improving through-care provision. These difficulties need to be addressed to ensure that the current funding for mentoring projects can be used to its full advantage. There is surprisingly little evidence that changes *within* the criminal justice system are effective in reducing prison populations. 'We may have to accept that such large scale change may be dependent on political, social and cultural processes over which criminal justice actors have little control' (Lightowler, 2010: 41).

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ANNEX ONE

Examples of practice in Scotland

A number of examples of third sector through-care provision in Scotland can be considered, operating in partnership with the Scottish Prison Service. Initial evaluations of these bridging and mentoring services (referred to below) suggest they are delivering positive results. However access to these services varies and depends on whether or not they are provided in a particular prison, and/or funded by the prisoner's local council. A few examples are outlined here:

Moving on Renfrewshire, Action for Children
This project works in YOI Polmont as a partnership approach of services based in Renfrewshire. Eligible young men (aged between 16 and 20) are identified as soon as possible on entry to custody and a 'youth work' approach is taken to support them, linking with other services both during and after custody. Most of those referred are serving short-term prison sentences and it is acknowledged that young people can be particularly difficult to engage with following release. Project workers meet identified needs such as housing, benefits and addressing health requirements. They will also work to address other issues such as employability skills, communication skills alongside local partners (i.e. Renfrewshire Council and other voluntary organisations). The project has now been expanded to two neighbouring local authority areas through a Public Social Partnership. Evaluation of the project (Hutton et al, 2011) found high levels of voluntary engagement, with 81% of the young men referred engaging in prison and 75% continuing to engage post-release. Among those who engaged, there was some evidence of reductions in reoffending rates, improved physical and mental wellbeing, including reduced or stabilised substance misuse and improved personal relationships. The importance of supporting the young men to find constructive activities appears to have had made a difference (e.g. training and employment).

Routes out of Prison (RooP), the Wise Group
RooP provides through-care support for prisoners approaching release. Through peer mentoring the project aims to help service users to gain the life, social and employment skills they need to resume their place within their family and society. Service users receive through-care support from Life Coaches, many of whom themselves have a background of offending and use their personal experiences to help their clients reconnect with their communities. The service is targeted at prisoners serving short-term sentences of between three months and four years and currently operates in seven prisons across Scotland.

The project offers a 'through the gate' support service whereby community based Life Coaches meet with the prisoner at least twice before they are released, to establish a working relationship and outline a plan of action. Following release, the Community Life Coach will help service users to access appropriate services, accompany them to appointments, advocate on their behalf and provide practical assistance, emotional support, praise and encouragement. In this sense RooP successfully provides a 'bridging model' of support from the prison to the community and to other community services.

An evaluation of the Routes out of Prison Project (Criminal Justice Social Work Development Centre for Scotland, 2011) found some positive indications of improvement among service users especially where service users continue to engage in the community. Schinkel and Whyte (2012) note that most male prisoners reported approaching RooP for help to find employment and did not appear to distinguish the service from others in the prison. For women prisoners, however, the peer support element was viewed as a frequent reason why women had signed up to the service. Schinkel and Whyte (2012) suggest this may be reflective of a gender difference in accessing services, or perhaps that life coaches in the women's prison had more time to spend with the smaller number of service users. Other positive outcomes achieved by service users included engagement with education, employment or training services, securing accommodation after release from prison and accessing health or addiction services.

Families Affected by Imprisonment (FABI), CIRCLE
Circle provides a range of services for prisoners with children across Scotland, operating out of prisons for both men and women. The FABI project provides through-care support for women with children, while they are in and after they leave prison (Nugent and Loucks, 2009; Hutton and Nugent, 2011). FABI works with women serving short sentences and on remand, those identified as having the highest level of social need and highest rates of reconviction (Lewis et al, 2007) but who frequently do not receive a sentence plan or access to support on release. The service offers women information and support on a range of issues including drug and alcohol misuse, child custody issues and housing provision. It also advocates on behalf of women ensuring that communication is established with other services, and that women are kept up-to-date on decisions being taken that affect them and their families, and that women have an opportunity to put their views across and be listened to. Evaluation of the FABI project (Hutton and Nugent, 2011) highlighted that women felt more able to discuss topics with their Circle worker than with workers from other services and perceived Circle staff to be non-judgemental, honest and willing to go the extra mile. Specifically, women highlighted their appreciation that Circle workers had time to listen to them

and kept them involved in what was going on, especially with regard to custody of their children and other issues.

Evaluation of the FABI project (Hutton and Nugent, 2011) found the project achieved high levels of voluntary engagement with 85% of women who accessed the project in prison continuing to do so after their release. The evaluation also suggests that this level of engagement may help contribute to reductions in offending behaviour in the longer term. For women, it was viewed as particularly important to build relationships with workers before leaving prison to ensure continuity from prison to the community. Help with housing was identified as a particular issue. The service was important in its provision of both practical and emotional support, and its' role as both 'gatekeeper' and 'advocate' in relation to other services (Hutton and Nugent, 2011).

Passport Project, Access to Industry
This project operates in Polmont YOI and HMP Edinburgh and provides through the gate support for prisoners returning to Edinburgh and Glasgow. The project engages with prisoners four to six months before release from prison and aims to give them the support they need to move into employment or education. Service users are assigned a dedicated Passport Caseworker who works with them on a one to one basis while they are in prison and continues to engage with them in the community after their release[5].

Partnership working lies at the core of the Passport service and Passport Caseworkers work in partnership with a variety of agencies both in prison and the community to ensure the service users are able to access the support they need. For example, the project has developed strong relationships with a range of partners in Edinburgh and Glasgow, including local regeneration agencies, colleges and employers through which they are able to offer service users a menu of training and work placement opportunities. In addition to improving the employability skills of the people who engage with the project, these local partnerships also help to aid their reintegration back into the community.

An evaluation of the Passport service (Jardine and Whyte, 2009) found it achieved high levels of voluntary engagement with 83% of offenders who accessed the project in prison, continuing to engage with it after their release. Positive outcomes achieved by service users include reduced offending behaviour, gaining SQA qualifications, securing employment and moving into further education.

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[5] See also Reid Howie Associates (2011 and 2012) for evaluations of the Glasgow Passport project.

Access to Industry also operates the Women Offenders Reintegration and Development (WORD) programme which was set up to work with women intensely, in prison, and to continue working with them on the outside; funded by the Scottish Government's Safer Communities Directorate. The project works with women from the Edinburgh area, to support access to education, training or employment in collaboration with Jewel and Esk College. Women who are less than a year prior to release can access the programme which consists of beauty therapy courses and 'holistic' caseworker support. The case-worker develops links with other agencies in community to ensure support for women on release. A support plan is established with the women who are supported in completing applications for college, employment as appropriate.

Work with women in HMP Edinburgh also fits with the Passport programme and continuity of support is promoted in the community. Intervention with women is focused on getting women into jobs but also at addressing domestic issues and relationships, often considered a priority for women who are more likely to have responsibility for children than male prisoners.

The flexible development of the WORD programme emphasised the importance of raising aspirations, building a framework where women felt safe and supported to reintegrate back into the community safely. The WORD programme prioritises partnership working, and has a close working relationship with CIRCLE, who will work closely with the family. Women are seen weekly in the prison and the working framework has been devised flexibly to fit with prison regimes as well as the needs of women. Workers also ensure women are as safe as they can be on release, arranging housing appointments for women on the day of release, and continuing to engage with women in the community as appropriate.

An internal evaluation of the WORD programme (Access to Industry, 2012) highlighted the importance of continuity with case-workers and an ongoing package of support. It identified a number of implementation difficulties resulting from limited eligibility criteria and a degree of 'programme inefficiency' resulting from initial delays and communication difficulties across the community and prison. However, working relationships between women and caseworkers and tutors were identified as positive, with useful referrals made to other external agencies.

Supported Accommodation Service, SACRO.
This service helps to reduce the risk of reoffending by assisting service users with housing and supporting them to live independently within the community. It provides support for over 16 year olds who are experiencing difficulties with their accommodation and who want to reduce reoffending. The service is available in Aberdeenshire, Highland, Orkney, Clackmannanshire, Forth

Valley, Stirling, Glasgow and Elgin. The service can enhance social work supervision in the community by providing monitoring, supervision (intensive supervision in cases of high risk offenders) and support in a range of types of accommodation. The service supports clients to gain the practical and social skills needed for independent living and has proved successful in helping prisoners to fit back into the community after their release from prison.

In an evaluation of the Supported Accommodation Service (Nelson, 2007) service users highlighted the relationship of trust and respect they had with their Sacro worker and the practical support they received from them as the main contributory factor in maintaining engagement with the service and reducing offending behaviour. Many service users highlighted the relationship of trust and respect they had with their Sacro Worker as a key strength of the service, noting that the Sacro worker listened to them and was generally sympathetic to their situation.