

**Mapping of employability support for  
Offenders in Glasgow**

**Final Report to Glasgow Works and  
Glasgow Community Justice Authority**

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# 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1: Introduction

This report presents the findings from a review of employability services provided to offenders in Glasgow. The study was commissioned by Glasgow Works (GW) and the Glasgow Community Justice Authority (CJA) on behalf of the city's offender employability strategy group. It was undertaken between November 2010 and February 2011.

## 1.2: The brief

The offender employability strategy group brings together all of the key strategic players involved in this area across the city. The broad aim of the group is to improve employability outcomes for offenders in Glasgow and this study is a core part of its 2010/11 work programme articulated as being to:

"Undertake a strategic analysis of existing mainstream and specialist employability services available to offenders / ex offenders in Glasgow and initiate development where required." (Glasgow City Offenders and Employability Strategic Group Work Programme 2010/11)

This work was commissioned to inform the group's activities by providing a picture of the range of employability services available to offenders across the city in the winter of 2010/11. As the brief states:

"The primary purpose of the mapping study is to provide the strategic group with a robust evidence base through which it can clearly identify areas of service provision requiring development and improvement."

The need for this work largely derives from the confused – and confusing – range of services offered under the auspices of offender employability. These have grown organically – often separately – and have been funded through a variety of sources. They include specific employability services provided by specialist organisations working with offenders as well as those provided by agencies working with a wider client group but accessed by offenders. They also include services provided inside prison and within the community.

An important task within this assignment has been to clarify this picture to provide not only a better understanding of who does what, but also to help explain the client journey.

Although the service map provides the core output from this work, the most important issue is the use to which this information will be put. Through our fieldwork we have engaged with key players across the city to consider the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing Glasgow around this important issue. To complement the mapping data we provide feedback from this fieldwork process and present a series of recommendations for city partners in our final chapter. These have been narrowly focused on where we believe the strategy group can make a difference.

### 1.3: The process

The study process was designed to be as inclusive as possible, within the study timescale and budget. It included a mix of desk research and fieldwork and our conclusions are drawn from the mix of primary and secondary data generated by the research. The overall process has been managed by a small officer sub-group from Glasgow Works and the CJA.

The key elements of the study have been as follows:

- Desk research of the policy context – covering justice and employability
- A desk-based review of the most recent data on Glasgow's offender population
- Key witness interviews with 30 consultees across the city<sup>1</sup>
- An electronic survey of service providers across the city<sup>2</sup>
- Field visits to the 3 most important prisons for Glasgow<sup>3</sup> – which comprised consultations with SPS and other staff and prisoner focus groups
- A review of good practice – mix of desk-based research, telephone and face to face consultations
- Three workshops with strategic and operational partners
- Analysis and reporting

### 1.4: Defining employability

For many people 'employability' is an ambiguous and unhelpful term. In particular, for those working beyond the immediate field, it can be confused with 'employment' so at the start it may be helpful to explain our use of the word.

In our experience the definition from Workforce Plus is the most useful and the one that is most widely accepted in Scotland. According to this, *employability* refers to

"...the combination of factors and processes which enable people to progress towards or get into employment, to stay in employment and to move on into the workplace."<sup>4</sup>

This definition, with its acknowledgment of the journey towards employment, is important in the context of offenders. Within it, we can see the importance of front end engagement processes where relationships are established and where clients are supported to cross a line and decide to change their lives. Many agencies across the city which would not define themselves as employability providers play an important role in this initial journey stage. Through their work these agencies – Social Work, Housing and Addictions services amongst them – provide a front door for the more structured employability work delivered by others in the city.

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<sup>1</sup> Details of the consultees are attached as Appendix 1

<sup>2</sup> A copy of the questionnaire is attached as Appendix 2

<sup>3</sup> Barlinnie, Polmont and Cornton Vale

<sup>4</sup> Workforce Plus: Scottish Government 2006

## 1.5: Report format

The report format is set out under the following chapter titles:

2. The offender employability context
3. The Glasgow Service Map
4. Making sense of the map - key fieldwork messages
5. Emerging/good practice and what it can teach us
6. The client perspective
7. Conclusions and recommendations

## 2. OFFENDER EMPLOYABILITY CONTEXT

### 2.1: Introduction

This section briefly considers some of the key issues of context for this research study. It initially reviews the key headline figures on offending and custody patterns in Glasgow, and then highlights why the issue of generating and supporting employability aspirations has become an increasingly significant part of the policy and operational landscape. This requires understanding and cross referencing developments in both the criminal justice and the employability/welfare domains.

### 2.2: Offending and custody patterns in Glasgow

There is a robust evidence base which shows the scale of Glasgow's challenges in tackling criminal behaviour. From the latest available evidence<sup>5</sup> we can see that the city:

- Has a crime level of 1,039 per 10,000 population against a national rate of 730
- Has a custody rate of 351 per 10,000 people against a national rate of 191
- Accounted for 4,080 of a total 20,371 liberated from Scottish prisons
- Had a total of **6,965** Social Enquiry Reports submitted to Scottish courts, representing a rate of 159.7 per 10,000 population, compared to the national rate of 109.8

In 2009/10 a total of 4,080 liberated prisoners returned to Glasgow. Of these 79% had been in prison less than one year and 65% for less than six months. Of this total, 590 were young offenders of whom 81% had been in custody for less than a year and 69% for less than six months.

A key national target is to reduce the rate of persistent offending, but we can see from the table below that the city's re-conviction rate continues to exceed the national figure:

	No of reconvictions	% reconvictions within			Ave no of reconvictions
		6 months	1 year	2 years	
<b>Glasgow</b>	12,583	23%	34%	46%	2.5
<b>Scotland</b>	57,359	22%	32%	44%	2.4

For young men in the city the reconviction rates are even higher as follows:

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<sup>5</sup> Scottish Government datasets including: Recorded Crime in Scotland 2009-10; Prison Statistics Scotland 2010; Reconviction Rates in Scotland: 2006-07 and 2007-08 Offender cohorts; Criminal Justice Social Work Statistics 2009-10

- 30% have been reconvicted within six months
- 43% have been reconvicted within a year
- 57% have been reconvicted within two years

Women account for a relatively small proportion of total offenders in the custody and in the community, and there are some key gender related differences in the pattern of offending and custody which are worth highlighting:

- Of the average daily prison population in Scotland, women account for just 5% of total prisoners. Only 60 (3.5%) of the total 1,725 offenders from Glasgow in custody in June 2009<sup>6</sup>, were women
- Women account for 16% of all Social Enquiry Reports submitted within Glasgow. These relate to 767 individual women
- According to national statistics<sup>7</sup>, of persons with a charge proved against them in Scottish Courts, 7% of women, compared to 14% of men, receive a custodial sentence. Women offenders receive higher levels of community and other sentences (including cautions and admonitions)
- Women have lower reconviction rates than men, with 19% reconvicted within 6 months, 29% with a year, and 38% within 2 years. In contrast to male offenders, these rates are lower amongst young women (aged under 21), with reconviction rates of 15%(6 months); 24% (1 year), and 35% (2 years)

A more detailed summary of the latest official data available is provided at Appendix 3.

### 2.3: Wider policy and practice developments

Responding to the employability challenge for offenders requires interpreting a complex wider policy environment, and an analysis that cuts across a number of policy areas. Layered on this complexity is the recognition that many of the key features of the criminal justice, employability and welfare landscapes are currently subject to significant and radical change. Some of these changes are now in place, whilst others are anticipated in the near future.

It is beyond the scope of this report to comprehensively analyse all of these developments, but below we highlight some of the most important of them, and explore what they could mean in further developing an effective employability service for offenders in Glasgow.

The **Offender Learning Strategy** was developed by the Scottish Government in 2009-10. Whilst noting that being in employment is a critical factor in reducing reoffending rates, the work-stream reports supporting the strategy's development cited Jobcentre Plus data suggesting that even in the good times, the proportion of

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<sup>6</sup> Prison Statistics Scotland 2009-19: local authority home area of offenders in custody by age and sex: 30 June 2009

<sup>7</sup> Criminal Proceedings in Scottish Courts 2009-10

those in custody progressing into employment was very small<sup>8</sup>. Some discussions for the current research study have reinforced this uncomfortable reality, and its implications are returned to below. However, alongside the poor outcome data, the work-streams identified the components of a successful support model for offenders:

- Voluntary participation
- Strong key-worker/advisor input delivered by credible, enthusiastic staff
- Continuity of support
- Emphasis on clearly defined goals
- Effective brokerage of access to wider supports

The common action themes subsequently identified by the work-streams resonate with the issues raised in this study. These included: the need for leadership; greater flexibility in the service offer; increased evidence of effectiveness; clarity around which offenders should be targeted; the provision of a variety of learning tools; recording achievement; and a commitment to monitoring and effectiveness. In our conclusions we return to many of these themes in considering the future options for Glasgow partners.

This research study was compiled as **major reforms in the criminal justice system** were being introduced following the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010. Collectively these signal radical changes which seek to recalibrate sentencing by reducing the number of short custodial sentences, and increasing the volume of credible and effective community disposals through new integrated Community Payback Orders (CPOs). These developments have the potential to assist the future employability offer to offenders in a number of positive ways:

- Reducing the number of people sent to prison for short periods - keeping them within their communities and thereby available to continue any existing connections to local support services
- Reducing the number of short term custodial sentences - virtually all of our consultees believed these provided very limited scope to undertake any meaningful employability work whilst in prison
- Increasing the opportunity to address a variety of employability issues within the CPO sentence
- Avoiding dislocation in critical community based employability related supports through a spell in custody - most significantly the loss of stable housing provision

The scale and speed with which these developments will impact on current short term custodial sentences in Glasgow remains to be seen. But without question, the degree to which these changes trigger a significant shift in sentencing practice will represent a major new opportunity as well as a challenge in terms of the future offender employability offer.

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<sup>8</sup> Jobcentre Plus data for 2007/08 indicated that 2.4% of ex-prisoners accessing Employment and Benefits Service (EBS) progressed to employment

Significant and relevant changes are also imminent in terms of **employability and welfare policies and provision**. These will have a major impact on offenders, and their implications will demand very careful consideration within the city's future service offer. Two key elements of the new UK government's approach are important - the new DWP funded Single Work Programme, which largely replaces and consolidates a range of current interventions<sup>9</sup>, and a projected "revolution in welfare policy".

Taken together, these policies signal an ever increasing "active" welfare approach, characterised by strong supports to help people into work, alongside benefit sanctions for those who refuse to participate in the assistance offered. Overall, the policy is underpinned by the desire to "make work pay", by further incentivising employment whilst ensuring that remaining longer term on benefits is a less attractive option.

For offenders, one specific dimension may be of particular importance. This relates to the push to move people from Incapacity Benefit to the more active Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Jobseekers Allowance. Following the introduction of the work capability test, far fewer claimants are being accepted onto ESA and the Welfare Reform Bill may make this benefit time limited. Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claimants are required to evidence that they are actively seeking work in return for their benefit payments. Given the very high levels of offenders who have historically claimed health-related benefits, and the relative few who appear to engage or progress in current programmes, these changes are of potentially huge significance. They demand careful consideration of:

- The eligibility of offenders to participate in the Work Programme - at present this is suggested as after being registered unemployed for 51 days (i.e. early but not immediate entry)
- How the various changes in benefits will be communicated to offenders - with some concerns that in the short run at least, letters may be ignored or sent to the wrong addresses
- The attractiveness of offenders to Work Programme providers who will be paid primarily on the basis of sustained job outcomes. As a particularly challenging group, most offenders will carry a high premium if successfully progressed, but there are equally concerns that providers may in practice think they have little prospect of triggering these payments
- How future CPO delivery will relate to potential Work Programme participation by offenders, and the options and/or limitations in operating these interventions side by side

These issues will evolve within the city's existing employability infrastructure. Since 2007, this has increasingly been co-ordinated and driven through Glasgow Works, which was initially developed as a DWP designated "City Strategy Pathfinder". Glasgow Works was charged with developing and implementing a local response to historically high levels of worklessness in the city, with Glasgow recognised as having

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<sup>9</sup> The rationalisation of DWP programmes includes ending the offender specific Progress to Work initiative

particularly noticeable issues in terms of people on long term, health related benefits. Whilst offenders were not initially identified as a specific Glasgow Works priority, many of the activities it has supported will have included people in this category. More recently, Glasgow Works has also funded pilot activity dedicated to assisting the employability journey of offenders.

This current research study connects closely to Glasgow Works' ongoing objective to assist the most disadvantaged labour market groups towards employment. It also supports Glasgow Works' general aspiration to define and deliver a pathway of collective provision, based on: simplifying the service offer; ensuring complementarity in various service supports; and further aligning/integrating agency procurement processes across the city.

Specific **policy developments for young offenders** are also significant. These recognise that, in addition to the challenges triggered by offending behaviour and potential custody, many of this group are also in the transition phase from statutory education to the world of work. Young offenders are recognised as a priority sub-group within the national More Choices, More Chances strategy, and their learning issues were afforded a dedicated work-stream group in the development of the Offender Learning Strategy. Of particular consequence, young offenders up to the age of 19 are entitled to a universal service offer articulated within 16+ Learning Choices. As a consequence, specific work - commonly led by Skills Development Scotland - has sought to ensure young people in custody are not excluded from the opportunities they could access through this mechanism.

Another important contextual element is the growing evidence base showing the significant **return on investment** to be secured from supporting offenders into sustained employment. This includes recent work from the Audit Commission which includes case studies of young offenders showing public savings in the range of £2,371,067<sup>10</sup>. Other exciting developments based on the potential return on effective interventions with this client group include the pilot activity under way in Peterborough Prison relating to Social Impact Bonds (SIB)<sup>11</sup>. The SIB pilot is discussed further in Chapter 6.

Two further and unavoidable elements of context are the **combination of public sector funding cuts and a labour market which is struggling to recover from a serious and prolonged economic recession**. Taken together, these constitute a challenging backdrop to moving forward the city's employability offer to offenders. Whilst unemployment rates remain high, offenders are inevitably competing with a wider and larger group of people for any opportunities available. Employers - unlike a few years ago - have greater choice, and in these circumstances "less deserving" groups such as offenders are likely to find it even harder to move into work. This will increase the challenge of many providers in motivating offenders, and for some support services which are reliant on outcome based funding current circumstances may reduce their interest in supporting offenders. In the short and possibly medium term, this will be a reality of the landscape in Glasgow.

The reality of **public sector funding cuts** is now well understood, with the most significant phase of these to date impacting on service provision from April 2011.

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<sup>10</sup> [http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/spsw/research/neet/NEET\\_Final\\_Report\\_July\\_2010\\_York.pdf](http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/spsw/research/neet/NEET_Final_Report_July_2010_York.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.justice.gov.uk/news/announcement100910a.htm>

Moreover, the process of year on year cuts will continue for some time. The consequence is that there will be very little or no “new money” in the system. Rather, future developments are likely to be characterised by: service redesign; doing “more for less”; deeper partnership working; service integration; and the need for ever more robustly evidenced outcomes. The findings of this research study - and their application - are particularly relevant in this scenario.

The final issue of context informs all further analysis; that **there is an unhelpful myth that the support needs of offenders are hugely distinct from those of the wider workless population**. There is an extensive body of evidence showing that the barriers they face (poor basic skills, low qualification levels, lack of work experience, health issues etc) are the same as those of many workless people. The links between deprivation and crime levels are well established, and in many of the most deprived communities a high proportion of the young male population has a criminal record with little stigma attached to this. So, the only key barrier for this particular client group relates to the admittedly sensitive issue of disclosure – particularly for those who have been in custody.

In practice, this sense of the distinct needs of offenders has led to two linked developments: limited access by offenders in the community setting to services to which they should be entitled irrespective of any status as an offender, and flowing from this the development of offender specific employability interventions. This perceived separation has been unhelpful, and certainly belongs to a more generous funding world than partners will face for the foreseeable future. This research, particularly the emerging service map, gives partners in Glasgow the opportunity to take practical action to address these issues.

### *Key conclusions*

A number of key themes are apparent from this brief review of context, and these inform our conclusions and recommendations in Chapter 6:

- It is a busy, fast changing and multi faceted context within which few issues will remain constant. A year from now the world will look very different, and inevitably, this requires that current and future actions reflect a full understanding and appreciation of the potential future landscape
- The new context contains a combination of both challenges and opportunities. Funding cuts and a continually depressed labour market are not ideal, but this scenario also demands that opportunities to work better together, maximise impact, and move further towards an integrated service offer are progressed with some urgency
- Careful consideration is needed on the degree to which offenders require dedicated and specialist services, and where the impetus should be to improve access to mainstream provision. For a variety of reasons, the balance should increasingly lean towards the latter approach, especially as criminal justice changes are likely to lead to more offenders seeking support in non-custodial, community settings

- Funding realities underline the ever increasing need for future investment to strongly evidence impact in terms of clearly defined outcomes
- There is considerable evidence of what service elements and characteristics work - this provides a good foundation from which to reflect on the service offer reviewed within the following section
- The changes across the criminal justice, employability and welfare policy domains will all impact on offenders, and how they combine and play out in practice will be central to their future prospects. Although policy level connections are increasingly recognised, translating this to operational activities and consistent service planning decisions across agencies will remain a major challenge

### **3. THE GLASGOW SERVICE MAP**

#### **3.1: Survey background**

An electronic survey was sent out to 37 contacts/organisations known to deliver services to offenders from Glasgow. A total of 21 responses were submitted, representing a return rate of 57%.

The survey gathered detailed information on the services provided to offenders both in prisons and in the community, and attempted to identify within this, those services providing “through the gate support”. A series of questions sought information on: the scale and nature of support provided; referral mechanisms and partnership working; performance measurement, and funding. It also asked service providers to comment on what changes could be made to improve learning/skills/employability outcomes for offenders, and how the employability strategic group could assist in this process.

Survey returns are capable of a variety of analyses, and within space constraints this section seeks to highlight key messages. A full copy of the survey returns has been supplied to the CJA and Glasgow Works. We have not included responses where survey answers do not highlight any obvious trend, or there are not enough responses to enable meaningful analysis.

#### **3.2: Background/profile of organisations**

Of the 21 organisations who responded to the survey, nearly half describe themselves as voluntary organisations or social enterprises, 28% as public sector organisations, and 24% as “other” (mainly comprising charitable status organisations). The respondents include the Local Regeneration Agencies, a number of colleges, some council and partnership services, offender specific and generic learning/skills/employability service providers, and community focused initiatives. A full list of respondents is included at Appendix 4.

Two thirds of organisations (14) class themselves as learning/skills/employability providers, with a third described as “other” types of organisations. 57% (12) of organisations specifically target or specialise in services to offenders. 62% (13) cover the whole of Glasgow in terms of service provision, with the remaining 8 focused on particular areas of the city. These included the Local Regeneration Agencies and a number of community focused initiatives.

Of the 21 organisations who responded, 11 provide services to offenders in prison, and of these, 9 said that they also provide support to clients in the community (although one of these provides a transitional or throughcare service for the clients they engage with in prison after their release). Of the 19 organisations which deliver services to offenders in the community, 8 said their service was part of a community based criminal justice service, with the remaining 11 engaging with offenders in the community in different ways.

### 3.3: Prison based services

11 organisations said that they provide services to offenders in prisons, fairly evenly split across Barlinnie, Polmont, Cornton Vale and other prisons in Scotland. In terms of clients supported per annum, this varies from around 10 to 800 in individual establishments depending on the nature of provision and demand/numbers engaged. Not surprisingly, the greatest number of prisoners supported is in Barlinnie, with over 1,400 clients receiving a service in 2010<sup>12</sup>. Over 470 offenders were supported in Polmont, and over 130 supported in Cornton Vale, with a further 735 receiving a service in other prisons in Scotland.

9 of the 11 organisations said that their prison based staff continued to work with their clients on release from prison.

#### *Targeting and referral*

The three main criteria used to target clients in prison are, in order: home local authority area, release date, and sentence length. For those which target by release date (8 organisations), half of the respondents indicated that this was 4-6 weeks, with the remainder indicating 8 weeks, 12 weeks or 4-6 months as target release dates. 78% said they thought that their intervention points were appropriate, though 3 providers suggested that earlier intervention might be more effective. Almost all services (10 of the 11) support short-term prisoners (serving a sentence of under 4 years). Just over half (6) provide services to long term prisoners and just under half (5) to remand prisoners. The most common referral route (cited by 73% of respondent organisations) for clients to become involved in a service is via SPS/Link Centre. Self referral is the second most common route, with other routes including other agency referrals and recommendations.

82% (9) of the 11 providers in prisons said that they would want to/are able to increase the numbers of prisoners engaging with their service. Suggestions for doing this included more appropriate referrals, widening geographic eligibility, better interagency work, more awareness raising and additional resources.

#### *Learning/skills/employability services*

5 organisations said that they provide learning/skills/employability services in prisons, covering a range of elements of support as shown below. Services which clients benefit most from are suggested as: confidence building sessions (4 of the 5 providers indicated this); literacy and numeracy support; vocational guidance; and benefits advice.

Apart from learning/skills/employability, the most common other needs that offender clients present with are overwhelmingly housing and addictions, with mental health and benefits issues also common barriers.

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<sup>12</sup> These were prisoners from across Scotland – but 76% of the Barlinnie figure were Glasgow residents

Of the 5 organisations providing learning/skills/employability services, clients tend to be within the first 3 stages of the “employability pathway”, though the proportions of clients at each stage varies across different organisations as highlighted below:

What proportion of your clients are at each of the following stages of employability?					
Employability stages	0-25%	25-50%	50-75%	75-100%	Response Count
<b>Stage 1 (chaotic lifestyle, distant from labour market)</b>	1	2	1	0	4
<b>Stage 2 (addressing lifestyle problems, committed but still far from labour market)</b>	2	0	2	0	4
<b>Stage 3 (capable of pre-vocational and vocational training)</b>	3	0	0	1	4
<b>Stage 4 (job ready)</b>	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Stage 5 (in work)</b>	1	0	0	0	1

Three of these providers felt that there were gaps in the learning/skills/employability (or throughcare) support currently provided to people from Glasgow in prison. These include: better follow up care in relation to addictions, accommodation and rehabilitation; improved engagement with offenders who have had negative learning experiences, and an improved, more standardised and consistent throughcare service from pre-release to integration within receiving communities.

### ***Partnership working and funding***

The level of partnership working within prisons was ranked by these providers as generally average to good, although with a few lower rankings. The co-ordination role of SPS in relation to learning/skills/employability services was however ranked slightly lower across the prisons. Barlinnie and Polmont were ranked the highest in these two regards by learning/skills/employability organisations.

70% of all service providers in prisons said that they work in partnership with (other) learning/skills/employability providers in prisons and these relationships were rated as either good or fair.

All but one of the organisations which provide services in prisons engage with prison-based Glasgow clients post liberation. None of these clients are required (either by prison or by court) to engage with these organisations post release. Given the voluntary nature of engagement, post release contact statistics are however encouragingly high for a number of these organisations – with the proportion of clients engaging after release ranging from 65% to over 90%<sup>13</sup>. Only 2 organisations had post release engagement rates of below 25%. Most common reasons for people not engaging are returning to chaotic lifestyles, and the pressures of peer group associations.

<sup>13</sup> As we discuss later in the report, there is no standard indicator for measuring post-liberation engagement

Providers indicated that the most common post-liberation destination for clients is unemployment, followed by training, education and lastly employment.

The Scottish Government is the most common source of funding for work to support prisoners. Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Works, EU funds and Trust Funds are also important funding streams.

Respondents were asked to suggest changes to improve learning/skills/employability services to clients returning to Glasgow from prison. The various comments include:

- Ensuring post release appointments are arranged prior to liberation
- Introducing some form of compulsion to attend relevant services after release
- An increase in the provision of 1:1 support
- Aligning funding more with projects and approaches which can clearly evidence results
- Focusing more on the development and articulation of individual support pathways
- A restructuring of all provision and a pooling of resources to enable a tendering exercise to support a comprehensive and seamless “through the gate” service

### **3.4. Community based support**

***Criminal justice services*** 8 organisations describe themselves as community based criminal justice services, providing services to: ex-prisoners released into the community; offenders serving community based sentences and young people at risk of offending. 62% of these organisations provided services to all of these groups.

All provide services to short term prisoners (serving less than 4 years); 62% provide services to long term prisoners and 38% to remand prisoners. 75% of these providers target specific offender groups, fairly evenly split across male, female and young offenders.

The most common referral routes into these services for offenders is via self referral or referral by a third party, with referral from Criminal Justice Social Work as part of a community sentence the next most common route. Half of the organisations have already been working with the clients while they have been in prison.

#### ***Learning/skills/employability support***

5 organisations indicated that they provide learning/skills/employability support to clients. Within this, a wide range of support is provided, prominently featuring literacy/numeracy support, confidence building and benefits advice as well as other vocational and job search related support. In order of client need, providers ranked confidence building sessions as the highest, followed by benefits advice, debt and money advice, and literacy and numeracy support.

The principal method for assessing client’s support needs is through the use of in-house assessment tools, though one organisation sourced this from another agency and one didn’t use an assessment tool.

Clients receiving learning/skills/employability support within the community are spread across the 5 stages of the employability pipeline, although again not surprisingly with smaller proportions at the “job ready” and “in work” stages.

What proportion of your clients are at each of the following stages of employability?					
Employability stages	0-25%	25-50%	50-75%	75-100%	Response Count
Stage 1 (chaotic lifestyle, distant from labour market)	0	0	3	2	5
Stage 2 (addressing lifestyle problems, committed but still far from labour market)	0	3	1	0	4
Stage 3 (capable of pre-vocational and vocational training)	2	0	1	0	3
Stage 4 (job ready)	4	1	0	0	4
Stage 5 (in work)	4	0	0	0	4

4 of the 5 organisations providing learning/skills/employability services said that funding eligibility prevents them from working with some offender clients. The reasons for this are generally linked to capacity limitations, funding being restricted to particular target groups, and the need to prioritise statutory requirements.

4 of these organisations indicated that they provided learning/skills/employability support to a total of (approximately) 1,100 offenders in 2009/10, with client numbers within individual providers ranging from around 100 to 500. This number is expected to be roughly the same in 2010/11, with 2 organisations expecting to either increase or decrease their numbers.

### *Other support*

Eight organisations said that they refer clients to other organisations for additional learning/skills/ employability support. The organisations listed were:

Jobcentre Plus
Local Regeneration Agencies/Glasgow Regeneration Agency
Colleges
Skills Development Scotland
Glasgow Works
ROOP
Charities for volunteering opportunities
The CIRV Academy consortium
Training Providers (eg Right Track)
Glasgow volunteer centre
Working Links
Progress 2 Work Linkup
Sencia

When asked to describe how they identified organisations providing appropriate learning/skills/employability services for their clients, 65% of organisations indicated

that they could either always or usually find these services. Only 2 of the 8 providers said that they struggled to find these services.

Staff awareness of learning/skills/employability services was generally thought to be good, with just a few organisations describing it as fair and one as excellent. None said it was poor. It was felt that awareness levels and links could be helped by more networking and information sharing to encourage improved understanding of agency links and referrals. In particular, this needed to focus on the very challenging nature of some offender groups.

As with prison based services, the major sources of funding for organisations providing services to offenders within the community are the Scottish Government, Glasgow City Council, EU and Trust Funds.

Performance is measured against a number of outcomes, with all 8 organisations including "any positive destination" (education, training or employment) as an outcome, and 75% including a "reduced level of reoffending" as an outcome against which performance is measured. Other measures include referral to an employability service and soft outcomes such as changes in attitude and readiness for work.

### ***Other services within the community***

In addition to the organisations which are community based criminal justice services, 11 organisations provide support to offenders within the community. In terms of learning/ skills/ employability support, just over half (6) of these organisations offer this support to a wide range of clients, with offenders actively targeted for particular parts. Just under half (5) have offenders using their services but do not overtly target them, although they can identify them within their management information systems. Only one organisation said that they have offenders accessing their services, but are unable to identify them within management information systems. 2 of the 11 organisations specialise in providing learning/skills/employability support to offenders.

Most of the organisations provide services to a wide range of groups, including ex-prisoners released into the community, offenders serving community sentences, young people at risk of offending, and other groups unrelated to criminal justice.

Again, the vast majority of organisations (10 of the 11 in this section) provide services to short term prisoners, with just over 50% supporting long term prisoners and 36% providing a service to remand prisoners.

Compared to community based criminal justice services, there is a slightly different pattern of referral into other community based services. As previously highlighted, self referral is again the most common route, with third party referrals and CJSW referrals also significant. Nearly 64% of the organisations are working with clients they have already been working with in prisoners - suggesting a significant aspiration to provide "through the gate" services.

Services to offenders cover a wide range of elements of support, fairly evenly spread. Literacy/numeracy support and vocational guidance the most commonly

provided services, offered by 91% of organisations. Other elements of employability support include job search and preparation activities, confidence building sessions, benefits advice, and debt and money advice. All of these are provided by at least 64% of the organisations responding. Literacy/numeracy support and jobsearch support are thought by providers to be the most important services in terms of client need. The least important were thought to be ICT skills and interview skills.

In order of frequency, apart from learning/skills/employability, most common needs clients present with are addictions, indicated by 90% of organisations, housing (70%) and mental health (60%). Debt and money problems, benefits issues and other health issues are also common needs, but presented less frequently by offender clients.

Again, most organisations use their own assessment tool to assess their offender clients' learning/skills/employability support needs. Others use a purchased assessment tool, and 2 organisations indicated that they don't use an assessment tool. Returns suggested the level of formality in assessment varies significantly; some organisations use ongoing interviews with clients whilst others prefer more structured and accredited processes.

In terms of their stages on the employability pathway, clients of these organisations are more commonly within the first 3 stages of the pathway, as before in different proportions across each stage. Of 10 organisations who responded to this question, over half were working with clients who were either job ready or in work, although these clients generally accounted for no more than 25% of their total clients.

<b>What proportion of your clients are at each of the following stages of employability?</b>					
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>0-25%</b>	<b>25-50%</b>	<b>50-75%%</b>	<b>75-100%</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
<b>Stage 1 (chaotic lifestyle, distant from labour market)</b>	2	5	3	0	10
<b>Stage 2 (addressing lifestyle problems, committed but still far from labour market)</b>	3	3	4	0	10
<b>Stage 3 (capable of pre-vocational and vocational training)</b>	4	4	2	0	10
<b>Stage 4 (job ready)</b>	7	1	0	0	8
<b>Stage 5 (in work)</b>	6	0	0	0	6

Around 1,730 offender clients in the community were supported by 9 organisations in 2009/10, ranging in caseload from around 20 to 1,000 in individual agencies. Most of these organisations expect to increase these numbers in the year 2010/11.

10 organisations said that they refer their offender clients to other organisations for additional learning/skills/employability support. In order of frequency, these include: colleges, local regeneration agencies, and agencies providing support in relation to debt and money advice.

Colleges
Local Regeneration Agencies (Glasgow wide)
Law and Money Advice /CAB /Debt and Money Advice/ Money Matters
Adult Literacy Projects /literacy and numeracy support
Venture Trust
Youthbuild ( Action for Children)
Impact Arts
Volunteer Centre
Sencia
Wisegroup
Volunteering
Momentum
Fairbridge
Glasgow Works

When asked how they would rate their working relationship with criminal justice agencies, organisations providing services to offenders in the community indicated that overall this was generally good or fair. In terms of individual services, working relationships were felt to be particularly good with Criminal Justice Social Work, with 7 organisations answering either good or excellent to this question. The Police, Scottish Prison Service and Glasgow Community Safety Services were also highlighted in terms of good or excellent working relationships.

The most common sources for funding for community based services are Glasgow Works and Glasgow City Council, followed by the Scottish Government and EU funds. 40% of organisations who responded to this question said that funding eligibility prevented them from working with some offender clients. Reasons for this included geographic eligibility, length of unemployment/benefit criteria and referral limitations.

All measured performance in terms of positive labour market destinations (education, training or employment), and 30% include a reduced level of reoffending as an outcome, or were in the process of trying to measure this as an outcome.

***In conclusion – all services***

Survey respondents were asked what changes they felt could improve working relationships between criminal justice agencies and their own organisation. A number of recurrent themes are apparent in these responses:

- Ongoing work to improve understanding and awareness across services
- Better communication and information sharing between agencies - perhaps formalised by more information sharing protocols
- Equally the need for greater clarity on cross agency referrals
- Ensuring that pre-release work with prisoners continues and is extended
- A strategic approach to funding, and more joint procurement activities. This would reduce duplication in service provision, ensure “what works” is funded, and produce better value for money

Organisations were then asked to suggest 3 changes which could improve learning/skills / employability outcomes for offenders. Common themes, some of which echo the key messages from the previous question, were:

- Improved employer engagement, promotion, and the maintenance of an employer database
- Increased awareness of the range and purpose of services available
- Improved partnership working to deliver a seamless service to offenders, providing a holistic approach which deals with the range of issues offenders may have
- The development/improvement of transition and through-care services, providing a coherent and joined up approach to the offender's journey from prison to the community
- Better information sharing between agencies relating to offenders needs, and clarity around appropriate referral routes
- Improved literacy/numeracy support to offenders
- The development of more work and training opportunities
- The development and more effective measurement of both hard and soft outcomes
- Greater focus on appreciating that for many offenders "personal stability" requires to be supported prior to the consideration of learning , skills and employability interventions

Finally, we asked how the offender employability strategic group can assist this process. A range of suggestions were identified and will be fully considered by the CJA and Glasgow Works. Common themes in responses were:

- The promotion and facilitation of networking events/mechanisms (including the potential establishment of a networking group) to enable closer partnership working, information sharing amongst agencies, and improved referral mechanisms
- Further development of the service review exercise to chart/provide an overview of the pathways through the system, identifying the cracks/gaps, and considering how to ensure that support follows the offender at all critical stages
- Increase support to employer engagement activities - promoting success and best practice
- Helping chief stakeholders (including SPS, CJA and political leaders) to agree the need for, and parameters of, a comprehensive restructure of service provision in Glasgow
- Championing and showcasing increased service integration - including co-location

In section 4 of this report, we now seek to consider the implications of the key messages from the survey returns, alongside the other information generated by the review process.

## 4. MAKING SENSE OF THE MAP – KEY FIELDWORK MESSAGES AND NEXT STEPS

### 4.1: Introduction

The previous chapter provided a snapshot of services in Glasgow. Here we complement that information and add to the emerging picture of the city's employability provision for offenders. The content presented here is drawn from our fieldwork inputs which comprise the stakeholder workshops, consultations and prison field visits.

In terms of structure, the chapter begins in the here and now, examining what currently works well and where there are reported weaknesses. It then proceeds to consider the future and to explore the opportunities and threats ahead which should be factored into the strategy group's decision making.

### 4.2: *What's already working well?*

Chapter 2 sets out the scale of the city's challenge. It underlines that fact that Glasgow has a higher number of prisoners per capita than any other part of Scotland. It also shows that a high proportion of these prisoners have short term sentences and high rates of recidivism. Sadly, this is a long standing problem which has drawn upon public sector resources for many years.

However, as a consequence the strategy group does not face this problem with a blank sheet of paper. There are a great many strengths to build upon and in terms of what is already working well across the city, the study fieldwork has particularly identified the following:

- Strategic framework

The establishment of a cross-city partnership with a focus on offender employability is widely perceived to be a city strength. Through the forum of the offender employability strategy group, there is scope for the city's key partners with an interest in this group to work more effectively together. Although still at a relatively early stage, the commissioning of this study is a signal of the group's commitment and ambitions. The fact that it is chaired by an elected member is also widely perceived to be an important asset.

- Consensus on the core problem

In Chapter 2 we describe the city's offender statistics. From this, it is evident that the biggest challenge is the high reoffending rates and the phenomenon of young men being recycled between prison and the city's most disadvantaged communities. In particular, the prevalence of short sentences presents a significant challenge around engaging with these clients whilst they are in prison. As a consequence, in relation to employability, much of the learning and skills offer within the SPS estate is only available to those on longer sentences (four years and more) whilst repeat offenders in the revolving door between prison and communities are often recycled without

any meaningful support.

Only long term prisoners and those under license receive statutory throughcare support and although others are offered it the take up levels of voluntary throughcare remain small. CJSW managers admit relief to this as any increase in uptake would stretch their limited resources even further. At the same time, SACRO indicate that they ideally need a twelve month period to work effectively with a client. Again, this level of support is not available to the majority of offenders re-entering communities – nor is it likely to be.

There is a growing consensus that this is the central problem to address. Significantly, there is also an acknowledgment that reducing re-offending rates is the overall goal, with employability as an important contributory factor towards this. For unless an individual has addressed his offending behaviour, sustained employment is not a sustainable outcome, although improved employability can be a contributory factor in raising desistance levels.

- Range, scale and quality of provision

A clear message coming through the fieldwork is that Glasgow is relatively well served in terms of employability provision for offenders. Although far from a perfectly co-ordinated service, there is an awareness for example within the two 'national' prison establishments (Polmont and Cornton Vale), that Glasgow prisoners have access to a much wider range of support than most other prisoners.

The previous chapter gives a good indicator of this, showing that across the city there is a mix of provision delivered by a wide range of organisations. Within this there is a good mix of specialist and generic interventions. Amongst the latter the city has a number of providers who are highly aware of this client group (i.e. John Wheatley College and the Wise Group) alongside others whose universal approach means that they have no grasp of the scale and effectiveness of work with these clients.

On the eve of April 2011, when many of the funding reductions begin to bite, there is a sense that this snapshot of provision is likely to alter in the near future. Already there have been announcements of significant cutbacks within public sector bodies and contract reductions and mergers in the voluntary sector. So although Glasgow remains relatively well placed, the service map will certainly be affected (although we note the confident tone of many of the organisations responding to the survey). Many anticipate that in the employability field, the trend will be away from dedicated provision for particular client groups towards higher expectations that mainstream providers will be better equipped to meet the needs of all clients.

- Significant resources

Estimating the total amount of funding supporting the employability of offenders in Glasgow has been beyond the scope of this assignment. However, the responses in Chapter 2 indicate the range of funders investing

in the employability skills of offenders. Again, some of this is specific to this client group whilst other funding has a wider focus, but encompasses these clients. This reinforces the important point that often the employability barriers and support needs of offenders mirror those of the city's wider workless population – low self esteem, low qualification levels, literacy and numeracy problems and fragmented work histories.

Within the discussion about the use of mainstream employability funds to support offenders are important questions about the Work Programme which we have already mentioned. However, it is evident that apart from mainstream funds to support workless clients across the city, there are also significant resources specifically targeting offenders which include Glasgow City Council/GCC, GCC CJSW contracts and trust funds – most notably from the Big Lottery Fund and the Robertson Trust. There are also specific ESF funds within a number of projects and a new tranche of structural fund monies about to be approved under the Priority 5 programme which makes specific reference to the need to improve employability outcomes for this group.

- Partnership collaboration and innovative practice

Our fieldwork has identified partnership working as one of the city's strengths in providing employability support to offenders. Again, the mapping survey provides evidence of this, showing that collaboration is the norm. Beneath these impressive figures, there are mixed reports of partnership work, where some organisations have much better reputations than others. So although there is much to celebrate, the picture is far from perfect – and as we discuss below there remain significant structural and behavioural barriers to be overcome.

A number of drivers underpin the improvement in partnership activity. One is the widespread acknowledgment that the complex support needs of offender clients require a multi-agency approach. There is now an established body of evidence about the range of these support needs and the survey reflects this, with housing, addictions support and debt management all prevalent issues. Few organisations would claim to be able to meet all of these needs directly, and our map shows the sophisticated network of linked provision that has evolved as a consequence.

At this point it is important to note that within this hierarchy of support needs employability is only one factor. For although being in work has been identified as a key factor in desistance<sup>14</sup> the move towards employment cannot take place until other needs are met. Frequently, accommodation is identified as the primary factor in this process, and we discuss this more fully below.

A second driver is the commissioning power of some funders targeting this client group. As we know, behaviour follows funding, and in Glasgow we have seen good examples around the offender agenda where funders have

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<sup>14</sup> For example Social Exclusion Unit " Breaking the Cycle" (1999) and McNeill F et alia "Reducing Re-offending: key practice skills" (2005)

influenced delivery relationships. It is interesting to see that it is the trust funds – with the Robertson Trust and Big Lottery to the fore – which have had the greatest impact here. By requiring providers – often from the third sector – to meaningfully collaborate they have catalysed delivery relationships through a number of models including Routes out of Prison (RooP), Passport, Moving On and Plan B.

This relatively new generation of interventions has also introduced a number of innovations and this willingness to try new approaches has also been identified as one of the city's strengths. In this respect Glasgow has benefited from the legacy of Equal Access which provided a catalyst for cross-sectoral working that continues today and which includes tangible assets including the Bridging Service. This service, primarily linking employability, health and care has the potential to further strengthen the links with Justice.

The city has also learned from others, transplanting effective interventions developed elsewhere. A good example of this is the work with young gang members delivered by GCSS. Another important stimulus for innovation has been the trust fund presence in the city. The Big Lottery Fund Scotland has supported a wide range of new approaches in this area – most notably RooP – and it continues to focus on youth offending as a priority. In addition, the Robertson Trust continues to be hugely influential – well beyond its size – and has supported a series of exemplary work in this area. Both have made a valuable contribution to this study through sharing their knowledge and expertise.

- Understanding of what works

The issue of offender employability is unusual in several respects. First of all, the root causes are well understood – which is not always the case. Second, and even more unusually, we also understand what works. This begs the question of why we have not solved the problem – but we return to this later in our report!

At this stage it is enough to note that there is now a growing evidence base which points to a series of characteristics of good practice in successful community resettlement, reduced re-offending levels, and employability progress. In the following chapter we explore this more closely, and amongst those key features of successful work we can identify:

- Effective co-ordination and communications between support agencies in prisons and the community
- Early intervention prior to liberation
- The offer of a holistic support service – including housing and health
- The value of a trusted one-to-one relationship which continues 'through the gate'
- Support offered to families

These features echo the characteristics of good practice cited in Chapter 2 which were drawn from the Scottish Government offender learning and skills workstreams.

## *What's not working so well?*

It is encouraging that this work has identified such a robust set of strengths which are being mobilised across the city. However, the scale of the problem relating to offender employability remains significant – as we have shown – and stakeholders are clear that despite these strengths, significant scope for improvement remains. In fact the data speaks for itself in this respect.

In this section we identify and briefly discuss the key development issues which have been raised within this study.

- Failure to reduce reoffending rates

Despite the range and scale of interventions designed to promote offender employability there has been little impact on reoffending rates. At an individual project level – as we discuss in Chapter 6 – there is evidence that reoffending rates amongst participants is falling and that employability has played a role in this. However, the numbers going through these programmes are not yet significant at a city level and may never be. In future it will be difficult to scale up these intensive approaches, given budget constraints, and the direction of travel may be more focused on quick intensive front end activity leading into better mainstream provision.

- Lack of shared strategic vision

Although we note the establishment of the offender employability strategy group as a strength, it is a relatively new structure which has yet to produce a shared strategic vision for the city in terms of offender employability. It is evident that despite (or because of) the involvement of a number of major organisations in this agenda, there is no shared plan for the city and no agreed set of targets. Furthermore, the respective roles and responsibilities of these key players at both the strategic and operational level is unclear and this has been identified as a current shortfall by many of our consultees.

We note that parallel to this process, work is being undertaken as part of the 'One Glasgow' model to co-ordinate efforts to tackle youth offending. Whilst there is a risk that this further fragments the picture, there is also an opportunity to strengthen the strategic partnership either by aligning these processes or by ensuring that there is read across them.

- Structural barriers

We have already noted that the journey from prison to successful and sustained community resettlement requires a wide range of support. However, despite improvements in partnership working, publicly-funded services are often structured in ways that do not always encourage joined-up client-centred approaches. A number of examples of this have been identified as key blockers to progress in this area.

One important factor for providers of employability services is the culture of output-related funding. This model provides financial rewards for supporting

clients into agreed outcomes – usually education, training or employment. The rationale is to drive efficiency and provide incentives for service providers to progress clients as quickly as possible. A key feature of New Labour’s welfare reforms (most notably in the New Deal Programmes), this model is now widely applied across welfare to work programmes. The Coalition intends to take this principle further when it introduces the Work Programme in the summer of 2011<sup>15</sup>.

This model has important implications for the people who are the focus of this report. Firstly, they tend to be far from the labour market with significant barriers to address before they are ready for employment. Consequently, they are not attractive to providers looking to move people quickly into work in order to claim the financial incentives. There are concerns that as the Work Programme moves us towards an even greater focus on outcomes, that these clients will be further disadvantaged.

It is important to note however that not all models work this way. In Glasgow the DWP City Strategy Pathfinder (Glasgow Works) pioneered a model with a greater focus on the engagement and progression of clients. This approach also tried to address one of the other structural weaknesses of current funding. This is where providers hang on to clients rather than referring them to agencies which are better placed to support them. Providers do this through fear of losing the future outcome payment attached to them.

As well as introducing a payment model whereby providers were paid at several progress stages, Glasgow Works also sought to recognise the role of other providers in the employability journey. However, despite its undoubted achievements in this area, Glasgow has not managed to instil universal behaviour change and as a consequence not all organisations adopt the client-centred approach which offenders require even more than most. Across the city this remains work in progress.

Another structural issue relating to funding is the widespread use of eligibility rules for clients. Consequently, services are not universally available and individuals are required to meet varying criteria – most notably relating to residence and benefit status. This work clearly shows that organisations whose primary focus is not employability – for example Criminal Justice Social Work (CJSW) – find this confusing and frustrating.

- Lack of clarity and mutual misunderstanding

The funding eligibility issue is also a good example of the cultural faultlines between professional working in the Justice and Employability domains. Although it might be seen as unhelpful to segment the support offer in this way, there is clearly scope for professionals in the respective fields to collaborate more effectively. This does not mean that those working in Justice require a detailed working knowledge of every aspect of employability or vice versa. But in two notoriously complex arenas it does mean that more

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<sup>15</sup> The Work Programme in Scotland will be delivered via 2 Prime Contractors whose identity remains unknown. Glasgow will form part of one of the two Scottish sub-regions.

than a basic knowledge is required. It also implies that staff on both sides have to make a concerted effort around this.

Again, it is important not to overlook the progress already achieved. Mutual understanding has improved thanks to interventions including the awareness-raising work conducted by Equal Access and staff collocation work like that undertaken by some LRAs<sup>16</sup>. However, our fieldwork underlines the fact that improving joint-understanding remains work in progress.

For staff working in Justice, in addition to confusion around client eligibility, other issues raised have included:

- o Knowing which agencies do what well – when so many seem to offer the same service
- o Trusting providers not to fast-track clients into unsustainable outcomes
- o Keeping track of ongoing developments – such as the Work Programme
- o Referring clients on to other agencies but receiving no feedback on their progress

On the other hand, staff working in employability settings have explained that they often struggle with:

- o Understanding the justice system and the range of disposals in place<sup>17</sup>
- o Gathering accurate and reliable information on prospective clients
- o Keeping track of justice developments – such as the introduction of Community Payback Orders

An important aspect relating to collaboration is clarity around respective roles and responsibilities. Recent experience within the Bridging Service is of value here as it underlines how long these attitudinal shifts take and also provides specific examples of what might go wrong. One of these which is pertinent to the offender agenda relates to the experience of referrals from Addictions staff which was identified in the Bridging Services evaluation.

This showed that although there had been high levels of referrals from the Addictions service, there were also high attrition rates with large numbers of clients failing to show for Bridging Service appointments. Unpacking this issue showed that Addictions staff had been strongly encouraged to make employability referrals with a clear signal that this would form part of their performance appraisal. This had a number of consequences; clients were referred in large numbers – often when they were not yet ready and at times without fully understanding what they had been referred to. With hindsight it was not surprising that many defaulted<sup>18</sup>.

There is a risk that the same mistakes are repeated in this arena, with a very similar (in fact often the same) client group. To avoid this, CJSW and other

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<sup>16</sup> Further details of both initiatives are contained in Chapter 5

<sup>17</sup> A process map showing the justice referral process is attached as Appendix 6

<sup>18</sup> We are also mindful that attendance rates for most services amongst addictions clients – as for offenders – are often low

referring staff must be better supported to understand when clients are ready to take that step. They must also understand that the referral process is not an end in itself, and work will be required to ensure that there is a feedback loop so that the outcome of referrals is shared and understood by all key players.

- Poor data and tracking problems

This study has identified significant challenges relating to data and management information.

A useful way into this is to consider a recent survey snapshot conducted by Jobcentre Plus. From a spot check of 150 prisoners released from Barlinnie in the summer of 2010 they found that 33% had re-offended and were back in prison, 65% remained in the community on benefits and 2% were in employment. There was no evidence that any of these clients had moved into education or training.

The employment outcomes correspond with earlier JCP data used in the workstream reports, with a reported rate of 2%. However, it is surprising to find that wider outcome rates were so low – particularly in the light of the good news stories generated by projects working in the prison.

Overall, this information underlines some of the structural weaknesses relating to data in this complex area and in particular we would point to four specific problems which require attention.

The first is the lack of real-time reliable data on re-offending rates. At present, the most recent re-offending rates date back to 2007/8 and the time lag between this national data makes it difficult to gauge the impact of current interventions. A number of organisations – amongst them the Robertson Trust and the Glasgow CJA – have been pushing the need to address this problem through discussions with the Scottish Government and other stakeholders.

The second issue is the lack of an agreed set of performance indicators against which project activity can be assessed. For example, there is no universally agreed measure to record community engagement with an ex-prisoner after the point of liberation. As a result, the variation in methodology amongst organisations makes it impossible to gauge the relative effectiveness of different models in this important operational area.

We note that in the survey providers are claiming post-liberation engagement rates of between 65 and 90% for offenders who are not under statutory orders. The available evaluation evidence with reliable data suggests that these figures are highly unusual which underlines the fact that there are no agreed definitions for a number of important indicators in this field. For example, Access to Industry define post-liberation engagement as three separate meetings with one of their project workers whereas other organisations will define it as one telephone call. Unless some of these inconsistencies are addressed it will remain difficult to compare the relative impact and effectiveness of interventions across the city.

The third issue relates to the challenges of tracking many of the clients in

question once released back into the community. Unless they are subject to a statutory supervision order it is notoriously difficult to keep track of their activity patterns post-liberation. Again, this presents practical challenges both in terms of providing support and for measuring the effectiveness of any interventions.

Linked to this is the final issue which relates to information sharing between agencies. Again, in the absence of a statutory requirement, data sharing arrangements between key service providers are often weak. For example, there is no central point in the city where advance information on prisoners about to be released is sent. In practice this means that we still have people released back into the community without sufficient preparation either for them or for their prospective support agencies. There are also examples from our prison focus groups where communication breakdown between agencies has led to prisoners losing their housing tenancies.

- Patchy support for families

We have already referred to the importance of providing support to families and in Chapter 5 we say more about the interventions through which this is provided. The feedback relating to women prisoners underlines the importance of this, but projects such as RooP have had an integrated family support component from the start available to all clients.

However, stakeholder feedback indicates that support to families across the city is uneven and that there remains scope to improve this aspect of services.

- Limited employer engagement – and shortage of job opportunities

Clearly, the current economic downturn has placed additional pressure on those looking for work in the city. Glasgow has fewer jobs than in recent times and there is increased competition for those opportunities. In this environment offenders are disadvantaged both through their typical profile (low education and skills etc) and by the stigma of their offending status amongst many employers.

Our fieldwork process captured widespread acknowledgement of these issues. On the supply side, service providers recognised that few employers have been actively engaged in this agenda, although there have been notable exceptions such as the commitment of the Marriott Hotel Group in relation to female offenders. We discuss this further in Chapter 5 together with a wider reflection on the scope to engage employers more effectively.

Prisoners are also keenly aware of these issues. Our focus group discussions generated a number of well-established issues around work – such as the need to earn more than benefits will provide<sup>19</sup>. They also underlined client perceptions about the relative availability of work in what they perceived as

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<sup>19</sup> Although planned changes to the benefits system will make staying on benefits a harder option

desirable (i.e., construction) and undesirable (Hospitality, Retail, call centres) sectors. Also, it was notable amongst young offenders that those most confident about finding employment post-release hoped to do so either through a family business or through family networks.

- Lack of social enterprise/entrepreneurship opportunities

A recurring question in the current economic climate is 'Where will the jobs come from?' This is a challenge for the city as a whole, but it is a particularly difficult issue for these clients. In addition to the characteristics of the wider workless population, they have the additional issue of disclosure to deal with, and the reality that in a market with few jobs there is a risk that they will be deemed 'less-deserving' than other job-seekers.

Given these labour market barriers, the opportunity to be self-employed or to engage in social enterprise is an alternative avenue to financial self-reliance. However, at present there is a very limited offer within the prison estate and much of the employability support framework is predicated upon clients becoming employees rather than setting up on their own.

#### *Looking ahead what opportunities are there?*

As part of the scanning activity conducted during the fieldwork, we have identified a number of opportunities in relation to offender employability as follows.

- Less money

It may seem counterintuitive to identify reduced funding as an opportunity. However, stakeholders identified two related ways in which tighter budgets may provide opportunities. Firstly, it may further encourage organisations to collaborate more (although it may also have the opposite effect) and secondly it should focus commissioners' attention on strengthening the evidence base. Only through doing this can we be sure that limited funds are being invested in the most effective way.

- Organisational restructuring

Like most cities, Glasgow's structures are subject to constant evolution and change. The current climate is one where the scale of transition is particularly acute and from 2011/12 there will be significant structural developments which will affect key players including Glasgow City Council, the LRAs and NHS Glasgow. Although the scale of this shift will have disadvantages, there will also be positive prospects as a consequence. For example, the merging of the LRAs into a single regeneration agency should support their role as a key player in relation to this agenda.

At the same time it is worth mentioning that changes within CJSW will also offer opportunities, most notably through the appointment of a new service head who has a good grasp of and a commitment to improving employability outcomes for offenders.

Finally, the change process continues within the SPS estate. There, significant

investment programmes have improved facilities including those used to support employability. In addition, key personnel changes – at least in Barlinnie and Polmont – provide additional grounds for optimism that partnership work with the prison establishments will continue to build on established good relationships. The Changing Lanes project – discussed in Chapter 5 – provides an example of something to build on. There is also an important debate taking place about the need to prioritise employability support within prisons to which Glasgow partners can make a contribution.

- Policy changes – CPOs and Work Programme

The introduction of new service models driven by national policy change are another source of optimism, although again this is not unreserved. Our primary focus is on the ‘through the gate’ experience, but the aspiration to jail fewer people and the emergence of CPOs are seen as a major opportunity to improve employability outcomes. In the case of CPOs the devil will be in the detail, but the scope for employability support accounting for up to 30% of the order is one which has meaningful potential. However, there is an awareness of the need to ring-fence some incubation space for partners to collaborate on the CPO design if this potential is to be realised.

On another front we have already made several references to the introduction of the Work Programme. Currently, as the DWP finalises the model and the procurement process, it is too early to gauge the impact of this with any certainty. What is clear is that a high proportion of offenders will come within the scope of the Work Programme so the Primes and their partners will have to deal with this. Whether they do so by ‘parking’ clients or by really addressing their support needs remains to be seen.

What is clearer at this point is that exceptions have already been made for prisoners with a current understanding that they will have early entry to the Programme from the point of 51 days – rather than 6 months – of unemployment. However, there is ongoing pressure to reduce this further – ideally so that prisoners are eligible from day one of their release.

However, it is worth noting that early access to the Work Programme would have pros and cons for this group. On the one hand it would enable those committed to moving on to avoid waiting 50+ days before they can start. However, for those who are less committed, early programme access would also mean early instigation of sanctions if they do not comply. As the statistics suggest that the second group is larger than the first, the benefits of arguing for early entry need careful consideration.

- Glasgow’s focus on young offenders

Although we have noted the lack of a shared strategic framework as a weakness, Glasgow’s growing focus on the problem of young offenders may provide a rallying point for collaboration. Parallel to this study, the city’s Community Planning Partnership (CPP) is facilitating a process under the banner of One Glasgow which has identified tackling youth offending as one of three city priorities.

This can only assist the plans of the offender employability strategy group, and we return to consider this further towards the end of this report.

- A time for innovation

We have already referenced the innovation taking place around offender employability and breaking the cycle of re-offending will require partners to take risks and introduce new ideas. A further stimulus to this may come from the agenda being set by the UK Ministry of Justice which is exploring a range of new mechanisms to address the reoffending problem.

The most high profile example of these is currently the Social Impact Bond (SIB) being piloted in Peterborough Prison. Details are provided in the following chapter but it is interesting to note that the innovative aspect of this is not the delivery model (which reflects earlier criteria of good practice) but the financial mechanism. Through the SIB, funding comes from philanthropic investors who will make gains provided agreed targets are achieved. In this way the risk has been transferred from the public purse to these third parties. Also, running over a six year period will provide a degree of stability for voluntary sector providers.

It is far too early to say how effective this model will be. What is clear however is the MOJ's signal – set out in its recent Green Paper<sup>20</sup> – that new approaches to this chronic problem are required. This speaks of a 'rehabilitation revolution' and it sets out an ambitious programme to live up to this billing.

### *And what's ahead that we might worry about?*

As we would expect, several of the opportunities cited above are also seen as carrying potential threats. As we have noted, less funding may further discourage collaboration between organisations even more desperate to attract and retain clients. In addition, it has already led to the loss of skills and experience within key partner organisations (for example CJSW) as staff numbers reduce. It may also mean the loss of entire services, as voluntary sector agencies struggle to meet their costs.

The organisational changes we have described may bring benefits, but inevitably they will also create a period of disruption and confusion as new structures bed in and staff changes take place. Often at such times the relationships between organisations which are key to effective working with such complex clients suffer in the short term as a result.

A third and final area of concern is around the impact the wider policy changes will have on the clients. For example, there is no doubt that proposed welfare changes (for example to Housing Benefit and ESA) will have a profound impact on them. Each will react differently to this changing environment. Although we would hope that some will be more inclined to consider taking up paid employment, others may take another path and deduce that there is an even greater incentive to continue

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/docs/breaking-the-cycle.pdf>

their offending behaviour. Again, only time will tell as these changes unfold in the coming months.

## **5: EMERGING/GOOD PRACTICE AND WHAT IT CAN TEACH US**

### **5.1: Introduction**

The underlying aim of this report is to support the offender employability strategy group to improve outcomes for offenders. To this end, the earlier parts of the report have analysed the data, provided a map of interventions and considered the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats affecting the city. In this penultimate chapter we add a final input through a focus on good practice in offender employability and what it can teach us.

We have already referenced some of the good practice characteristics which have already been associated with successful work in this field. We have also mentioned some of the organisations supporting and delivering this work in the city. In this Chapter we consider this work in greater detail. Also, we widen our scope beyond the city to include other approaches which may be of value to the strategy group. However, the scale of the project has meant that this aspect of our review has been somewhat limited, and confined either to projects that we are aware of or that others have recommended.

In terms of format, rather than focus on specific organisations we have structured this Chapter thematically. This has meant highlighting an aspect of good practice and then referring to organisations which have employed it within their model.

### **5.2: Good practice approaches in working with offenders through the gate**

#### **5.2.1 Early intervention in prison – and sustaining it through the gate**

In each of the 3 prison focus groups we have spoken with prisoners who on the point of imminent release have had little or no employability support and have no idea where to find it in the community. This is clearly far from ideal and it underlines the fact that although there is excellent work going on there are still many gaps.

We have also noted elsewhere in the report that a small minority of prisoners receive statutory support from CJSW.

Fortunately, there is now a number of projects which seek to make contact and build the relationship with the client prior to their liberation. In many cases this will start at the point six weeks prior to release, where prisoners will be offered this support service – provided they are eligible. The Routes out of Prison and Passport projects provide this model whilst further afield it is also a feature of the St Giles Trust work in greater London and the Daedelus project in Felltham YOI delivered by Rathbone. In each case, building the relationship prior to release reduces the uncertainty around the liberation process and it also provides a conduit into a wider range of services.

The Moving On project – funded by the Robertson Trust – takes the early intervention principle even further. This pilot targets offenders in Polmont from Renfrewshire and the model involves making the connection with the prisoner from the induction stage. To date, young men using this service have a return to prison rate of 32% which is considerably less than the average<sup>21</sup>. The fact that Moving On engages with them from the start is identified as one of its key strengths, as a high proportion of young prisoners offered the service take it up. The day 1 intervention point was highlighted as a key feature by a senior SPS official in Polmont who noted that:

“If you make the link at the six week stage they’ve done their time. They’ve toughened up and they feel that they’ve done it alone – so they don’t see the need as much. But if you get them at the start – especially the first timers – you have a much better chance of getting close to them.”

### 5.2.2 Trusted relationships and peer support models

There is a considerable body of evidence relating to the importance of the personal adviser/keyworker in supporting disadvantaged people along the employability journey. The importance of a trusted and consistent relationship is particularly important for offenders, and a number of successful projects have built their approach around this model. As well as Moving On, the Passport project has also done this, with impressive results. Building on its success with other clients, Passport has been working with Glasgow clients in Polmont since March 2010 and during this period 95% of clients offered the service have engaged, 88% have continued to engage on release and 35% have moved into positive destinations<sup>22</sup>.

Another important dimension to the role of the trusted adviser is to employ ex-offenders in that role. There are some clear advantages to such a model, particularly when credibility is such an important issue for those working with these clients. In Scotland the Wise Group has pioneered this approach through the RooP project which is operating across a number of SPS establishments including Barlinnie, Polmont and Cornton Vale.

The principle of peer support is at the heart of the RooP project and the evaluation<sup>23</sup> notes its value to project participants, one of whom noted:

*“I think that it is good that he is an ex-offender as well as he is a good example of what I can do and I know that unlike maybe other services he really wants to help me and that is all that he really wants to do.”*

The RooP evaluation does not provide full programme data on reoffending rates so it is not possible to compare the effectiveness of this model against other approaches, although a new evaluation is imminent which may provide this data.

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<sup>21</sup> “Moving On” Renfrewshire Young Offender Throughcare project: Evaluation of the first two years - Nugent B October 2010. (We have shown that in Glasgow the rate for young men is 57% after 2 years)

<sup>22</sup> Positive destinations defined as education, employment or training and community engagement defined as 3 meetings with their project worker post-liberation

<sup>23</sup> Draft final report of the RooP project: Whyte B et alia May 2009

However, the peer-support model is also at the core of another high profile intervention with offenders delivered by the St Giles Trust in London. Primarily a housing-support agency, St Giles provides a support service to prisoners which is delivered by a team composed of 50% ex-offenders. Again, it has not been possible to access data on re-offending rates but the organisation has a strong track record and is central to the SIB pilot being delivered at Peterborough Prison.

### 5.2.3: Offering a holistic service – and the key role of housing

Although our primary focus has been employability, it is evident that offenders have other support issues which must be addressed before any serious thoughts of the labour market can take place. As a front line social worker told us:

“Employability is important but it has its place. Sorting their housing is the key thing – but it’s not always easy. Getting them home is the best option but that’s sometimes not an option. Probation hostels are the worst – they’re like mini prisons...”

An equally powerful message came from a prisoner aged 21 who has already been in Polmont six times. From his experience:

“You’re gonna be out in five weeks and then there’s a change and before you know it you’re in a hostel in a place you don’t know, surrounded by junkies and with £56 in your pocket. It’s no long before you’re back in here...”

In the support models which operate effectively, workers provide a holistic support model which involves liaising with the key resettlement agencies. Feedback suggests that navigating the housing labyrinth is beyond many offenders and the Moving On evaluation cites the observation of a housing officer who notes young people’s reluctance to ask for help around this issue – and the important role of a mediation service like that one. We also see the St Giles service with housing as the keystone service around which all of the other interventions are built.

Both of the de facto national prisons pose particular problems around housing in particular and community reintegration overall. Liberated prisoners from Polmont are often young men returning to unstable home environments as we have seen and the challenge of geography adds an additional difficulty for any service provision. This is particularly the case where issues of territoriality are in the mix. As a consequence, a holistic personalised service offer which encompasses housing is a real asset.

For women prisoners – most of whom are in Cornton vale – the housing issue is equally acute. As we see in the next chapter, a number of the focus group participants had lost tenancies despite being in prison for short sentences and for many their priority is to reunite families and re-establish a regular home life. Again, being so far from the city adds an additional pressure on the provision of a tailored service which can meet the needs of female prisoners.

### 5.2.4: Shifting the financial risk

One of the questions arising from this work is how we can find resources to support prisoner employability at a time of shrinking public sector budgets. Although it is too early to judge its effectiveness, the eye catching boldness of the Peterborough Prison pilot is worth exploring. As we have already said, here the innovation is not in the form of the intervention (led by St Giles Trust) but in the funding model.

This consists of a support package of around £5 million provided by a basket of organisations including BIG, the Fairbairn Foundation, the Monument Trust and the Barrow Cadbury Charitable Trust. Through a deal brokered by Social Finance, the model hinges on a guarantee from the MOJ that investors will share in the savings to the public purse if re-offending rates drop by 7.5% over the 6 year period.

During this time, partners will provide support to 500 prisoners per annum, most of whom will be resettled in the local Peterborough area. An important part of the resettlement package is the agreement of local facilities – including shops and post offices – to carry reminders and contact information about the service. The idea is that any lapsed participants within the community will easily be able to re-engage.

#### 5.2.5: Involving employers and links to real jobs

In the previous paragraph we noted employer's wariness to recruit employees, the sensitive issue of disclosure and the real danger that in the current climate even fewer offenders proceed into employment. As we have also noted from the Jobcentre Plus data, the flow of ex-prisoners into work is already very small.

However, there is an established record of employers providing opportunities to employees. For example, the current MOJ Green Paper refers to some of the good practice examples where strong relationships have been established between employers and specific prisons. Amongst these it mentions Calpac UK's relationship with HMP Kirkham and the collaboration between Travis Perkins and Ford Open Prison.

There is also the example of the Marriott Hotel group which through the Employer Coalitions in North East England and in Scotland has provided a good role model for others. The former has seen the establishment of an industrial kitchen being installed in Durham Prison together with a range of traineeships for prisoners which have led to employment in the company's hotels.

In Scotland the company has provided opportunities to young people and to women offenders. The latter has involved delivery of their 'Spirit to Serve' programme in Cornton Vale which has led to a number of these women finding employment at the company's hotel in Glasgow. Feedback from Marriott staff suggests that more could be made of this experience and that the company's role could be utilised more effectively to tackle prejudices and to attract other employers.

#### 5.2.6: Shared spaces for professional development – learning through doing

In the previous chapter we referred to the challenges of cross agency working and to some of the difficulties professional staff face when engaging with other sectors. Of course there is a great deal of ongoing partnership work which is ongoing and

where by stealth people are learning about other's work culture and models every day.

Within all this good practice we would draw attention to two specific interventions which we believe are particularly important. The first is the Changing Lanes pilot, designed by SDS and delivered by SPS staff working in close partnership with SDS, Jobcentre Plus and the LRAs. A number of important learning points emerge from this model. One of these is the active involvement in SPS staff of the programme's delivery. Prison officers have a unique relationship with prisoners and they occupy a key influencing role. Hitherto this has been implied but through the Changing Lanes model we can see how their knowledge and capacity can be usefully mobilised.

The other important dimension of Changing Lanes is the way in which it has provided a platform for close collaboration between SPS staff and the LRAs. Here we have seen LRA staff working out of prison for the first time and we have also witnessed SPS officers going through the gate to shadow LRA colleagues in the field. As well as being symbolically important, this may really help address the issue of residents disappearing from communities without any information only to reappear from prison months later – by which time the community reintegration task is significantly tougher. It is also a breakthrough to see prison officers working outside establishments – even in this modest way. Building on this will help address some of the historical difficulties attached to their role ending firmly at the gate<sup>24</sup>.

The other notable example under this heading also involves the LRAs. In one example, GERA has collocated a member of its Bridging Services team within the CJSW offices on a full time basis. As a consequence, there has been an increase in the rate of referrals but perhaps more importantly a much stronger trusted relationship with the CJSW team where the GERA staff member is now widely seen as 'one of us.' However, we are aware that other LRAs have been less successful with such collocation attempts so there a number of factors (personalities, office chemistry, management model, communication protocols etc) will have a bearing on this.

### 5.2.7: The role of the college sector

The role of the college sector – actual and potential – is another important issue arising from this work. Through the Passport Programme<sup>25</sup> we can see that engaging prisoners on courses pre-release is an attractive model. Again this revolves around the importance of the relationship with college staff occupying a key role. From the client perspective having this introduction to college life is less daunting than approaching an education institution from cold.

We can also see the potential importance of community colleges through the work undertaken by John Wheatley College. Located in the East End, the college has a long standing record both in providing opportunities for female offenders returning

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<sup>24</sup> The Robertson Trust plans to launch a pilot in Aberdeen Prison which will further explore the role of prison officers providing support beyond the gate

<sup>25</sup> Through Passport, prisoners embark on college courses during their sentence, with college staff (from local institutions) delivering course content in the establishment. This builds their confidence as students and ideally aims to support access into college post-release

from Cornton vale to the area. It has an officer based in the prison and has run a number of courses targeting this client group from its campuses in Easterhouse and Shettleston. However, the college reports that the direction of travel within the FE sector – towards formal accredited courses – discourages the type of access provision likely to initially engage these students. It also notes that community colleges have been particularly badly hit by the latest round of funding cuts<sup>26</sup>. At the same time, Access to Industry has found colleges less receptive to their offender clients as competition for places intensifies.

The final aspect relating to colleges – though not a good practice issue concerns the SPS LSE contract. The current one is split between Motherwell and Carnegie with a new model due to be introduced in the coming weeks. Across Scotland this national contract has acted as a deterrent to many local colleges who see little logic in trying to compete for business with these players. This is obviously unhelpful and one of the key issues which the strategy group may wish to consider in future is the potential role of the city's colleges in supporting offender employability.

### 5.2.8 The importance of literacy and numeracy support

The service map returns highlight both the perceived significance of literacy and numeracy support in supporting offenders (rated as one of the biggest single support areas in both the prison and custodial settings) , and also the range of organisations that currently offer this type of support. This reflects a commitment to ensure the needs of offenders are included in the wider support offer within the Community Learning Partnership's Glasgow Adult Literacy Strategic Plan 2008-11. Evidence that this support has been targeted in practice are clear in survey returns with 2 organisations (both Colleges), 4 criminal justice focused community services, and 9 non criminal justice community services all indicating they offered some form of literacy and numeracy support to offenders.

Of particular note is the Glasgow Literacies Link Project (ALLP) which has been in operation since October 2007. This provides "across the gate" support to offenders returning to the city from Barlinnie, Polmont, Cornton Vale - and more recently - Greenock prison. The approach of the project demonstrates many of the features of good practice suggested elsewhere in this report: initial engagement within the custodial setting; practical support on and after release; and linking/signposting offenders to a range of community based literacy and numeracy services. Critically, the project recognises the importance of ensuring holistic support is provided to offenders by connecting to other key supports such as housing, addictions and benefits advice services. Getting this latter element right has been central to ensuring sustained engagement by participants.

A further interesting development, which may have the potential to improve prison to post prison links literacy and numeracy supports, is the introduction of the use of the Scottish Qualification and Credits Framework credit rating within the education offer provided by Motherwell College in Barlinnie<sup>27</sup>. This process increases the

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<sup>26</sup> Robertson Trust is about to launch a pilot project supporting a local college – Kilmarnock – to engage with prisoners in the local prison establishment

<sup>27</sup> As of December 2010, four SCQF credit rated units were available within the Barlinnie service offer.

options for agencies in the community to understand the nature and level of support provided to offenders whilst in prison, and to consequently “join up” their learning journey.

#### 5.2.9: New interventions – and knowing what works and sticking with it

Within this Chapter focusing on good practice we have crossed the boundary to discuss one project – the SIB pilot – which has barely started but which we deemed worthy of mention. Before ending we would like to refer to another intervention in its infancy. However, in doing so we are mindful that one of the issues here is the constant arrival of new initiatives and the importance for the strategy group of focusing on what works and ensuring it is appropriately supported, rather than continually encouraging new interventions to appear. We return to this important point in our final chapter.

In the meantime, Plan B is another initiative supported by the Robertson Trust through which Barnardos will provide a dedicated youth work service in Polmont targeting 16 and 17 year olds. At the same time the organisation will also be providing a similar service in Cornton Vale, both of which will focus on supporting young people in an integrated way established by other interventions.

Finally, in relation to the theme of innovation, we conclude this section on good practice with a health warning. Until the challenge of reducing reoffending is solved there will always be room for innovation. However, the confused service landscape in Glasgow is a legacy of a culture where new projects have been endlessly launched. The absence of a consistent approach to evidencing their impact limits our knowledge as to which are most effective. Consequently, pilot projects continue whilst new ones are introduced – exacerbating existing confusion.

A more strategic approach is required in future, which ideally involves not only public commissioners but also the city-based trust funds which are active in this field. And although innovation should remain important, the focus should be on agreed mechanisms for evidencing impact and to jointly supporting the most effective existing approaches.

## 6. THE CLIENT PERSPECTIVE

### 6.1: Introduction

The study process included three focus group discussions held with prisoners in Polmont, Barlinnie and Cornton Vale prisons. In this Chapter we summarise the key points raised in these sessions.

### 6.2: Participant profiles

A total of 17 participants were involved of whom 14 were from Glasgow with the others coming from Paisley and East Kilbride. The table below provides further details of their prison experience.

Establishment	Number of participants	Number of first time prisoners	Number of repeat prisoners
Barlinnie	4	1	3
Polmont	8	5	3
Cornton Vale	5	3	2

All of the prisoners were due for release within the year, with most having a liberation date in the coming months. Most had been on short sentences, although a few in Polmont were on long term sentences – the longest being six years. Amongst those in Polmont who were repeat offenders, one young man aged 21 had already been inside six times.

### 6.3: Employability background

All four of the Barlinnie participants had addictions issues and were involved in the First Steps programme. Two of them had a reasonable work history and all had experienced extensive periods of unemployment. Prior to prison they had used the services of various employability agencies including Glasgow North Regeneration Agency and Working Links, although the latter was not deemed to have been helpful.

Of the Polmont group, four had been in work prior to prison and in all these cases had worked for a small family business. Their occupational areas were upholstery, scaffolding, painting and motor mechanics. In fact, one had completed his apprenticeship as a motor mechanic.

Others had intermittent experience which included casual work in a fast food restaurant and attending college for a period. Of those without a fixed occupational area, a major issue had been boredom and alcohol.

The women in Cornton Vale had all had some limited work experience but none had been in employment at the point of arrest and going to jail.

#### 6.4: Views on the support offer in prison

All 4 of the Barlinnie group said that they wanted to find work on release. However, they had little idea of how to access support for this in prison – and no expectations that any support would be provided on release. One mentioned that someone on his wing had taken part in an employability programme which had a good reputation but he didn't know its name. Although they all had a link prison officer they had received no details of any projects and thought they would be most likely to hear about them from other prisoners. They thought that the idea of across the gate support sounded good – and one of them asked our consultant if he could gather some information for him and send it back.

The situation in Polmont was different. The participants described the range of Vocational Training (VT) opportunities open to them which included brickwork, painting, plumbing, hairdressing and other options. Most had tried one or another but they complained that the levels were low and that VT was not a priority for the prison. As proof of this they explained that it was not unusual to be told that the prison officer was unavailable or to turn up and find that there were no materials.

Engaging in VT was seen to be less about acquiring work skills and more about getting out of your cell, earning some money and picking up DIY techniques that you could use once you were back home.

The group also mentioned that prisoners from the local area had the opportunity to undertake external work placements towards the end of their sentence with employers like Falkirk Stadium, a local fish farm and a golf course.

Three had also been supported by Routes out of Prison (RoOP). One had been supported on a previous sentence but on release had disengaged because he was offered a volunteering experience and he "wouldnae work for nothing". A second had also been supported on a previous sentence but had disengaged on release although he couldn't explain why. A third had been offered support and was considering whether to take it up.

Awareness levels of other support agencies were low. None had engaged with Jobcentre Plus in prison and although a few had been supported by Phoenix Futures around alcohol and drugs they had not found this useful. Although several acknowledged that alcohol had been a major factor in their incarceration, they perceived the Phoenix advice to be naïve – interpreted as advising them to drink less on release.

The Cornton Vale group was different again. From the start they made it clear that for them 'employability' in the sense of eventually finding work, was a low priority. Their primary focus on release would be to reunite their families – particularly where they had children – and sort out their housing.

After an initial induction on arrival they went to the 'Work Board' where they were assigned tasks in the prison, with options including hairdressing, kitchen, laundry and gardening. Three participants had jobs which they enjoyed because it made the day go more quickly as well as providing experience and certificates.

Again there was limited awareness of statutory support agencies such as Jobcentre Plus. However, they were using support from a number of voluntary sector organisations and those which were highly rated were Circle and RooP. One woman receiving support from RooP had high hopes that it would help her make a successful transition after liberation.

### **6.5: Throughcare support priorities**

The Barlinnie group identified three key priorities:

1. The front end importance of accommodation. Without this they saw no point even thinking about work – but from experience they would end up as ex-addicts in a hostel full of others facing the same problems
2. Often prisoners do not even know where they are going back to – making it very difficult to establish links with local support agencies
3. Lots of help is required helping people deal with their offending histories and knowing how to present this to employers (none were aware that this support was available to them)

The Polmont group had very low expectations of the support agencies. As one put it “They’re all full of false promises.” For these participants whether you get on or not is down only to you and there is no one out there you can trust. All of them shared this view of publicly funded agencies. However, those fortunate enough to have supportive families were more optimistic and through them they hoped to be able to return to work and reintegrate into the community on release. For the others, the prospect of ending in an offender hostel “surrounded by junkies” was familiar and had previously ended with them returning to prison.

Children and housing were the main issues for the women in Cornton Vale. One had just learned that her house had been shut up four weeks after she came into prison and that her children were now with her mother whilst her boyfriend who had been caring for them had had to find accommodation elsewhere. She had been trying to bottom out the problem with no success.

Although some expressed a long term interest in working, there were far more important throughcare issues for them in the short term.

### **6.6: Summary**

The key messages from these focus groups are depressingly familiar. However, it is important that client voices and experiences are part of this work – if only because they underline the fact that despite the range of provision on offer we remain far from getting this right.

The points made by the participants speak for themselves. However in conclusion we would add a number of observations as follows:

- There appears to be a continued problem with promotion and communications. From the experience of these clients, awareness levels of the available support is low and information channels ad hoc

- Throughout this report, accommodation has been raised as a central issue related to offender employability. All three of these focus groups strengthen this viewpoint
- Information sharing amongst agencies inside and outside prisons is another problem highlighted elsewhere in this work that is echoed in these sessions

## **7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **7.1: Introduction**

In this final chapter we set out our conclusions and present a series of linked recommendations to the offender employability strategy group.

### **7.2: Conclusions**

Our brief was to provide details of employability services for offenders in Glasgow in order to support the strategy group's future work. What we have found is that the city is better served than any other part of Scotland with extensive provision available to clients. This is provided by a mix of specialist and generic agencies and Glasgow benefits from having exemplary organisations in both categories working across the city.

Within the existing service map there are also examples of pioneering work with this client group. Two major trust funds operating have made an important contribution to this by supporting pilot activity targeted at offenders.

Over the past decade we have seen a growth in employability provision targeting this client group. Three drivers have underpinned this. The first has been the growing evidence base confirming the important role employment can play in desistance. The second has been the scale of this chronic problem in Glasgow. The third has been the availability of public sector resources.

In terms of finance we are now in a different place. There will be fewer funds in the coming years and this provides a challenge to use them even more effectively. However this requires an understanding of where resources have the greatest impact and this study has underlined the fact that at a city level this remains unknown.

Throughout this report we have described the core problem as those offenders moving between custody and communities on short term sentences. In Glasgow this accounts for a high proportion, with 65% of the 4,080 prisoners returning to the city in 2009/10 having sentences of less than six months. Recidivism rates remain high – particularly for young men with 57% reoffending within two years.

The report also makes clear that the primary rehabilitation focus both within prison and within community-based Justice Services is on long-term prisoners released on license or under statutory order. This group accounted for 2.75% of prisoners returning to the city in 2009/10. Although short term prisoners released into the community can be offered voluntary supervision, take up levels are low. CJSW and other delivery agencies admit that they have no capacity to meet increased demand for take up even if it were there.

Much of the offender employability service we have mapped targets these short term prisoners. However, although there are examples of good practice across the city – discussed throughout this report – there is insufficient evidence to assess

whether this is making an impact. Indeed, the Jobcentre Plus Barlinnie data raises challenging questions about its effectiveness. Overall, much of the feedback we have heard suggests that although there are patches of good work the throughcare support offer for short term prisoners remains uneven – to say the least. This work also shows that for those prisoners returning to the city from Polmont and Cornton Vale, the resettlement process is more complex and works even less well.

So although there is a wide range of these services on offer, it is largely un-coordinated, operates outwith any shared strategic framework and its overall impact is unproven. One of the factors behind this is that provision has grown organically over the years in the absence of much strategic dialogue between service commissioners. The result is the complex sprawling picture that has emerged from this work.

This is far from ideal and stakeholders contributing to this study are clearly of the view that the year ahead is an opportunity for change. This report should provide a platform for that both by clarifying the picture and by assisting in the identification of priorities. A recurring theme throughout the fieldwork has been the risk of trying to fix everything at once. Indeed, as strategy group members know, there are limited things here which they can influence and it is important to be clear about what they are.

We therefore conclude that the key priorities emerging from this work are:

1. Improving the community resettlement process for short-term prisoners returning to the city – particularly from Cornton Vale and Polmont
2. Improving the evidence base – especially in relation to re-offending data, and the way in which projects funded within the city measure and report performance
3. Optimising the scope for improved strategic collaboration and co-commissioning across the city – so that resources are aligned and complementary
4. Ensuring the existing offender employability support is aligned to the Work Programme
5. Promoting culture change and fostering improved joint working across the justice and employability sectors
6. Ensuring that offenders have access to mainstream services and that those services assign resources to meet their support needs

The offender employability strategy group does not have the lead responsibility for addressing all of these priorities. We are also aware that it is an ambitious menu which cannot all be achieved in the short term. However, we see these as inescapable conclusions from this work and we also believe that the group has an important role to play in taking them forward. To help this process, we attach related recommendations under each of these priorities in our final section.

### 7.3: Recommendations

PRIORITY	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>1. Improving the community resettlement process for short-term prisoners returning to the city – especially from Cornton Vale and Polmont</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore the options to improve advance information sharing about prisoners being released to Glasgow</li> <li>2. Ensure that the strategy group contributes to the city's plans under the One Glasgow proposal – particularly relating to accommodation as a basis for employability</li> <li>3. Promote the introduction of an end-to-end service identifier for all prisoners</li> </ol>
<p>2. Improving the evidence base – particularly in relation to re-offending data, and the way in which projects funded within the city measure and report performance</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Co-ordinate the production of a shared set of indicators for use by offender employability projects</li> <li>2. Provide a forum for sharing performance data on offender employability projects</li> <li>3. Lobby the Scottish Government to improve the available data sets on reoffending</li> </ol>
<p>3. Optimising the scope for improved strategic collaboration and co-commissioning across the city</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agree the respective roles and responsibilities in relation to service commissioning at city level</li> <li>2. Establish a mechanism which allows strategic partners to contribute to one another's commissioning processes</li> <li>3. Test this mechanism in relation to the design and procurement of CPOs</li> </ol>
<p>4. Ensuring the existing offender employability support is aligned to the Work Programme</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Examine pros and cons of Day 1 entry and consider whether this would be worth pushing for</li> <li>2. If so, use Glasgow's established relationship with the DWP to lobby for a city pilot whereby ex-prisoners have Day 1 access to the Work Programme</li> <li>3. Maintain close contact with the DWP and Ministry of Justice to ensure that Glasgow is well placed to host any Scottish pilots relating to Breaking the Cycle<sup>28</sup></li> </ol>

<sup>28</sup> Although the Ministry of Justice Green Paper does not extend to Scotland it is possible that the DWP, at the request of the MOJ, will test some new approaches with this client group. In this even there may be scope for one of these to be piloted in Scotland

	<p>4. Contact the Work Programme Prime responsible for Glasgow (once appointed) to consider the strategic fit between established provision and their delivery model</p>
<p>5. Promoting culture change and fostering improved joint working across the justice and employability sectors</p>	<p>1. Share the output from this work and produce a glossary of terms relating to offender employability</p> <p>2. Build on the EAS legacy through the design and promotion of events for operational staff across sectors supporting offender employability – focus on sharing good practice, clarifying roles and responsibilities, encouraging collocation etc</p> <p>3. Build on the Barlinnie pilot and strengthen links between Prison Officers and external providers</p> <p>4. Actively engage supportive employers to showcase their work with service providers and other employers</p>
<p>6. Ensuring that offenders have access to mainstream services and that those services assign resources to meet their support needs</p>	<p>1. Support mainstream organisations which can play an important role in offender employability (e.g. Glasgow Life) to ensure that staff are aware of the client group's support issues</p> <p>2. Clarify with colleges and the Scottish Funding Council the role of the sector in supporting offenders – particularly ex prisoners</p>

## APPENDIX 1: CONSULTEES

Jack Martin	Jobcentre Plus
Sandra Wood	Jobcentre Plus
Kalim Uddin	GCSS
Ann Marie McFadden	GCSS
Laurie Russell	The Wise Group
Morag Pryce	The Wise Group
Kirsty Clarke	Glasgow Life
Alistair Murison	Glasgow Life
Stephen Brooks	GSERA
Ronnie Saez	GERA
Stephen Davis	GERA
Sharon Kelly	SDS
Adrienne McCaulay	CJSW
Sean McKendrick	CJSW
Tom Golcher	Glasgow Works
David Coyne	Glasgow Works
Kim Murphy	Glasgow Works
Beth Macmaster	Glasgow CJA
Rob Whealing	SACRO
Ian Graham	John Wheatley College
Christine Scullion	The Robertson Trust
Isobel Hilferty	CJSW
Jim McFarlane	SPS Cornton Vale
Iain Henderson	Motherwell College
Sharanne Findlay	SPS Polmont YOI
Mike Copeland	SPS Polmont YOI
Carolyne Sawers	Big Lottery Scotland
Paul Ryan	SPS Barlinnie
David Black	GERA
Heather Voisey	GHA
Jill Wilshire	Big Lottery Fund

Appendix 2: Prison and offender statistics : summary data from Scottish Government Crime and Justice Statistics

*Recorded Crime in Scotland: 2009-10*

Number of crimes recorded by the police per 10,000 population and crime index, by council area, 2009-10						Number and Index	
	Non - sexual crimes of violence	Crimes of indecency	Crimes of dishonesty	Fire - raising, vandalism, etc.	Other crimes	Total crimes	Index (Scotland = 100)
Scotland	22	12	295	180	142	651	100
Glasgow	52	19	443	233	293	1,039	160

*Prison Statistics Scotland: 2010*

Community Justice Authority and local authority home area of offenders in custody by age and sex: 30 June 2009										
	Adult			Young offender			All			Imprisonment rate per 100,000 population <sup>1</sup>
	Men	Women	All	Men	Women	All	Men	Women	All	
Scotland	6,719	370	7,089	1,048	46	1,094	7,767	416	8,183	191
Glasgow	1,460	57	1,517	205	3	208	1,665	60	1,725	351

Custody type/sentence length of offenders in custody by local authority area of home address: 30 June 2009										
	Remand	Fine default	Less than 6 months	6 months - 2 years	2 years - 4 years	4 years or over	Life/Section 205 /206	Recalls from supervision/licence	Others	Total
Scotland	1,566	4	475	903	2,202	1,664	758	610	1	8,183
Glasgow	354	-	78	151	450	354	206	132	-	1,725

Liberations from prison by custody type/sentence length and local authority area of home address: 2009-10										
	Remand	Fine default	Less than 6 months	6 months - 1 year	1 year - 4 years	4 years or over	Life/Section 205 /206	Recalls from supervision/ licence	Others	Total
Scotland	8,751	360	3,959	3,242	3,159	480	40	342	38	20,371
Glasgow	1,870	72	724	558	657	100	12	68	19	4,080

Young offender liberations from prison by custody type/sentence length and local authority area of home address: 2009-10										
	Remand	Fine default	Less than 6 months	6 months - 1 year	1 year - 4 years	4 years or over	Life/Section 205 /206	Recalls from supervision/ licence	Others	Total
Scotland	1,917	29	474	444	487	18	-	25	6	3,400
Glasgow	336	2	71	66	97	5	-	10	3	590

Adult liberations from prison by custody type/sentence length and local authority area of home address: 2009-10										
	Remand	Fine default	Less than 6 months	6 months - less than 1 year	1 year - less than 4 years	4 years or over	Life/Section 205 /206	Recalls from supervision/ licence	Others	Total
Scotland	6,834	331	3,485	2,798	2,672	462	40	317	32	16,971
Glasgow	1,534	70	653	492	560	95	12	58	16	3,490

*Reconviction Rates in Scotland: 2006-07 and 2007-08 Offender cohorts*

Table 7 - Rates by community justice authority and local authority: 2006-07 cohort														
	Total number	No. of re-convictions	Number reconvicted within:			Number with a custodial reconviction within:			Percent reconvicted within:			Percentage with a custodial reconviction within:		
			6 mths	1 year	2 yrs	6 mths	1 year	2 yrs	6 mths	1 year	2 yrs	6 mths	1 year	2 yrs
Scotland	53,260	57,359	11,791	17,246	23,419	3,464	5,330	7,947	22	32	44	7	10	15
Glasgow	11,093	12,583	2,587	3,757	5,053	822	1,230	1,814	23	34	46	7	11	16

Reconviction rates by sex and age: 2006-07								
Glasgow								
		All	all within 6 months	all within 1 year	all within 2 years	custody within 6 months	custody within 1 year	custody within 1 years
All	All	11093	2587	3757	5053	822	1230	1814
	Age							
	under 21	2180	618	901	1195	148	241	374
	21 to 25	2191	533	774	1042	170	263	392
	26 to 30	1686	470	654	835	160	227	319
	over 30	5036	966	1428	1981	344	499	729
Male	All	9350	2249	3251	4383	769	1148	1698
	Age							
	under 21	1951	584	847	1115	143	236	366
	21 to 25	1890	464	673	918	160	244	362
	26 to 30	1402	395	540	693	149	209	292
	over 30	4107	806	1191	1657	317	459	678
Female	All	1743	338	506	670	53	82	116
	Age							
	under 21	229	34	54	80	5	5	8
	21 to 25	301	69	101	124	10	19	30
	26 to 30	284	75	114	142	11	18	27
	over 30	929	160	237	324	27	40	51

Reconviction rates by number and type of previous convictions: 2006-07							
Glasgow							
	All	all within 6 months	all within 1 year	all within 2 years	custody within 6 months	custody within 1 year	custody within 2 years
All offenders	11093	2587	3757	5053	822	1230	1814
<u>Previous convictions</u>	3246	332	526	787	34	70	123
None							
1 or 2	2467	445	718	1000	58	91	180
3 to 10	3160	806	1192	1622	216	362	556
Over 10	2220	1004	1321	1644	514	707	955
<u>Previous custodials</u>	7921	1379	2113	2955	189	334	598
None							
1 or 2	1225	336	498	679	125	205	310
3 to 10	1235	485	658	840	260	369	499
Over 10	712	387	488	579	248	322	407
<u>Previous community</u>	6841	1057	1666	2362	166	300	505
None							
1 or 2	2754	857	1198	1586	334	479	704
3 to 10	1473	660	877	1086	315	442	595
Over 10	25	13	16	19	7	9	10

*Criminal Justice Social Work statistics 2009-10*

<b>Social Enquiry Reports by Local Authority, 2004-05 to 2009-10, Number of Reports Submitted and Reports Submitted per 10,000 population</b>												
	Number of Reports Submitted						Reports submitted per 10,000 population					
	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Scotland	39,622	41,427	40,848	41,986	42,472	40,762	109.9	114.3	112.0	114.4	115.0	109.8
Glasgow	6,365	7,066	6,530	6,737	7,043	6,965	151.3	166.9	153.1	157.2	163.1	159.7

<b>Social Enquiry Reports by Local Authority, Number of Reports Submitted and Number of Individuals by Gender, 2009-10</b>						
	Number of Reports Submitted			Number of Individuals		
	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
Scotland	34,731	28,809	5,922	27,639	22,978	4,661
Glasgow	6,078	5,125	953	4,793	4,026	767

<b>Social Enquiry Reports Submitted by Age and by Gender 2009-10</b>									
	Gender			Age					
	All	Males	Females	16-17 <sup>(2)</sup>	18-20	21-25	26-30	31-40	Over 40
Scotland	34,731	28,809	5,922	2,810	5,971	7,256	5,604	7,332	5,758
Glasgow	6,078	5,125	953	420	901	1,203	964	1,435	1,155

**Social Enquiry Reports by Local Authority : Number of Reports Submitted by Main Outcome, 2009-10**

	Main Outcome																
	Total	Custo dy with exten ded senten ce	Custod y with SRO	Custod y	Comm unity Service	Restrict ion of liberty order	Deferm ent for DTTO assess ment	Probati on with a conditi on of unpaid work	Probati on with additio nal conditi ons	Probati on with standa rd conditi ons	Monet ary Penalty	Deferre d (3 months or more)	Warran t for appreh ension / recall	Admon ition(3)	Absolu te Dischar ge	Other	Outco me not yet known
Scot	34,731	122	145	5,758	5,668	560	396	2,811	2,090	2,798	3,077	3,265	890	1,074	25	3,473	2,579
Glas	6,078	25	18	925	749	37	0	368	440	464	387	676	194	147	2	13	1,633

### APPENDIX 3: SURVEY RESPONSES

Glasgow Life

APEX Scotland

Sacro

John Wheatley College

Working Links

South West Bridging Service

Includem

Violence Reduction Unit (CIRV)

Turning Point Scotland

The Wise Group

GERA

GSERA

GNRA

Social Work/Strathclyde Police

City of Glasgow College

Faith in Throughcare

GWRA

Stow College

GCSS

Access to Industry

APPENDIX 4: OFFENDER PROCESS

