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The resettlement of short-term prisoners: an evaluation of seven Pathfinders

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Executive summary

Short-sentence prisoners – those sentenced to less than 12 months and normally released at the mid-point of their sentence – constitute the majority of adult prisoners. This group has the highest re-conviction rate among released adult prisoners, but as a consequence of their short-sentences, few are able to take advantage of offending behaviour programmes and pre-release services designed to improve their prospects of resettling successfully and leading law-abiding lives in the future. Unlike longer-term prisoners, moreover, they are not subject to statutory post-release supervision and are thus dependent upon voluntary after-care services for help with the multiple problems which research demonstrates are a consistent feature of the profile of short-sentence prisoners. In an attempt to address these deficiencies, six resettlement 'Pathfinders' were established in 1999 with the aim of reducing re-offending by this group of prisoners through effective resettlement work provided on a voluntary basis, both in custody and for up to three months after release. This report presents the results of an evaluation of the original six Pathfinders and a seventh that was added in 2001.

Of the original six Pathfinders, three were led by the probation services in Hull, Durham and Oxfordshire/Buckinghamshire (located at HMPs Hull, Low Newton – a women's prison – and Woodhill/Springhill respectively). Three others were led by voluntary organisations with experience of working with offenders in custody and in the community: NACRO, CRI and SOVA (located at HMPs Birmingham, Lewes and Wandsworth). By April 2000 all six projects were fully operational.

In selecting the Pathfinders, emphasis was placed on the importance of providing a co-ordinated approach to practical resettlement problems (including lack of accommodation, low educational attainment, unemployment and substance abuse), either directly or in partnership with the voluntary sector. In addition, probation-led projects were expected to involve participants in a structured programme of cognitive/motivational work designed to address their offending behaviour. Such a programme, F.O.R. … A Change (F.O.R.), was available to participants at HMPs Hull and Woodhill from early 2001. Durham ran a modular programme for female prisoners, which contained both practical and motivational elements. To produce a larger sample of F.O.R. participants the resettlement initiative was extended to HMP Parc (with South Wales Probation Service), where the F.O.R. programme ran from April 2001.

Aims

The evaluation was designed to examine both the effectiveness and the cost-effectiveness of the Resettlement Pathfinders in addressing the resettlement needs of short-sentence prisoners and in reducing reconviction. A key issue was whether the Pathfinders were able to motivate participants to pursue targets for personal change and – in the absence of any powers of compulsion – to persuade them to remain in contact with the project teams or partner agencies following release. Practical and organisational issues were also examined in order to gauge how much the projects were able to achieve in the short time frames available to them, and what were the main obstacles to effective delivery of resettlement services. Specific aims were to examine:

- whether those projects that included a component designed to tackle offending behaviour had a greater impact on reconviction than those that focused on practical resettlement needs;

- improvement or otherwise in the range of resettlement and offending behaviour problems targeted by the projects;
- the degree of change in attitudes and traits related to offending;
- the cost effectiveness of each project;
- the ingredients of successful delivery of resettlement services and barriers to effective practice.

Methods

To achieve the aims of the evaluation four main strands of work were undertaken:

- a process evaluation, commencing with an early organisational 'audit' of project design and implementation, followed by a longer-term examination of how the resettlement provision at each Pathfinder was actually delivered in custody and following release;
- an investigation of the resettlement needs of short-term prisoners and the level of service provided at each of the Pathfinders;
- an assessment of the impact of the projects on resettlement problems, attitudes related to offending, and reconviction;
- an assessment of the cost-effectiveness of each of the projects.

A range of research methods was used in conducting these interrelated strands of work. Interviews were carried out with project managers and staff involved in the delivery of the resettlement provision. The information gathered in these early visits provided the starting point for a more comprehensive process evaluation that continued throughout the study. A key component of the evaluation was the tracking of offenders who participated in the Pathfinders through the use of comprehensive case management records (CMRs). All 'closed' CMRs received by 25th January 2002 were included in the evaluation, a total of 1,081 cases.

Pre-release interviews were conducted with a total of 139 participants across the seven Pathfinders. However, difficulties in maintaining contact with the offenders after they left prison were such that only 36 post-release interviews were achieved. In addition to these face-to-face interviews, postal questionnaires were sent to 769 offenders, of whom 74 responded – a response rate of just 10 per cent.

The data required for a robust comparison of cost effectiveness were identified at an early stage. All personnel, equipment and financial costs associated with the resettlement projects were identified, quantified and valued on a quarterly basis from financial information and evaluation data collection tools. Output measures were defined according to level of intervention, which related to the time input from relevant staff.

In the longer term a reconviction study is planned. The reconviction data will be used to examine the effectiveness and the cost-effectiveness of each Pathfinder, and of the various types of 'service' provided, in reducing re-offending by short-term prisoners.

Principal findings

Practical, organisational and partnership issues

The practical experience that staff gained during the pilots in implementing and delivering the resettlement Pathfinders highlighted several common themes, impediments to effective practice and important lessons for future resettlement work with prisoners serving short-sentences. The three main areas of difficulty identified in

chapter 3 were in relation to:

- the management, staffing and training of the teams and the appropriate use of their time and skills, particularly in relation to the assessment of offenders;
- the role of the partner prisons in facilitating the work of the Pathfinders;
- deficiencies in resettlement services available to offenders, both in prison and in the immediate period following their release.

Discussion of these issues with project managers and staff enabled the evaluation team to make a number of recommendations for improving the organisation and delivery of future resettlement work (see below).

The Pathfinder participants: problems and levels of service

Chapter 4 indicated that high proportions of the prisoners joining the Pathfinders faced the kinds of problems that have been identified in numerous previous studies as typical of short-term prisoners: most commonly in relation to accommodation, drugs, employment and thinking skills. The problems afforded the highest priority by the project teams concerned accommodation and drugs. Probation-led Pathfinders also put thinking skills and education/training high on their list of priorities.

The main services delivered inside prison included one-to-one advice and support, 'welfare' work on prisoners' behalf (such as contacting employers or housing agencies), referrals to other agencies and – in the probation-led Pathfinders – the delivery of specific offending-related programmes. Over half of all prisoners who progressed beyond the assessment stage were referred to another agency (most commonly for accommodation and drugs problems).

Post-release, the four probation projects were all more successful than the voluntary projects in maintaining contact and in the numbers with whom meaningful work was carried out. Offenders who were most likely to maintain contact post-release were: women (Durham achieved the highest post-release contact rate), older males, those with lower risk/need scores, and those who had completed the F.O.R. programme.

Interviews with offenders and postal questionnaires completed by ex-prisoners (the latter admittedly not representative of all Pathfinder members) all suggested that the projects were viewed in a strongly positive light by offenders. Over 70 per cent of the prisoners interviewed stated that they had gained benefits from the project. In general the perceived benefits were less concerned with practical problems than with improved 'self-confidence', 'peace of mind' or 'having someone to talk to'. Among the relatively small group (107) contacted by the evaluators post-release there was a small increase in the number in employment (compared with employment circumstances immediately prior to imprisonment), but there had been a small 'net loss' of 'permanent' accommodation.

Outcomes: interim measures of effective resettlement work

The level of post-release contact – and of significant and 'long-term' contact – achieved by most of the Pathfinders indicates that they were at least five times more successful than probation services have been in the recent past in maintaining contact through 'voluntary after-care' systems. Nevertheless, only a small proportion of offenders who were assessed as having significant criminogenic needs received help with these problems post-release. For example, of the 526 who were initially found to have significant drug problems, only 40 are known to have attended a drugs agency post-release. Similarly, the 77 offenders known to have found housing with the direct help of the projects must be set against the 535 initially identified as having significant accommodation problems.

Until a reconviction study of ex-prisoners from the Pathfinders has been undertaken in 2004, it will not possible to make any definitive statements about the effectiveness of the various Pathfinder projects – or of particular styles of service delivery – in the key area of reducing re-offending. However, the report provides an analysis of three interim outcome measures: the level of 'continuity of services' experienced by prisoners (specifically, the extent of meaningful post-release contact), 'attitude change' within custody, and changes in 'problem levels' within custody (the latter two measured by CRIME-PICS II scales G and P). The main findings were that prisoners in projects run by probation services and prisoners who completed a cognitive motivational programme were the most likely to experience high continuity of services and to exhibit changes in attitudes (and to a lesser extent, problems).

Cost effectiveness

The results of the cost effectiveness study indicate that the costs per offender participating beyond the action planning stage varied widely between the seven projects. Probation-led Pathfinders invested more resources into prisoner contact than those led by voluntary organisations, although the increased cost of post-release work for the former was comparatively small. High attrition rates increased the costs considerably. Probation-led projects spent less per unit of positive change in offending-related attitudes, but in a composite ranking of a number of outcomes (including improvement in practical resettlement problems), one voluntary-led Pathfinders was the (joint) third most cost-effective performer.

Future resettlement work with short-sentence prisoners

The information gathered from case management records and interviews with project staff and offenders, allow us to offer some recommendations for future resettlement projects.

Organisation and delivery of resettlement services within prisons

Effective implementation and delivery of services for short-term prisoners requires:

- strong professional management and leadership, and adequate numbers of experienced staff (including seconded prison staff) geared to providing this kind of service;
- effective, timely and less time-consuming assessment procedures;
- genuine prison/probation/voluntary sector partnership in delivering resettlement services;
- better facilities in prison from which to work, including private areas where prisoners can be interviewed;
- better access for short-term prisoners to existing prison services, such as CARAT;
- effective case management from the point of assessment through to the post-release phase of intervention;
- full monitoring and recording of work carried out with offenders, including referrals, to facilitate evaluation and provide a check on programme integrity.

Access to services and opportunities

Gaps in provision of services needed to facilitate reintegration of offenders indicated a need for:

- improved partnership working with Employment Services, Benefits Agency, local authorities and relevant voluntary/private sector agencies;

- access to a wider range of suitable housing including supported housing and drug rehabilitation centres;
- an end to the local authority practice of excluding offenders from available housing;
- improved systems to allow benefit claims to be prepared and processed pre-release;
- improved employment opportunities and services for offenders not considered 'job ready' as a result of poor skills, drug/alcohol abuse.

Addressing complex needs

The evaluation confirms that short-term prisoners' resettlement problems are typically a combination of difficulties in accessing opportunities and resources and difficulties which have their roots in the prisoner's attitudes, beliefs and habitual responses to problems. This suggests the need for an holistic, integrated approach able to provide:

- continuity of contact where possible with the same worker/mentor through pre- and post-release stages;
- a high level of pre-release contact which addresses not only practical resettlement problems but also lifestyle, attitudes and motivation to change ;
- opportunities and encouragement for offenders to undertake structured programmes which address thinking, motivation and self-management;
- pro-social post-release support, through continuity of contact with probation staff and/or mentors;
- resettlement work in female prisons as in male prisons targeted on criminogenic factors, but also responsive to personal and social problems particular to women offenders;
- special attention to any additional resettlement needs in relation to offenders from minority ethnic backgrounds, both male and female.

1. Introduction and background

This report presents the results of an evaluation of seven 'Resettlement Pathfinders' funded under the Home Office Crime Reduction Programme. The first six of these were selected in 1999 and the seventh (based in Parc prison) was added in 2001 to provide extra cases with which to evaluate the F.O.R. ... A Change resettlement programme (see below). The main aim of these Pathfinders was to reduce re-offending by offenders sentenced to imprisonment for less than 12 months, who are not subject to statutory supervision on release: this was to be achieved by facilitating a successful transition from custody back into the community, for example by assisting them with practical problems (such as lack of accommodation), referring them to specialist agencies (eg drugs agencies) or helping them to address deficits in motivation or thinking skills. Such assistance, it was planned, would continue on a voluntary basis for up to three months after release.

The report is divided into seven chapters. This introductory chapter considers the origins of resettlement work, relevant research, and recent policy initiatives that seek to address the inadequacies in existing resettlement provision for short-sentence prisoners. Chapter 2 outlines the scope of the evaluation and the methods used to conduct it. Chapter 3 describes the organisational arrangements of the seven projects and practical issues that arose during their implementation, as well as drawing some preliminary lessons about good practice. Chapter 4 analyses the characteristics of the prisoners who joined the Pathfinders, the problems they faced both during and after imprisonment, and the actions taken by the projects to address them; it also looks at the projects through the eyes of some of these prisoners. Chapter 5 focuses on outcomes of the work: it is too early to determine whether the projects actually reduced re-conviction, but some other indicators of impact are presented (a supplementary analysis of reconvictions will be conducted in 2004). Chapter 6 presents the results of a cost-effectiveness analysis. Finally, Chapter 7 summarises the findings and draws some brief conclusions.

Background and concept of resettlement

Until the setting up of the Resettlement Pathfinders, the supervision of prisoners serving sentences of less than 12 months and released without statutory supervision had been assigned a peripheral role in probation work. Indeed, a recent study of the performance of that role concluded that at the end of the 20th century there had been 'a continuing decline both in the voluntary after-care caseload and in the priority accorded to this area of work' (Maguire et al. 1997: 57); the report also argued that the failure to meet the needs of this particular group of offenders raised some important questions about crime reduction and public protection. Similar concern is evident in the recent review of the sentencing framework (Halliday, 2001), a significant conclusion of which is that 'one of the most important deficiencies in the present framework is the lack of utility in short prison sentences – those of less than twelve months'. Both the study and the review affirm that short-sentence prisoners (some of whom have at some stage in their criminal careers committed serious offences) constitute the majority of adult prisoners, and have both a high level of social need and the highest reconviction rate of released adult prisoners (Home Office, 1999). Moreover, many receive inadequate provision in relation to employment, housing and health, are denied involvement in appropriate programmes of intervention, and thus are prone to the effects of social exclusion. At the same time, the opportunity to engage with them is limited because of the short time period in which pre-release work – crucial to generating the motivation needed for the maintenance of post-release contact – can be undertaken.

Historical background

'Resettlement' work with prisoners, under a variety of names, has a long history, though its usefulness has often not been self-evident. That story has been told elsewhere (Bochel, 1976; Jarvis, 1972; King, 1964) and can be summarised only briefly here. Evolving, as it did, from the Discharged Prisoners' Aids Societies' (DPAS) and later the Police Court Mission's) tradition in the 19th century of offering practical and moral help to prisoners, the involvement of the probation service in the voluntary after-care of prisoners began relatively late in the 20th century. Despite a growing involvement in the supervision of young offenders released from Approved Schools and Borstals, until the early 1960s the primary responsibility for the care and resettlement of ordinary prisoners rested with the DPAS. The Advisory Council Report (Home Office, 1963) shifted that responsibility to the probation service and renamed it 'throughcare', with the result that between 1963 and 1971 the number of voluntary aftercare cases increased from one per cent of the total caseload to seven per cent (Davies, 1974).

For a period of approximately twenty years, the business of maintaining pre- and post- release contact with short-sentence prisoners co-existed alongside the statutory supervision of released prisoners as a small but significant part of probation officers' work, but thereafter it began to decline. The decline was attributable to the growth in compulsory post-release supervision (automatic and discretionary conditional release – ACR and DCR)[1] following the Carlisle Committee's report on parole (Home Office, 1988b); the increased weight given to control and monitoring; a sharpened focus on more heavily convicted offenders; the demand for a commitment to risk assessment and public protection; the shift towards evidenced-based practice; and the development of National Standards with an exclusive focus on the supervision of licences.

The process of decline in voluntary after-care can be traced in a series of Home Office pronouncements from the early 1980s. These began with the Statement of National Objectives and Priorities (Home Office, 1984), which put a clear emphasis on compulsory supervision. While throughcare is third in the list of priorities, a crucial qualification is made:

> 'Sufficient resource should be allocated to throughcare to enable the Service's statutory obligations to be discharged.... Beyond that, social work for offenders released from custody, though important in itself, can only command the priority which is consistent with the main objective of implementing non-custodial measures for offenders who might otherwise receive custodial sentences' (p5).

Following this landmark publication, a succession of papers confirmed the redefinition of probation work as public protection and crime prevention, and introduced the idea of voluntary after-care being provided by other organisations in partnership with probation (Home Office, 1988; Home Office, 1988a; Home Office, 1990; Home Office, 1990a). So, by the early 1990s, voluntary after-care lingered on in the range of probation officers' work: it received a passing mention in the new National Standards (Home Office, 1992), a cursory nod in the first of the three year plans (Home Office, 1992a), but it was removed altogether from the 1995 National Standards (Home Office, 1995). It was no surprise, therefore, that a survey of voluntary after-care in the mid-1990s (Maguire et al., 1997) found little relevant activity in the majority of probation areas.

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1. Offenders receiving a custodial sentence of at least one year and less than four years are entitled to automatic conditional release (ACR) at the halfway point of their sentence; they are supervised by a probation officer for half the remaining time. Discretionary release (DCR) based on the recommendation of the Parole Board applies to offenders serving four years and over. These arrangements replaced the system of releasing prisoners on parole.

Although voluntary after-care has been primarily a 'welfare' function of probation, undertaken on a one-to-one basis with what might be generalised as low risk offenders,[2] during its history there have been variations in the style and location of that work. For instance, in describing the history of after-care since the Advisory Group's report, Davies (op. cit) traces the development not only of prisoners' wives groups, but of government capital funding for hostels, the use of Voluntary Associates, some limited family casework, and specialist after-care units. A number of these units were established in the 1960s (for example, in Inner London and Gloucestershire), and although their main focus was statutory after-care, they also established voluntary after-care as an area of specialist expertise. Moreover, at the beginning of the 1970s, voluntary day centres such as the Barbican Centre (Foggart, 1976) introduced concepts such as key worker contracts and resettlement programmes, not just to probationers but also to ex-prisoners. In these respects, the practice of voluntary after-care has contributed to significant aspects of the history and development of groupwork in probation.

As Halliday (2001) argues, the notion of a voluntary commitment by short-sentence prisoners to work designed to reduce the risk of their further offending sits uneasily within the direction of current criminal justice policies, but the idea that short-sentence prisoners should be subject to some form of statutory supervision is not new. In the late 1960s, even though such prisoners were not viewed as high risk but rather people who had 'difficulty performing certain roles', it was proposed that instead of being sent to prison they should be placed on probation with a condition that they attend a Community Training Centre[3] (Priestley, 1970: 2). Although the curriculum of training was couched in terms of 'personal development', 'vocational preparation' and 'social skills' (ibid: 3-4), it was aimed at a familiar litany of problems associated with, for example, poverty, homelessness and unemployment (what now might be described as criminogenic needs), and the men were categorised as those who 'sink into recidivism and vagrancy' (Vercoe, 1970: 4). Although this was put forward as an alternative to custody, it is relevant here because it established the principle of the statutory supervision of this group of offenders (albeit via a probation order), and its proposed content is redolent of the programmes in the 'custody plus' recommendations of the Halliday report with its commitment to rehabilitation and reform through conditional post-release support.

The concept of resettlement

What is different about Halliday's proposal, however, is the additional emphasis on public protection and enforcement, and the use of the term resettlement.[4] This change in terminology is important insofar as it may reflect a change in conception of work with short-sentence prisoners, from straightforward welfare support to what might be described as 'welfare plus': in other words, the provision of help with those welfare problems related to risk of offending (criminogenic needs), with the specific objective of reducing the risk of future offending. Expressed in these terms, resettlement implies a commitment to reintegration and inclusion. Interestingly, Pitts (2001: 8), in arguing that there is a dearth of research on work designed to help community reintegration, states that promulgating such knowledge 'is a key aim of the resettlement Pathfinders'. However, the specific meaning of the term resettlement is, perhaps, rather less clear than this statement implies.

The definition formulated by the Association of Chief Officers of Probation and adopted in the Joint Thematic Review (Home Office, 2001) rightly places emphasis on public protection, addressing offending behaviour,

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2. Perhaps best symbolised by Charlie Smith, the subject of Tony Parker's The Unknown Citizen (London: Hutchinson, 1965).
3. An idea that led to the Day Training Centre Experiment that was set up following the Wootton Report (1970) on non-custodial and semi-custodial sentences.
4. Probably first introduced in the report of the Prisons and Probation review as a replacement for throughcare (Joining Forces to Protect the Public. Prisons-Probation. A Consultation Document. Home Office 1998).

partnership and work with families.[5] Implicit in this definition are the concepts of community reintegration and inclusion, and they are made more explicit in the body of the review when it focuses on the core problems faced by this group of prisoners. Community reintegration and inclusion might mean, for instance, restoration to the pre-sentence situation; or improvement upon the pre-sentence standard of living; or re-establishment of social support networks; or the creation of new pro-social relationships; or 'collaboratively defined task[s] relevant to criminogenic needs, and potentially effective in meeting them' (Raynor and Vanstone, 1994: 402). The process of community reintegration needs to be flexible and responsive to possible differences among short-sentence prisoners: for instance, some prisoners might have been settled before or be well integrated in social groups of both positive and negative influence. Furthermore, the reasons for undertaking resettlement are equally complex and potentially diverse: they could include common humanity; the need for a continuation of rehabilitative effort undertaken in prison; the amelioration of damage done by prison; or the reinforcement of the social contract (non-offending behaviour for increased life chances). The responsibilities shared by, on the one hand, the State through its representatives in the criminal justice system and, on the other hand, the offender, are integral to all these reasons, and need to be made explicit in the process of resettlement.

The lessons of research and the current policy context

If, as seems likely following Halliday, the reduction of offending is to assume a central role in resettlement work, it follows that its implementation will have to take heed not only of principles of natural justice but also of the principles of effective work in the community. Research suggests that thinking and problem-solving are important components of effective intervention (Ross and Fabiano, 1985), but in embracing that knowledge resettlement work will also have to take account of research evidence about dynamic risk factors such as unemployment and homelessness. For example, May (1999) demonstrated a statistically significant relationship between reconviction following a community sentence and a variety of problems including lack of accommodation, unemployment, drug use, and relationship difficulties (see also Raynor et al., 2000). Moreover, the main body of previous research into the needs of prisoners informs us that such problems (plus others such as poverty and a general need for social stability) are a consistent feature of the profile of the short-sentence prisoner (Morris, 1965; Davies, 1974; Holburn, 1975; Banks and Fairhead, 1976; Carlen, 1983; Corden, 1983; and, more recently, Maguire et al., 1997; NACRO, 2001; HMIP, 2002; and the 2002 report of the Social Exclusion Unit). The report of the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) highlights the relationship between the individual and social factors and places a heavy emphasis on 'combined service failure', asserting that 'the failure of mainstream agencies to deal with aspects of social exclusion means that the Prison Service and Probation Service are in many cases being asked to put right a lifetime of service failure'.

Other recent research has focused on the resettlement problems experienced by women prisoners and has identified personal and social factors that appear to maintain their offending behaviour (Hamlyn and Lewis, 2000; Clarke and Howden-Windell, 2000). It is no surprise, therefore, that a wide range of individuals and agencies consulted by the SEU about how to reduce re-offending by ex-prisoners suggested strategies based on both better services and the promotion of behavioural change (Robinson, 2001). The main recommendation of the SEU report is the creation of a National Rehabilitation Strategy to reduce offending, involving a Going Straight contract, national measures to deal with core problems (such as lack of money and accommodation) and further developments based on evidence of effectiveness.

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5.   'A systematic and evidenced-based process by which actions are taken to work with the offender in custody and on release, so that communities are better protected from harm and re-offending is significantly reduced. It encompasses the totality of work with prisoners, their families and significant others in partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations.' (p12)

Several aspects of the current policy environment appear to offer a unique opportunity to make these objectives more achievable. A standard risk/needs assessment instrument (OASys), which covers the range of social and personal factors referred to above, is being rolled out nationally for use by both the Probation and Prison Services. The F.O.R. ... A Change programme is designed for use with short-sentence offenders in prison – or on licence, should Halliday's 'custody plus' recommendation be implemented. The Joint Thematic Review of Resettlement (HMIP, 2002:23) calls for the Probation and Prison Services to develop a joint strategy that ensures 'consistency and continuity in preventing offending and reintegrating offenders into the community' and this is supported by their joint resettlement performance indicator. In the voluntary sector, NACRO has been active in promoting the needs of prisoners generally and in particularly those of minority ethnic groups and women (NACRO, 1998; 2001; 2002). Last but not least, the Resettlement Pathfinders, which are evaluated here, have been exploring new practical approaches to work 'through the gates'. As Pitts (2001:3) argues, the combination of these elements may 'promote a profound push towards seamless work from prison to community'.

It is against this changing policy background, then, that the evaluation of the Resettlement Pathfinders has to be viewed. It is important to remember, of course, that participation in a Pathfinder project was totally voluntary on the part of prisoners: we can only speculate what impact these initiatives might have had if post-release participation had been compulsory. However, this aside, the Pathfinders provide an excellent practical test of 'evidence based' thinking when applied to the thorny issue of the short-sentence prisoner group, as they included explicit efforts to move beyond simple 'welfare' work to approaches aimed at systematically identifying and addressing criminogenic needs, including deficits in thinking skills and motivation. Both OASys and offender programmes featured prominently, as did careful planning and monitoring of actions with individual offenders. In the next chapter, the aims of the evaluation are set out and the main research methods described.

2. Aims and methodology

Aims of the evaluation

The evaluation was designed to examine both the effectiveness and the cost-effectiveness of the Resettlement Pathfinders both in addressing the resettlement needs of short-sentence prisoners and in reducing reconviction. An important aspect of this was the extent to which they were able to motivate participants to pursue targets for personal change and – in the absence of any powers of compulsion – to persuade them to remain in contact with the project teams or partner agencies following release. It was also concerned with the practical and organisational issues of how much the projects were able to achieve in the short time frames available to them, and what kinds of obstacles they came up against, in order to inform future projects and to identify lessons about good practice. The specific aims of the evaluation were to examine:

- the impact of the seven projects on the reconviction rates of short-sentence prisoners;
- whether those projects that included a component designed to tackle offending behaviour had a greater impact on reconviction than those that focused on practical resettlement needs and provided no structured offending behaviour programme;
- improvement or otherwise in the range of resettlement and offending behaviour problems focused on by the projects;
- the degree of change in attitudes and traits related to offending;
- the cost effectiveness of each project;
- the ingredients of successful delivery of resettlement services and barriers to effective practice.

Selection of the projects

Of the six original pilot resettlement projects, three were led by the probation service and three by voluntary organisations with experience of working with offenders in custody and in the community. The criteria for selecting the probation-led pilot projects, as set out by the Home Office in Probation Circular 17/1999,[6] included previous experience in resettlement work and in using the results of risk and need assessment instruments to target offending-related problems in an integrated way. The Circular acknowledged that a key determinant of the success of the projects was whether they were able to work in close co-operation with the Governor and staff of the partner prison. Another key criterion was that all of the partner prisons should be able to provide a minimum of 400 prisoners over the life of the project (estimated at the outset to be three years) who were serving sentences of less than 12 months and were thus eligible to join the Pathfinders.

It was envisaged that all of the projects would address practical resettlement issues and that those in which the voluntary sector was to play a key role would focus on social and personal problems relating to accommodation, finances, low educational attainment, unemployment and substance abuse. Probation-led projects were expected to provide a combination of practical assistance (either directly or in partnership with the voluntary sector) and cognitive/motivational programmes designed to address offending behaviour.

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6.   Probation Circular 17/1999: Crime Reduction Programme: Applications to Help Develop New Pathfinders. Home Office.

Six projects were selected for funding and evaluation. By March/April 2000 all six projects were fully operational and were gathering data on offenders who participated. A cognitive motivational programme, F.O.R. ... A Change, was available to participants at HMPs Hull and Woodhill from early 2001. In order to achieve a sufficient sample of participants to assess the 'added value' of this programme it was found necessary to extend the resettlement initiative to one other prison. HMP Parc and South Wales Probation Service thus became a seventh pilot project and delivered the F.O.R. programme between April 2001 and March 2002. A target of 100 participants was agreed.

Table 2.1 summarises the locations of the projects, the types of resettlement provision provided and the numbers of participants. All but the Durham/Low Newton project were located in male prisons.

Table 2. 1　　　The Pathfinder projects

Probation-led Pathfinders

Probation Service	Prison	Type of provision	Geographical coverage
Oxfordshire/ Buckinghamshire	Woodhill & Springhill	1:1 work on practical resettlement needs & F.O.R. ... A Change programme	Milton Keynes
Humberside	Hull	1:1 work on practical resettlement needs & F.O.R. ... A Change programme	Hull
Durham	Low Newton	1:1 work on practical resettlement needs & individualised modular programme	County Durham, Northumberland, Teeside
South Wales	Parc	1:1 work on practical resettlement needs & F.O.R. ... A Change programme	South Wales

Voluntary led Pathfinders

NACRO	Winson Green (Birmingham)	1:1 work on practical resettlement needs	West Midlands
Crime Reduction Initiatives (CRI)	Lewes	1:1 work on practical resettlement needs. Use of volunteer mentors.	Sussex
SOVA	Wandsworth	1:1 work on practical resettlement needs. Use of volunteer mentors.	Central, West, South West London

To achieve the aims of the evaluation four main strands of work were undertaken:

- a process evaluation, commencing with an early organisational 'audit' of project design and implementation, followed by a longer-term examination of how the resettlement provision at each Pathfinder was actually delivered in custody and following release;
- an investigation of the resettlement needs of short-term prisoners and the level of service provided at each of the Pathfinders;
- an assessment of the impact of the projects on resettlement problems, attitudes related to offending, and reconviction;

- an assessment of the cost-effectiveness of each of the projects.

A range of research methods was used in conducting these interrelated strands of work.

Organisational audit and process evaluation

During May and June 2000 members of the evaluation team carried out a systematic programme of research visits to each of the six original schemes. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with project managers and staff involved in the delivery of the resettlement provision. The interviews included an examination of:

- criteria and methods of selection and referral to the projects;
- systems for assessing risk and need;
- pre-release procedures, content of pre-release intervention and links with external agencies;
- preparation for release and post-release intervention with offenders who remained in contact.

Trawls of all relevant documentation were carried out during the initial visits.

The information gathered in these early visits provided the starting point for a more comprehensive process evaluation that continued throughout the study. This included attendance at local and national steering group meetings and maintaining regular contact with project staff. In November and December 2001 a second round of semi-structured interviews with key personnel was conducted at all seven projects. These interviews were designed to obtain views on the ingredients of successful resettlement work with short-term prisoners, constraints that hampered the projects prior to and following release, and ways in which the Pathfinders might have been improved.

The F.O.R. cognitive/motivational programme

The evaluation included an examination of the delivery of the F.O.R. ... A Change (F.O.R.) programme at three of the probation-led projects. Developed by Frank Porporino and Liz Fabiano, the programme was specifically designed for use with short-term prisoners whose sentences preclude participation in longer-running offending behaviour programmes. In evaluating the resettlement Pathfinders an attempt was made to assess the 'added value' of cognitive-behavioural and motivational group-work delivered as part of the resettlement 'package'.

Views of staff involved in delivering the programme were obtained. Members of the evaluation team also observed video recordings of 16 sessions and completed observation checklists which included styles of delivery of the course material, levels of participation and evidence of confidence and motivation building.

It should also be noted that the Durham Pathfinder ran a programme for female prisoners in the form of modules tailored to the needs of individual offenders and delivered one-to-one (see below). This was not evaluated separately in the same way as the F.O.R. programme, as there were no resettlement projects dealing with female prisoners with which comparisons could be made.

The tracking of project participants via case management records

A key component of the evaluation was the tracking of offenders who participated in the Pathfinder projects. This was designed to capture at an individual level the information needed to assess the range and severity of resettlement problems/needs and the actions taken to address these at both pre-release and post-release stages. Project teams

completed a comprehensive case management record (CMR) for each participant. The CMR recorded:

- demographic information about the offender;
- a problem assessment (based on the OASys assessment tool);
- whether participants attended structured programmes or modules;
- meetings with project staff, mentors and other service providers pre- and post-release;
- all action taken with or on behalf of an offender by project staff, volunteer mentors, or other service providers, both pre- and post-release;
- whether participants dropped-out of the projects pre-release;
- whether the work to be undertaken pre- and post-release, as detailed in the initial action plan, was actually completed and reasons for non-completion;
- whether the project maintained contact with the offender post-release and reasons for termination of contact.

Projects were asked to send 'closed' CMRs – i.e. those pertaining to individuals who had left the project and with whom all resettlement work had ceased – to the evaluation team on a monthly basis. All closed CMRs received by 25th January 2002 were included in the evaluation, a total of 1,081 cases. The information on the CMRs was entered into a comprehensive coding frame and analysed using SPSS.

Representativeness of the sample

Time constraints prevented project staff from collecting information on those who declined to join the Pathfinders. It is therefore uncertain whether those who participated were representative of short-sentence prisoners, for example in relation to criminogenic needs, or motivation to address resettlement problems. We do know, however, that the majority of participants were assessed as medium to high risk of reconviction at all of the projects, and most were assessed as having a number of significant resettlement needs (see Chapter 4). Moreover, the subsequent reconviction study (see below) will indicate whether those who participated were similar in terms of expected rate of reconviction to comparison groups of short-term prisoners drawn from the same prisons.

The offender's perspective

In order to obtain offenders' views of the resettlement projects, interviews were conducted with a small number of offenders at each location. The interviews were qualitative and followed a standardised, mainly open-ended format in order to minimise variation in questioning and ensure that we obtained the same information from each interviewee. Our aim was to interview 20 offenders in custody at each project (except at Parc where the target was ten) and to re-interview as many offenders as possible post-release.

The pre-release interview: The target number of interviews was achieved in all of the project areas except Birmingham. The shortfall at Birmingham was largely due to the high transfer rate from HMP Winson Green; the few prisoners who were on the Pathfinder at any one time were frequently transferred to other prisons. The interviews were conducted during 2001 by members of the evaluation team. A total 139 participants were interviewed. The numbers conducted in each of the project areas were as follows: Birmingham 15, Durham 24, Hull 27, CRI 21, Ox/Bucks 21, Parc 10, Wandsworth 21. Selection of offenders for interview was not strictly random, but based simply on who happened to be on the Pathfinder at the time one of the evaluators visited. Very few declined to be interviewed and we are not aware of any factors which might indicate bias in the pre-release sample. The pre-release interviews focused on resettlement problems anticipated and prisoners' expectations and experience of the projects at the pre-release stage.

The post-release interview: The aim of the follow-up post-release interviews was to explore problems experienced after release, help and advice sought and views on resettlement advice and practical support received. Difficulties in maintaining contact with prisoners following their release are well known and an attempt was made to meet the inevitable shortfall by interviewing a 'booster' sample of offenders who had participated in the project but had not been interviewed pre-release. A small financial incentive (£15) was offered. This was only partially successful and as the following table shows, despite best efforts the final number of achieved interviews fell well short of our initial target.

Table 2.2	Number of post-release interviews achieved	
	No. of interviews achieved	No. of failed attempts to interview[7]
Birmingham/NACRO	0	9
Durham	13	17
Hull	10	19
Lewes/CRI	3	13
Parc	0	10
Ox/Bucks	8	14
Wandsworth/SOVA	2	31
TOTAL	36[8]	113

The low response rate may indicate a bias towards offenders with more positive views of the resettlement Pathfinders, or at least towards those who had a more settled life post-release.

The final interview: Follow-up interviews by telephone were attempted with as many offenders as possible (from either the original or the booster sample) six months after they had left custody. These focused on accommodation and employment status, any current problems and any help received from project staff and other service providers post-release. Interviewees were sent a £15 postal order for taking part. In the event, only 74 telephone calls were made, resulting in the completion of just 12 interviews. Many of the telephone numbers supplied by the projects or by the offenders during the pre-release interviews were no longer operational. Some were for the family and friends of the offender who were unable to provide details as to the offender's whereabouts. Messages were left with family and friends and on answering machines but these too produced little response. Unfortunately, therefore, this exercise produced insufficient data for inclusion in the evaluation.

The postal questionnaire: In view of the difficulties experienced in securing the first and second post-release interviews, a short postal questionnaire was designed for completion by as many participants as possible. Recipients were asked about their current accommodation and whether they were in education, training or employment. They were also invited to give their views on the project.

Questionnaires were sent to a total of 769 offenders.[9] The percentage of cases in which resettlement staff were able to provide contact details varied widely between projects, from as high as 93 per cent in the

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7. This figure includes those who failed to respond to a written invitation to attend an interview, those for whom no contact details were available, those who refused to be interviewed post-release, and those who were subsequently sentenced to another period of imprisonment.
8. 14 of the 36 were from a booster sample of offenders who were not interviewed in custody.
9. To be more accurate, questionnaires were sent in 769 cases, not to 769 individuals, as some cases concerned the same individuals who had been on the Pathfinder more than once, during separate custody periods.

Birmingham project to just 46 per cent at Lewes and 36 per cent at Wandsworth. As noted later in the report, one of the main difficulties experienced by the two latter projects was the severe shortage of accommodation in London and the south-east of England, which meant that many offenders left prison with no fixed address.

The overall response rate was just ten per cent (74 replies) across the seven projects. As with the post-release interviews, such a low response rate may indicate a bias in favour of offenders with relatively settled living arrangements, whose experience of the resettlement projects was generally positive. Caution is therefore also necessary in interpreting the findings of the postal survey.

Evaluation of outcomes

The evaluation was designed to record improvement on key outcome measures, namely:

- practical and personal resettlement problems (in particular, housing, finances, employment and drug misuse);
- attitudes to offending behaviour;
- reconviction.

The CMR was designed to capture information on any action taken to address each resettlement problem identified in the offender's 'action plan', both in custody and at the end of the post-release phase. As will be seen in Chapter 4, however, the majority of offenders were not seen post-release and thus received no service at this stage.

Self reported problems and attitudes: CRIME-PICS II

Change in self-reported attitudes to crime and in social and personal problems was measured by the CRIME-PICS II questionnaire and problem inventory (Frude et al., 1995). Ideally this was to be completed at three specific times during the period of intervention: immediately after reception, shortly before release, and at the end of the community phase of intervention at the point of exit from the project. However, while most prisoners were assessed by CRIME-PICS II once, a combination of unexpected transfers and the release of some prisoners on Home Detention Curfew contributed to a modest number of second assessments being completed. Moreover, the difficulties of maintaining contact with offenders post-release meant that it was not possible to achieve the final assessment in most cases. Overall, first CRIME-PICS II assessments were completed in 843 cases (78% of all those initially registered on the Pathfinders); second and third assessments were completed on 54% and 7% of these 843 prisoners, respectively. This gives us sufficient numbers to conduct a full analysis of changes in problems and attitudes within prison, but the scope for analysis of post-release change is limited (see Chapter 4).

Reconviction study

A key indicator of the effectiveness of the projects will be whether they achieved a reduction in expected reconviction rates among offenders who participated. On the basis of the Offender Group Reconviction Scale (OGRS2), predicted and actual rates of offending will be calculated at two years following release for all of the participants. In addition, reconviction data from the Police National Computer (PNC) will be used to obtain one year reconviction rates for the project participants, although these rates will not be directly comparable with the OGRS expected reconviction rates.

It should be borne in mind that reconviction rates are used as a surrogate for the unknown level of offending. A major problem in drawing inferences from reconviction data with regard to the effectiveness of particular offender programmes is that local factors, which are independent of rates of reoffending may have a bearing on recorded reconvictions (Colledge et al., 1999). For this reason, predicted and actual rates of conviction will be obtained in respect of comparison groups of offenders constructed for each of the projects. If the analysis indicates, for example, that the actual reconviction rate for one or more of the programmes is significantly lower that the expected rate, the results for the corresponding comparison group will assist in gauging whether the difference is a reflection of the effectiveness of the Pathfinder (in reducing re-offending) or of other local factors.

For all of the projects except HMP Low Newton, comparison groups of 200 prisoners have been drawn from the partner prisons. These comprise prisoners who were serving sentences of less than 12 months and who were released in the year before the establishment of the Pathfinder projects.[10] HMP Low Newton became an all-female establishment only shortly before the project commenced. Consequently, the comparison group for this project comprises an equal number of cases from two other womens' prisons: HMPs Styall and New Hall.

Offender employment status post-release

The infrequency of contact with offenders post-release, both in respect of the project teams and our own attempts to achieve interviews, meant that for the majority of participants we were unable to obtain information on their employment status following release. Through the Employment Service, however, we were able to establish whether the offenders were unemployed and claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) at six months post-release. These data were obtained in all 574 cases in which National Insurance numbers were known.

Cost-effectiveness

A central concept in the cost-effectiveness analysis was transparency in the derivation of key variables. Utilising a framework developed by the Home Office and drawing heavily upon the accompanying guidance,[11] evaluators tracked project inputs, outputs and outcomes across time in such a way that resulting variables were comparable across resettlement projects and more widely across the Crime Reduction Programme. This standardised approach required the completion of an electronic recording template, incorporating data to the level of detail required for sound future strategic decision making.[12]

At the project inception stage evaluators identified the data required for a robust comparison of cost effectiveness. Project proposals and budgetary information were obtained, leading to the production of a table outlining the various planned inputs and the location of the required data.[13] Output measures were defined according to the level (or degree) of intervention, which related to the time input from relevant staff in a direct delivery capacity. Estimation of direct delivery time required the completion of case-related activity forms (timesheets) for each offender on the project. As noted above, assessment of the impact of the projects included a primary measure (reduction in reconviction rates) and secondary, or interim indicators of effective intervention.

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10. The project led by the Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire probation service was originally planned to involve HMPs Woodhill and Springhill. In the event, 11 out of 156 project participants were in Springhill, so the comparison group was drawn in these proportions from the two prisons.
11. See Dhiri and Brand (1999)
12. Indeed, one of the key objectives of the research was the provision of results in a format that could subsequently be used in a comparative cost-benefit analysis to be conducted by the Home Office.
13. Comprehensive costing required that those inputs not funded by the CRP but utilised in the schemes were also identified and included in this table. In all cases identifying the 'additionality' of inputs was important. In the case of non-CRP funded (or levered-in) input, 'additionality' required that a particular resource was either purchased from an external budget or simply re-assigned or borrowed from a non-CRP activity.

The key input and output variables were then tracked over time. All human, physical and financial costs associated with the resettlement projects were identified, quantified and valued on a quarterly basis from financial information and evaluation data collection tools. Using the Home Office guidance as a framework, missing data were sought directly from the projects through face-to-face or telephone interviews and where appropriate, postal requests. In such instances the opportunity was also taken to verify existing data.

Standardised input cost headings provided by the Home Office assured comparability between both resettlement data and wider interventions falling under the Crime Reduction Programme. Key distinctions were made between the type of cost (personnel, training, equipment, premises and so on) and whether the consumption of the input occurred during set-up or ongoing activities.

Project costs were compared with total staff time input in order to derive a unit cost for each member of the resettlement projects involved in direct delivery either pre- or post-release. Using a sample of recorded case-related activity forms, time spent in direct delivery of the particular resettlement programme was estimated. In comparing this time with the unit costs of direct staff, evaluators were able to estimate the costs per degree of intervention.

The result was a comparable data set linking input costs (via output measures) to primary and secondary outcomes. From these data the resettlement projects were compared for cost-effectiveness and the robustness of the conclusions drawn tested using sensitivity analysis – for example, considering the implications of variations from planned expenditure (with particular emphasis on costing the replication of activities and events) and in the valuation of mentor opportunity costs.

3. The resettlement process: key issues and learning points

In this chapter we examine the implementation and delivery of the resettlement services provided by the seven Pathfinders. During our visits to the prisons we gathered detailed information about their organisational arrangements, and their pre-release and post-release resettlement provision. Descriptive summaries of the organisation and content of each project are provided in Appendix A. This chapter focuses on the ways in which the resettlement provision was actually delivered and draws upon the practical experience staff gained during the pilots through working with short-sentence prisoners in partnership with the 'host' prisons and outside agencies. In the final interviews with project managers and staff this experience informed our understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the schemes. The interviews also highlighted some common themes and important lessons for future resettlement work with prisoners serving short-sentences.

Objectives and general approach of resettlement Pathfinders

Managers and staff revealed a clear understanding and endorsement of the aims of the resettlement initiatives. As the summary accounts at Appendix A indicate, all of the teams, including those led by voluntary agencies, considered that help and advice provided with practical resettlement problems was valuable in its own right, but should also aim to improve reintegration and help offenders achieve stable, crime-free lives. Probation-led teams placed greater emphasis on the need to address criminogenic needs, including anti-social attitudes and beliefs underpinning offending behaviour, but there was a general awareness within the project teams that their interventions were unlikely to impact upon the risk of re-offending unless they increased the offenders' motivation and confidence to pursue their personal goals on release from custody.

Although there was some variation between the projects in organisation and delivery mechanisms, the basic procedure was the same. The sequence of activities was broadly as follows:

- recruitment of offenders who fulfilled the eligibility criteria (serving sentences of less than 12 months and resettling in the geographical catchment area of the project);
- assessment of resettlement needs based on validated assessment instrument (OASys);
- action planning targeted on priority needs identified in the assessment and agreed with the offender;
- building motivation to address offending-related problems;
- work in custody on action plans to prepare for release; referral to relevant statutory and voluntary agencies in the community;
- pre-release review; and
- post-release assistance either directly through Pathfinder staff/mentor or by referral to relevant agencies.

Fuller accounts of the way in which each of the Pathfinders carried out each stage of the process are provided in Appendix A.

Organisational issues

Several of the projects experienced initial teething difficulties and the first six months were effectively a developmental stage during which the contributions of the partner prisons to the resettlement process were negotiated, partnerships with outside agencies were forged, staff were trained, and systems were developed for delivering an integrated resettlement service. Project specifications of eligibility criteria, selection and assessment arrangements and post-release contact frequency were not finalised until October 2000.

During our initial visits to projects in May-June 2000 a number of teams reported difficulties in relation to staffing, assessment, and/or the volume of paperwork entailed in completing OASys assessment forms, case management records (CMRs) and CRIME-PICS II questionnaires for each offender.

Management and staffing

The main problem experienced was shortage or unavailability of trained staff at times when they were needed to undertake assessments or other aspects of work with offenders prior to their release. At Lewes, for example, staff shortages in the early stages of the pilot restricted their intake to less than half of the offenders who were eligible to participate. The Wandsworth Pathfinder was also understaffed, particularly during the last seven months of the pilot following the departure of the probation officer (who conducted the OASys assessments) and the administrative assistant. According to the senior project manager at SOVA, the project manager – who undertook most of the work within the prison – was 'inundated with case management and evaluation work that has taken him away from achieving the goals he should be working on.' In the early stages of the project a probation officer completed OASys assessments.

At other projects high staff turnover and delays in appointing and training new staff severely limited the number of assessments and amount of pre-release work that the remaining staff were able to undertake. While at some of the Pathfinders staffing problems eased over time, at others staff turnover/absences was a long-term feature which undoubtedly affected their performance and productivity.

Project managers were seen as playing a crucial role in maintaining high morale and commitment from staff who were often working under considerable pressure. One senior manager emphasised the importance of an effective project 'champion', particularly where difficulties arose in obtaining necessary support from Governors and prison officers (see below). Probation-led teams also considered that project managers had a key role to play in building strong links between prison-based members of the resettlement team, the 'local' probation office, and agencies in the community.

Assessment issues

Staffing and training difficulties were closely related to the problems that most of the projects experienced in keeping pace with OASys interviews and completing the original long version of this assessment instrument. Only members of probation teams were trained in the use of OASys. Despite this training, some team members who were inexperienced in interviewing offenders (such as probation service officers at Durham) reported that they found the interviews challenging. At Birmingham a serious bottleneck occurred in the first six months of operation as the prison-based probation officers who were to assist NACRO staff in assessing offenders were initially untrained and unprepared for the significant increase in their workloads. Consequently, very few assessments were completed over a three-month period. In order to maintain a throughput of offenders in the absence of trained staff, some project teams undertook resettlement work on the

basis of a short interview but without having completed an OASys assessment. Such difficulties are reflected in the fact that assessments were only achieved in respect of half of the participants at Birmingham and in two thirds of cases at Hull (see Chapter 4).

An observation made by several teams was that the resettlement process was too 'front loaded', leaving insufficient time to work with the offender. Indeed, some respondents contended that the demands made upon their resources at the assessment stage was the main reason for their failure to achieve the target number of 400 participants over the lifetime of the pilots. A welcome development was the change to a shorter version of the OASys assessment instrument during the course of the pilots. Despite this change, staff working in prisons with high transfer rates, notably Birmingham and Wandsworth, wasted much time assessing offenders only to find that they had been transferred before any of the problems identified had been addressed.

Relationships with prison partners

In inviting applications for the development of resettlement Pathfinders, the Home Office envisaged a close partnership between the Pathfinder team and the Prison Service (Probation Circular 17/1999). This was seen by the Home Office as a key factor in the success of the resettlement pilots. However, our interviews with managers and staff indicated considerable variation between the projects in the extent to which partner prisons supported and facilitated their work.

Commitment and leadership from prison management

Commitment and strong leadership from the prison Governor and senior prison managers was mentioned by project teams as a crucial prerequisite of effective delivery of resettlement work with short-term prisoners. Where this was forthcoming it facilitated the day-to-day work of the projects, conveyed to prison officers the importance of the initiative, and helped to maintain high morale among project staff. Wide variation between the Pathfinders in the level of support provided by prison management was apparent, as illustrated in the project descriptions (Appendix A). At HMP Parc, for example, the work of the resettlement team was jointly managed by the prison and by members of the South Wales probation service. The project was considered by the staff to be well integrated into existing throughcare and programme development initiatives, and the F.O.R. programme was afforded no less priority than other programmes available to inmates. Similarly, at Low Newton women's prison, Lewes and Hull, the Governor grades were generally supportive and this was conveyed to prison staff. Even with such support, however, the projects were not as closely integrated into existing regimes and services as they would have liked. The project managers at both Hull and Low Newton regarded the lack of integration as the cause of certain difficulties the teams experienced, such as gaining access to offenders, communicating with other relevant departments within the prisons and generally making best use of the limited time available when working with short-term prisoners.

Other Pathfinder teams were more critical of the prison management. In a report from the Ox/Bucks project it was noted that considerable difficulties had been encountered at the strategic level in relation to Prison Service involvement. A change of Governor had created major problems and even 18 months after the inception of the project it was still seen as existing in isolation and 'does not figure anywhere in the priorities of others who are in a position to influence its success.' Similarly, the senior project manager of the Wandsworth Pathfinder observed that not only were prison staff unsupportive but, more fundamentally, the project was not located within any existing resettlement provision at Wandsworth nor linked to existing regimes and programmes. The establishment of closer links with the throughcare department was seen as an improvement, but the fundamental problem remained that the project was not valued by senior prison managers. At Birmingham prison, NACRO staff

observed that the project was not helped by 'having changing [prison] management teams, the prison focus changing, the prison not being supportive of what you are doing. Most of [the Governors] do not know what you are actually talking about when you say Pathfinder because they have all changed apart from [one Governor]'.

The transfer of short-sentence prisoners to other prisons

An issue of concern for several projects was the practice of transferring short-sentence prisoners after they had been assessed and in some cases, had begun work on resettlement plans. The support of the prison Governor was essential if prisoners eligible to attend the resettlement project were to be kept at the prison until their release. From the commencement of the Pathfinder projects there was pressure on several of the prisons to transfer short-sentence prisoners in order to reduce overcrowding. Indeed, those serving short-sentences were explicitly prioritised for transfer. This practice had a major impact on the ability of the projects at Birmingham and Wandsworth to achieve the initial target number of 400 participants. The transferring of prisoners also explained the loss of a number of eligible prisoners from Woodhill and Lewes.

At Winson Green it was noted in an early quarterly report that: 'As a result of the overcrowding at HMP Birmingham, prisoners can be transferred out without notice to the Pathfinder workers. Whilst for the non-target group this has not been too problematic, if a prisoner in our target population has been OASys-assessed and then is transferred out to a distant location which prevents the continuation of our work, it will have a knock-on effect in achievement of target'.

Designated premises within the prison

Whereas some of the projects were provided with designated premises in the prison (for example, at Low Newton and Parc) others were less well accommodated. While recognising the pressure on office space in the partner prisons, the resettlement teams explained that lack of designated premises restricted their ability to carry out important aspects of their work. Moreover, the impression conveyed where the prison did not provide adequate office space, or suitable facilities in which to carry out interviews or deliver group work, was that the work of the teams was not valued by the prison Governor.

At Birmingham prison, for example, there was no dedicated Pathfinder office for the use of the NACRO team. Staff were allocated desk-space in an office shared with other prison staff, but since this was not on one of the wings, for security reasons prisoners were not permitted to enter the office. Interviews with prisoners therefore had to be conducted on landings, in the laundry room or wherever some measure of privacy could be found. At Lewes the team was provided with an office but again, as there were no facilities for carrying out interviews on the wings these had to take place in the prisoners' cells or on landings. The Hull team were critical of the fact that they had to compete with other programmes and activities for space to run the F.O.R. programme, sometimes losing out to programmes afforded higher status since they had been accredited and thus contributed towards the prison's Key Performance Indicators. A more co-operative approach would, in the view of the project manager, have involved allocation of the premises to the Pathfinder on specified days.

Attitudes of prison officers to the Pathfinder

It was evident from our interviews with project staff that there were marked differences between the prisons in the attitudes of prison officers to the resettlement initiatives. At one extreme, the Wandsworth project manager described a culture of resistance and obstruction: 'Certain individuals [have been supportive] but as an organisation [the prison has] probably not [been supportive]. I think this prison still has an attitude towards

the voluntary sector, amongst certain staff in particular. So we are not particularly welcomed.' According to the project manager, at the outset some prison officers at Wandsworth were deliberately obstructive, for example throwing Pathfinder literature in the bin, or making derogatory remarks about the project. This attitude had an adverse effect on the team's work and their morale in the early stages and although over time some officers became 'more tolerant of us – some very co-operative', they were a minority. The attitude of the principal officer was seen as wholly negative. 'I think that the Principal Officer on this wing now has no real interest in us whatsoever. He has never once come to ask anything, never once taken any interest in anything, he just blanks us. And that is a shame because that will filter through then to his staff.'

At Hull, the project manager observed that the team had occasionally experienced 'deliberate obstruction from prison officers' and was aware of negative comments being made by some prison officers about their work. It was thought that prison staff carrying out resettlement work independently of the Pathfinder 'perhaps feel threatened by us and consequently become protective about their work and contacts.'

Although other project teams did not experience such negative attitudes and behaviour, there was a general consensus that the prison was a difficult environment in which to deliver resettlement work. As the Lewes/CRI project manager put it: 'The prison has not been obstructive in any way. But the way it is structured is not a positive environment in which to get services involved … if I want to see an inmate and they are moving people …I might spend half an hour just trying to find someone.' These observations are consistent with the findings of other studies of the implementation and delivery of innovative programmes in prison. For example, in a study of prison employment and training programmes, Webster et al., (2001) described the negative impact of cultural and organisational constraints which inhibit or undermine the efforts of programme staff.

Involvement of prison staff in delivering the Pathfinder

Projects in which one or more prison officers became actively involved saw this as a way of reducing hostility and smoothing relationships with prison staff at all levels. The Hull team considered that the inclusion of an experienced prison officer as a full time member of their team enabled them to resolve a number of potential problems at an early stage. Involvement of prison staff also facilitated access to necessary information (such as records of previous convictions) and ready access to the prisoners. Similar benefits were described by the project manager at Lewes. The two prison officers on the team were able to 'cut through prison red tape and bureaucracy' to obtain details of previous convictions and assessments. Their involvement facilitated good relations between the project and the prison, and helped offset the lack of structural integration noted above. The Parc project ,and in the later stages, the Durham project, also benefited from having prison officers on their teams and in some cases sharing post-release work.

Difficulties arose, however, where prison officers' time on the project was not ring-fenced. At Lewes, prison officers were required to work with prison shift patterns, be available for other duties within the prison, or stand in for staff who were off sick or on leave. While recognising the many demands upon prison officers' time, the fact that for periods of time the project could be left without staff trained to carry out OASys assessments clearly affected the project's ability to achieve target number of participants.

Effective links with existing prison services

The projects varied in the extent to which they were able to gain access to existing services and treatment programmes within the partner prisons. As noted in the introduction to this report, offenders serving short-sentences tend to be denied access to programmes and activities in prison in view of the limited time

available before their release. Project teams were frequently unable to take advantage of 'in house' services in addressing the resettlement problems of offenders who participated in the Pathfinders. The Hull/Humberside team appear to have had more success than other teams, reporting improved links and co-operation with 'in-house' services and courses over time. In general, however, the resettlement needs of Pathfinder participants could not be met through existing services, notwithstanding the efforts of project staff. The difficulties experienced are well illustrated in relation to help sought with educational and training needs through the prison education departments, and with drug misuse through the drug service CARAT (Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare) which was launched throughout the prison service in 1999.

All of the project teams made referrals to the education departments for an assessment of educational and training requirements. Relationships with education department staff were generally positive, but the high demand for places on courses provided in prison and the limited time available to Pathfinder participants meant that very few offenders actually attended any courses prior to their release. As is evident from the descriptions of pre-release interventions in respect of education, training and employment (Appendix A) most of the preparatory work, such as making appointments with colleges, training centres, or job centres, was directly undertaken by the resettlement teams.

The Prison Service Drugs Strategy recognises the importance of the CARAT service in developing care plans and release plans for offenders and making appointments with external drug agencies for treatment and counselling to continue on release (Prison Service, 1998). According to the project teams at Birmingham, Hull, Lewes, Woodhill and Wandsworth, however, there were major difficulties in accessing this service in respect of short-term prisoners. In most cases this was because the CARAT service was over-stretched due to the high demand for help from the prison population as a whole. The NACRO worker observed that 'they do the assessment – I think that is all they are expected to do in all honesty – a paper filling exercise'. Despite this, the team continued making referrals to CARAT because 'they are more specialised ... and it helps avoid ... "toe-stepping"'.

The solution for all of these teams was to build direct links with drug agencies in the community. The Hull Pathfinder team lost confidence in the CARAT service on discovery that several offenders with a need for drug services on release had not been referred by CARAT to an outside drug agency. Although the team agreed that it would be best practice to use the prison route and not bypass CARAT it was discovered that outside agencies were receiving very few referrals of Pathfinder participants with drug problems, mainly because of the shortness of their sentences. The team therefore arranged a system of direct referral to one of the main community-based drugs agencies in Hull. Other projects also bypassed the CARAT service. The CRI team at Lewes regarded their relationship with the CARAT team as positive although by the end of the project the team manager noted: 'We have been doing a lot of the referrals ourselves to rehab., whereas it is not really our remit, but it was that or nothing ... I would still do that, and then I would go to the CARAT team and say "...this is my plan. What do you think?"' The Ox/Bucks project team found that although they had envisaged a close working partnership with CARAT in HMP Woodhill this was not achieved. The CARAT team was never fully staffed and appeared to put their available resources into work with offenders serving longer sentences. The fact that the service was located at some distance from the house unit at which most Pathfinder participants were based was an added difficulty. In practice 'things like their workshops, taking control courses, considering change, are essentially not available.' Hence the team began to refer directly and at one agency it was agreed that offenders would move to the front of their 3-month waiting list, thus receiving help immediately on release. Similarly at Wandsworth the project manager bypassed the CARAT team and developed effective links with outside agencies:

'We learnt fairly early on that if we referred them to the CARAT team it would be six weeks before they are actually seen, and that is a wasted six weeks. We started to refer directly to the local council in London where they were living or even where they were homeless immediately before they came in to prison. So we've cut out CARAT and gone straight to the local authorities, and built up a good relationship with a good number of them now who recognise us, and will come in and do the assessment. And all that can be done in the time it would take for someone to see them from the CARAT team.'

In a study of the nature and effectiveness of drugs throughcare, which was carried out during 1998-1999, Burrows et al., (2001) identified a number of major structural problems restricting the provision of drug services 'through the gate' and in the community, not least the fact that responsibility did not fall to any single agency. The experiences of the Pathfinder teams support the researchers' conclusion that funding shortfalls need to be addressed and lead responsibility for co-ordinating drugs throughcare taken on by one organisation.

Several projects noted the absence of in-house services for offenders with alcohol problems. At Lewes, for example, it was felt that recent emphasis on addressing drugs problems had led to neglect of the needs of offenders with alcohol problems. At Woodhill one of the team members observed: 'There is very little provision for heavy alcohol users, and what there is tends to be knitted into the drugs work, and that in itself is inaccessible.'

Addressing priority needs: issues relating to service delivery

A common theme throughout our interviews with project staff was of the need to begin to address urgent resettlement problems without delay (sometimes before a full OASys assessment had been conducted) in view of the short time available to work with the offenders. The project summaries appended to this report indicate that teams identified as most pressing the same practical and personal problems namely: homelessness (or likelihood of losing an existing tenancy); unemployment; dependency on benefits; and substance abuse. As will be seen in the following chapter of the report, the majority of offenders who joined the Pathfinder projects were unemployed, had no fixed address and were reliant upon benefits on release. Many offenders looked to the projects for advice on benefit entitlement, assistance with claim forms and help with rent arrears.

The case management records of offenders who participated in the Pathfinders show how much time was available to address the priority needs identified pre-release. The interval between reception into the prison and the date on which action plans were drawn up ranged from as little as three weeks at Durham to six weeks at Wandsworth.[14] At Durham the team had an average of five weeks to work with offenders on their action plans before release compared with seven weeks at Lewes and Wandsworth and six weeks at the other four prisons.

Early action included direct assistance by Pathfinder staff with benefit claims and contact with local authorities in an effort to retain existing tenancies for offenders whilst they completed their prison sentences. In general, however, the Pathfinders were heavily reliant upon external agencies for early and effective intervention to address practical resettlement problems and there was a consensus among those we interviewed that effective working relationships with statutory and voluntary agencies were vital. Over the lifetime of the pilots the teams expanded their existing links and developed additional contacts in the areas in which the offenders were living following their release (see Appendix A for descriptions of the main community-based agencies to which referrals were made). The probation-led projects succeeded in bringing representatives of agencies into the prisons to meet offenders and one team held regular 'marketplace' sessions attended by a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies.

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14.   The comparisons exclude Parc as only four of their CMRs included information on these intervals.

Despite these efforts, a major frustration expressed by many project staff was the inadequacy of support for offenders in the period immediately following their release when they are often tempted to revert to previous drug using and criminal behaviour. Gaps in provision for ex-prisoners and long waiting lists were noted, typically where help was needed in securing accommodation, financial support or drug treatment. Efforts to address the acute financial difficulties many offenders faced on release brought the teams up against the 'red tape' surrounding entitlement to income support, housing benefit and grants. Several teams sought to expedite payment of benefits by completing and submitting forms prior to release. One team described their success in gaining access to the benefit system after lengthy negotiations. After some 18 months they succeeded in obtaining named contacts at each job centre in the area covered by the project coupled with an agreement that Job Seekers Allowance claim forms could be completed prior to release. Prisoners could then be accompanied to the job centre on the day of release and would be interviewed on the same day. The project manager mentioned the 'red-tape' that the project had to overcome:

> '[The project worker] did have times at the beginning when she would fill in JSA forms in the prison and would get to the benefits office and they would rip them up and say "you have to start again because you have had a change of circumstances". We got over that ... I suppose in theory there could be a change in circumstances between the prison gate and the job centre. In practice there is not likely to be much of one.'

As will be seen in Chapter 4, the analysis of the case management records of the offenders who participated in the Pathfinders confirms that accommodation and drug misuse were by far the most frequently identified problems, housing difficulties being most severe in relation to the Wandsworth and Lewes projects. Our analysis also indicates that these two problems generated the largest number of referrals both before and after release. The project teams' descriptions of the difficulties they experienced in securing help with these two priority problems highlight the widely reported shortage of housing and drug services for ex-prisoners (see, for example NACRO, 2000; Burrows et al., 2001; Home Office, 2001).

Shortage of suitable accommodation

Lack of suitable local accommodation for offenders was described by several project teams as the major obstacle to resettlement as until offenders were satisfactorily housed they were unlikely to achieve stability in other areas of their lives or to overcome drug and alcohol problems. With the exception of the Birmingham resettlement team, which had access to NACRO's supported housing and pre-existing local partnerships with other housing providers, all of the project teams reported difficulties in accessing suitable accommodation for homeless offenders. The teams experienced refusal by housing associations and private landlords to consider ex-prisoners with outstanding debts, rent arrears or claiming housing benefit. Local authorities were also reluctant to house ex-prisoners whereas project staff considered that they should be accorded priority in recognition of their urgent need for settled accommodation on the path to social integration and desistance from offending.

The Ox/Bucks team described lack of accommodation in Milton Keynes as the main problem for the majority of participants. Two hostels of a good quality served the whole of the community, not solely the probation service, therefore demand for places was high. Stringent eligibility criteria were applied, including a minimum age requirement of 25. The YMCA were unhelpful as they could only offer appointments eight or more weeks ahead and were very tightly 'age-bound'. Other types of housing were in short supply and if, as was often the case, offenders had accrued rent arrears, they were unlikely to be considered suitable for privately rented accommodation.

'What emerges is a picture of people who weren't able, and were not facilitated during previous prison sentences to deal appropriately with terminating existing tenancies. [They may not have been] aware of the housing benefit rules, or maybe were but just did not do anything about it. But I guess for people who do a lot of short-sentences maybe previously there wasn't any addressing of those kinds of issues when they hit the prison, and often arrears started accruing ... I am working with someone now who has £600 worth of arrears, and that shuts loads of doors.'

The difficulties in securing accommodation for Pathfinder participants in Wandsworth were equally severe. The project manager observed:

' I think that a lot of the hostels are not suitable for [people leaving prison] ... all you are doing is sending them back into an environment where they are likely to re-offend, where there are drugs available in every room, and fights break out. Basically a person has to go out, sleep rough, be seen to be sleeping rough by one of the outreach teams. They are then given a ticket – they take that along to some centre and register themselves. They then have to go back onto the streets and sleep and if they are in the same area at some point the team will come back and say "we have got you in to somewhere"'.

Hostel fees in London were 'exorbitant' and acted as a disincentive to obtaining employment as they were paid by the benefits agency for unemployed residents. According to the project manager, an offender would need to find work at a weekly wage in excess of £200 per week, which is not easy for ex-prisoners with few qualifications. As a result of these barriers, the project manager acknowledged that the team had not been very successful in keeping in contact with offenders following release. Participants were informed of the SOVA drop-in centre in Camberwell but at the end of the pilot exercise only two or three of them had attended: 'A lot of them walk out that gate and there is never, ever contact again…They will think you have failed them. They are used to being failed. This whole system fails them.'

The CRI/Lewes team experienced similar difficulties in the case of offenders seeking accommodation in Brighton. Those who had places on council waiting lists or were waiting to go on the lists when sentenced were deemed by the local authority 'voluntarily homeless' as a result of their behaviour. As the project manager explained: 'CRI has got five houses for ex-offenders, which are usually full. There is the YMCA, but if a person has got substance misuse problems there is a good chance that they will not want to go into the YMCA because there will be a lot of people in there who are drinking and taking drugs, so they feel vulnerable in there.' For the same reason other temporary accommodation in the Brighton area was considered unsatisfactory by the team. Consequently many participants left HMP Lewes without accommodation. As one offender expressed it: 'I will leave this jail NFA [no fixed abode] tomorrow and do not see much hope.'

Many offenders also highlighted lack of suitable housing as a priority need. In a response to our postal questionnaire one offender observed: 'my biggest problem since release has been trying to find accommodation, and getting in touch with X from Pathfinders has proved impossible … any help you can give me with acquiring a house to live in would be very much appreciated as at the moment I am staying with my brother in his flat and it can't go on much longer.' In response to the question 'what has helped most since your release?' one offender replied: 'In the beginning I was hoping I was going to get my home in the country, but like always I got nothing.' One offender explained how vital accommodation was in helping him avoid re-offending : 'If I'd had no help I'd have been in the same cycle. Accommodation prevented me from kipping on my mate's couch and getting into the same old ways.'

Drug services in the community

Post-release services for offenders in need of drug treatment or support in their efforts to remain drug-free were described by most of the project teams as inadequate, largely because existing services are insufficient to meet the scale of the problem. Although the CARAT service was intended to provide support for up to eight weeks following release this was not available to any of the offenders. As noted in the HMIP Thematic Review of resettlement provision, the level of demand, shortage of experienced CARAT staff and treatment services in the community, and funding problems associated with partnership working, has made this goal very difficult to achieve (HMIP, 2001). The experience of the Lewes team illustrates the scale of this problem. A senior manager at CRI observed that Brighton is often described as 'the drugs-death capital of Europe'. Demand for help far outstrips supply.[15] Accessing substance misuse services proved very difficult as there was a three to four month wait for treatment, whilst residential provision, although available in theory, was restricted due to shortage of funding. A team quarterly report (January – March 2001) stated:

> 'Community care funding for residential drug and alcohol programmes remains almost non-existent, and is particularly difficult to secure for this group of clients. We apply pre-release, with the intention of clients entering treatment direct from prison, when they are drug free. We have been informed they have no priority need for treatment, as at the time of application they are in a secure setting and therefore not at risk. Post-release the situation often changes dramatically, as they are homeless and exposed to their old acquaintances and behaviour patterns. They may be eligible to go on the waiting list for funding, but by then their motivation will have been severely decreased by social pressures.'

Similarly, although in Birmingham drug using participants were able to attend 'drop-ins' post-release, providing cups of tea and information, the waiting lists for more intensive help, such as counselling, 'detox' and 'scripts' (methodone prescriptions for people wanting to come off heroin) were very long. For women leaving Low Newton with a need for drug services there were again long waiting lists and few residential rehabilitation centres in the geographical area covered by the project.

It is noteworthy that the Ox/Bucks team circumvented long waiting lists for services in Milton Keynes by making arrangements with a local drug agency for Pathfinder participants to jump to the front of their 3-month waiting list for services. The SOVA team seemed also to have had some success in securing treatment for drug users. A SOVA Report noted that: 'successes have been made in liaison with local authority substance misuse teams, and a number of our clients who have a history of these issues, have been accepted for residential funding'. The report went on to say, however, that 'there are still instances where funding is agreed, though only if a client has an address'.

Engaging offenders and building motivation

Without exception, the resettlement teams recognised the limitations of intervention in respect of practical problems without addressing an offender's anti-social attitudes, values and behaviour. It was generally agreed that participants needed to be motivated to engage fully in the process of action planning and goal setting and to continue in the community with offending-behaviour work begun in custody. Members of staff at each project attended training in motivational interviewing and pro-social modelling and there was a general recognition of the need to apply this training during face-to-face contact with participants.

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15. We understand that at least two people who were on the Lewes Pathfinder died shortly following release following a drugs overdose.

As indicated in Chapter 2, however, a major difference between the four probation-led projects (at Low Newton, Hull, Woodhill/Springhill and Parc prisons) and the voluntary projects (at Lewes, Birmingham, and Wandsworth prisons) is that the former provided specific programmes targeted on motivation and thinking skills. The F.O.R. cognitive/motivational programme was designed specifically for use with short-term offenders. The modular approach adopted at Durham sought to provide women participants with an integrated resettlement package which addressed 'immediate practical needs' as well as the thinking and attitudes underlying their criminal behaviour (see Appendix A). The modules were also designed to respond to social and personal needs which research has shown to be of particular significance to women prisoners, notably their primary responsibility for dependent children and the relatively high incidence of psychiatric morbidity and adverse early life experiences including sexual abuse (see, for example, Prison Reform Trust, 2000; and Howden-Windell and Clark, 1999).

Also noteworthy is the fact that probation-led projects identified problems relating to attitudes and thinking skills in their OASys assessments and case management records considerably more frequently than the voluntary-led projects. This finding will be discussed further in the following chapter of the report.

With the exception of offenders with very poor literacy skills, all offenders who were eligible for the Pathfinders were encouraged to attend the F.O.R. programme at Woodhill, Hull and Parc prisons. Staff who delivered the 12 session programme saw considerable benefit in the links made within the programme between practical resettlement problems, cognitive deficits and motivation. It was thought that the learning acquired through the programme provided offenders with the 'tools' and the motivation to pursue personal change (in attitudes, values, unrealistic goals, etc.) and tackle practical problems following release. The fact that the programme was delivered in a group setting was also viewed as beneficial: 'They are away from the wing, they don't have to be macho and they challenge each other. Also you can't motivate one-to-one, it's too overbearing.' As our observation of video recordings of the programme indicate (Appendix B) some of the tutors were more successful than others in adopting a style of delivery based on the principles of pro-social modelling. This appeared to be particularly effective in engaging participants and encouraging participation.

At Low Newton/Durham all of the women who participated in the resettlement project undertook a short preparatory module designed to encourage motivation to change and alternative pro-social ways of behaving (see Appendix A). Although the modular approach was favoured by the Durham team however, they were sceptical of the impact the modules were likely to have on offending behaviour. Certain of the modules were regarded as too short, superficial and 'flimsy' to address the targeted problems in any depth. This was said, for example, of the interpersonal skills/self esteem module. Concern was also expressed that the programme did not permit the offenders to put the acquired learning into practice. 'We just cover awareness and don't do any follow up exercises or practice. We can't do any follow-up on the outside – they need to be on probation for that.'

The project team at Durham emphasised the importance of high levels of one-to-one contact and practical assistance in motivating women to continue with their action plans: 'Making sure that things are set up for them when they get out. I think that helps with their motivation quite a lot.' This approach was seen as having a down side however, as it could encourage dependency and discourage the self determination needed to pursue their goals, such as remaining drug free, when such support was removed.

Through the gate: a seamless transition?

In the final interviews with project managers and staff we explored the way in which teams had sought to ensure that work carried out in prison was continued and built upon in the community. What systems had been adopted to ensure a co-ordinated approach to case management through the gate and had these been successful? What can be done to encourage offenders to remain in contact and motivated to continue with their action plans following release? Responses from each of the Pathfinders to these questions are summarised in Appendix A. Here we draw on these accounts to highlight the main suggestions elicited from managers and staff.

Effective case management

Many respondents, particularly those participating in probation-led projects, stressed the importance of effective case management in ensuring a co-ordinated, holistic approach to resettlement work from the point of assessment through to the post-release phase of intervention. Short timeframes made it all the more crucial that case managers took responsibility for all stages of intervention. Aspects of the case manager's role mentioned in interviews were consistent with those identified in the *HMIP Guide to Effective Practice* within the context of probation supervision, such as co-ordination and sequencing of work, taking responsibility for referrals to other agencies and prioritising problems (Chapman and Hough, 1998).

Continuity of support: the role of mentors

Many of those interviewed considered that the relationship between the offender and a member of the project team or a mentor, was key to successful resettlement work. The person who formed this relationship was in a position to befriend, motivate and encourage further contact after release. The importance of pro-social modelling was also mentioned by several respondents. Early and regular contact pre-release was seen as critical, although as pointed out by the senior project manager at Wandsworth, in reality the amount of contact needed with mentors prior to release (a minimum of three meetings) was seldom achieved with those serving short-sentences:

> 'We do try to get [mentors] in [to the prison] earlier, because they can build up a relationship. Once the relationship has been built in the prison then there is more chance of that carrying on once the person has gone out. When we started I used to think that two visits would be enough, but what happened was that people did not turn up. So we learnt from that and brought mentors in earlier.'

Where project teams did not use mentors, attempts were made to provide continuity of contact with one member of the team as, for example, at Low Newton where the same project worker who began work in custody continued to deliver the agreed programme of intervention following release. The exception was Birmingham where it was thought that use of different staff in custody and following release minimised the risk of dependency on any one person.

Many of the offenders whom we interviewed valued the relationship which developed with mentors and project workers and the interest shown in their problems. For some offenders the fact that the mentor was a volunteer and was not attached to either the prison or probation service enabled them to speak more openly about their problems and concerns. One offender observed: 'It was support I wouldn't necessarily have had. We can discuss anything, it's an open door.' Another offender valued 'having someone to talk to'. A third offender mentioned the continuity of contact: 'The prison visits. Someone who sees you in prison who can help afterwards.'

As will be seen in Chapter 4, some two thirds of participants did not remain in contact after they had been released, and rates of contact were not high even when offenders had been in touch with mentors whilst in custody. The reasons for loss of contact were, however, explained by project teams as due in large measure to the lack of suitable accommodation available to offenders in the two areas in which mentors played a key role, namely Brighton and London. As a result of this shortage, a high proportion of participants sought accommodation outside the localities in which the projects operated.

Reviewing goals and planned actions at point of release

Reviewing offenders' goals and action plans at the point of release was a further aspect of effective practice mentioned by a number of teams. Members of probation-led teams in particular mentioned the importance of ensuring that concrete plans were in place for further work on release. These key meetings also provided an opportunity to acknowledge what had been achieved up to that point, encourage continuation with the project following release and reinforce motivation. Documented reminders of appointments in the community were sometimes favoured. Where there was a change of staff several respondents mentioned the importance of a hand-over meeting at which the new project worker should take responsibility for further action on behalf of the offender. Without such meetings it was feared that much of the momentum achieved in prison would end at the prison gate.

A designated resettlement office in the community

Several teams mentioned the importance of having a designated office for offenders to visit following their release in order to encourage offenders to remain in contact and continue with the action plans drawn up in custody. Probation-led projects had access to the local probation offices and either provided regular 'surgeries' (one day a week at the Hull probation office) or conveyed to offenders that they could call in to the office at any time (Parc/South Wales project). The voluntary-led projects were less well provided. The SOVA project manager observed that the organisation's Camberwell office was offered to offenders as a dropping-in point, but there was uncertainty as to whether the resettlement project should have been charged for this facility. She rightly judged that few of the participants would, in practice, come to the Camberwell office for help or advice.

Suggestions for improving resettlement structures and provision

The experience gained by the seven teams in operating the Pathfinders enabled them to highlight some major impediments to effective delivery of resettlement services to prisoners serving short-sentences. While the teams were able to work around some of these difficulties it was clear that others could only be addressed through much improved access to services and opportunities for this group of offenders, both in custody and in the community. Hence the following main suggestions from Pathfinder teams for strengthening future resettlement initiatives with short-term prisoners:

- recognition by prison management and staff of the importance of resettlement work and a move to genuine prison/probation/voluntary sector partnership in delivering resettlement provision;
- improved partnership working with Employment Services, Benefits Agency, local authorities and relevant voluntary/private sector agencies. Access to these services prior to release was essential, such as through regular visits to prisons along the lines of the 'marketplace' provided at HMP Parc;
- access to a wider range of suitable housing including supported housing and drug rehabilitation centres;

- an end to the local authority practice of excluding offenders from available housing on the grounds that they are 'intentionally homeless' because of lack of local connections, rent arrears or criminal records;
- improved systems for enabling benefit claims to be prepared and processed prior to release;
- improved employment opportunities and services for offenders not considered 'job ready' as a result of poor skills, drug/alcohol abuse such as the NACRO 'pre-gateway' scheme for those not deemed ready for New Deal or sustained employment (see Appendix A); and,
- a period of statutory supervision during which to consolidate and build on progress made in custody on cognitive skills and motivation.

4. Profiles of prisoners and scheme interventions

Numbers of participants

It is difficult to put a precise figure on how many prisoners 'joined' the Pathfinder resettlement schemes, as – despite central efforts to introduce more standardisation – the project teams varied in both their 'signing up' and record-keeping practices. In particular, prisoners who agreed to take part, but who changed their mind or were transferred before much could be done with them, may or may not appear in local records. Our basic rule has been to include as 'participants' only those for whom a formal 'case management record' (CMR) was completed. The CMR, which was designed by the evaluators in consultation with project managers and the Home Office Resettlement Pathfinder Manager, was filled in by each Pathfinder to provide a record of project-initiated interventions as the prisoner progressed through his or her sentence, including (where relevant) after release. The minimum requirement for the opening of a CMR was the production of an 'action plan': in theory, the action plan was informed by a careful assessment of the individual offender's needs and formed the basis for systematic work to address them. At the end of the offender's involvement with the project – ie when the case was deemed to be 'closed' (for whatever reason) – a copy of the CMR was forwarded to the evaluators, together with the results of any assessments (eg OASys and CRIME-PICS II) that had been carried out along the way. The following tables are based on all completed CMRs received by the cut-off point set by the evaluators (25th January 2002).

As Table 4.1 shows, the schemes opened case records on a total of 1,081 offenders. Clearly, all the projects struggled to recruit enough prisoners to meet the initial target of 400 per scheme. The most successful in this respect were Hull, Birmingham and Lewes, with 225, 189 and 180 cases respectively, but even they fell well short. In two prisons the shortfall was due to insufficient numbers of eligible prisoners, but elsewhere this was not the case (see Appendix C, Table 1) and as discussed in Chapter 3, the reasons appear to relate mainly to practical and organisational problems.

The majority of the 1,081 cases involved some work with the offender before and/or after release, although 60 (6%) resulted in transfers, and 100 (9%) in withdrawals from the project, before any of the action plan was implemented. In other words, 921 offenders participated to some degree beyond the initial planning stage.[16] The largest numbers of early drop-outs were in Birmingham, where transfers were a continuing problem, and work was done with only 123 of the 189 on whom CMRs were opened.

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16. Some of the 'withdrawals' might be better described as failures of communication or logistics – eg when staff shortages led to prisoners with very short-sentences not being visited quickly enough before their release.

Table 4.1	Numbers of prisoners participating in the projects, by Pathfinder.		
	N of cases opened	N withdrawing/ transferred before any work done	N taking some part in project beyond assessment/plan
Birmingham	189	66	123
Durham	131	16	115
Hull	225	7	218
Lewes	180	14	166
Ox/Bucks	156	14	142
Parc	49	16	33
Wandsworth	151	27	124
Total	1,081	160	921

It can be seen from Table 4.2 that there was considerable variation between prisons in terms of age and ethnicity: obviously, all prisoners were male except those in Durham. Wandsworth and Lewes both took on relatively high proportions of older men (35% and 31%, respectively, being over 35), while participants from Durham, Hull and Parc had a much younger profile. Those participating were predominantly white: indeed, minority ethnic groups were under-represented in all seven Pathfinders in relation to the host prison population, an issue which will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Where type of offence and sentence length are concerned (see Appendix C, Table 1), the differences were not great, except that there was a relatively high proportion of violent offenders among those from Parc, and the Ox/Bucks project accepted a high proportion of those on very short-sentences (64% were serving under 12 weeks). The latter practice was largely due to concerns about shrinking numbers of eligible prisoners. Perhaps surprisingly, it seemed to make almost no difference to whether or not any work was done with the prisoners.

Table 4.2	Age and ethnic group of prisoners, by Pathfinder				
	Age at sentence (n=1,063)*		Ethnic group (n=1,053)*		
	Under 25 %	Over 35 %	White %	Black %	Asian %
Birmingham	29	24	80	10	11
Durham	44	10	100	0	0
Hull	35	16	99	1	0
Lewes	16	31	96	4	1
Ox/Bucks	28	25	85	12	3
Parc	31	13	100	0	0
Wandsworth	23	35	66	30	4
All	29	23	89	3	8

* In this and following tables, totals will vary owing to missing data. Percentages may be rounded up or down and may not therefore sum to 100

Problems and needs

Prisoners were assessed in a variety of ways. The most systematic way of assessing their problems and needs was by means of the OASys or CRIME-PICS II instruments. OASys is the standard offender assessment system developed by the Home Office which will eventually be used routinely by the probation service to assess all offenders on whom pre-sentence reports are prepared. CRIME-PICS II is an instrument which measures both attitudes to crime (the G score) and the level of practical and emotional problems that offenders face (P score). Table 4.3 shows the OASys and CRIME-PICS II (G) scores among those assessed in each prison. In Chapter 5, it will be seen to what extent these scores changed after the project interventions.

For the purposes of this chapter, the main point to note is that the two instruments, though measuring somewhat different things, place the prisons in roughly the same order in terms of the percentages of prisoners with the highest scores. Hull comes out clearly top in both cases, with almost half the prisoners indicating high levels of risk/needs and 'criminal attitudes', as well as highest mean scores in both cases. By contrast, the Pathfinders in Ox/Bucks and Birmingham had relatively very few in the high score categories, and the lowest mean scores.

Table 4.3	OASys and CRIME-PICS G ('Attitudes') scores, by Pathfinder					
OASys score	Under 35 %	35-59 %	60-84 %	85+ %	Total %	Mean
Birmingham	14	28	34	24	100	63.4
Durham	8	26	36	30	100	70.4
Hull	7	17	32	45	100	78.8
Lewes	15	25	35	25	100	65.5
Ox/Bucks	20	33	23	24	100	63.0
Parc	18	22	27	33	100	63.3
Wandsworth	18	19	29	34	100	67.2
All	14	24	31	31	100	68.0
(N=850)						
CRIME-PICS II (G)	Under 30 %	30-39 %	40-49 %	50 or over %	Total %	Mean
Birmingham	3	31	49	17	100	42.1
Durham	5	19	36	40	100	46.8
Hull	7	17	31	45	100	47.2
Lewes	19	26	29	26	100	41.4
Ox/Bucks	16	34	35	14	100	39.9
Parc	19	21	23	37	100	43.4
Wandsworth	14	27	27	33	100	43.1
All	11	26	34	29	100	43.4
(N=843)						

Turning now to the more specific issue of prisoners' 'problems', Table 4.4 shows their CRIME-PICS II Problem (P) scores, again divided up by prison. The main point to note here is that the female prisoners in Durham emerged as having more severe problems than any of the male groups. Once again, prisoners from Birmingham and Ox/Bucks came out at the low end of the scale.

Table 4.4	CRIME-PICS P ('Problems') scores, by Pathfinder					
	Under 20 %	20-29 %	30-39 %	40 or over %	Total %	Mean
Birmingham	18	52	20	10	100	27.0
Durham	2	21	38	39	100	36.5
Hull	10	33	33	24	100	31.9
Lewes	6	33	30	31	100	33.2
Ox/Bucks	16	46	25	13	100	28.5
Parc	9	33	44	14	100	31.9
Wandsworth	6	25	38	31	100	34.6
All	10	36	31	23	100	31.5
(N=843)						

Table 4.5 shows prisoners' problems measured in different ways. First, it shows for each Pathfinder the number of problems per prisoner, and number of 'significant' problems per prisoner, identified in initial assessments. Secondly, it shows the percentage of prisoners in each project assessed as having specific types of problem at the 'significant' level. The identification of 'significant' problems is in most cases (850 out of 1,081) based on OASys scores[17] – but in the other 231 (172 of them in Birmingham and Hull) it is based solely on judgements by project staff made without the assistance of a systematic assessment tool.

On average, prisoners were identified as having over six different problems out of a possible 14 categories. The mean number of significant problems came out at over four per prisoner. The most commonly recorded significant problems concerned accommodation, drugs, thinking skills and employment – all of which were identified in at least 40 per cent of prisoners.

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17. In OASys, each problem is scored individually, and a threshold score is set at which the offender is considered to have a 'significant' problem in that area: this is often referred to as scoring 'above the line'

Table 4.5   Problems (and significant problems) identified, by Pathfinder

(a) Total numbers of problems identified

	Total problems identified	Problems per prisoner	Significant problems	Signif't problems per prisoner
Birmingham	1,021	5.4	395	2.1
Durham	995	7.6	556	4.2
Hull	1,438	6.4	960	4.3
Lewes	919	5.1	713	4.0
Ox/Bucks	928	5.9	585	3.7
Parc	390	8.0	213	4.3
Wandsworth	1,211	6.8	611	4.0
All	6,902	6.4	4,086	4.1

(Total N of prisoners = 1,081; N with at least one significant problem = 964)

(b) Percentages of prisoners with 'significant' problems

	B'ham %	D'ham %	Hull %	Lewes %	Ox/Bks %	Parc %	W'wth %	All %
Type of problem								
Attitudes	19	36	45	8	37	35	30	30
Accommodation	37	54	58	61	44	16	66	51
Relationships	8	16	10	22	14	14	24	15
Education/training	18	55	63	37	33	39	39	35
Employment	29	60	45	34	30	55	40	40
Financial management	24	34	30	49	26	43	28	32
Lifestyle/associates	7	26	42	28	35	37	20	27
Alcohol	26	16	20	51	39	50	32	32
Drugs	24	73	65	56	38	38	48	50
Emotional	14	37	13	23	12	37	25	20
Inter-personal skills	5	5	10	3	3	12	6	6
Thinking skills	23	47	43	36	57	57	39	46
Motivation	10	4	19	2	4	4	11	9
Other	1	2	4	1	3	0	8	3

However, there were considerable differences between prisons both in the numbers and – especially – the types of problems identified. Overall, in line with the findings from OASys and CRIME-PICS II outlined above, Birmingham and (to a lesser extent) Ox/Bucks identified relatively low numbers of significant problems per prisoner. The findings from Birmingham are somewhat puzzling, as one would normally expect high levels of need among inmates of a large local prison. Part of the explanation is that, due to staff shortages, over half of the Birmingham assessments were based on judgements by NACRO project staff rather than OASys, and the staff tended not to identify many problems beyond accommodation. However, it also appears from those OASys assessments which were carried out that rather fewer of the prisoners accepted on to this Pathfinder had major problems than elsewhere (see Appendix C, Table 2).

Accommodation problems were most prominent in the prisons in London and the South-East – Wandsworth and Lewes – where house prices and shortages are particularly high. By contrast, such problems were relatively unusual in the South Wales prison (Parc). The reverse was true of employment problems, which loomed large in Parc, but not in Lewes. They were most common, however, among the women in Durham. Major drugs problems, although common in all prisons (with the exception of Birmingham – see the comments above), were also found to be especially widespread in Durham, where 73 per cent of all women were identified as having significant needs in this area. Finally, significant thinking skills problems were identified in over half of all prisoners in Parc and Ox/Bucks, but under a quarter in Birmingham.

In addition to assessing prisoners' problems, project staff identified in each action plan the problem with the highest priority for intervention. As Table 4.6 shows, accommodation and drugs – also identified most often as 'significant' problems (Table 4.5) – were easily the most frequently selected as top priority. Thinking skills, alcohol and employment, although also high up the list of significant problems, were prioritised considerably less often.

Table 4.6	Problems identified as the highest priority, all Pathfinders combined	
	N of prisoners	%
Accommodation	300	32
Drugs	282	30
Alcohol	97	10
Thinking skills	59	6
Employment	46	5
Education/training	41	4
Attitudes	28	3
Financial management	27	3
Other	20	2
Emotional	17	2
Lifestyle/associates	7	1
Relationships	9	1
Inter-personal skills	6	1
Motivation	3	0
Total	942	100

In both problem assessment and problem prioritisation, there was a fairly clear division between the 'probation-led' Pathfinders and those led by voluntary organisations. Table 4.7 shows, for each prison, the problems most frequently assessed as 'significant', as well as the three problems most often given top priority in action plans. It can be seen that all three 'voluntary-led' schemes focused heavily on accommodation issues (and to a lesser extent drugs problems), while the probation-led schemes were more likely to recognise and give priority to drugs problems, thinking skills, employment, education and training. This suggests that the assessment of prisoners' problems and the planning of interventions is not a 'neutral' process, but is influenced to some extent by the core interests and expertise of the agency involved.

Indeed, although it is not one of our main concerns here, this variability in assessment raises the intriguing question of whether OASys assessments – which are designed to produce standard measures of problem levels – are more subjective than previously thought, and are significantly influenced by the background or

approach of the person carrying out the assessment. Appendix C, Table 2 shows, for each Pathfinder, the percentages of prisoners assessed via OASys as having a 'significant' problem in each of the main OASys problems categories. It can be seen that, in some categories, there is considerably more variation between prisons than one might expect.

This seems to be the case particularly with problems concerning cognition, attitudes, emotions or motivation, where judgements are probably more difficult than with practical issues such as accommodation or employment. Thus, for example, the proportions with high scores on the 'Attitudes' scale ranged from 59 per cent (Hull) to 8 per cent (Lewes), and on the 'Thinking Skills' scale from 64 per cent (Ox/Bucks) to 36 per cent (Lewes). There were also variations – not shown in the Appendix Table – on the 'Lifestyles/Associates' scale from 47 per cent (Hull) to 14 per cent (Birmingham), on the 'Emotions' scale from 37 per cent (Parc) to ten per cent (Ox/Bucks and Hull), and on the 'Motivation' scale from 22 per cent (Hull) to just two per cent (Lewes).

However, there are also some puzzling differences in what are apparently more 'straightforward' categories: in particular, high scorers on the 'Drugs' scale ranged from 70 per cent in Durham and 67 per cent in Hull down to 33 per cent in Birmingham; and on the 'Alcohol' scale from 50 per cent in Lewes down to 21 per cent in Hull. As all the OASys assessors received training in the use of the instrument, this issue deserves further investigation.

Finally, Tables 4.8 and 4.9 show the employment and accommodation status (where known) of all Pathfinder prisoners prior to coming into custody. Under a quarter were employed, and only just over half lived in permanent accommodation. The figures in parentheses after the first column show prisoners' expectations, at the time of their first assessment interview in prison, of being released into a job or into permanent accommodation. As has been found in previous studies which drew attention to the negative effects of short-term sentences (eg NACRO, 2001), it can be seen that fewer expected jobs or accommodation post-release than they had had before going into prison.

Table 4.7	Problems most often assessed as significant and as top priority, by prison		
	Most frequent (%):	2nd most frequent (%):	3rd most frequent (%):
Ox/Bucks	A Thinking skills (57)	Accommodation (44)	Alcohol (39)
	B Accommodation (37)	Thinking skills (21)	Drugs (14)
Hull	A Drugs (65)	Education/Training (63)	Accommodation (58)
	B Drugs (48)	Accommodation (18)	Thinking skills (9)
Durham	A Drugs (73)	Employment (60)	Education/Training (63)
	B Drugs (57)	Accommodation (19)	Alcohol (7)
Parc	A Thinking skills (57)	Employment (55)	Alcohol (50)
	B Drugs (32)	Alcohol (31)	Thinking skills (18)
Lewes	A Accommodation (61)	Drugs (56)	Alcohol (51)
	B Accommodation (40)	Drugs (24)	Alcohol (23)
Wandsworth	A Accommodation (66)	Drugs (48)	Employment (40)
	B Accommodation (32)	Drugs (30)	Alcohol (10)
Birmingham	A Accommodation (37)	Employment (29)	Alcohol (26)
	B Accommodation (56)	Other (8)	Drugs (7)

A = assessed as a 'significant' problem; B= assessed as offenders' 'top priority' problem

Table 4.9 also confirms that prisoners in Lewes and Wandsworth were the least likely to expect release into permanent accommodation. Indeed, 40 per cent of the Lewes prisoners claimed to have had no fixed address before sentence, compared with the overall figure of 21 per cent. Once again, the figures suggest that Birmingham prisoners had the best situation in terms of housing – although, ironically, accommodation formed the primary focus of the Birmingham Pathfinder's work.

Table 4.8	Employment status					
	Employment status before sentence (and expected after release)					
	Employed		Unemployed	Training/education/ economically inactive	Total	
	%		(%)*	%	%	%
Birmingham	22	(14)	71	7	100	
Durham	5	(3)	70	25	100	
Hull	19	(13)	76	5	100	
Lewes	20	(17)	68	12	100	
Ox/Bucks	48	(50)	42	10	100	
Parc	14	(13)	78	8	100	
Wandsworth	26	(12)	66	8	100	
All	23	(18)	67	10	100	

(n=975)
* Percentage of prisoners expecting to go into employment on release.

Table 4.9	Accommodation status					
	Accommodation status before sentence (and expected after release)					
	Permanent		Transient	NFA	Other	Total
	%	(%)*	%	%	%	%
Birmingham	65	(51)	25	9	1	100
Durham	52	(40)	26	22	0	100
Hull	44	(37)	23	33	1	100
Lewes	42	(35)	18	40	0	100
Ox/Bucks	56	(48)	32	8	4	100
Parc	43	(40)	41	16	0	100
Wandsworth	58	(32)	25	16	1	100
All	53	(41)	25	21	1	100

(n=986)
* Percentage of prisoners expecting to go to permanent accommodation on release.

Where jobs are concerned, the highest pre-sentence rates of unemployment were found among the prisoners in Parc and Hull, but nearly all the other prisons also had high rates. The major exception was Ox/Bucks, where nearly half had been in employment pre-sentence and half expected to have a job on release (compared with the overall figure of only 18%).

Summary of problems

In summary, then, as many previous studies have found, the short-term prisoners taken on by the seven Pathfinders had multiple serious social and individual problems. The average number of 'significant problems' per prisoner was 4.1. Over half were assessed as having significant problems in relation to accommodation and drugs, and over 40 per cent in relation to thinking skills and employment (women's needs were particularly prominent in the areas of drugs and employment). Moreover, the indications were that, without assistance, the prison experience would exacerbate some of these problems: in particular, the proportions expecting to leave prison without a job or permanent accommodation were higher than the proportions without jobs or permanent accommodation pre-sentence.

While there were fairly close associations, in each prison, between the problems most frequently identified as 'significant' and the problems given highest priority in prisoners' action plans, it also appeared that both assessments and prioritisation were influenced to some extent by the expertise and orientation of the agency taking the lead role. The 'voluntary-led' schemes, where staff expertise and knowledge was mainly in the traditional 'prisoners' welfare' area, all identified accommodation most often as a significant problem and all set it as the first priority in the highest proportion of cases.

By contrast, the probation-led projects appeared to be much more aware of deficits in thinking skills, attitudes, education or training. Whereas in the (voluntary) Pathfinders in Birmingham and Lewes, no prisoners were deemed to need help with 'thinking skills' as the highest priority, in the probation-led schemes in Ox/Bucks, Parc and Hull this was set at top priority in 21 per cent, 18 per cent and 9 per cent of cases respectively. Of course, these were also the three prisons which ran the F.O.R. … A Change programme, training in which undoubtedly contributed to staff awareness of this kind of problem.

Interestingly, OASys scores, which are intended to provide a standard 'objective' assessment of problems, also varied to a greater degree than one might expect, suggesting that they too may be influenced more than previously thought by the background or approach of the assessor.

Plans, actions and levels of service

We now turn to the various services that the Pathfinders provided to offenders, in prison and after release. Most of these were recorded in the CMRs, so it is possible both to produce some overall figures and to compare prisons according to the types and levels of service that each provided. This is the subject of this chapter. In Chapter 5, we shall explore evidence as to whether outcomes were related to these different types of service.

Of the 921 prisoners on whom CMRs were completed and who received any service from the projects beyond assessment and planning (see earlier and Table 4.1), 353 (38%) received some form of service both inside prison and post-release, although 35 of these were seen outside on their day of release only. The remaining 568 received some service inside prison – and 44 of them had brief contact with a worker after release – but no post-release work appears to have been undertaken with them (Table 4.10).

Table 4.10	'Service' received inside and outside prison		
		N	%
Service inside and outside		318	35
Service inside and outside on day of release only		35	4
Service inside only		568	62
Total		921	100
(No service received		160)	

Services inside prison

As well as being divisible between work done 'inside only' and 'through the gates', the cases can be categorised broadly according to the types and level of work done with each prisoner. Where work inside the prison is concerned, the most structured and intensive interventions were provided by the F.O.R. … A Change programme (in Hull, Ox/Bucks and Parc) and the modular programme for female prisoners run in Durham prison. Altogether, plans were made to put 175 offenders through the F.O.R. programme. In the end, 141 actually started this programme and 114 completed all its prison-based sessions. In Durham, plans were made to put 116 women through modules, and 106 completed at least one.[18] A further 23 male prisoners took short drug awareness courses in Lewes.

However, structured programme work of this kind was the exception rather than the norm. The majority of prisoners received advice or assistance on an individual basis from the Pathfinder staff, or were referred to one or more other agencies. Project staff also undertook practical work on prisoners' behalf, such as arranging accommodation or setting up post-release interviews with housing, employment or drugs agencies.

For standard one-to-one work, the most common plan was for the prisoner's case manager to see him or her about once a week, although this was often not possible due to pressures of work or the constraints of prison life. The content of these meetings was driven to some extent by the priorities in the action plan, but a wide variety of work was undertaken. While some in-depth counselling took place in a few cases (particularly in relation to bereavement, breakdown of relationships, and emotional problems), undoubtedly the main thrust of the meetings was to discuss progress in relation to practical problems. Outside of the formal group programmes, there was little evidence of a focus on offending behaviour or thinking skills.[19]

Aside from general support, the main type of action taken was referral to other agencies. 'Referral' is a notoriously vague term in the world of service provision, and can mean in reality anything from a suggestion that a prisoner contacts another agency to the setting up of a specific appointment on his or her behalf. Moreover, as noted in Chapter 3, many 'referrals' result in no useful action or even in no contact. These reservations should be borne in mind in interpreting the following figures.

According to project records, 451 offenders (49% of those who stayed in Pathfinders beyond the planning stage) were referred to one or more agencies while still in prison. In line with patterns of prioritisation, the most common type of referral concerned accommodation. As Table 4.11 shows, 230 prisoners – 43 per cent of those identified with 'significant' accommodation problems – were referred to housing agencies.

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18.   81 of the Durham prisoners took the 'use of time' module, 54 the 'inter-personal skills' module and 39 the 'financial management' module.
19.   An exception was that Hull staff ran single FOR modules with some prisoners not on the programme.

Table 4.11	Percentages of prisoners referred to relevant agencies while in prison		
	N with 'significant'	N referred	%
		problem of relevant type	to agency
Referred to:			
Housing agencies	535	230	43%
CARAT	526	120	23%
Other drugs agencies	526	99	19%
Employment agencies	418	64	15%
Alcohol agency	328	53	16%
(Any agency	804	451	56%)

The other main type of referral was to drugs agencies. Within the prisons, 23 per cent of offenders with significant drug problems were referred to CARAT schemes (a relatively high proportion of these in Hull) and 19 per cent to specialist drugs agencies (especially in Durham). One might have expected rather more CARAT referrals but, as noted in Chapter 3, Pathfinder staff in some of the prisons experienced considerable difficulties in accessing this service.

Referrals for alcohol problems were less frequent: 16 per cent of those with significant alcohol problems were referred to other agencies, normally Alcoholics Anonymous (Lewes appeared to be most active in this respect). Referrals to employment agencies were also relatively unusual in most prisons (partial exceptions being Hull and Lewes); overall, there were records of only 64 such actions.

In addition to referring prisoners to other agencies, project staff undertook a certain amount of work directly on their behalf. Again, accommodation issues were by far the most prominent. Staff arranged accommodation directly (eg by contacting local hostels or bed and breakfast providers) for 44 prisoners, and contacted previous landlords or local authorities to stop prisoners losing existing accommodation in several other cases. Birmingham (in the NACRO tradition) and Durham were the most active in this kind of work, 'housing' 25 of the 44 prisoners between them.

In relation to drugs problems, there were 11 cases documented in which project staff made arrangements for prisoners to attend rehabilitation courses on their release. Where employment is concerned, there were several cases of staff contacting previous employers to persuade them to keep jobs open, as well as of staff arranging specific appointments at job centres. Overall, however, given the high level of unemployment among the prisoners, there appeared to be less activity in this area than one might have expected. In most prisons, the main thrust of project activity in relation to jobs seemed to be the provision of information about vocational training courses.

On education and training more generally, the most common activity was the provision of information about courses (to about 20 per cent of prisoners with significant education or training needs), although project staff also arranged the enrolment of about 30 offenders on to prison education classes, and in a handful of cases staff directly arranged enrolment of prisoners on to college courses to commence after their release.

Finally, although not a measure of quality or indeed of appropriateness (and to some extent distorted by variations in recording practice), some idea of the range of interventions carried out in each prison can be

gleaned from a simple count of the different categories of 'actions' recorded as undertaken with or on behalf of each offender.[20] In all, over 2,500 were recorded, an average of nearly three different kinds of action per prisoner who received any service (see Table 4.12). It will be remembered from Table 4.5 that a total of 4,086 'significant' problems had been identified at the assessment stage (an average of 4.1 such problems per prisoner) so there was overall, as one might expect, a sizeable shortfall between the amount of work planned and that actually carried out. Generally speaking, however, the prisons which identified the highest number of problems undertook the highest numbers of actions with prisoners. Durham and Hull were among the highest on both counts (both projects carried out five or more actions with over 20 per cent of prisoners). By the same token, Birmingham produced (by some distance) the lowest figure on both problems and actions.

Table 4.12	Number of 'actions' undertaken by Pathfinders, pre-release		
	N of different 'actions' recorded		
	0-2	3-4	5 or more
	%	%	%
Prisoners in:			
Birmingham	94	6	0
Durham	42	34	24
Hull	39	39	22
Lewes	60	31	8
Ox/Bucks	49	35	15
Parc	54	33	2
Wandsworth	35	45	20
All prisons	52	33	15
(N=921)			

Contact and actions post-release

According to the scheme records, some contact was made with 397 (43%) of the 921 offenders who were still 'members' of a Pathfinder when they left prison (though in 35 of these cases, contact was on the day of release only). As will be discussed in Chapter 5, this degree of voluntary post-release contact is markedly better than has been achieved in the past.

Previous studies of voluntary aftercare (for example, Maguire et al., 1997, 2000) have found that post-release contact with ex-prisoners tends to be short-lived. However, it appears that, although only a minority of offenders on the Pathfinders were seen after release, a fair proportion of these maintained contact for several weeks: as Table 4.13 shows, contact was kept for two months or over with at least 28 per cent of those who were in communication with the Pathfinder after they left prison. According to project records, 11 prisoners remained in contact for over six months. The longest period for which a project kept in touch with any one prisoner was just over a year, but it appears that contact was only occasional during this period.[21]

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20. 'Actions' here refers to the kinds of assistance described above: eg referrals to other agencies, or help with accommodation or employment. Referral to the F.O.R. or Durham programme counts as one action.
21. The frequency, duration and quality of contact post-release were difficult to measure in a meaningful way from the available data. For example, some contacts (initiated by staff or ex-prisoners) were brief telephone conversations about how the offender was 'getting on', sometimes weeks after release without any other contact. A broad measure of 'significant' post-release contact is given in Chapter 5.

Table 4.13	Prisoners in touch with project post-release: length of contact	
	N	%
Under two weeks	102	26
2 weeks > 2 months	136	34
Two months or over	111	28
Not known	48	12
Total	397	100

The general question of which prisoners received post-release services will be taken up in Chapter 5. However, it is worth briefly outlining here the characteristics of those with whom the projects maintained longer-term contact. Among those 'worked with' post-release who were in touch for two months or over:[22]

- 21 per cent were women (compared with 12% of all Pathfinder prisoners);
- 37 per cent of the males were aged 35 or over (compared with 28% of all males);
- 9 per cent were non-white (compared with 11% overall);
- 26 per cent had an OASys score below 35 (compared with 11% overall);
- 17 per cent had a CRIME-PICS II (G) score below 30 (compared with 11% overall);
- 19 per cent had a CRIME-PICS II (P) score below 20 (compared with 10% overall);
- 34 per cent had originally been assessed as having a significant accommodation problem (compared with 50% overall);
- 36 per cent had originally been assessed as having a significant drug problem (compared with 50% overall);
- 17 per cent had completed the F.O.R. programme (compared with 11% overall).

Although the differences are not huge, the overall message from these figures is that longer-term contact was more likely to be maintained with women, older men, those towards the lower end of the risk/needs scale, and those completing prison programmes.

With regard to the work actually undertaken post-release, quantification is difficult, not least because some Pathfinders confused pre- and post-release activities (particularly 'referrals' to other agencies) in their records. However, some form of post-release 'action' (as opposed to simply contact) was recorded with 353 (38%) of the 921 Pathfinder 'graduates' (see Table 4.13 above). This activity was very much geared towards practical, rather than cognitive or emotional, problems. In recording the problems to be addressed after release, project workers seemed largely to ignore those parts of earlier OASys assessments which identified deficits in the latter areas. Specifically, 37 per cent of the 353 offenders 'worked with' post-release were recorded as needing help with accommodation problems, 25 per cent with drugs problems, and 23 per cent with employment problems. By contrast, problems in thinking skills (10%), emotional issues (9%) and attitudes (7%) were referred to relatively infrequently.

Focusing on the more concrete and productive actions taken, it appears that at least 36 of the offenders with whom projects had post-release contact found accommodation with the direct (post-release) help of staff or mentors. While it was more common for this help to result in short-term accommodation, about a quarter of these cases involved housing described as 'permanent'. Added to those whom staff successfully helped while

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22. They were fairly evenly spread across the projects, apart from Wandsworth, where active contact was maintained with only seven offenders for this length of time. Durham had the most long-term contacts.

they were still in prison (see earlier), this means that, overall, around eight per cent of all Pathfinder prisoners, and 14 per cent of all those originally assessed as having a significant accommodation problem, were directly assisted by staff to acquire somewhere to live.[23]

The other main type of post-release activity was in response to drugs problems. At least 35 ex-prisoners from the projects actually visited a drugs agency, eight of them entering rehabilitation. This represents around seven per cent of all those initially assessed in prison as having a significant drug problem.

Otherwise, project records indicate that 12 with alcohol problems attended AA meetings, ten were assisted in getting places on education or training courses, and about the same number were directly helped to get jobs (eg by the worker speaking to a former or prospective employer). A few, too, saw counsellors for emotional or health problems.

While the focus here has been on practical problems, it is important to emphasize that, even if no direct practical assistance was given, project workers offered general advice and emotional support to significant numbers of ex-prisoners, and it is possible that such contact in itself had a positive impact in some cases. We shall return to this point when presenting ex-prisoners' own views below.

Finally, Table 4.14 shows the numbers of cases in which project workers claimed (in their case management records) to have addressed particular types of problem post-release, and their assessments of how fully their objectives had been achieved. It can be seen that they were quite pleased with their efforts, particularly in relation to accommodation, which was the problem most often identified and 'worked on' after release (in 127 cases). They claimed to have 'fully achieved' their objectives in 60 per cent of relevant cases. The equivalent figures for employment, education/training, and drugs were 45 per cent, 42 per cent and 34 per cent, respectively.

Table 4.14	**Project workers' assessments of problems post-release and success in meeting related objectives**			
	N of cases in which problem addressed	'Objectives fully achieved'	'Objectives partly achieved'	'Objectives not achieved'
		%	%	%
Type of problem				
Accommodation	127	60	35	6
Drugs	80	34	55	11
Employment	76	45	38	17
Education/training	60	42	33	25
Financial management	54	52	22	26
Thinking skills	36	39	42	19

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23. As noted earlier, 44 were found accommodation while still in prison. However, six of these 'overlapped' with those assisted outside, in that further work had to be done post-release. Hence, 74 offenders altogether were directly and successfully helped with accommodation (among 535 initially assessed – mainly via OASys – as having a significant accommodation problem).

Offenders' views and experience of the Pathfinders

Experiences inside prison

As noted in Chapter 2 of this report, interviews were conducted in prison during 2001 with a total of 139 offenders on the Pathfinders. The interviews were aimed at capturing offenders' views and experiences of the project pre-release, and for that reason were conducted as close as practicable to their date of release.[24]

Interviewees were first asked why they had agreed to take part and what type of help they thought that the Pathfinder teams could offer them. As Table 4.15 shows, the highest proportion (37%) had been attracted principally by the prospect of help with accommodation. Help with drug or alcohol problems also figured prominently: these findings fit well with the results of OASys assessments and the priorities set by the Pathfinders, as discussed earlier. In addition, a fifth gave as their main reason a desire to 'stay out of trouble'. There was some variation between projects in the emphasis placed on different types of problems and needs, such as the high percentage of women at Durham whose main reason was help with drug problems and a strong emphasis on accommodation at Wandsworth, but the numbers of respondents at each Pathfinder were too small for such differences to be statistically meaningful.

Table 4.15	Reasons for joining the Pathfinders.	
	N	%
Primary reason given		
Accommodation	37	27
Alcohol/drugs	21	15
To stay out of trouble	21	15
Education/employment	14	10
Someone to talk to	6	4
Financial	4	3
Depression	2	1
Relationships	1	1
Other	26	18
No reason given	7	5
Total respondents	139	100

When asked what they had so far 'got out of' joining the Pathfinder, only 27 per cent replied they had obtained no benefit as yet (a figure which would probably have been lower had all the interviews been held close to release).[25] Interestingly, the most common benefits mentioned were not help with housing or drug problems (though these were the most often mentioned practical problems), but help in the less tangible areas of 'self-confidence' 'peace of mind', and 'having someone to talk to' (see Table 4.16). A typical response in this mode was from a prisoner who said, 'It's been good because I can relate to them in a certain way. They are there to help.' More replies are listed in Appendix D.

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24. Arranging interviews was not always easy, and in prisons where there was a risk of failing to achieve the quota of 20 interviews some prisoners were seen earlier in order to avoid 'missing' them.
25. Obviously, some of the 'benefits' perceived by offenders may not be regarded as 'benefits' by those designing or delivering the services. However, in most cases, offenders answering this question referred to outcomes which would generally be regarded as supportive of rehabilitation.

Table 4.16   Benefits derived from Pathfinder while in custody

	Number and percentage mentioning (Total n=139)	
	N*	%*
Type of help/advice received		
Financial	5	4
Education/employment	10	7
Accommodation	21	15
Alcohol/drugs	18	13
Confidence/peace of mind	34	24
Staying out of trouble	4	3
Someone to talk to/mentor	23	17
Thinking skills	19	14
Where to go for help	8	6
Nothing as yet	27	19
Other	29	21

* Columns sum to more than the total respondents, as multiple responses were allowed.

Among the interviewees who were attending the F.O.R. programme or the Durham modules, several specifically mentioned the help received with thinking skills and impulsive behaviour. One respondent observed, for example that: 'It's given me more awareness of what you can achieve if you put your mind to it.' Another felt that he had gained 'A better understanding of myself. Better ideas of how to solve problems…keeping my emotions under control.'

Asked if the Pathfinder staff had put them in touch with anyone else so far, 48 per cent of respondents mentioned contact with or referral to one or more agencies. This figure is consistent with the analysis of pre-release contacts with agencies based on CMR records (see above). Also in line with the CMRs is the finding that the most frequent referrals mentioned by the interviewees were in respect of accommodation (35%), drug misuse (31%) and education/employment (18%).

The majority (61%) of interviewees expected to see someone from the Pathfinder team after their release. Many who were close to their release dates could name this contact person. However, just under a third were unsure whether there would be post-release contact. Only ten interviewees said they would definitely not keep in touch, in most cases because they considered that they would not need further help from the Pathfinder.

Table 4.17 shows the main types of post-release help wanted by the 86 who expected to remain in contact. Accommodation, education/employment and drug use were predictably the main types of practical and personal problem highlighted. It can again be seen, however, that moral support was considered important, several respondents seeing potential benefit in remaining in touch with someone from the Pathfinder (whether a volunteer mentor or a member of the team) simply to have someone to talk to about their problems and progress.

Table 4.17	Help wanted from Pathfinder post-release	
	Number and percentage mentioning (Total N=86)	
	N	%*
Type of help wanted		
Money/benefits	4	5
Employment/education	24	28
Housing	17	20
Drink/drugs	10	12
Boredom	2	2
To stay out of trouble	10	12
Someone to talk to/mentor	24	28
Don't know/nothing	8	9
Other	11	13

* Columns sum to more than the total respondents as multiple responses were allowed.

Post-release experiences

Post-release work will be discussed in some detail in Chapter 5. However, some of the views and experiences of offenders from the Pathfinders will be briefly presented here. These are based on 35 face-to-face and telephone interviews and 72 responses to postal questionnaires, in both cases mainly between three and six months after their release (see the discussion of methodology in Chapter 2 above). It is reiterated that the findings from both sources are not fully representative of the views of all ex-prisoners from the Pathfinders, as it is likely that those who responded were in more stable situations than those who 'disappeared' after release. The numbers are also too small to differentiate reliably between the experiences of ex-prisoners from different Pathfinders, or even between those from probation-led and voluntary-led Pathfinders. Nevertheless, the results give some idea of the range of post-release experiences.

Among the 72 ex-prisoners who returned questionnaires, 25 per cent named drugs, 18 per cent named accommodation, and 15 per cent named employment as their main problem area post-release. Likewise, help with drug problems (24%), accommodation (24%) and employment (19%) were the services most often mentioned as having been received from project staff (before or after release). These findings are broadly in line with those from the CMRs and project staff interviews.

Among the 35 interviewed post-release, 23 had been in contact with (and 15 had received 'help' from) the Pathfinder since they left prison. Those who had not kept in touch gave a variety of reasons, ranging from not needing help to being on drugs or not knowing how to contact the scheme. It is worthy of note that the majority (13) of those who had remained in touch had seen staff or mentors three or more times: this supports the finding from the CMRs that, when they saw offenders post-release, the projects tended to be more active and to keep in contact for longer periods than was usually the case under voluntary aftercare in the past.

The interview findings are also broadly in tune with the CMRs and the postal survey, in that offenders reported that the kinds of practical help given post-release were mainly in relation to accommodation (12 offenders), drugs or alcohol (11), employment (11) and financial matters (8). However, as with the pre-release interviewees, respondents also tended to report the help they had received in terms of gains in 'self-confidence' (12) and 'keeping out of trouble' (10). Indeed, when asked which aspects of their experiences on the Pathfinder they had

found most helpful, over half (19 out of the 35) named 'emotional support' or 'someone to listen or talk to', compared with only five who specified assistance with accommodation (the next most frequent choice).

Overall, 20 of the 35 said that they had found their experience of the Pathfinder 'better than expected', and all but two of the remainder said that it had been 'as good as expected'.

Finally, both the post-release interviews and the postal questionnaire included questions about the offenders' current status in terms of accommodation and employment. Their responses could be compared, case by case, with the project records of their status before they came into prison (see Table 4.18).

Table 4.18	Pre-prison and post-release accommodation and employment status		
	Post-release accommodation		
	'Permanent'	Temporary	Total
Pre-prison accommodation			
'Permanent' housing	46	21	67
Temporary/NFA	16	16	32
Total	62	37	99
	Post-release employment		
	Employed	Training	Unemployed	Total
Pre-prison employment			
Employed	23	2	4	29
Unemployed	11	3	47	61
Total	34	5	51	90

According to their CMRs, 67 of the interview and survey respondents had been in 'permanent' accommodation prior to their imprisonment, and 32 in transient accommodation or homeless. Among these same 99 offenders, the (self-reported) post-release situation was that 21 had lost their permanent accommodation as a result of going to prison, but 16 others who had previously been without such accommodation had now found some, in several cases with the help of the Pathfinder. In other words, there was a small 'net loss' of permanent accommodation.

The situation with employment was more encouraging. Here, 25 of the 29 who had previously had jobs were again in employment or training, and 14 of the 61 who had previously been unemployed had now found jobs or training places – a 'net gain' in employment over the whole group.[26]

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26. Numbers are too small to undertake separate analysis of any changes in female interviewees' accommodation or employment status.

5. Interim outcome measures: what makes a difference?

The interim measures used in this study

Like all the Crime Reduction Programme projects the resettlement Pathfinders are intended to reduce crime, and will eventually be subject to a reconviction study when those who passed through them have been followed up for at least two years. In the meantime a number of interim measures of effectiveness have been chosen to provide a preliminary evaluation of the impact of each project. These measures are chosen as plausible indicators of effective practice on the grounds of their use in other reputable studies and the opportunities they offer for comparison. This chapter is therefore based mainly on three measures which we were able to apply to a reasonable proportion of the prisoners in the projects. First we discuss continuity of service, or the proportion of prisoners who remained in significant contact with the projects after release. This reflects a general consensus in previous studies of resettlement work with prisoners, that contact which continues 'through the gate' is most likely to be helpful (see, for example, HMIPP, 2001) and that poor services in custody lead to low levels of voluntary continued contact (Maguire et al., 1997; 2000). Although there has been little attention in past reconviction studies to the rehabilitative effect of continuity in resettlement services, the professional consensus in favour of its importance is so strong that all projects aimed to achieve high levels of post-release contact.[27]

The second and third outcome measures used concern changes in prisoners' attitudes favourable to offending and levels of perceived life problems, both based on the CRIME-PICS II questionnaire (Frude et al., 1994). This instrument, although not designed specifically as a reconviction predictor, is known to be related to reconviction (Raynor, 1998) and is being successfully used in other Pathfinder evaluations as a measure of change (see, for example, Hatcher and McGuire 2001; ICPSU, 2001). CRIME-PICS II was also easy to use and suitable for repeat administration to measure change.[28] It was therefore adopted as an appropriate offending-related interim measure.

All three sets of interim outcome measures are compared by project and also in relation to known variations in service type or service input, such as level of service activity and whether mentors or structured group programmes were used. In addition, this chapter includes an assessment of available information about the services provided to minority ethnic prisoners.

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27. Previous evidence is stronger concerning the relationship between higher levels of contact in pre-release services and reductions in subsequent offending (for example, Berntsen and Christiansen, 1965; Shaw, 1974), and consequently we also use a measure based on the range of 'actions' recorded in relation to each prisoner before release, though this is considered for most purposes as an indicator of service input rather than an outcome.

28. Although most prisoners in the Pathfinders were also assessed using OASys (the Home Office's new standard Offender Assessment System for risks and needs – see Chapters 2 and 4) this took so long to administer that it was in the great majority of cases applied only once, so could not be used as a measure of change. Moreover, OASys did not at that time have a known association with reconviction and was in use in the projects for policy reasons, in some areas displacing assessment instruments with known validity such as LSI-R and ACE (Raynor et al., 2000).

Attrition and continuity of services 'through the gate'

In this chapter, success in achieving post-release contact is measured against one of two baselines: (a) all those initially 'joining' the projects, or (b) all those who were still Pathfinder 'members' at the point of release (and hence had some opportunity for, or expectation of, post-release contact). The first is important as an indicator of how successful the different projects were in 'holding on to' offenders over the full duration of their planned intervention – ie from the initial planning stage, through the prison sentence, and for several weeks post-release. The second is an indicator of how successful the projects were in keeping in touch with their 'continuing members' (ie those who had not been lost to the project during the custodial period).

As discussed earlier in the report, 'attrition' of Pathfinder members while still in custody could occur for a variety of reasons, from sudden transfers (the most common) or unexpected home detention curfew to a change of mind by prisoners or sickness among project staff. The records indicate that 160 of the original 1,081 prisoners who 'signed up' withdrew from the project or unexpectedly left the prison before any work could be undertaken with them, leaving 921 who were still 'members' at the point of release.

As outlined in Chapter 4, 397 of these offenders had some contact with the projects after release. These represented 37 per cent of the 1,081 initial 'joiners', or 43 per cent of the 921 who were still members when released. This level of post-release contact greatly exceeds the levels recorded in the only recent study of resettlement services for short-term prisoners prior to the establishment of the Pathfinders (Maguire et al., 1997). In that study, the probation areas which were most active in providing a service had post-release contact with only 15 per cent of those whom they had designated as 'live' cases in prison: in fact, the figure of seven per cent recorded by a voluntary organisation in London was probably nearer to the average level across the country, bearing in mind that most probation areas (65%) were not found to be active in offering services for this group. It is immediately apparent, then, that the Resettlement Pathfinders were able to engage short-term prisoners much more effectively than previous providers, leading to levels of post-release contact at least five times higher than has been the norm.

The project records also indicate that, among the 397 contacted, 353 engaged in some form of purposeful work post-release. This figure reduces to 318 (29% of the initial joiners, 35% of those released as members) if one excludes those seen only on their day of release. These 318 ex-prisoners received what might be called the 'alpha' service – ie post-release activities involving significant purposeful contact beyond the day of release. Reception of this kind of service will be used as our main measure of 'high continuity'.

Within these global figures there were considerable variations from project to project. Table 5.1 illustrates these, together with the average initial OASys score in each project to indicate whether particular projects were tending to deal with more or less problematic prisoners. The table sets the number of prisoners initially joining each Pathfinder to a base of 100, then shows the degree of 'attrition' at each stage: ie what proportions remained members up to release, were in contact at all post-release, and engaged in 'significant purposeful contact.'

| Table 5.1 | Attrition and continuity of service to all initial joiners, by Pathfinder |

	Proportions still participating at each stage, to base of 100				
	Joiners	Still members at release	Post-release contact	High continuity of service*	Mean first OASys score**
Project (n of initial joiners)					
Birmingham (189)	100	65	32	21	63.4
Durham (131)	100	88	50	47	70.4
Hull (225)	100	97	38	32	78.8
Lewes (80)	100	92	29	22	65.5
Ox/Bucks (156)	100	91	50	42	63.0
Parc (49)	100	67	37	33	63.3
Wandsworth (151)	100	82	23	16	67.2
All projects (1081)	100	85	37	29	68.0

* Significant contact beyond the day of release.
** As noted in Chapter 4, not all prisoners had an OASys assessment: the information is based on the cases in which it is available. The overall number of assessments completed was 850.

The highest overall level of 'useful continuity' (with 47% of its original 'membership') was achieved by Durham. As this was the only project dealing with female prisoners, it is unclear how far this is attributable to the capabilities of the staff and how far to the sex of the offenders. Nevertheless, it is a highly impressive figure by previous standards.

Among the male prisons, the rate varied from 42 per cent (Ox/Bucks) to 16 per cent (Wandsworth). There is no indication from the OASys scores that this can be attributed to the levels of risk and need presented by the prisoners: for example, the prisons showing the three lowest mean OASys scores had continuity rates ranging from 21 to 42 per cent, and those with the three highest OASys scores exhibited a range from 16 to 47 per cent. Rather, the main reasons for the variation appear to lie in (a) differing degrees of attrition during the pre-release period; and (b) different kinds of 'service' provided by the projects.

Projects also varied in the proportion of theoretically 'eligible' prisoners who joined the Pathfinders. Numbers of eligible prisoners were collected on a regular basis from each Pathfinder team except Parc, in view of their late entry into the study. These numbers need to be treated with caution as the Pathfinders differed to some extent in the eligibility criteria they adopted and in their recording practices. The aggregate figures do, however, provide a broad indication of the relationship between the total number of eligible prisoners, the numbers joining and the numbers receiving various levels of service. As shown in Table 1, Appendix C, the projects which were most successful in engaging substantial proportions of prisoners were Durham (74%), Woodhill and Hull (both 51%).

(a) Pre-release attrition

First of all, it is clear from Table 5.1 that Birmingham 'lost' over a third of its Pathfinder prisoners while they were still in custody.[29] As discussed in Chapter 3, this was largely due to sudden transfers – an issue, it might be argued, beyond the control of the project team, although it could also be argued that the prison was a partner in the projects and that a better understanding should have been reached about 'keeping' Pathfinder

29. Parc also 'lost' a large proportion of its 'members' pre-release, but this was due to the fact that the project was designed only to take on those prisoners who took the F.O.R. programme. For various reasons, a number of prisoners withdrew from (or never started) the programme, and this often meant a simultaneous withdrawal from the Pathfinder.

prisoners. Be that as it may, the 'knock-on effect' was that, overall, Birmingham achieved 'high continuity of service' in a relatively small proportion of cases (21%), despite being reasonably good at keeping in touch with those prisoners who remained in the Pathfinder at the point of release (significant post-release contact was achieved with 32 per cent of these, close to the average for the seven projects).

Wandsworth suffered from similar attrition problems in custody, though to a lesser degree ('losing' 18% of members before release). However, the Wandsworth project seemed to have considerably more trouble than Birmingham in making or maintaining contact with offenders after release: only 23 per cent of its 'members at release' experienced 'high continuity of service' post-release – by far the lowest such rate. Moreover, the combined effect of these two different kinds of attrition caused Wandsworth also to be placed last in the list of overall continuity rates: thus only 16 per cent of its original members eventually received the 'alpha service'.

In contrast to the above two (large local) prisons, the projects in Hull, Lewes and Ox/Bucks all managed to retain over 90 per cent of their 'members' throughout their sentences. The differences between these three came after release, where Ox/Bucks was clearly the most successful in maintaining contact. Interestingly, the Ox/Bucks prisoners showed the lowest average OASys scores (and Hull the highest), which may suggest that ex-prisoners with higher needs or risk levels are less likely to keep in touch after release (for further discussion see below).

(b) Different kinds of service

Table 5.2 explores the possibility that different levels of continuity are to be explained at least partly by differences in the services provided. In this case, we are trying to explain differences in continuity from the point of release onwards (ie ignoring prior attrition in custody), so the comparisons are based on the 921 offenders who reached that point as Pathfinder members, not the original 1,081 who joined earlier.

Table 5.2 Types of service related to high continuity		
	Average initial OASys	% with high continuity
Type of service (n)		
'Probation-led' project (male) (393)	70.1	39
'Voluntary-led' project (male) (413)	65.5	25
Significance of difference	*	**
With F.O.R.: F.O.R. prisons only (114)	73.9	47
Without F.O.R.: F.O.R. prisons only (279)	68.1	36
Significance of difference	n/s	*

** = p<0.01, * = p<0.05, n/s = not significant; t-tests in column 1, X^2 in column 2.

The first 'service type' is about who runs the project, and reflects the division of the Pathfinders into 'probation' and 'voluntary sector' projects (counting male prisons only, to avoid skewing the comparison by including the relatively successful probation women's project in the absence of a women's 'voluntary sector' project). The second 'service type' concerns completion (or not) of the F.O.R. programme.

The findings support the view that different types of service lead to different levels of post-release contact, or 'continuity'. In particular, offenders leaving prisons as members of 'probation-led' projects were significantly more likely to receive high continuity of services than those from 'voluntary-led' projects, and those who had

completed the F.O.R. programme were significantly more likely to do so than their counterparts in the F.O.R. prisons who did not take the programme. These differences persisted when controlling for age and OASys score[30]. We have already seen (Table 5.1) that the three voluntary-led projects exhibited much higher levels of overall attrition (ie including withdrawals and transfers in prison) than the probation-led projects.

On the other hand, the findings in relation to a third set of contrasting 'service types' were less clear-cut. These are defined by differences between 'activity rates' in custody, which are derived from the numbers of different types of 'actions' recorded as taken in response to problems before release (see Chapter 4): five or more 'types of action' are counted as a 'high' level of activity in custody, and two or fewer as 'low' activity. In other words, this is a measure of the range of pre-release input, and approximates to a measure of intensity.

As Appendix C Table 4 shows, a 'high level of activity' in prison was not in itself significantly more likely than a 'low level of activity' in prison to result in high continuity (although there was some tendency in that direction). This finding may seem a little out of tune with previous studies (and practice assumptions) which suggest that prisoners with whom a relationship is built in prison are much more likely than others to keep in touch after release. However, it should be remembered that 'level of activity' here refers simply to the number of different types of action undertaken, rather than to the number of times that prisoners were seen, or the quality of the relationship. Moreover, the variable is closely related to OASys scores because, as one might expect in a well-run project, prisoners with the greatest variety of criminogenic needs received the greatest variety of services in custody. Presumably because such prisoners were less likely to come out of prison into a stable situation, the position was reversed after release, high OASys scorers as a whole 'doing worse' than low scorers in terms of maintaining contact. The table suggests that there was a tendency for a high input of services in prison to ameliorate this problem a little, although the effect did not reach the level of statistical significance. In short, active work in prison with the 'neediest' prisoners may pay some dividends later in terms of enhanced contact after release.

Finally, questions about the effectiveness of yet another 'service type', the use of mentors, as a mechanism for improving continuity are difficult to answer with any certainty, as we have no suitable comparators for their activities. For this reason, all findings on the subject have to be treated with strong caution. We do know that the 'mentoring Pathfinders' (Wandsworth and Lewes) were less effective in terms of overall continuity rates than all the probation-led projects (see Table 5.1). However, their rates were similar to Birmingham, another voluntary-led project, so it is difficult to disentangle organisational features from the use of mentors (or not) as possible reasons for their relatively poor level of continuity – let alone other factors such as differences between the catchment areas of the various prisons.

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30.   Both of these also emerged as significant in bivariate and multivariate analysis of factors related to high continuity – see Appendix E.

Table 5.3   Mentors and continuity

	Average initial OASys	% with high continuity
Type of service (n)		
Saw mentor (mentoring prisons only) (145)	70.4	29
Did not see mentor (mentoring prisons only) (145)	62.4	14
Significance of difference	*	**
Saw mentor (mentoring prisons only) (145)	70.4	29
No mentor (other male prisons) (516)	68.6	37
Significance of difference	n/s	n/s
In mentoring prison (Lewes/Wandsworth) (290)	66.1	22
In other 'voluntary-led' prison (B'ham) (123)	63.4	33
Significance of difference	n/s	*

* = p<0.05, ** = p<0.01, n/s = not significant; t-tests in column 1, X^2 in column 2.

Turning now to community trends in relation to prisoners who were still Pathfinder members on release, Table 5.3 indicates that, within the two prisons that used mentors, those prisoners who saw a mentor in custody were significantly more likely to remain in useful contact with the project after release (usually via their mentor) than those who did not. This is not unexpected, given that staff in Wandsworth (and to a lesser extent, Lewes) tended to leave post-release work mainly to the mentors, and ex-prisoners only rarely took the initiative in contacting the Pathfinder themselves. Nevertheless, it does provide some reassurance that, within these projects, the mentors did provide a better service than would have been available without them.

Table 5.3 also shows a comparison between the continuity levels of those prisoners in Lewes and Wandsworth who saw a mentor pre-release and prisoners in Pathfinders in other male prisons which did not use mentors; and a second comparison between continuity levels among offenders from the mentoring prisons (regardless of whether offenders actually saw a mentor) and from the other voluntary prison, Birmingham. In both cases, mentors emerge as, if anything, less effective than other kinds of worker in maintaining contact with offenders they get to know in prison. However, as stressed above, this finding may be affected by several other factors – not least the housing shortages in London and the South East which led to many prisoners moving away from the area.

To sum up this somewhat complex sub-section, it appears from our study of continuity of services and whether contact continued 'though the gate' that in comparison with previous 'voluntary after-care' schemes, the Pathfinders were successful in increasing, sometimes dramatically, the proportion of prisoners who continued in meaningful contact after release. This was particularly marked where projects were run by probation services (which usually meant higher levels of input: as discussed in Chapter 4, only Wandsworth among the voluntary projects recorded levels of input comparable with the probation projects) and above all among prisoners who completed a motivational programme. The highest continuity of all was achieved by Durham, a probation-led project which had the highest levels of input and also used a form of group programme. In Durham's case, however, it is difficult to separate the contribution of different features to this result. As the only women's project it lacks comparators, so it is impossible to estimate how far the result may be related to differences between male and female prisoners; also, almost everybody did some modules of the programme but few did them all, so it is not possible to disentangle what effects the programme itself may have had. Nevertheless it is clear that the Durham project produced very good results on the continuity measure, and had a number of features in common with the more successful male projects.

Finally, the findings on two other types of service – 'high activity in custody' and the use of mentors, are less clear-cut. It appeared that high levels of activity in prison marginally improved the chances of useful post-release contact with those scoring high on OASys (a group which is generally less likely to remain in touch with project staff), but the statistical association was not significant. Equally, while mentors seem to have done a useful job in the otherwise poor-performing (in terms of post-release contact) Pathfinders in Wandsworth and Lewes, there was no evidence that mentors per se offer better prospects of maintaining contact than other kinds of staff (indeed, the available indications – which are not reliable – were in the opposite direction). More conclusive findings about the impact of both 'high activity in custody' and mentoring may emerge from the reconviction analysis in 2004.

Attitudes and problems

The second and third of our interim measures of effectiveness are derived, as explained above, from the CRIME-PICS II instrument. This has five subscales, as indicated in Table 5.4; of these, the two based on the largest number of items and generally most sensitive to change are the G scale ('general attitudes to crime') and the P scale ('perception of current life problems', a self-report measure). Consequently these two scales are used to measure changes in attitudes or perceived problems among the Pathfinder members.[31] As described in Chapter 2, 454 prisoners completed a first CRIME-PICS II at or near the start of their involvement with a project and a second near the point of release. A small number (62) completed a third CRIME-PICS II after release, but our main indicators of change are the 454 cases in which first and second scores are available. This means that we are only able to identify changes taking place during the prison sentence.

Overall, as Table 5.4 shows, prisoners in the projects showed significant amounts of positive change on all CRIME-PICS II scales. (There were no significant changes from second to third CRIME-PICS II among the small number of prisoners who did three, and only small changes, in both directions, from first to third.)

Table 5.4	Changes in average CRIME-PICS scores: all Pathfinders (N = 454)		
	1st score	2nd score	Significance of change (t-test)
Scale			
General attitudes to crime (G)	43.0	41.6	p<0.01
Anticipation of re-offending (A)	14.8	14.2	p<0.01
Victim hurt denial (V)	7.6	7.2	p<0.05
Evaluation of crime as worthwhile (E)	10.9	10.4	p<0.01
Perception of life problems (P)	31.8	29.4	p<0.01

These differences are not large, but they are significant, and quite small changes in CRIME-PICS II scores have been associated with reductions in reconviction in previous research (Raynor, 1998). In some projects, average changes were considerably larger than in others: Table 5.5 illustrates this for the two main scales G and P. Again initial scores are included, and show that the amount of change does not simply reflect the initial score.

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31. As noted earlier, not all the intended repeat measures were actually completed in useful numbers: originally we hoped also to use material from repeated OASys assessments, but only 13 prisoners had a second OASys completed on them and consequently these are of little use. It is also interesting to note that among the 672 prisoners who completed a first CRIME-PICS II and were subject to an OASys assessment, all CRIME-PICS II scales except the V scale ('victim hurt denial') are significantly correlated with OASys scores (the correlation coefficients are: G scale 0.59, A 0.59, V -0.09, E 0.38, P 0.46).

The four projects which showed the largest changes in attitudes were (in rank order) Parc, Ox/Bucks, Durham and Hull. The largest problem score changes were (again in rank order) in Parc, Hull, Durham and Wandsworth. Bivariate analysis of this kind cannot exclude the possibility that other variables, such as differences in prisoners' characteristics, may contribute towards differences in outcome. However, our main risk-related measure of prisoners' characteristics (the initial OASys score – see Table 5.1) shows a rather different distribution, and projects showing large changes on CRIME-PICS II include those with both high and low mean OASys scores. Overall our figures strongly suggest a 'project effect' – that is, that differences in outcome are at least partly attributable to differences in the projects. It may be recalled that the four projects with the highest proportions of prisoners receiving 'high continuity of service' were Durham, Ox/Bucks, Parc and Hull, in that order (Table 5.1), so there is a useful degree of agreement between our three main interim outcome measures. The case of Wandsworth is interesting: this project shows much more impact on perceived problems than on attitudes, which may reflect the fact that this was a project which was quite active in work with prisoners but – in the SOVA tradition – tended to direct that work towards problems of resources and opportunities rather than attitudes and thinking. This may be over-interpretation of the data, but the pattern of results is certainly worthy of note. Also striking is the consistently strong performance of Durham and, among the male prisons, Parc, where the highest proportion of prisoners did the F.O.R. programme.

Table 5.5	Main CRIME-PICS change measures, by Pathfinder (N = 454)			
Project (n)	Initial attitude score	Initial problem score	Attitude change +/-	Problem change +/-
Birmingham (57)	42.1	26.1	0.63	-1.35
Durham (41)	47.4	36.2	-2.68	-3.32
Hull (104)	47.0	32.6	-2.31	-3.33
Lewes (98)	40.1	33.1	-0.31	-1.43
Ox/Bucks (57)	39.5	28.2	-2.88	-2.42
Parc (27)	42.7	33.5	-3.52	-3.35
Wandsworth (70)	42.4	34.9	-0.99	-2.58

As with our continuity measure, it is useful to look beyond the raw project results and examine different types of service. Table 5.6 shows the results, including the significance (t-test) of any differences in the average amount of change when a particular type of service is provided or not provided. Where differences are significant a correlation coefficient 'r' is included as an indicator of effect size. (The F.O.R. programme is considered twice in this table, first in comparison with all prisoners in the study who did not do F.O.R., and secondly in comparison only with those prisoners in the F.O.R. pilot prisons who did not do F.O.R..)

Table 5.6	Changes in attitudes and problems associated with types of service	
Service	Attitude change	Problem change
Prison/probation project (male) (188)	-2.65	-3.05
Prison/voluntary org. project (male) (225)	-0.28	-1.77
Significance of difference	** r = 0.156	n/s
High activity (242)	-2.44	-2.92
Low activity (212)	-0.39	-1.88
Significance of difference	** r = 0.137	n/s
With F.O.R. (all projects) (93)	-3.21	-3.64
Without F.O.R. (all projects) (361)	-1.04	-2.37
Significance of difference	** r = 0.116	n/s
With F.O.R. (F.O.R. prisons only) (93)	-3.21	-3.64
Without F.O.R. (F.O.R. prisons only) (96)	-2.13	-2.43
Significance of difference	n/s	n/s
With mentor (mentoring prisons only) (81)	-0.83	-1.90
Without mentor (mentor prisons only) (87)	-0.37	-1.91
Significance of difference	n/s	n/s

** = $p<0.01$, n/s = not significant; t-tests in column 1, X^2 in column 2.

Again the figures suggest that some types of service made more difference than others. All except mentoring show noticeable differences in the expected direction, and the differences in attitudes tend to be larger and more significant than the differences in perceived problems. The largest 'effect' is associated with the difference between probation-run and voluntary sector-run projects, which as we have seen is also associated with differences in levels of activity. The F.O.R. programme is also associated with differences in the expected direction, showing significantly greater changes in attitude when compared with all other prisoners, but when compared only with other prisoners in the F.O.R. pilot prisons the differences are smaller. This may indicate that the prisoners in the F.O.R. prisons who did not do F.O.R. were likely to be benefiting from other services to a greater extent than many prisoners in the other prisons. Within the F.O.R. pilot prisons, completion of the programme appears to be more strongly associated with higher take-up of post-release services than with major changes in attitudes or problems.

Employment after release

Unemployment among ex-prisoners is an important criminogenic factor, and the degree of success in helping offenders gain employment is a good indicator of the effectiveness of the Pathfinders. Unfortunately, reliable data on the post-release employment status of short-term prisoners (who are not on licence) has always been difficult to obtain, owing to difficulties in keeping track of their whereabouts. As noted in Chapter 4, we obtained a certain amount of information from questionnaires and interviews, but this is likely to be unrepresentative, as the respondents were predominantly those in more settled accommodation.

An attempt was made to collect some more reliable information on post-release employment by finding out which prisoners were claiming Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) three months and six months after release. This was possible only in the case of 574 prisoners whose National Insurance numbers had been recorded (there is no obvious reason to believe that these were an unrepresentative group). The resulting figures can be found in

Appendix C, Table 5. In all projects, except one, there was a decrease in the numbers claiming benefits from three to six months after release. However, there are several reasons why this cannot be regarded as clear evidence of employment status. There are a number of requirements JSA claimants must meet in addition to not having a job – for example, availability, attending interviews if required, satisfying rules about the duration of claims, and having a settled address. In all the projects the proportions known to be claiming after release are dramatically below the proportions stated to have been unemployed before sentence (see Table 4.8): the average proportion believed to be unemployed at sentence was 67 per cent, and even more expected to be unemployed on release, yet only 26 per cent of the followed-up group were claiming JSA at six months after release. It is unlikely that any services received during sentence transformed their employment prospects to this extent. What is more likely is that claiming behaviour is a very imperfect measure of employment status, particularly for a group with relatively limited access to good jobs but perhaps better access to short-term informal 'off the record' employment, and no doubt in some cases to income from offending. A much more detailed prospective study of the labour market behaviour of released prisoners would be needed to throw more light on these questions.

Diversity issues: black and Asian prisoners in the projects

Information was available on the ethnicity of most (97.4%) of the prisoners in the projects, and all but a very few of them could be categorised within the broad groups 'Black', 'Asian' (i.e. South Asian) and 'White'. These are acknowledged to be imperfect classifications but were the most useful for this study as more detailed breakdowns, such as the census classification, would have been impractical due to different recording practices and the small size of resulting subgroups for analysis. The main questions for consideration were (a) whether, once accepted on a Pathfinder project, different ethnic groups received similar services, and (b) whether access to or take-up of the project was similar for white and minority ethnic prisoners.

Equality of service

On the first question, the proportion of minority ethnic prisoners in the projects varied considerably, as already illustrated in Chapter 4. The projects in Durham, Hull and Lewes had a mainly or entirely white membership. Birmingham involved the highest proportion of Asian offenders at 11 per cent and Wandsworth had the highest black membership at 30 per cent. How this compared with the population in the project prisons is discussed further below. Once on the project, there are no significant differences between ethnic groups in the probability of receiving a 'high continuity' service or being involved in post-release contact, although Asians were slightly more likely to have post-release contact. Within the two prisons which offered mentoring, both black and Asian prisoners were slightly more likely to have a mentor than white prisoners.

The most obvious difference in services received, and the only one which is statistically significant[32], is that Asian prisoners were less likely than the average project member to receive a high input of services during sentence; however, most of the Asian prisoners were in Birmingham where recorded levels of activity were generally low, and in fact Asian prisoners had slightly more than the average input for Birmingham project members. The overall number of minority ethnic prisoners in many of the projects was so low as to make statistically significant differences unlikely to occur: for example, in the F.O.R. prisons not many black or Asian prisoners were available. Of the four Asian prisoners who joined a Pathfinder project in a prison offering F.O.R., none actually undertook the programme, and the proportion of available white prisoners who did the programme was slightly higher than the proportion of black prisoners. One possible implication is that if the F.O.R. programme is to be used wisely, its impact in prisons with a more diverse population needs to be evaluated as opportunities arise. Table 5.7 summarizes the differences:

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32. $X^2 = 12.33$, p<0.01

Table 5.7	Proportions of different ethnic groups receiving various services		
	White	Asian	Black
High continuity of service	30%	9%	28%
Any post-release contact	37%	42%	35%
High activity (3 or more 'actions')	41%	10%	40%
With mentors (mentoring prisons only)	45%	57%	52%
Doing F.O.R. (F.O.R. prisons only)	27%	0%	21%

Slight differences between ethnic groups were also apparent in some of the assessment measures used in the projects. Asian prisoners on average had slightly lower scores on most CRIME-PICS II scales and on OASys, and also showed less positive change than other groups. Black prisoners had slightly lower scores than white prisoners on all CRIME-PICS II scales; they also showed slightly greater change in self-reported problems but less change in attitudes. None of these differences was statistically significant. Table 5.8 shows the differences:

Table 5.8	Average scores on assessment instruments							
	Initial	CRIME-PICS II[33]					change	change
	OASys	G	A	V	E	P	in G	in P
White (n=730)	69.1	43.9	15.0	7.7	11.0	31.8	-1.6	-2.4
Asian (n=25)	54.7	38.8	12.2	9.1	10.4	28.0	+0.3	0.0
Black (n=67)	57.0	39.5	13.1	8.2	10.3	29.5	-0.5	-4.1

Equality of access to the projects

We were able to compare the recorded ethnicity of those prisoners who participated in the projects (i.e. at least had an action plan prepared) with the ethnic composition of the population of each of the target prisons on randomly selected days within the life of the project or shortly after. Whilst this is less satisfactory than an average for the whole period would have been, it gives some indication of whether there are major discrepancies. Table 5.9 shows the comparison. In most of the projects there are some possible signs of under-representation of minority ethnic prisoners, but these indications are in most cases slight. Exceptions to the general pattern are the projects in Ox/Bucks and Wandsworth: the former has a higher representation of black prisoners than is recorded for their catchment prisons as a whole, and the latter has a higher proportion of Asian prisoners than that recorded for the prison as a whole. The largest numbers of minority ethnic prisoners are to be found, as might be expected, in Birmingham and Wandsworth, although the proportions of minority ethnic prisoners in the projects are still exceeded by those in the host prisons (except as noted above for Asians in Wandsworth).

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33.   The meanings of the various CRIME-PICS II subscales (G, A, V, E, P) are given in Table 5.4.

Table 5.9	Proportions (%) of prisoners in the main ethnic groups					
	Pathfinder			Prison population		
	White	Asian	Black	White	Asian	Black
Birmingham	79.7	10.7	9.6	69.5	14.4	15.6
Durham	100.0	0	0	96.3	0	3.7
Hull	99.5	0	0.5	95.2	0.8	3.1
Lewes	96.1	0.6	3.4	84.4	2.5	12.0
Ox/Bucks	85.4	2.6	11.9	84.4	3.5	9.9
Parc	100.0	0	0	96.6	1.5	1.9
Wandsworth	65.7	4.3	30.0	55.0	2.3	42.3

We do not know whether these figures indicate that some groups of prisoners were less likely to volunteer for projects (perhaps seeing them as 'not for us') or whether they suggest differences in how successfully projects were promoted to different groups. Other studies (for example NACRO, 2002) have suggested that minority ethnic prisoners are under-represented in programmes, and it is noticeable that the Pathfinder project which involved the largest number of Asians (Birmingham) had an Asian staff member (though as in most other projects the proportion of Asian prisoners in the project still fell short of that in the prison as a whole). The only women's project in the study, Durham, involved an all-white population in an almost all-white prison, and no comparisons can at present be made with projects in prisons containing significant numbers of black or Asian women.[34] Overall, our findings concerning minority ethnic prisoners underline the need for continuing monitoring of their inclusion in projects and their experience of them.

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34. We have attempted at least to explore some resettlement needs of minority ethnic women prisoners by asking a black researcher connected with the Pathfinder evaluation team to conduct focus groups with minority ethnic prisoners in another women's prison. This work is still under way at the time of preparing this report.

6. Costs and cost-effectiveness

Introduction

As with other initiatives within the Home Office Crime Reduction Programme, this evaluation was designed to assess both the effectiveness and the cost effectiveness of the Pathfinders. The cost effectiveness component entailed the gathering of information from each of the projects relating to their costs. Project input costs will eventually be analysed in relation to predicted and actual rates of reconviction (of participants and comparison groups of offenders) in order to determine the relative value for money offered by each Pathfinder. In the interim, the assessment of cost effectiveness is based on the intermediate measures of output and impact described in Chapter 5. This chapter describes the comparison of Pathfinder costs with these interim measures. Costs are examined in relation to:

- the seven Pathfinder programmes individually and by type of service delivery;
- productive output of the seven Pathfinders and by type of service delivery;
- intermediate outcome measures of change in attitudes and problem perception derived from CRIME-PICS II.

We begin with an overview of the overall costs of the programmes and draw conclusions in relation to the type of delivery. The costs are then used to value productive output for each Pathfinder through a comparison of offenders receiving Pathfinder service: both pre- and post-release; and pre-release only. To achieve this, a sample of offenders was drawn from each scheme and costs estimated by first deriving unit costs for direct activity, then comparing these costs with activity forms recording work done with or on behalf of the sampled offenders. Finally, the intermediate impacts of the Pathfinders are placed in 'value for money' context by comparing the relative costs associated with changes in self-reported attitudes to crime and personal problems as indicated in CRIME-PICS II scores. Appendix F provides more details on the approach taken in costing Pathfinder activity and explains the key assumptions upon which the results are based.

Results

Table 6.1 is an analysis of expenditure for each of the prisons taking part in the resettlement project. The table shows a percentage of total project cost for each cost type (personnel, training, equipment and so on). As noted earlier in the report, the Parc project commenced approximately a year after the original six Pathfinders, so its aggregate costs should not be compared at face value with those of the other six.[35]

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35. However, on the basis of year one delivery, comparable two year costs would be around £165,000 or less than £1,700 per offender starting (£2,500 per offender taking part beyond assessment).

Table 6.1 — Percentage spend in each heading

	B'ham	Durham	Hull	Lewes	Ox/Bucks	Parc	W'worth
Project Cost (£)	273,161	308,409	301,936	235,415	266,449	96,400	208,219
Project staff (%)	47	45	70	56	72	45	55
Volunteers (%)	-	-	-	14	-	3	12
Indirect (%)	34	39	13	10	12	8	14
Total staff (%)	81	84	83	80	84	56	81
Training (%)	5	3	10	5	8	29	4
Equipment (%)	1	1	1	1	2	3	1
Premises (%)	4	7	4	5	3	1	6
Travel (%)	4	3	(0.5)	(0.5)	1	3	(0.5)
Advertising & Publicity (%)	(0.5)	(0.5)	1	(0.5)	1	1	(0.5)
Other (%)	3	1	(0.5)	3	2	6	2
Attrition rate %	35	12	3	8	9	33	18
Cost per case opened (£)	1,445	2,384	1,342	1,307	1,708	1,967	1,379
Offender taking part beyond assessment (£)	(2,221)	(2,680)	(1,385)	(1,418)	(1,876)	(2,921)	(1,679)

There is a remarkable consistency in patterns of expenditure, with the exception of Parc (where the level of central funding was much lower and where prisoners were taken on by the Pathfinder only if they planned to take the F.O.R. programme). Durham, Ox/Bucks and Hull spent marginally more on staffing than the other projects. Ox/Bucks, Hull and Parc spent more on training staff than other prisons, mainly because of the F.O.R. programme. Other differences were very small. The total cost for each prison is then divided by the number of prisoners who joined the Pathfinders initially – 'cost per case opened' – and for those who took part beyond the assessment and planning stage.

As noted earlier in the report, for a variety of reasons the attrition rate varied considerably between prisons. Attrition significantly increases the unit cost since resource is expended for no return. Hull had the highest percentage of offenders continuing with the project throughout their period in custody (97%) and Birmingham the lowest (65%). Hull also had the lowest overall cost per prisoner, followed by Lewes. The Parc project was the most expensive in these terms, because most of its 'members' attended the F.O.R. programme, coupled with the fact that all of its pre-release and post-release work was undertaken by probation officers or prison officers (at other projects some of the work was carried out by less expensive probation service officers or by volunteers). However, Durham (which had fewer cases than the male prisons) and Birmingham (owing to its high attrition rate) were also expensive in terms of unit costs.

Table 6.2 is the result of a more detailed analysis of a representative sample of cases from each prison, comparing the costs of productive[36] time in cases in which there was only pre-release contact with those which involved contact beyond the day of release (defined in Chapter 5 as 'high continuity of service').[37] The table shows that the increased cost of providing continuity of service post-release differed markedly between prisons. The probation-led programmes had the highest overall costs, but the increased cost of providing this service was considerably smaller than that incurred by the voluntary sector schemes.

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36. 'Productive time' refers to time spent by Pathfinder staff with, or on behalf of, the offender. This information was collected from case-related activity sheets completed for each offender.

37. The sample was chosen randomly from the case management files. No inclusion has been made for Parc since data were missing for both the number of F.O.R. ... A Change sessions each offender attended and the particular members of staff who delivered each session to them.

Table 6.2	Costs associated with continuity of service				
	Pre-release contact (number still members at release)		Pre- & post-release contact (high continuity of service)		Percentage increase in cost
	Number in sample (n)	Average cost (£)	Number in sample (n)	Average cost (£)	
Birmingham	18	72	14	242	+236
Durham	16	301	20	326	+ 8
Hull	16	828	9	889	+ 7
Lewes	9	251	15	439	+ 75
Ox/Bucks	15	774	9	889	+ 15
Wandsworth	21	263	17	409	+ 56

(Parc is not included due to missing data)

Table 6.3 compares the costs between programmes of achieving positive change in self-reported attitudes to crime and problem perception (the greater the negative score the better the result). In relation to attitudes, the probation-led programmes not only achieved better results, but did so much more efficiently (for less cost). Lewes prisoners showed the least change (attitude = -0.31) and incurred the highest cost per unit change (£4,216), while Birmingham had the second highest cost (£2,294) and the only negative change (Attitude = 0.63). The most successful project in both respects was Parc.

The difference between probation and voluntary-led schemes was less clear-cut in relation to changes in problem perception. Indeed, the cost of achieving change in Wandsworth was comparable with the probation-led services. This finding is, however, consistent with the earlier finding that a high level of pre-release work was carried out at Wandsworth in relation to practical resettlement problems.

Table 6.3	Intermediate outcomes – cost per change in CRIME-PICS scores: attitudes and problem perception			
Project	Change in attitude	Cost per unit change per offender in attitude (£)	Change in problem perception	Cost per unit change per offender in problem perception (£)
Birmingham	0.63	2294	-1.35	1070
Durham	-2.68	890	-3.32	718
Hull	-2.31	581	-3.33	403
Lewes	-0.31	4216	-1.43	914
Ox/Bucks	-2.88	593	-2.42	706
Parc	-3.52	559	-3.35	587
Wandsworth	-0.99	1393	-2.58	534

Finally, Table 6.4 shows that, on average, probation-led resettlement provision for male prisoners was associated with statistically significant self-reported attitude change (–2.65) at a cost of £655 per unit. Overall voluntary schemes achieved only around one-tenth of the change seen with probation-led provision and cost over seven times more. It should be remembered however that the focus of voluntary schemes was on practical support and as such we should expect them to be less cost-effective in terms of their impact on attitudinal change.

Table 6.4	Costs for changes in attitudes associated with types of service		
Service (n)	Cost (£) per offender starting	Change in attitudes	Cost per change in attitudes score (£)
'Probation-led' (male) (188)	1,735	-2.65	655
'Voluntary- led' (male) (225)	1,378	-0.28	4,921

Table 6.5 compares project costs with a number of measures discussed in Chapter 5 and above. Projects are ranked according to various performance measures (1 = best performer, 7 = worst performer). It must be stressed that the results represent an approximate (ordinal) guide only and take no account of size differences between ranked outcomes and costs. However by adding together total outcome ranking and ranking for average cost, we can get a feel for the best performing projects. The Pathfinder at Parc had the best impact on the outcome measures but also proved relatively expensive. Hull had the best aggregate score reflecting (relatively) large impact on outcomes at (relatively) little cost.

Table 6.5	Pathfinder rankings for outcome measures					
Scheme	Percentage expecting accommodation on release	Percentage expecting employment on release	Change in CRIME PICS attitude	Change in CRIME PICS problem perception	Total outcome ranking	Average cost per offender (receiving significant input) (1 = cheapest)*
Birmingham	1	3	7	7	5	5
Durham	3	7	3	3	4	6 (7)
Hull	5	4	4	2	3	1
Lewes	6	2	6	6	6	2
Ox/Bucks	2	1	2	5	2	4
Parc	3	4	1	1	1	7 (6)
Wandsworth	7	6	5	4	7	3

1 = best performer
7 = worst performer
*Figures in brackets reflect the result if Parc is costed on the basis of estimated second year provision.

Conclusion

The results of the cost effectiveness study support the main findings of the report. The Hull Pathfinder was the most expensive per case opened (and comparatively, per offender taking part beyond inception)[38] but did offer the best value-for-money in addressing problem perception. Relative to the other Pathfinders, Parc provided better value-for-money in changing offender attitudes. Overall, the probation-led schemes tended to put more resource into prisoner contact, and while three of the four spent more money per prisoner than voluntary-led schemes, they spent less per unit of intermediate outcome (change in attitudes to crime). This may however reflect the focus of the voluntary schemes upon practical resettlement problems since in the composite ranking of a number of intermediate outcomes (including issues such as employment and accommodation) the Lewes Pathfinder is the joint third (with Parc) most cost-effective performer.

38. Assuming a scaling up of Parc costs to include second year delivery

7. Conclusions and recommendations

This report has outlined a brief history of thinking and practice in relation to the 'resettlement' of short-term prisoners; provided descriptions of how the first seven Resettlement Pathfinders operated in practice; identified major obstacles they came up against during their implementation; presented profiles of the prisoners who took up their offer of services; analysed the levels of service actually delivered, both before and after release from custody; and provided some preliminary indicators of both the effectiveness and the cost-effectiveness of the different Pathfinders. In this concluding chapter, we briefly reiterate what appear to be the most important findings and draw out some of their implications for future work in this area.

Practical, organisational and partnership issues

The main practical lessons to be drawn from the experiences of project teams in delivering the Pathfinders were summarised in Chapter 3. A detailed 'process evaluation' identified a number of areas in which significant improvements were desirable. These involved principally (a) the management, staffing and training of the teams and the appropriate use of their time and skills, particularly in relation to the assessment of offenders; (b) the role of the partner prisons in facilitating the work of the Pathfinders; and (c) major deficiencies in the services available to prisoners and ex-prisoners, especially through organisations outside the criminal justice system. Problems in the first two of these areas not only handicapped the effective delivery of services, but contributed to one of the main disappointments of all the projects, namely their failure by a considerable distance to reach their target number of 400 prisoners per scheme.

We were led to conclude that the following would increase the effective organisation and delivery of future resettlement work based in prisons:

- strong professional management and leadership;
- recruitment and training of adequate numbers of staff, including where possible more seconded prison staff;
- effective, timely and less time-consuming assessment procedures, so that work with prisoners can begin promptly and is not held up by 'bottlenecks' at the beginning of the process;
- greater recognition by prison management and staff of the importance of resettlement work and a move to genuine prison/probation/voluntary sector partnership in delivering it: this includes more integration of management systems to avoid, for example, sudden transfers of prisoners on programmes;
- better facilities from which to work, including private areas where prisoners can be interviewed;
- better access for short-term prisoners to existing prison services, such as CARAT;
- effective case management from the point of assessment through to the post-release phase of intervention; and
- wherever possible ensuring continuity of contact with the same worker/mentor through pre- and post-release stages.

To these can be added a number of broader recommendations with implications not just for participants in projects and the criminal justice system, but for a range of agencies and organisations without whose co-operation major progress in the resettlement field is much more difficult:

- improved partnership working with Employment Services, Benefits Agency, local authorities and relevant voluntary/private sector agencies (perhaps through regular visits to prisons along the lines of the 'marketplace' provided at HMP Parc: obviously, this is easier if the prison is near the prisoner's home area);
- access to a wider range of suitable housing, including supported housing and drug rehabilitation centres;
- an end to the local authority practice of excluding offenders from available housing on the grounds that they are 'intentionally homeless' because of lack of local connections, rent arrears or criminal records;
- improved systems for enabling benefit claims to be prepared and processed prior to release; and
- improved employment opportunities and services for offenders not considered 'job ready' (as a result of poor skills, drug/alcohol abuse) such as the NACRO 'pre-gateway' scheme for those not deemed ready for New Deal or sustained employment (see Appendix A).

Prisoners: problems and services

Chapter 4 showed that high proportions of the prisoners joining the Pathfinders faced the kinds of problems that have been identified in numerous previous studies as typical of short-term prisoners: most commonly, problems with accommodation, drugs, employment and thinking skills. The problem afforded the highest priority by the project teams was that of accommodation (top priority in 32% of cases), followed by drugs (30%) and alcohol (10%). However, there was a clear difference between the probation-led and voluntary-led Pathfinders, in that the former were more likely to put 'thinking skills' and 'education and training' high on their list of priorities. Interestingly, too, the OASys assessments carried out in the probation-led projects tended to produce higher scores on cognitive and emotional items than was the case in the voluntary-led schemes. This is surprising, given that OASys is meant to offer a fairly 'objective' assessment, regardless of who uses it (provided, that is, the person has received appropriate training). In short, there was a clear tendency for problems to be identified, and work to be targeted, at areas in which the lead agency had particular interest or expertise.

The main services delivered inside prison included one-to-one advice and support, 'welfare' work on prisoners' behalf (such as contacting employers or housing agencies), referrals to other agencies (including CARAT inside prisons) and – in the probation-led Pathfinders – the delivery of specific programmes (mainly F.O.R.). Over half of all prisoners who progressed beyond the assessment stage were referred to another agency (most commonly for accommodation and drugs problems) although this does not necessarily mean that action was taken by the agency in respect of the problem(s) identified.

In terms of the range of services provided in custody, the probation-led projects (especially Durham and Hull) tended to be the most active, although Wandsworth also came out as particularly active in this respect.

This pattern persisted post-release in a more marked fashion, with the four probation-led projects all more successful than the voluntary-led projects in terms of the proportions of ex-prisoners contacted, and the numbers with whom meaningful work was carried out. Durham appeared to be the most successful of all in these respects, carrying out significant post-release work with 54 per cent of the women who left prison as Pathfinder members. At the same time, there were discernible patterns in terms of the characteristics of

offenders who were most likely to maintain contact: in addition to women,[39] these included older males, offenders with lower risk/need scores, and those who had completed the F.O.R. programme.

Finally, interviews with offenders in custody, and postal questionnaires completed by ex-prisoners (the latter admittedly not representative of all Pathfinder members) all suggested that the projects were viewed in a strongly positive light. Over 70 per cent of the prisoners interviewed stated that they had gained benefits from the project. Interestingly, although much of the work recorded in the case management records concerned practical help, they were more likely to name 'self-confidence', 'peace of mind' or 'having someone to talk to' as the main benefit to them. Among the relatively small group (107) contacted by the evaluators post-release, there had been a 'net gain' in terms of employment: that is, more of this group were employed some 3-6 months after release than had been employed immediately prior to being sent to prison. This is encouraging, given previous research findings that short-term imprisonment often leads to a loss of employment (though it has to be recognised that this may be an untypical group of ex-prisoners). On the other hand, there had been a small 'net loss' of 'permanent' accommodation.

Outcomes: what's promising in resettlement

In terms of outcomes, perhaps the most impressive finding has been the level of post-release contact – and of significant and 'long-term' contact – achieved by most of the Pathfinders. Project records indicate that, in this respect, they were at least five times more successful than probation services have been in the recent past in maintaining contact through 'voluntary after-care' systems.

Nevertheless, significant advance though this may be, and valuable as some of this post-release work obviously was, it still touched only small proportions of all those offenders in the Pathfinders who were originally assessed (inside prison) as facing significant problems. For example, the total of 40 who are known to have actually attended a drugs agency post-release has to be seen in relation to the 526 who were initially found to have significant drugs problems (the same can be said of the total of 76 cases where drug-related objectives were assessed as 'fully or partly achieved'). Equally, the 77 offenders known to have found housing with the direct help of the projects (or the 132 for whom accommodation-related objectives were assessed as 'fully or partly achieved'), have to be set against the 535 initially identified as having significant accommodation problems. In other words, fairly small minorities of those with serious drug or accommodation problems are known to have accessed relevant or effective services after release. In the case of drugs the most optimistic interpretation would be that about one in seven did so, and in the case of accommodation, one in four.

We emphasise that until a reconviction study of ex-prisoners from the Pathfinders has been undertaken in 2004, it will not be possible to make any definitive statements about the effectiveness of the various Pathfinder projects – or of particular styles of service delivery – in the key area of reducing re-offending. However, Chapter 5 provided an analysis of three interim outcome measures: the level of 'continuity of services' experienced by prisoners (specifically, the extent of meaningful post-release contact), 'attitude change' within custody, and changes in 'problem levels' within custody (the latter two measured by CRIME-PICS II scales G and P). The main conclusions were that prisoners in projects delivered by probation services, and prisoners who completed a motivational programme, were the most likely to experience high continuity of services and to exhibit changes in attitudes (and to a lesser extent, problems). The highest continuity rate of all was achieved by Durham, a probation-led project which had the highest levels of input and which also used a form of group programme. Unfortunately, as the only women's project it lacks comparators, so it is impossible to estimate how far the result may be related to differences between male and female prisoners. Nevertheless

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39. This may have been a consequence of good practice by the Durham Pathfinder team, rather than the sex of the offenders: in the absence of other female prisons for comparison, this cannot be determined.

it is clear that the Durham project produced very good interim outcome results, and it had a number of features in common with the more successful male projects.

The findings on two other types of service – 'high activity levels in custody' and the use of mentors, were less clear. The former may have marginally improved the chances of post-release contact with those scoring high on OASys (who are less likely to remain in touch with project staff). It also appeared that mentors had done a useful job in the otherwise poor-performing (in terms of post-release contact) Pathfinders in Wandsworth and Lewes, but there was no evidence that mentors per se offered greater prospects of maintaining contact than other kinds of staff (if anything, the indications were in the other direction, though this may be explained by factors such as the difficult catchment areas of the mentoring prisons). More conclusive findings about the impact of both these variations in service type on re-conviction may emerge from the reconviction analysis in 2004.

One apparently straightforward way to increase the proportion of prisoners remaining in touch after release would be to make such contact a requirement of some form of statutory licence or conditional liberty. The Halliday report contains suggestions (such as 'custody plus') which would have this effect (Halliday, 2001), and the introduction of Automatic Conditional Release by the 1991 Criminal Justice Act led to reasonable levels of post-release contact with offenders who would probably not have sought it on a voluntary basis (Maguire and Raynor, 1997). However, there is a balance to be struck: it would be important not to make contact requirements for short-term prisoners disproportionately burdensome or overloaded with rigorous enforcement requirements. This could result in large numbers returning to prison for non-compliance, adding to the problem of the 'revolving door'.

There were some minor variations between the Pathfinders in the pattern of expenditure but these alone cannot account for the large variation in cost per prisoner shown in Chapter 7. The attrition rate has a large effect on unit costs and the greatest cost did not necessarily reflect best value. Two of the voluntary-led projects (Wandsworth and Birmingham) had relatively high attrition rates, which increased their unit costs considerably. On the interim measures of change in attitudes to offending and self-reported problems, Parc and Hull appear to provide best value for money, although among the voluntary-led projects Wandsworth was comparable in terms of the costs of achieving improvement in problem perception.

The above findings, together with information from the case management records and interviews with project staff and offenders, allow us at least to state some plausible hypotheses about what resettlement projects should aim to provide if they are to have a reasonable chance of delivering benefits in terms of reduced re-offending. Our results so far suggest that projects should aim to provide:

- a high level of pre-release contact, including attention not only to practical problems but also to attitudes, motivation and encouraging post-release contact;
- good professional management and experienced staff geared to providing this kind of service. (Preliminary outcome measures suggest that the projects run by the probation service have been more successful than those run by voluntary organisations);
- opportunities and encouragement for offenders to undertake structured programmes which address thinking, motivation and self-management;
- access to relevant resources and opportunities, facilitating links to these as far as possible before release;
- encouragement for prisoners to focus on taking responsibility for change and coping with anticipated post-release problems;

- provision of pro-social post-release support, through continuity of contact with probation staff and/or mentors;

- full monitoring and recording of work carried out with offenders, including referrals, to facilitate evaluation and provide a check on programme integrity;

- resettlement work in female prisons should be targeted, as in male prisons, on criminogenic needs but should also be responsive to personal and social problems particular to women offenders; and

- offenders from minority ethnic backgrounds, both male and female, tend to have additional needs, and it is important to pay special attention to services for these groups.

Implicit in these recommendations is the recognition that short-term prisoners' resettlement problems are typically a combination, in varying proportions, of difficulties in access to opportunities and resources, and difficulties having their roots in the prisoner's attitudes, beliefs and habitual responses to problems. These of course may interact and reinforce each other, but the suggestion is that services which aim to address only one or the other of these are likely to be less successful than services which are capable of encompassing both. As we saw in Chapter 4 (and particularly in Table 4.7), the voluntary-led projects in our study were more likely to give priority to resource issues such as accommodation problems whilst probation-led projects were more likely also to identify a need for changes in thinking.

These tentative suggestions also appear consistent with some recent research on the process of recidivism (Zamble and Quinsey, 1997) and on desistance from offending (Maruna, 2000). Both these studies point, in very different ways, to the fact that future offending is likely to be influenced by offenders' thinking as well as their circumstances. Very briefly, Zamble and Quinsey's study of released male prisoners in Ontario found that the process of recidivism often involved practical or situational difficulties leading to negative emotion (depression, anger) and perhaps pessimism about the possibility of dealing with the situation other than by offending. This leads people to give up on their attempts to avoid offending. As Zamble and Quinsey put it, 'in the case of criminal behaviour, factors in the social environment seem influential determinants of initial delinquency for a substantial proportion of offenders . . . but habitual offending is better predicted by looking at an individual's acquired ways of reacting to common situations' (pp. 146-7). This suggests that services for released prisoners must address not only the problems they face but also the personal resources, strategies and motivation they have available for dealing with them.

Maruna's (2000) interview-based study of offenders in Liverpool suggested that these personal resources are related to the way offenders understand and account for their situation and behaviour. He describes these understandings and accounts as different kinds of narrative, some of which support continued offending and some of which support desistance. For example, those who were continuing to offend saw themselves as victims of circumstances who had little choice, while those who were desisting from offending saw themselves as having taken control of their lives and determining their own futures. In discussing the latter group Maruna describes the 'narrator's strong sense that he or she is in control of his/her destiny. Whereas active offenders in the Liverpool Desistance Study . . . seemed to have little vision of what the future might hold, desisting interviewees had a plan and were optimistic that they could make it work' (p.147). Studies such as this lend some support to the idea that resettlement services should address both opportunities and thinking: they should aim to reinforce and support plausible 'narratives of desistance'. There may even be dangers in an exclusive focus on problems of access to resources and opportunities, as if crime were nothing more than a response to environmental difficulties or restricted opportunities: this may run the risk of reinforcing recidivist 'narratives' in which offenders cast themselves as victims of circumstance. Future research should, in our opinion, at least address this possibility.

Appendix A. Pathfinder descriptions

This appendix provides short summaries of the main organisational features of each of the seven Pathfinder projects and their systems for delivering pre-release and post-release resettlement work. Based on interviews with project managers and staff, each summary also looks briefly at the types of work undertaken, either directly by project staff or through referral to outside agencies, and the main problems encountered in the course of the pilots.

HMP Birmingham/NACRO

Objectives and general approach

The National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO) has historically taken a strong interest in the after-care of prisoners. Their bid to pilot a resettlement Pathfinder stated that they would target 'those areas of practical concern that research suggests contribute to the increased risk of re-offending'. This was to be done through 'the development of a network of contacts with agencies, organisations and individuals in the prison catchment area that will facilitate the smooth access of prisoners to community-based resource'. NACRO considered that they were well placed to provide this service in view of their experience in delivering practical help and support to ex-prisoners over a number of years and their existing network of resources (chiefly in relation to accommodation and employment) in the West Midlands.

Management and staffing

The NACRO Area Manager had responsibility for operational management of the project. Two project workers undertook most of the resettlement work, one working almost exclusively pre-release, the other working primarily post-release, both working full-time. It was initially envisaged that four other NACRO workers would assist post-release but problems in maintaining contact with offenders meant that their input was rarely needed. A full-time administrative worker, based within the prison, assisted the project team.

NACRO emphasised the importance of strong links with prison staff, the Winston Green probation team and the prison education department. It was pointed out in their application to run the Pathfinder that the NACRO centre in Birmingham had provided a service to Birmingham prison for many years. NACRO's Prison Development Manager (a member of the management team) suggested however that the project would have benefited from a higher level of commitment and support from prison managers. The prison's 'biggest and only priority' had been to reduce overcrowding, and their transfer-out policy had serious repercussions for the Pathfinder.

Pre-release provision

Wherever possible, OASys assessments informed action plans drawn up with offenders. In the absence of an OASys assessment plans were completed on the basis of informal conversations with offenders.

It was initially envisaged by the NACRO team that most of the practical resettlement work would be conducted post-release and that there was little that could be achieved whilst the participants were in the Birmingham prison. Even though the pre-release worker acknowledged the importance of early intervention in custody, especially in relation to accommodation and benefit applications, emphasis was placed on post-release referral to NACRO's network of community links. According to the project manager, pre-release meetings between prisoners and outside agency workers were not a regular feature of the project, largely because of the difficulties involved in bringing agency workers into Birmingham prison other than through pre-arranged one-to-one visits which had to be booked some days in advance.

Accommodation: The project team considered themselves 'lucky in comparison to other Pathfinders because there is accommodation here'. The resettlement workers helped prisoners to find housing by making applications to the local authority, direct access hostels, and supported housing schemes. They also encouraged prisoners to deal with their rent arrears and helped with housing benefit claims.

Substance misuse: The project referred prisoners with drug problems to the prison CARAT team, although the resettlement workers had reservations about the service provided, believing that CARAT was unable to meet the high demand for assistance from prisoners in general and did not prioritise offenders serving short-sentences.

Education, training and employment: NACRO's report to the Pathfinder Project Board in November 2000 stated:

> 'It has become clear from the work so far that many prisoners who access the service have a multiplicity of needs and that few are ready for employment. This is partly because they fall below the national average in terms of basic skills and also because they have no history of regular attendance at work.'

Difficulties were experienced in accessing information from the prisons concerning offenders' education and training needs as apparently the education department did not allow the team access to their assessments. Even if such information was available, places on courses offered in Winson Green were in such short supply that it was thought unlikely that the project would be able to secure places for participants.

Similarly, the pre-release worker considered that nothing could be done in relation to employment needs pre-release. NACRO arranged for special visits from an employment and placement officer 'on a couple of occasions' but 'requests for employment help that we have had are very few and far between'. It was considered that most offenders had insufficient skills to qualify them for the majority of jobs available and few were sufficiently motivated to obtain the requisite skills on release: 'the biggest difficulty that we have had working in Birmingham is that there is nothing done with them whilst they are in prison to motivate them to want to do anything when they come out.' Offenders were told about NACRO's 'Pre-Gateway Programme' whilst in prison, and encouraged to attend on release. This programme is intended to provide a stepping stone between prison and eventual employment, offering advice, guidance, and basic skills support to all ex-prisoners returning or relocating to Birmingham, including Pathfinder participants.

Motivational work: NACRO did not provide structured motivational work with offenders but the resettlement workers were expected to use the techniques learned during the motivational interviewing training when working with offenders. The post-release worker considered, however, that the participants lacked self-motivation and 'feel that they are doing something by saying yes they want the help, and it is us that has to carry the rest of it'. Indeed, some were 'dead lazy'. The project manager agreed that prisoners who attended

the Pathfinder 'were not motivated to do anything when they come out and it is very difficult to get their motivation going'.

The transition to the community

According to the project manager 'it is probably important that it is a different person' providing the pre-release and post-release support 'so that [the offender] does not get too dependent on one person'. Thus, responsibility for a case was usually transferred from the pre-release worker to the post-release worker on release. If possible the post-release worker would meet with the offender twice before his release but at the busiest times only one pre-release meeting was achieved and early release on Home Detention Curfew (HDC) could mean that no contact was made pre-release.

Post-release provision

The project manager was keen that the post-release workers should meet offenders at the prison gate and saw this as 'an integral part of a resettlement package' which although labour intensive 'can make a lot of difference'. According to the post-release worker she 'often picked people up at the gate and [took] them to the benefits agency, job centres, GPs, accommodation – all the practical community links'.

The project specification stated that weekly contact was to be offered following release, although it was expected that this would vary according to the level of need and the length of time since release. In practice the majority of project participants did not maintain contact with the Pathfinder post-release even where there was an initial meeting on discharge from the prison (see Chapter 4). Attempts were made to contact offenders through letters and phone calls, but with little success:

> 'I would always write to them, if I had a phone number I would be making contact by phone. So a lot of the work was chasing up, constant writing to people, which is just a complete waste of time when people are not interested.'

The project manager noted a lack of services for offenders wishing to address their drug misuse on release, and suggested that much of what does exist is restricted to drug-users between the ages of 16 and 25. The post-release worker had 'on several occasions taken people to the local drop-in centres' where they could 'have a cup of tea and get some information' but the waiting lists for more structured assistance, such as rehabilitation and counselling, were long.

Durham (Low Newton)/Probation Service

Objectives and general approach

From April 1998 Low Newton became an exclusively female establishment with an operational capacity of 250 prisoners. As described in Durham Probation Service's bid to provide a resettlement programme at Low Newton, the model is one of '… a dedicated team based partly inside and partly outside Low Newton that offers a seamless programme for women identified for the project'. Existing provision for women serving short-sentences was seen as un-coordinated and not based on any assessment of need. Research indicates that different, or additional criminogenic needs may exist for women offenders relating to physical and mental health, histories of physical and sexual abuse and current relationships with male partners who are abusive or exploitative (Howden-Windell and Clark, 1999). Aware of this literature, the project team sought to provide an integrated resettlement programme which addressed the multiple, often inter-related, problems associated with female offending.

From the start, it was envisaged that the programme of intervention would include work on 'immediate practical needs'. For those women assessed as having cognitive deficits a programme would be offered which also tackled thinking and attitudes underpinning criminal behaviour, problems of low self-esteem, poor communication skills, difficulties in current relationships (including domestic violence) and mental health problems.

As stated in the introduction to the project manual, its purpose was:

> '… to attempt to break the cycle of offending and help women resettle in their communities with knowledge of how to improve their situation, motivated to make the necessary changes with a pro-social network of support.'

Emphasis was placed upon early assessment and commencement of resettlement work. This was seen as essential with short-sentence prisoners in order to carry out as much work as possible in readiness for release. Early intervention also enabled the community-based members of the team to begin to build a rapport with the prisoners before their release. The resettlement team followed a modular programme (see below), which was intended to be flexible and responsive to the particular needs of the individual. The modules were designed to be delivered in a group setting in custody or on a one-to-one basis following release.

Staffing

As one of the three probation service areas covered by the Pathfinder, Durham Probation Service took the lead in designing the project in consultation with the prison Governor. The project was managed by a senior probation officer, who provided dedicated line management, and was staffed initially by a prison based probation service officer (PSO) and three community integration officers (CIOs) at PSO equivalent. At a later stage the number of CIOs was reduced to two in view of the low numbers of prisoners joining the project. The prison provided administrative support and dedicated office space within the prison.

Pre-release intervention

On the basis of an OASys assessment, a compact was drawn up with the offender which detailed: needs identified (those areas in which the offender scored 'over the line' on one of the criminogenic needs or where the need was apparent from self-assessment or interview); the objectives agreed in relation to each need; who is to provide the intervention; and where it is to take place.

A notable feature of the Low Newton Pathfinder was the Board Meeting, often chaired by a senior member of the prison staff, the purpose of which was to formalise the objectives and the course of action set out in the compact and agree with the offender how the work should be delivered. Although informal in approach, the Board Meeting was seen as providing a valuable opportunity for the project team to secure a commitment from the offender to what was essentially a voluntary agreement and to express any concerns she may have about the content of the compact.

The modular approach

The seven modules available to participants addressed a range of dynamic (i.e changeable) offending-related problems. Each module typically involved three or four sessions lasting approximately two hours. No module took more than eight hours to complete. The content of each module was designed by the resettlement team with input from members of the Northumbria Probation Service regarding existing courses and programmes

for offenders. Depending on the areas of need identified in the initial assessment, participants were offered modules on: Alcohol; Employability; Finances; Interpersonal skills; Parenting; and Use of Time. All of the modules were designed to encourage the use of cognitive skills, such as problem-solving, and all emphasised the connection between the problem focused upon in the module and offending.

The project manual also provided guidance on five Strategic Responses to resettlement needs designed to operate through work in partnership with existing service providers based either in prison (such as a drug project entitled Compass) or in the community (such as Norcare, a provider of supported accommodation). The strategies encompassed: Accommodation; Domestic violence; Drug misuse; Education; and Mental Health. As with the modules, the decision as to which strategic responses were appropriate was determined at the assessment stage.

As with other Pathfinder projects, the three main offending-related problems highlighted in the project manual were in relation to drugs, accommodation and education/employment.

Accommodation: Prior to release the project team ensured that those eligible for housing benefits received advice and help in completing relevant application forms, either directly or through referral to the one of three housing officers at Low Newton with responsibility for housing benefits advice and help in maintaining accommodation. As the existing service was 'a little haphazard' advice on housing benefits was incorporated into the Finance module. For women with no accommodation the CIOs were expected to build on existing providers (such as Norcare) as well as supported accommodation or residential rehabilitation for each geographical area covered by the Pathfinder. Referral and liaison with external agencies began as soon as the contract had been signed by the offender.

Drug misuse: In Low Newton work on drug abuse was carried out by Compass, following the CARAT programme. Where drug abuse was identified in the OASys assessment the team worked closely with Compass to ensure that the CARAT programme was accessed where appropriate and to arrange for any community-based follow-up work agreed with the offender. Compass carried out their own assessment of the level of abuse and the degree of intervention required for the woman to come off drugs and remain clean.

Education, training and employment: The prison education department provided an initial assessment of the participant's level of literacy and numeracy. Any education or training requirements identified in discussion with the offender were recorded in the prisoner compact and pre-release input was provided by the education department. The resettlement team arranged appointments directly with local colleges/training centres. The employment module was designed to assist the participants in seeking employment following release, for example by developing skills in CV preparation. Team members also made contact prior to release with Job Centres.

Motivational work: A preparation module (delivered in two sessions, each of two hours duration) was completed by all participants. The module used motivational interviewing skills to encourage motivation to engage with the programme, to look at the reasons for offending, to think about change and to design a set of realistic objectives. Members of staff who delivered the module had attended training in motivational interviewing and pro-social modelling.

The transition to the community

In the week immediately before release the CIO and the offender met to review work carried out under the compact, arrange an appointment within seven days of release and agree any further work which needed to be done post-release, including any modules which could not be completed in custody. Participants were reminded of any appointments made on their behalf with statutory or voluntary agencies.

In an early report on the project the project manager observed that 'with clearly formulated objectives at the start of the intervention the review of progress against objectives is a straightforward process'. He also commented that 'it has become increasingly apparent that motivation of the women is best achieved when the same worker commences the work in the prison and continues to deliver in the community. The relationship which is developed between the CIO and the women is valued by them and offers a good pro-social model'. The team also considered that their systems for achieving a seamless transition worked well. As the project put it: 'As probation officers we're used to keeping case management records and have good systems for linking pre- and post-release work.'

The CIO meeting with the offender took place within seven days of release, often on the day of release if immediate help was needed in relation to accommodation.

Post-release provision

In addition to practical tasks, such as obtaining accommodation or securing a place in a drug rehabilitation unit, CIOs put effort into relapse prevention and helping participants put into practice the skills they had begun to acquire in the course of the pre-release modular work. Inability to access community resources for several was common, however, and was viewed as 'very damaging to the women concerned' especially where motivation to remain drug-free needed to be sustained. One CIO observed that it was very disheartening when considerable effort had been made to access drug services only to find that the drug user had relapsed before the drug agency worker contacted her.

Over the lifetime of the project the Pathfinder team developed a range of links with statutory and voluntary agencies in the relevant probation areas, including drug rehabilitation/counselling, job linkage/job centres, child care support services and local colleges. Some of these were an expansion of existing contacts, but many new links were made, especially in the areas outside County Durham.

HMP Hull/Humberside Probation Service

Objectives and general approach

The project team described the main aim of this project as:

> '... to encourage inmates to accept responsibility for their own futures and to seek out and access resources made available via Pathfinder with the objective of reducing the risk of reoffending.'

Providing practical help with resettlement problems was considered crucial but insufficient. According to the project co-ordinator:

> 'I don't think it helps at all just providing a flat, or finding employment, or a training course for someone ... You need to look at peoples' attitude[s] and behaviour, teach them about victims, and the consequences of their offending.'

The approach taken by the team was thus one of combining practical assistance with work specifically designed to impact upon offending behaviour delivered as part of a group work programme or where this was not possible, on a one-to-one basis.

Management and staffing

Overall supervision of the project was undertaken by a senior probation officer. Day-to-day management and co-ordination was the responsibility of a probation officer who worked on the Pathfinder full-time. Other members of the team were a prison officer (full-time), a probation service officer (full-time), a probation service officer/probation officer (half-time), and a clerical officer (half-time)[40].

The project team considered that they had been 'well supported' by the prison. The prison Governor described the project as being 'invaluable'. In his view:

> 'The project fits in … it is not just seen as a tag-on, operating in isolation. The line management of it goes down through the management chain, through the head of resettlement who reports to me, and down to the team.'

Prison/project integration was further enhanced by the fact that the team was based inside the prison. Although there were some areas in relation to which the project team would have liked more support (see Chapter 3), the relationship between the prison and the project was generally positive.

Pre-release intervention

In the case of offenders attending the F.O.R. programme, the action plan drawn up on the basis of an OASys assessment highlighted pressing welfare needs that required urgent attention. Participants were expected to identify other personal goals and targets in the course of the programme. In practice all three resettlement teams delivering F.O.R. experienced difficulty with this two-stage approach. At Hull the senior project worker preferred to record and act upon offending-related problems as soon as these became apparent rather than wait until they emerged in the offender's 'personal agenda for change'.

The Pathfinder team developed a range of pre-release services and improved contacts with 'in-house' provision. Referrals were made to several existing services within the prison including CARAT, a drug awareness course, and the prison education department. The team also worked closely with a charitable community-based organisation, Humbercare. A designated Humbercare worker was funded to spend two and a half days each week working on the project pre- and post-release to provide help and advice in relation to accommodation, training and employment. Workers from other community-based organisations, such as the Alcohol Advisory Service, and a group providing help and support for Black and Asian prisoners, made occasional visits to the prison but were not a regular feature of the project.

Accommodation: New project participants with housing needs were given an appointment to see the Humbercare worker on his next visit to the prison. He helped those who would otherwise have been homeless on release to find accommodation, made referrals to a range of accommodation providers and assisted some offenders in their efforts to retain existing accommodation and deal with rent arrears.

Substance abuse: The project team referred those with drug problems to the CARAT team, who saw prisoners 'perhaps once following our referral'. It was expected that CARAT would refer project participants to outside

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41. The people filling these three posts changed several times over the course of the project.

agencies for help and support post-release. As noted in Chapter 3 however, project staff were not always satisfied with CARAT efforts to link prisoners into community-based service provision and as a consequence they negotiated with COMPASS, the main post-release service provider in the Hull area, to accept referrals directly.

Prisoners wishing to address alcohol problems were referred to the prison-based Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) team. The community-based Alcohol Advisory Service also agreed to see participants pre-release, although as noted above, they did not visit the prison on a regular basis.

Education, training and employment: Project participants wanting help with education, training or employment were referred to the Humbercare worker who offered guidance on the various options available and assisted with applications. The project team could also arrange day release to attend interviews, although there was apparently little call for this. Work placements were available in the prison with NVQ accreditation. The prison Education Department provided various courses that were open to project participants.

Motivational work: The F.O.R. … A Change programme was introduced at Hull in June 2000, and was delivered by the Pathfinder staff. In theory it was open to all project participants but time constraints, staffing problems, and prison rules prevented some eligible offenders from attending[41]. There is also evidence to suggest that a minority of eligible prisoners, who were thought likely to struggle with the amount of reading and writing involved, were dissuaded from attending.

Where participants in the Pathfinder did not attend F.O.R. an attempt was made to provide some offence-focused and motivational work on an individual basis with staff trained in motivational interviewing. According to the project team, 'this one-to-one work is undertaken on the wing and can involve victim awareness, self control, self-management, raising responsibility and so forth'.

The transition to the community

Pre-release review meetings were held with project participants, at which project workers followed motivational interviewing principles 'to encourage continuation of project on release' and an 'acknowledgement of achievements to date'. The work to be done post-release and the involvement of other service providers, was also discussed. At these meetings prisoners were given a personal dossier, or 'passport', which included contact telephone numbers for service providers and details of any forthcoming appointments they had agreed to attend. It reminded them that they had agreed to maintain contact with the project on release and stated that 'your programme of work was based on your individual needs and so it is in your interests to see the programme through'.

Post-release provision

The project team held a regular Friday surgery at the Hull probation office. Appointments were made for the first Friday after release. Contact could also be made by telephone or letter for those ex-prisoners successfully resettled into employment. The Humberside worker also held a weekly surgery at the probation office and would see up to six ex-prisoners a week. Ex-prisoners who did not keep appointments were sent second or third appointments and given opportunities to telephone or to write but once it became clear no contact was likely the case was closed.

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41.   Prisoners deemed at risk of harm from other inmates, such as sex offenders, are held separately on what is commonly referred to as the 'vulnerable wing'. Prison rules prevent such prisoners from coming into contact with the rest of the prison population.

The emphasis during the post-release phase was upon practical resettlement work and referral to community-based service providers where necessary. Offenders were praised if they did attend appointments and for any progress they had made. Those who had been on the F.O.R. programme were encouraged to apply the programme learning to everyday situations.

HMP Lewes/Crime Reduction Initiatives (CRI)[42]

Objectives and general approach

CRI describe their purpose thus:

> 'CRI is an independent charity whose purpose is to enable people to adopt and sustain a stable, crime-free life style, through community-based initiatives and supportive housing, and to improve the lives of those affected by offending and substance misuse. CRI is dedicated to developing and delivering effective preventative and rehabilitative services in partnership with other voluntary organisations, contributing to public safety by preventing crime and alleviating its worst effects, and providing the opportunity for people to play a full and legitimate part in the life of their community.'[43]

In their bid to run a resettlement Pathfinder project CRI emphasised their experience in working with released prisoners with a range of criminogenic needs. They aimed to utilise this experience and their existing portfolio of service and referral contacts to provide project participants with 'practical help and support to tackle problems relating to offending, both pre-release and in the community'[44]. CRI also thought it important to challenge offenders' negative attitudes and behaviour. In the words of the project manager, 'resettlement is also about trying to affect their thought processes, their attitudes and values, improving life skills and thinking skills'.

Management and staffing

The project was managed by a member of CRI (one day a week), who was based at the organisation's head office. The project team comprised: a senior project worker from CRI (full-time), two prison officers who together provided the equivalent of one full-time officer on the project, a part-time administrator, and for the last 12 months, a part-time resettlement worker.

CRI's work in HMP Lewes pre-dates the Pathfinder project, which may have contributed to the good relationship that existed between the project team and the prison. The project enjoyed the full support of prison staff at all levels from the outset, so much so that CRI described the project as being 'run in partnership with Lewes prison'. Prison/project integration was further assisted by the inclusion of two prison officers on the project team and by the team being based inside the prison. The close working relationship and the commitment from senior management in HMP Lewes ensured rapid pick-up and engagement of eligible prisoners.

Pre-release intervention

CRI emphasised the importance of clearly specified and achievable action plans, jointly agreed with offenders, followed by active case management to ensure that targets were met. The senior project worker worked with the prisoner to devise an action plan. He began by going through the completed OASys assessment and pointing out where the individual had scored 'over the line' so that he might recognise, and consider addressing, the problems that he faced:

42. At the time of their initial tender bid, CRI were known as SARO. For the sake of consistency, the organisation that ran the Lewes Pathfinder project will be referred to as CRI throughout.
43. Taken from Crime Reduction Initiatives, an information leaflet produced by CRI.
44. Taken from Sussex Pathfinder Project, an information leaflet produced by CRI.

> 'It is about them identifying their needs and where they want to get to, and I use the OASys to do that, but it is in agreement with the inmates. So I am not telling them what they need. What I am doing is opening up the dialogue, so they are a part of it.'

The project team endeavoured to work closely with service providers within the prison, and in an early report to the Pathfinder Project Board stated that 'we are able to link prisoners into in-house support in HMP Lewes, such as CARAT, the drug-free wing and landing, education and healthcare'. Contact was made with the Race Equality Council on behalf of minority ethnic offenders who joined the project. One-to-one counselling both pre-release and post-release was obtained at no cost to the project from Mankind, an organisation which provides support for men who have been sexually abused or assaulted. Pre-release meetings between prisoners and community-based service providers were not, however, a regular feature of the project as most agencies with whom the team had contact required payment for their services.

Accommodation: Securing suitable accommodation was seen as crucial as 'prisoners who are housed adequately, particularly where there is a degree of support, are more likely to achieve a stable lifestyle, including employment and abstinence'. Referrals were made to community-based service providers, including local hostels, CRI housing and the YMCA, but shortages of suitable accommodation severely hampered the team's efforts.

Substance abuse: Offenders wishing to address their substance misuse were referred to the CARAT team. It was intended that the project and CARAT would then work together to access the necessary services but in order to speed up the process the senior project worker did much of the work in person. He described the process of trying to secure help in this area for prisoners as follows:

> 'I would find out what the clients were prepared to do – would that be one-to-one counselling, could they go to a residential placement, would they be prepared to go to a day programme. Then we give them the leaflets, show them what it is about, make a referral to the agency, apply for funding, and if by some miracle these come together … before they are released hopefully they will go to rehab.'

Efforts were also made to provide help with alcohol misuse through referral to the prison AA team.

Education, training, and employment: The project team referred offenders to the prison education department for help with education and training, for example in relation to basic skills, IT, life skills, DIY, drugs and alcohol awareness, returning to work, and healthy relations. The senior project worker also discussed training opportunities with prisoners, providing them with college brochures where relevant. Work placements were available within the prison, with NVQ accreditation.

Motivational work: The senior project worker and the prison officers on the team were trained in motivational interviewing techniques and used these skills to motivate project participants to recognise and address their problems. Keeping the prisoner informed of progress was deemed essential to maintaining motivation: '…keeping them updated on issues, funding bids and housing requests and writing them notes to say what is going on so that they are always engaged.' Volunteer mentors also played a key role in sustaining participants' motivation.

The volunteer mentors

From the outset the involvement of volunteer mentors, provided and trained by CRI, was seen as central to the project. Some were ex-offenders, keen to provide the help and support that they would have liked when they were in prison while others were using the mentoring to obtain work experience relevant to their chosen career, for example as counsellors. All the mentors attended a two-day induction course run by CRI, and were encouraged to attend further courses led by CRI which covered issues such as drug abuse, claiming benefits, motivational interviewing, basic literacy skills, goal setting, and pro-social modelling. The senior project worker, with whom they met regularly, supervised their work.

Project participants were offered the support of a mentor at the time of writing the action plan. It was originally intended that mentors and clients would meet once pre-release, and thereafter in the community. It was later decided to increase the amount of pre-release contact, on the grounds that 'the more time available [for the mentor and their client] to establish pre-release contact, the more effective post-release contact can be maintained'. The mentors also recognised the benefits of increased pre-release contact. One felt that increased contact was necessary 'because in a few weeks they can go through the initial enthusiasm, and then withdraw … and then … come back to thinking "well maybe", and while you still have them you can work through the different stages'. Another noted that 'if they just see you once, and they are close to release … it is easier for them to say "I can't be bothered", because they have not really got to know you'.

Mentors provided practical help and advice, for example by helping individuals to complete forms or write their CV, contacting service providers and negotiating with landlords. They also played a supportive and motivating role, attempting to build self-esteem 'which is usually at rock-bottom', and 'trying to make them aware that they can still make something of themselves and build a better life'.

The transition to the community

At the pre-release review, conducted by the senior project worker or a mentor, checks were done to ensure that all the necessary post-release appointments with service providers were in place. The times and dates of these meetings were confirmed with the offender, as were the details of their first post-release appointment with their mentor. The senior project worker emphasised the importance of sharing information with agencies prior to release in order that they could provide the service that best suited the individual's particular needs. As noted in Chapter 3, however, major gaps in post-release provision, in particular in relation to accommodation and drug misuse, impeded this transition.

Post-release provision

Mentors were willing to meet offenders on the day of release, perhaps accompanying them to their accommodation or to a meeting with a service provider. Mentors continued to provide practical help for those in contact whilst also supporting the offenders' efforts to desist from re-offending. Although it was intended that contact would cease three months after release, mentors were happy for it to continue beyond this point if necessary.

The project referred participants to a wide range of community-based agencies for help and support post-release. These included: housing providers such as the YMCA; CRI housing; the local council; substance misuse help groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous; employment services such as New Deal; relationship counsellors; and mental health care workers.

HMP Woodhill[45]/Oxford & Buckinghamshire Probation Service

Objectives/general approach

In a report to the Pathfinder Project Board, the project team explained the need to combine practical resettlement work with work designed to address offending behaviour:

'This group of offenders do require significant input focusing on specific aspects of their offending and it is not simply a matter of linking them to community based resettlement providers e.g. accommodation and employment. They are, without doubt, a group who will fail to resettle successfully unless skilled work is undertaken to help them tackle their offending.'[46]

The project thus sought to reduce offending by helping prisoners to develop 'more socially acceptable attitudes and behaviour' and by 'tackling and reducing practical problems associated with offending and resettlement'.

Management and staffing

The Pathfinder was managed by a senior probation officer who spent one day a week working on the project. At the outset a probation officer and a probation service officer were responsible for the assessments and resettlement work. The introduction of the F.O.R. ... A Change programme, and the demands of assessment and monitoring created resource pressure which resulted in the appointment of an additional full-time probation officer in January 2001. The team was assisted by a full-time administrative assistant, and from February 2001 by two prison officers who helped to deliver the F.O.R. ... A Change programme.

With the exception of the administrative assistant, the project team was based in probation service offices in Milton Keynes. According to the team their work in the prison was greatly assisted by the senior prison officer in charge of the prison resettlement unit. He described his role thus:

'I make sure that people are fully aware that they cannot cancel this because of the importance of the work that they are doing. In the past it would have been looked upon as two prison officers who are doing something that can be cancelled to bring them back [to do 'prison work']. I can assist by promoting the project within my rank, and above, to press home how important it is that we keep this project working, and keep the two officers.'

The team did not always enjoy the same degree of support from prison management staff, however. The project manager suggested that a high turnover amongst middle and senior prison management staff may have contributed to the apparent lack of consistency amongst prison Governors in the status accorded to the Pathfinder.

Pre-release intervention

Action plans were based on the information gained through the OASys assessment or when OASys was not completed 'on the basis of professional judgement'. As noted in the summary account of the Hull project, F.O.R. participants had the opportunity to add to their initial action plan, detailing any new objectives set, or action to be taken, as a result of attending the programme.

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45. It was originally intended that the project team would work with prisoners in both HMPs Woodhill and Springhill. Practical constraints were such that only 11 of the 157 prisoners on this project were held at Springhill (7%). The FOR a Change programme was delivered there once, to four prisoners, only two of whom were included in the Pathfinder project.
46. Report to the Pathfinder Project Board, November 2000.

The project team utilised their existing contacts and developed new links with prison and community-based service providers to access practical resettlement help pre-release, in particular in relation to accommodation, education, training and employment.

Accommodation: The Pathfinder project contributed to the cost of employing a housing officer who worked for the charitable organisation Shelter. He was to undertake one-to-one work with prisoners, for example in securing accommodation and addressing problems associated with rent arrears. The project team was not satisfied with the service provided, however, and did much of the work themselves until the housing officer was replaced. The team had good links with various housing associations but as indicated in Chapter 3, the shortage of suitable accommodation severely constrained this aspect of their resettlement work.

Substance abuse: It was originally envisaged that the project team would work closely with the prison CARAT, but their focus on longer-term prisoners, alongside practical constraints, meant that joint working with drug-using participants was not achieved. The team initially enjoyed the help and support of a substance misuse practitioner 'who would go and assess and be very proactive in setting up community work in tandem with us', but she left and was not replaced. Thus, little work was done to address drug problems in prison, although staff did make arrangements for participants to meet with drugs workers on release.

Project participants wishing to address their alcohol abuse could, in principle, work with the prison-based AA team, receive help from the Milton Keynes Drug and Alcohol Support Services (MKDASS), or attend one of several substance misuse courses pre-release. According to the project team, however, the reality was somewhat different:

> 'There is very little provision for heavy alcohol users, and what there is tends to be knitted into the drugs work, and that in itself is inaccessible so we tend to not be able to push people through for that.'

Education, training and employment: The project team had a good relationship with the careers advisor in the prison, and regularly referred project participants to him for advice on training and employment. Literature produced by the Pathfinder suggested that a range of education courses were available within the prison. According to project staff, however, the short time frame coupled with a high demand for places meant that few project participants were able to attend.

Motivational work: Practical constraints meant that delivery of the F.O.R. ... A Change programme did not begin in HMP Woodhill until February 2001. Two prison officers and the probation officers on the project team were involved in delivery. When attendance at F.O.R. was not possible, motivational work was often undertaken on an individual basis.

The transition to the community

Project workers conducted a pre-release review at which prisoners were given an appointment to see a member of the Pathfinder team shortly after release. Post-release appointments with other agencies were also arranged pre-release wherever possible. Some agencies would not accept referrals from the Pathfinder (such as AA and some local counselling services) insisting on self-referrals in the belief that contact was more likely to be maintained with clients who were sufficiently motivated to make the first approach.

Post-release work with offenders

Post-release work by the project team and agency workers focused on addressing practical needs. Arrangements were made by the Pathfinder to enable participants wanting help from the drugs agency CDAK to 'jump the queue' for services and receive help immediately upon release, whilst self-referring service users had to wait for up to three months. Several local housing associations were supportive but the severe shortage of suitable accommodation in Milton Keynes hampered the project's efforts.

Project workers did not stick rigidly to the three-month limit on post-release contact and were prepared to work with offenders for longer if there was a clear need and desire on the part of the offender for continued support. In the words of one project worker:

> 'Some people I have seen twice a week … there is a housing problem chappie who I have seen every day this week. But it was twice the week when he first came out, three times last week, a couple of times the week before that. Then other people are quite happy to discuss things one week, then go away for a fortnight and work on it.'

The team's approach was seen as 'pulling back to the original idea of the individually tailored package of services designed to meet individual needs'.

HMP Parc/South Wales Probation Area

Objectives and general approach

As explained in Chapter 3, the resettlement Pathfinder initiative was extended to HMP Parc and South Wales Probation Service in order to boost the number of short-sentence prisoners attending the F.O.R. programme. The throughcare manager (a senior probation officer) with responsibility for the delivery of F.O.R. at Parc explained that she and colleagues took the opportunity to run the programme for a number of reasons. It was seen as a way of 'becoming tuned in to developments around the corner', namely the Prison Service resettlement KPI and the possibility that sentences of less than twelve months will in future involve a period of statutory supervision in the community. The SPO also commented that 'on top of all that, we weren't doing anything at Parc for short-termers'. An attraction of the F.O.R. programme was that it combined work on offending behaviour and on the full range of practical problems which prisoners face on release from prison:

> 'We needed something to kick-start resettlement work with these offenders and this programme has provided it. Not only is it work for short-term prisoners it links with the work of the programmes department.'

Management and staffing

The resettlement programme was provided by the Programmes Unit at Parc prison. The programme was managed by an SPO based at Parc who had responsibility for throughcare and programme development. Three members of the Unit (prison custody officers) and one seconded probation officer were trained to act as tutors on the F.O.R. programme. The South Wales probation area nominated three probation officers to provide post-release support. With a maximum of 10 offenders attending each F.O.R. programme staffing levels were considered to be sufficient.

Senior management commitment within the prison was seen by the throughcare manager as an important factor contributing to the smooth running of the programme. The support of the Director of HMP Parc and Head of Sentence Management and Programmes meant that participants were not taken off for any reason other than disciplinary problems or HDC. The F.O.R. programme was not given any less priority than other offending behaviour programmes provided at Parc: 'There is a tremendous commitment from the Director. He comes over to give out certificates at the end of the programme, he knows about it and sees it as important even though it hasn't been accredited.'

Joint prison/probation meetings were held regularly. These were viewed as an important way of ensuring ownership of the programme by senior management and providing a mechanism for raising and addressing problems at senior level as and when they arose. Prison/probation collaboration was also encouraged at the working level, with prison custody officers sharing the post-release work (including visits to participants in the community) and having access to probation offices and partnership referral processes.

Pre-release intervention

As in the case of offenders who attended the F.O.R. programme at Hull and Woodhill, individual action plans were drawn up in relation to problems identified in the OASys assessment. These plans could be altered or expanded as a result of the offender's attendance at F.O.R. since the programme was designed to encourage active participation in identifying key problems and setting realistic goals.

The main form of intervention for participants in the resettlement initiative at Parc was the 12 session F.O.R. programme, delivered according to the programme manual. At Parc a pre-F.O.R. session was held in order to provide prisoners with an opportunity to meet each other and their tutors, to discuss any perceived problems, establish ground rules and ensure that all who volunteered were willing to proceed. In session seven participants were interviewed individually in order to consolidate their personal action plans and prepare for session 12 (referred to as the 'marketplace' session), at which they had an opportunity to obtain information from, and make appointments with, a range of statutory and voluntary agencies. In addition to outside agencies, the 'marketplace' session was attended by representatives of HMP Parc Education Department, housing advisors, drug counsellors and CARAT. The network of community agencies to which the project could refer offenders expanded over the year. As one project worker explained: 'We try and make sure that everyone leaves the marketplace with a number of appointments which are relevant to them, be that drugs or whatever. Just to make it real for them.'

Where OASys or pre-F.O.R. meetings with offenders revealed urgent problems these would be tackled immediately. Once again, lack of suitable accommodation, unemployment and substance abuse were seen as the main problem areas requiring early intervention.

Accommodation: Many offenders left with no accommodation as agencies were reluctant to set anything up before release and offenders had:

> '…exhausted all the channels that would normally be open to them – they've been kicked out by the family because of their behaviour. A lot of their offending is drug-related and their heroin use oversteps what families are prepared to put up with.'

However, one project worker stressed that no-one who had attended the programme had been released without any accommodation, even though this may be temporary and not what they might have chosen.

Substance abuse: Participants needing help in relation to drug misuse were referred to the prison CARAT team. At the marketplace session they were able to make direct contact prior to their release with Drug Aid Drug Agency or West Glamorgan Council Alcohol Drug Abuse (WGADA).

Education, training and employment: Educational provision pre-release was the responsibility of the prison education department, with which the resettlement team had a good working relationship. A number of employment providers were represented at the marketplace session. The employment agency Instant Muscle visited regularly and specialised in finding employment for ex-offenders. Mid-Glamorgan Employment Agency was also represented as were employment agencies based in Bridgend and Swansea.

Motivational work: The Parc team regarded the F.O.R. programme as a valuable mechanism for developing an offender's motivation to identify and tackle offending-related problems, work on cognitive deficits and begin to apply the programme learning to resettlement problems typically experienced by short-sentence prisoners. The fact that the programme is delivered in a group setting was regarded by the Parc team as beneficial. As one project worker put it 'they are away from the wing, they don't have to be macho and they challenge each other. Also you can't motivate one-to-one – it's overbearing'.

It was acknowledged, however, that although most of the participants were responsive to the F.O.R. programme during the course of the 12 sessions, many lost motivation following release since they were under no obligation to maintain contact with the project. The throughcare manager saw potential conflict between the ethos of encouraging offenders to take responsibility for themselves and act independently, and the project team's experience that 'unless we provide a lot of help and support they will not pursue their action plans once they leave prison'.

The transition to the community

All prisoners had contact with their post-release worker immediately before leaving prison. Programme tutors who also undertook a proportion of the post-release work effectively case-managed the offenders throughout. This continuity of contact with one person was considered by the team to be of major benefit to offenders. For other participants, an external probation officer made contact on a one-to-one basis from session seven or eight onwards to prepare for contact post-release and consider what actions needed to be taken to begin to accomplish the goals identified by the offender. A first post-release appointment date was set one week prior to release.

As noted above, the 'marketplace' brought participants into contact with a wide range of community-based agencies, providing them with information and referrals. This is evident in the quarterly report completed by Parc for the period 1 April to 30 June 2001 which recorded ten contacts with housing agencies, 15 with drug agencies and eight with NACRO with regard to employment and housing information. Agencies were found by the project team to have been very willing to become involved in the marketplace. As expressed by the throughcare manager: 'We have nothing but positive feedback from those who have come in. They say they can't believe we haven't done it before.'

Post-release provision

The project used five different local probation offices for post-release work and made appointments for offenders at each office. Offenders were encouraged to keep their appointments but as in the case of the other resettlement initiatives, many offenders failed to make any post-release contact. One project worker

wrote to all of the offenders who went out to his area summarising the progress they had achieved in relation to the goals they had set prior to their release. At the end of the letter he reminded them of the place and time at which they could meet him if they wished to call in to the probation office. Phone calls were also made to some participants to check how they were getting on. All knew that they could contact the post-release worker at the probation office or at the prison by letter or telephone.

During the evaluation period the project team did not systematically track the progress of participants who were referred at the 'marketplace' to partnership agencies but the team was aware that take-up by offenders was low. Improvements in monitoring outcomes of referrals were planned at the time of our final interviews.

HMP Wandsworth/SOVA

Objectives/general approach

SOVA is a voluntary organisation with experience of working with offenders in prison and in the community. Prior to the Pathfinder, SOVA provided advice and support to prisoners in Wandsworth via the existing throughcare scheme, using both paid staff and volunteer mentors. In their initial proposal to deliver a resettlement service to short-sentence prisoners, SOVA explained that :

> 'The [project] will aim to demonstrate that pre and post-release assessment and intervention are effective in reducing offending. The [project's] objectives will therefore include: an integrated approach to criminogenic needs; providing interventions targeted at the specific needs of individuals; having available a range of services and local referral agencies in order that all predictable individual needs can be met.'

Management and staffing

The project team initially comprised: the project manager who was employed by SOVA (full-time), a probation officer whose sole task was to complete OASys assessments (half-time), and an administrative assistant provided by the prison (full-time). A senior project manager employed by SOVA had general oversight of the project. The departure of the probation officer and the administrative assistant (in June 2001) left the project understaffed for the latter part of the pilot period.[47]

Despite being based on one of the wings and having good relations with the Governor in charge of resettlement and the throughcare team, the project team felt isolated within the prison. SOVA noted that 'as a voluntary organisation within HMP Wandsworth, you learn to understand that acceptance is never going to be easy. Tolerance is a more realistic outcome'.[48] The project manager reported that a lack of practical support from senior prison managers, and deliberate obstruction by some prison officers, also hampered their efforts.

Pre-release provision

Until June 2001 action plans were prepared on the basis of information provided by the prisoner and the OASys assessment. Thereafter they were based on information provided by the prisoner in conversation and on a tick box form which itemised services available through the Pathfinder.

SOVA recognised the difficulties experienced by offenders in accessing appropriate services, observing that 'all too often there is either a genuine ignorance about what they can do, or a reluctance to do so until they

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47.   Attempts to find a replacement were frustrated by a local shortage of probation officers, and various other constraints.
48.   Report to the National Pathfinder Steering Group Meeting, 29/11/00.

are released'. The project manager developed links with a range of community-based organisations. Although emphasis was placed on accommodation, substance misuse and employment issues, help was sought from many other service providers including National Debtline, the Iranian Embassy, the Salvation Army, and Cruse Bereavement Counselling, several of whom met offenders in Wandsworth on a one-to-one basis.

Accommodation: Lack of suitable accommodation forced the project manager to find innovative ways of securing housing. For example, he asked GPs to detail the health problems of some project participants in letters which were sent to the homeless persons' units of the London Borough Councils, in an attempt to show that the prisoners concerned had a priority need for local authority housing. He also made 'considerable in-roads with local service providers in Dorset, Somerset and Kent'. Prisoners who were prepared to leave London on release were found accommodation at hostels such as the House of Saint Martin in Somerset, a residential care and training centre run by the Langley House Trust. In practice, however, few were considered suitable for this facility or were willing to move away from London.

Substance abuse: Dissatisfaction with the service provided by the prison CARAT team led the project manager to refer prisoners directly to local authority substance misuse teams and outside agencies. He developed good links with various service providers, some of whom were willing to see prisoners pre-release to conduct the assessments required for work to begin post-release.

Education, training and employment: The project manager contacted various employment providers at the outset and found Employment Service Direct (ESD) to be the most helpful. Project participants were able to ring ESD from the Pathfinder office to indicate what type of work they wanted. ESD then faxed back details of any vacancies and the project manager arranged interviews with employers. This was only achieved in a few cases however, as finding accommodation usually took precedence over employment needs.

Motivational work: As at Lewes, SOVA staff considered that the volunteer mentors played an important role in motivating offenders to access services and keep in touch post-release. According to the senior project manager, 'volunteers do this in an ad hoc way, one-to-one. Mentoring encourages them to open up on issues around their offending, not just on their practical problems.' The project manager did not consciously use motivational interviewing techniques with project participants, preferring to 'be as I am now – me' rather than 'go in for using certain words or certain ways of doing things'.

The volunteer mentors

According to their initial proposal to the Home Office, 'SOVA has been recruiting, training and managing volunteers on behalf of statutory agencies in the Criminal Justice System since 1975 and are recognised as the leading voluntary agency in this field'. Mentors were seen as an integral part of the Pathfinder project from the outset and were recruited from a 'pool' of volunteers working for SOVA. They were trained alongside other SOVA volunteers in general mentoring skills including guidance in befriending, boundaries and communication skills, equal opportunities issues, and job search skills.

Prisoners were to be offered the support of a volunteer mentor shortly after they had joined the project. On a visit to the project in January 2001 however, a member of the evaluation team noted that many project participants knew nothing about the mentors. The project manager explained that they were experiencing a shortage of volunteers. Their quarterly report for this period noted that 'maintaining mentors has proved to be quite difficult … volunteers tend only to stay for short periods of time, using the experience as a way to employment.'

Where mentors were allocated they met the prisoners either weekly or fortnightly for as long as possible prior to release. Mentors assisted with practical issues, such as CV preparation and provision of information about college courses and, as noted above, they fulfilled an important befriending and motivating role.

The transition to the community

The project manager devised various means of helping offenders make the transition to the community. Efforts were made to ensure that any counselling or treatment begun in Wandsworth was continued on release and, as noted above, representatives of voluntary or statutory agencies were brought into the prison for pre-release meetings with offenders whenever possible. Appointments were made pre-release for prisoners to see service providers in the community and the project manager confirmed the times and dates of these meetings with project participants during an informal pre-release review. Mentors were also intended to facilitate a smooth transition, although, as noted above, this only had relevance for some participants.

Post-release work

It was SOVA's intention to try to maintain contact with offenders for up to three months, writing or phoning at least twice in the case of lapse where location was known. Frequency of contact was to be every two weeks by phone or one-to-one although this was expected to vary according to need. In practice, maintaining post-release contact was highly problematic. Homelessness and drug addiction were major obstacles to continued contact with mentors. The project manager conceded:

> 'Keeping in contact with clients after they have gone – I don't think that has really been successful. People are literally leaving and we don't know where they are going. We might arrange for them to attend our drop-in in Camberwell, but only two or three have done that.'

Initially prisoners assigned to mentors were given post-release appointments as a matter of course but non-attendance by offenders prompted a decision to arrange such meetings only at the offender's instigation. As indicated in Chapter 4 (Table 4.13), the mentors were no more successful in maintaining contact than those who worked with offenders at Lewes. As one volunteer put it: 'I phone them a couple of times to make sure that they are okay. They are a bit reluctant to keep in touch. It probably reminds them of being in prison. Or maybe they have fallen down the slippery slope and are embarrassed about getting back into their old ways again.' This mentor noted that the large majority of offenders she had met through the project 'had some sort of substance abuse problem'.

On occasion mentors travelled some distance from London to take participants to supported housing or to a rehabilitation centre. In a few such cases the mentor or project manager maintained contact for some months by letter or telephone. There were other potential success stories, such as the drug user whom the mentor had escorted to a drug rehabilitation centre and who was still drug-free some weeks after release. Such cases were 'very rewarding' to mentors, as were appreciative comments from offenders: 'It's all down to you people, if I didn't actually see you I would probably still be depressed.'

Appendix B. Observation of F.O.R. programme video recordings

The observation of video recordings had the following objectives:

- to gain a first hand knowledge of the activities covered by each of the key sessions;
- to examine styles of delivery of the course material: for example, do facilitators follow the key principles of motivational interviewing?;
- to assess the extent of variation between tutors in the way in which sessions are delivered; and
- to gauge whether sessions achieve the objectives set out in the programme manual:

1. Is the locus of control internal (do participants set their own agenda for change)?

2. Is motivation and confidence built through the course of the programme?

3. Do participants and tutors interact in a way that facilitates open discussion, personal disclosure and a willingness to seek assistance within the group?

Sessions observed

Session 1 (1 group)
Session 2 (2 groups)
Session 3 (3 groups)
Session 4 (2 groups)
Session 5 (2 groups)
Session 6 (1 group)
Session 11 (1 group)
4 one-to-one sessions (session 7).[49]

Two of the sessions observed were delivered at Woodhill, the remainder at Parc prison.

Exercises observed in each session

Session 1:   Moving from A to B; Who are you?; My story: The beginning.
Session 2:   Looking forward: Who I want to be; My story: The future; My lifeline.
Session 3:   The current and desired state; Perceiving, reacting, interpreting; Identifying my roadblocks (self test).
Session 4:   Six thinking shades; Using thinking shades to overcome obstacles and gain control.
Session 5:   What's important to me (pictures and recording sheet); Standing by our values; Wants and needs; Can't do, won't do.
Session 6:   Defining goals; Goals exercise; choosing goals.
Session 11:   Role play-response to failure; Cycle of change; Defining failure; Asking for help.

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49.   Video recordings of sessions 8-10 were not made available to the researchers.

Adherence to instructions in manual

In the majority of the sessions observed, the leaders followed the manual closely and the participants carried out the relevant exercises. Moreover, they did so in a classroom setting, very like that required in the delivery of the Reasoning and Rehabilitation (R&R) programme. In one Session 5, points 5-11 in the 'standing by our values' chapter were omitted, but it appeared as though they were left to individual sessions. If this chapter was missed altogether, what appears to be a critical point of the programme would have been lost. The more confident leaders, on a limited number of occasions, deviated from the script and introduced extra-curricula material but did so to the enhancement of the programme: for example, in one Session 5, the leader introduced the Milgram experiment to illustrate a point about compromising values. This raises an interesting point in relation to programme integrity, which is often interpreted as meaning simple adherence to the letter of the programme manual. It is, of course, much more to do with the theoretical model, adherence to purpose and maintenance of the required focus, and more confident group leaders maintaining programme integrity whilst at the same time being innovative in their use of material.

Styles of delivery

Do leaders follow key principles of motivational interviewing?

All of the leaders followed the key principles of motivational interviewing. All avoided argument, none were judgmental and we noted several occasions on which leaders stressed the importance of self-efficacy and personal responsibility; for example, remaining drug free and avoiding slipping back into the previous criminal lifestyle. All asked questions, although a minority did not do so as often as might be expected given that the sessions are all intended to encourage offenders to engage and become active participants. Leaders 'rolled with resistance' in different ways: for instance, through the use of humour; encouragement (in response to 'can't' won't' – 'It is hard. Just have a go – its not an easy exercise'); and maintaining the focus in the face of sexist banter.

There were three sessions in which the style of the leader was at times one of persuading/lecturing and giving advice. At Woodhill, for example, a prison officer delivering Session 4 spoke at length to the group (at one point he spoke for 15 minutes without eliciting views/comments) and his style of delivery seemed overly didactic. This conflicts with the list of principles, but it may be that the material for these sessions requires too great an input from the leader leaving insufficient time for discussion. The written reviews, which are completed by leaders at Woodhill at the end of each programme, lend support to this view. Parts of Session 3 are criticised as 'very theoretical and long', resulting in 'time pressure in delivering all the information'. Similarly, Session 4 has been difficult to complete to time with the result that a fast pace has had to be set.

Styles of delivery varied in other ways but it was not always possible to gauge the influence of different styles upon the groups, especially at Woodhill where only the leaders were on camera. At Parc, where some participants could be seen and heard, it is clear that one particular leader was more successful than others in maintaining control of the group, holding their attention and avoiding dominance of the group by one or two of the more vocal members. That particular leader and one at Woodhill encouraged and achieved higher levels of participation and interaction than others. Indeed, sessions appeared to work best (that is, in terms of level of interaction) when the leaders not only adopted a directive style of leadership, encouraged participation, rewarded effort, challenged, maintained the principle of internal locus of control, but also responded to group interaction as material to work with and relate to the primary focus. However, most of the leaders conveyed sincerity and belief in the value of the course material.

Positive reinforcement

The degree to which leaders positively reinforced relevant and appropriate contributions varied, but most encouraged participation in this way frequently. This is an important aspect of the process of generating motivation and it fits the distributed functions model of group leadership in which group members are given freedom to move into the leadership role (leadership acts, in this sense, are defined as any contribution that helps the group complete its task and achieve its goals). Therefore, it needs to be maintained (both verbally and non-verbally) at a high level.

Reference to earlier learning

There was less consistency in this aspect of delivery. Most leaders referred to previous learning very often or often, but there was one instance of very little reference. Predictably, most reference was made at the beginning of the session, and usually to the previous session. Examples include, a referral back to the concept of 'self talk'; several references to 'roadblocks'; and a reference to the thinking processes involved in the 'thinking shades' exercise. The repetition of a device like 'roadblocks' is reminiscent of the use of Debono's Cort card system in the R&R programme in which participants were encouraged to use an acronym such as PMI (Plus, Minus and Interesting) as a framework for examining ideas and part of the Creative Thinking module of that programme. In the STOP research, it was found that these remained a part of the individual's problem-solving repertoire.

Motivation and confidence building

Again, there was less consistency in this respect with some sessions lacking any obvious evidence of motivation or confidence building, but others, including the one-to-one sessions, provided ample evidence. For example, emphasising to the group that everyone was capable of addressing the thinking problems that underlay their behaviour – 'You don't need degrees to do the 12 sessions and to benefit from them.'; devoting several minutes to a discussion on love in which the group defined it as based on selflessness; positively reinforcing an answer based on facts; admitting to a compromise of values in order to encourage the practice of thinking skills (the leader admitting to mistakes and demonstrating that the situations they lead to are recoverable); and emphasising progress made and encouraging group members to think of the course as providing a set of tools in their heads.

Use of peer training

There was not much evidence of use of peer training. In fact, there were just two sessions, one at Parc and one at Woodhill in which the leader involved a group member in some form of presentation in front of the rest of the group. However, it should be borne in mind that the concept of peer training is not clear, and might be interpreted as including contributions made from within the group itself that might contribute positively to the group's learning.

Levels of participation/engagement in the group

It was not always possible to see all (if any) of the participants on video (none at Woodhill) and, therefore, it is not known whether everyone present contributed. In some groups, it is clear that there were one or two participants who contributed disproportionately, and perhaps the fairest assessment is that interaction between members of the groups was variable. At its most successful, the leader encouraged and achieved high levels of group interaction, but in some groups there was very little discussion among participants and little follow-through with the group of an opinion expressed by a group member.

When the level of interaction was high, this appeared to be linked closely to motivation and confidence building effort and positive reinforcement of contributions. So, in those groups where interaction was high the leaders were very active in drawing individuals in, asking for views and developing thinking and argument; moreover, once the groups entered what might be described as the 'performing stage', those leaders acted as effective listeners and controllers.

Locus of control

All of the leaders observed showed awareness of the importance of self-motivation and active engagement of offenders in setting their own agendas for change. Efforts to ensure that the locus of control is internal are evident in all sessions including the one-to-one sessions where broad goals identified earlier in the programme are narrowed down and prioritised by the offenders themselves. The maintenance of an internal locus of control manifested itself in a number of different ways. For instance, the use of specific questions to individuals such as 'what would work for you?'; encouraging other group members to challenge an individual's denial of responsibility; personalising the 'definition of failure'; and, in the evaluation of the programme, questioning each group member about his/her contribution and his/her learning.

Overall atmosphere of the group

This is difficult but not impossible to assess based on video recordings particularly where participants are not on camera and their voices are indistinct. At Parc the level of participation suggests that the group as a whole were fully engaged and were receptive to the course material. None of the groups could be described as having a negative atmosphere, although one group appeared to be lethargic and unmotivated. Where the session appeared to be working best, there was a clear work ethos in the group and the focus of the session was maintained. The atmosphere of the groups seemed to be affected particularly by the style and approach of the leader; the more spontaneous and confident the leader the more positive the general atmosphere appeared to be. The two participants at Woodhill whose contributions could be heard were articulate and responsive to questions asked by the leaders.

What style of delivery appears to work well/less well?

At both Parc and Woodhill two leaders divided a session between them with one leading, the other fulfilling a maintenance role when, for example, participants required one-to-one help with exercises/written work carried out during the sessions. This style of delivery, which appeared to be most effective in engaging participants and encouraging active participation, is based on the motivational interviewing principles and general group work skills. In the more successful sessions leaders were: directive and firm with those who otherwise could have become dominant, disruptive or distracting to other members; non-judgmental; aware of the need to provide a high level of positive reinforcement; concrete and specific; challenging (pro-offending attitudes) rather than confrontational; confident; at ease with the course material; spontaneous in their use of the content of group discussion as a means of achieving the goals of the session; made frequent use of open questions to elicit views; and paid attention to both the maintenance and task leadership functions. In particular, the successful leaders appeared to be skilled in edging the group members towards self-challenge. Overall, therefore, the most efficacious leadership seemed to be based on the principles underpinning the R&R programme and pro-social modelling.

There was one very good example of these elements coalescing in a Session 5 run at Parc. This session is concerned with needs and wants, and concreteness and specificity are of particular importance. As in all of the sessions two leaders were involved; although their delivery differed in pace, both sustained an appropriate level of control and kept the group focused. Essentially, this session is a STOP and THINK session aimed firstly at intervening in the process of arriving at solutions and helping the group members to visualise and assess outcomes before making decisions, and secondly helping them to reflect on their values and their relationship to wants, needs and expectations. The leaders are instructed to assist group members to confirm what they value and what beliefs/values they regard as negotiable.

By the effective use of challenging (highlighting discrepancies, evasion and distortion, challenging group members to own their problems and explore consequences, etc.), the leaders succeeded in giving the group members the opportunity to achieve these goals. They also used humour, praised effort and interacted with the group as a whole. The result was some very thoughtful contributions from the group, for example, 'sometimes you dump your values, you go against your morals'. In contrast, a session in which the leaders were drawn often into interaction with individual members the group was fragmented and less focused, while the maintenance and task functions became blurred.

Appendix C.   Supplementary tables

Table C.1	'Attrition', from eligible prisoners to significant contact outside prison, expressed to a base of 100, by Pathfinder

	Eligible prisoners[50]	'Joined' a Pathfinder	Some work in prison	Some contact outside	'Significant' contact outside[51]
Birmingham	100 (n=953)	22	13	6	4
Durham	100 (n=178)	74	65	37	35
Hull	100 (n=439)	51	50	20	16
Lewes	100 (n=826)	22	20	6	5
Ox/Bucks	100 (n=304)	51	47	26	22
Wandsworth	100 (n=1,049)	14	12	3	2
All	100 (n=3,749)	29	25	10	8

Table C.2	Type of offence and sentence length, by Pathfinder

(a) Main offence

	Violence/PO %	Burglary %	Theft/damage %	Autocrime %	Other %	All %
Birmingham	14	6	29	37	14	100
Durham	3	4	67	7	18	100
Hull	9	6	38	35	12	100
Lewes	15	8	33	31	13	100
Ox/Bucks	10	1	25	46	18	100
Parc	23	4	19	44	10	100
Wandsworth	12	6	42	19	21	100
All	11	5	37	31	15	100 (n=1055)

(b) Length of sentence

	Under 12 wks %	12-23 wks %	24 wks or over %	Total %
Birmingham	32	48	20	100
Durham	42	37	21	100
Hull	43	44	13	100
Lewes	47	39	15	100
Ox/Bucks	64	25	10	100
Parc	38	53	9	100
Wandsworth	43	44	9	100
All	44	41	15	100 (n=1035)

50.   As defined by Pathfinders in their monthly statistical returns. These may be limited by local 'rules' – eg the minimum length of sentence accepted, or the town to which the prisoner is intending to return.
51.   See Chapter 5 for a definition.

Table C.3   Percentages of prisoners identified with key problems at 'significant' level according to OASys, by Pathfinder

	Drugs	Acc	TS	Emp	Ed/T	Fin	Alc	Atts	(n of OASys completed)
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Birmingham	33	41	43	49	32	41	43	33	(94)
Durham	70	48	44	55	49	31	12	35	(129)
Hull	67	50	57	52	46	35	21	59	(148)
Lewes	56	59	36	33	34	49	50	8	(174)
Ox/Bucks	40	44	64	34	39	28	42	42	(135)
Parc	37	16	57	55	39	43	49	35	(49)
Wandsworth	50	65	46	40	44	31	34	37	(121)
All	53	50	49	44	41	37	35	35	(850)

Percentage scoring 'above the line' on OASys

Table C.4   Continuity of service, level of activity and risk/needs level

Type of service (n)	Average initial OASys	% with high continuity
High activity in custody (140)	82.8	38%
Low activity in custody (465)	61.6	34%
Significance of difference	**	n/s

** = p<0.01, n/s = not significant; t-tests in column 1, X^2 in column 2

Risk/needs level (n)		% with high continuity
Above average initial OASys (412)		30%
Below average initial OASys (334)		44%
Significance of difference		**

** = p<0.01,

OASys score and level of activity in custody (n)		% with high continuity
High OASys and high activity (95):		35%
High OASys and low activity (160):		28%
Low OASys and high activity (32):		53%
Low OASys and low activity (195):		43%

X^2 = 0.935 (high OASys scorers) and 0.852 (low OASys scorers) n/s.

Table C.5   Proportions (%) of offenders claiming JSA after release

Project	Live claim at 3 months	Live claim at 6 months
Birmingham (n = 52)	40%	46%
Durham (n = 40)	28%	18%
Hull (n = 125)	36%	34%
Lewes(n = 110)	20%	17%
Ox/Bucks (n = 112)	26%	22%
Parc (n = 41)	15%	12%
Wandsworth (n = 94)	29%	27%

Appendix D. Offenders' comments on their experiences

1. Selected replies in pre-release interviews to the question: 'So far what have you got out of being on the Pathfinder?'

   'Support I wouldn't necessarily have had. We can discuss anything, it's an open door.'

   'A better understanding of myself. Better idea of how to solve problems…keeping my emotions under control. I can easily solve problems at work but when it comes to myself I just push it under the carpet, deny it.'

   'It's given me more awareness of what you can achieve if you put your mind to it.'

   'They've helped me with my flat more than anything else – I was going to be evicted. They've put me in touch with a careers officer and helped me sort out my finances.'

   'It's done everything I've asked for.'

   'It's been good because I can relate to them in a certain way. They are there to help.'

   'Looking at things differently. Helping me to think about the way I've treated people and how I've hurt them – Mum, Dad, my friends and people I've stolen from.'

2. Selected replies in post-release interviews to the question: 'What has been the most helpful aspect of the Pathfinder project?'

   'It's helped me to look at things differently. I was also given help in getting on a literacy course at college.

   'Someone to talk to.'

   'The prison visits. Someone who sees you in prison who can help afterwards.'

   'The way they taught me to think about problems and how to find solutions. Take it step by step instead of diving in.'

   'It made me take a deep look at myself. It gave me information that I didn't have and a thought process to stop you re-offending.'

   'From a very early stage it gave reassurance that I wasn't going back to where I'd been for so long, that I could break the mould. It's been three months since I left prison and I would normally be back on heroin by now.'

   ' I've learnt to look at different perspectives, to understand the effects of my behaviour on other people.'

   'Having someone to talk to about problems who is not directly involved.'

Appendix E. Explaining 'high continuity' by multivariate analysis

Multivariate analysis is required to isolate the importance of any one aspect of service or offender characteristics in explaining high continuity (ie, significant contact after release) – in this case, in relation to offenders who were still members of Pathfinders at the point of release. Logistic regression is used because the dependent variable (continuity) is binary ('high' or 'not high').

The data were collected in particular circumstances which affect the analysis: offenders were not randomly assigned to projects (eg, all women were in Durham); key service options (F.O.R., mentoring, the Durham programme) were available only in particular prisons. In fact, if we know the prison, we also know the programme, lead agency and sex of offender. This poses problems for theorising regressions and interpreting results. The independent factors included are 'institutional' (prison, whether probation-led or voluntary-led); 'service inputs' (level of activity in custody, F.O.R., mentoring) and 'individual characteristics' (age, sex, OASys score). Before running the regressions, we tested the data for associations of all the variables with continuity, as shown in Table E1.

Table E.1 Kruskal-Wallis test (a,b)

Factors (n) [variable name]	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Institution			
Prison (921) [PRISON]	4.805	1	.028
Probation or voluntary led (921) [PROBVOL]	30.418	1	.000
Service inputs			
Mentoring (921) [MENTOR]	2.353	1	.125
F.O.R. programme (921) [F.O.R.]	5.260	1	.022
Activitiy level in custody (921) [ACTIONS]	.003	1	.959
Individual characteristics			
Age when sentenced (906) [AGE]	.072	1	.788
OASys score (746) [OASYS]	17.208	1	.000
Sex (921) [SEX]	21.821	1	.000

(a) Kruskal Wallis test; (b) Grouping variable: Continuity (group= low, high)
MENTOR: Had at least one meeting with a mentor in prison/ did not see a mentor;
F.O.R.: Completed the F.O.R. ... A Change programme/ did not start or complete F.O.R.;
ACTIONS: Number of different types of intervention with the individual in prison.

The table shows that PROBVOL, OASYS and SEX were all significantly correlated with high continuity (2 p<0.001). However, because females (SEX=1) were all in one prison, there is no comparator for institution or service inputs; for this reason, the following regressions were run on male offenders only. AGE and OASYS are entered in all the regressions to control for individual characteristics; ACTIONS is included to control for the effects of high service activity in custody. In all regressions, coefficients on OASYS show a negative relationship between OASys score and high continuity.

The first logistic regression is to isolate the effects of lead agency type (regardless of the actions taken): C = f(PROBVOL, ACTIONS, AGE, OASYS) + constant, where C is continuity. Table E.2 shows the results: being in a probation-led programme (Hull, Ox/Bucks or Parc) increases the odds of high continuity.

Table E.2	Importance of lead agency (male prisons only)			
Variable	Odds ratio Exp(B)	Sig.	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
PROBVOL Probation	2.744	**	1.904	3.956
ACTIONS	1.026	n/s	.922	1.143
AGE	1.030	*	1.009	1.051
OASYS	.988	**	.981	.994
(n=626, significance ** $p<0.001$, * $p<0.05$)				

The second regression is to isolate the effects of completing the F.O.R. programme or seeing a mentor pre-release: C = f (F.O.R., MENTOR, AGE, OASYS) + constant. Table E.3 shows that 'completing F.O.R.', but not 'seeing a mentor pre-release', increases the odds of high continuity.

Table E.3	Importance of the programme (male prisons only)			
Variable	Odds ratio Exp(B)	Sig.	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
F.O.R.: did F.O.R.	2.464	**	1.537	3.950
MENTOR: had mentoring	1.064	n/s	.684	1.655
ACTIONS	1.019	n/s	.913	1.137
AGE	1.023	*	1.003	1.044
OASYS	.988	**	.981	.994
(n=626, significance ** $p<0.001$, * $p<0.05$)				

Appendix F.   Supplementary information on cost derivation

Estimation of costs

In order to estimate the economic costs of the Pathfinders, evaluators sought to:

- identify the additional resources consumed in setting-up and implementing the schemes;
- quantify the amount of resource consumed; and
- place a value on input resource based on the opportunity cost.[52]

In an effort to reflect regional differences the cost data collection focused on valuation at the local level. Information on funding support from the Crime Reduction Programme and other sources was supplemented with analysis of additional resources provided 'in-kind' through lead organisations and local partnerships. The costs of resources already incurred or irrevocably committed prior to the start of the project – such as existing equipment that was borrowed and used in the scheme – were also included in the analysis.[53] For consistency all costs were set at April 2000 values by using a two per cent allowance for inflation. Further underpinning assumptions for each type of project cost described in Table 6.3 are considered in Chapter 7.

Cost assumptions

Personnel

Data were collected on pay-related costs for personnel working on the Pathfinder projects. Broadly, two categories of inputs could be identified, namely those by:

- direct project staff (including paid staff, volunteer mentors and agency input)[54]; and
- indirect staff (line management, recruitment).

Direct personnel were those staff members working directly with offenders in completing assessments, one-to-one and group work and work done on behalf of the offender both pre- and post-release. Each staff member was identified from discussions with project teams about the various roles within Pathfinder teams. Information was then sought on the total hours worked, taking into account holiday entitlement and bank holiday leave. For prison and probation staff this information was collected from Prison Service and Probation Boards Association literature while in the case of the voluntary organisations the information was supplied directly by the project managers. Actual input was verified over time to account for issues of staff turnover, sick leave and overtime worked. Valuation of direct personnel was – where possible – based upon local salary, employers NI and pension contribution, and other ancillary costs such as environmental allowance paid to some probation officers.

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52. The 'opportunity cost' refers to the value of the next best alternative, which, for this evaluation was the market rate for the particular input.
53. These costs are typically referred to as 'sunk costs'. Notably no attempt was made to place value on human capital 'brought' to the project from prior staff training and experience.
54. Agency input here includes contracted agencies and those attending the final session of the F.O.R. … A Change programmes at Parc. Costing information was not available for other (more general) agency input to those referred from the Pathfinder programmes.

All line and senior management, administration, contributions by central departments (for example, personnel and finance) and those involved with recruitment activities – interviewing, sifting through applications and so on – were included under the heading of indirect staff. In most cases the input from this staff type was under-represented in project funding claims, which made detection from formal financial sources problematic. In such circumstances estimates were sought from the Pathfinder project managers and where possible through direct contact with the relevant line management staff. In costing recruitment and selection where no local information was available, one working day was assumed for both a personnel manager and administrator for each direct member of staff recruited. In nearly all cases, Home Office standard hourly costs for the appropriate job types were used to place a value on the costs of line management.

Training

Costs were estimated for training undertaken by Pathfinder staff.[55] Where staff from more than one project attended a training event (such as Home Office-provided training in Motivational Interviewing), costs were apportioned according to the number of attendees. Two broad types of training could be identified: Home Office-provided training; and training that was organisational based.

Home Office training refers to centrally provided courses covering areas such as motivational interviewing, OASys assessment, pro-social modelling and F.O.R. … A Change. These typically lasted one or two days, with the exception of F.O.R. … A Change, which normally involved a week's training. The cost of accommodation and subsistence for centrally-held board meetings, national conferences and quality assurance were also included in the overall costs.[56] More generally recorded training costs related to both training fee and associated accommodation and subsistence, but did not include one-off expenditure such as the development of the F.O.R. … A Change programme manual.

Outside the core Home Office training provision, Pathfinder staff took part in varied 'organisational'-based training covering topics both directly related to the original aims of the Pathfinders and more indirectly to the general workplace – for example, issues of Health and Safety. Pathfinder induction and other training were available for those Pathfinders utilising mentor support, although in many cases the training was taken by Pathfinder staff and therefore did not incur additional trainer cost. To avoid double counting staff taking part in training were assumed to be working on the project and their costs included in the 'personnel' chapter.

Premises and equipment

For each Pathfinder project an attempt was made to value capital resources used by direct staff at the local level. Generally office premises were valued according to their rental, although for simplification, office space and equipment utilised by line management were costed through a ten per cent uplift on these staff costs.[57] Meeting rooms (both inside and outside prison) used for Pathfinder delivery were cost at £0.30 based on Home Office standard costs.

Other capital costs included both borrowed and purchased equipment. Project accounts were used to value the latter and in each instance VAT (as a 'transfer' payment) was excluded. Evaluators were asked to consider only the annuitised value of the equipment reflecting the consumption of the resource over the project life and

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55. Where the data were available training costs were based upon actual fees paid. Where this information was unavailable a cost of £300 per trainer day (approximately £40 per hour) was assigned, based on comparable market rates.
56. These costs, although minimal in relation to overall project costs, were included as a matter of prudence in determining the overall cost of replication.
57. Rental rates were sourced from 'PRIME UK property Markets', Healey & Baker (November 2000) and based upon one person occupying 10m^2 area for 1,700 hours per year.

beyond.[58] Similarly where equipment was not used full-time on the project an appropriate percentage of the total cost was assigned. In many cases the Pathfinders utilised existing equipment and its cost was included in order to fully reflect the cost of replication.

Other project costs

Other project related costs included:

- travel costs;
- advertising and publicity; and
- other overheads.

These cost types represented a small percentage of overall expenditure (between 1% and 6% although typically around 2%) and were collected mainly from project-related accounts (although costs were estimated and included for resources provided 'freely').

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58. In this instance annuitised values represent the constant annual cost that is equivalent to the item's actual cost over its useful life.

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