

Final Evaluation Report

Second Chance Resettlement Project:

**A Prisoner Resettlement Project in HMP Holme House
Delivered by Nacro
Funded by KPMG and HM Prison Service**

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Carried out by:

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Summary

The Second Chance project ran from December 2001 to August 2004 in HMP Holme House in Stockton in the North East of England. The Project was implemented by Nacro and was co-financed by KPMG and the Prison Service. The objective of the Project was to reduce re-offending by ex-offenders by providing resettlement services to prisoners in HMP Holme House who were being released into the Tees Valley.

The Project provided support to prisoners to help them on release. This support included help with securing accommodation, finding employment and training and support with drug abuse issues.

Over three years the Project provided resettlement services to 954 prisoners.

The evaluation found that:

- The Project provided a resettlement service in Holme House Prison that dealt with accommodation, employment, training and other needs.
- The Project played a key role in the resettlement activities of Holme House Prison, on both a practical and strategic level.
- The Project had a very high caseload. This caseload made it impossible to carry out post-release work as it was conceived in the original project proposal. This was compounded by a high staff turnover.
- The Project developed a wide network of partner organisations, outside of the prison. However, there were no formal relations or agreements between the Project and its partners which meant that tracking beneficiaries and providing support for ex-offenders in need was almost impossible.
- The Project linked beneficiaries with outside support and service organisations, including the Benefits Agency, facilitating the move from inside to outside. However, there was no support on release for ex-offenders.
- The Project provided a range of its partner organisations with referrals; referrals that they would have otherwise found difficult to find.
- The Project had a very close relationship with the prison service and professionals within Holme House Prison.
- The Project has had no tracking system for clients until January 2004, so it has been difficult to determine the outcomes of their support services since the beginning of the Project.
- The Project realised successful outcomes (i.e. secured tenancies, places on education or training courses, etc) for 15 percent of its clients.
- The Project had little impact on re-offending rates of beneficiaries worked with in the first seven months of the Project.

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1.0 Introduction

This report is an evaluation of the Second Chance Resettlement Project. The objective of the Project was to reduce re-offending by ex-offenders by providing resettlement services to prisoners in HMP Holme House. The Project was implemented by Nacro and was co-financed by KPMG and the Prison Service. The Project ran from December 2001 to August 2004.

Although the Project has now finished, and will not be continued, there is now another resettlement project¹ in HMP Holme House (and HMP Low Newton) that began in September 2004 and that has built upon the experience of the Second Chance Project.

This evaluation report describes the Second Chance Project, traces its history and development since its beginning, outlines its strengths and weaknesses, and makes a judgement on the Project's impact on reducing re-offending. In so doing, it provides a commentary on how successful the Project was and provides lessons for future resettlement projects, including the new Nacro and De Paul Trust Resettlement Project.

The Second Chance project is referred to as 'the Project' throughout this report. Holme House is referred to as 'the prison'. The people that the Project works with are interchangeably referred to as prisoners, beneficiaries and clients.

1.1 The Context

The context in which the Project is working is one where the prison population is increasing, overcrowding endemic and the debate about how best to tackle re-offending ongoing. At the start of March 2004, the prison population in England and Wales stood at 74,960, its highest ever recorded figure and an increase of 2,484 over the previous year (HM Prison Service, Estate Planning and Management Group, 2004). For the second consecutive year England and Wales has the highest imprisonment rate in the European Union at 141 per 100,000 of the population (Walmsley, 2004).

The number of prisoners serving short sentences has been a contributory factor to this increase. Between 1992 and 2002 the number of adults sent to prison for sentences of less than 12 months more than doubled from 18,500 to nearly 48,000. In 2002 more than half of all those sent to prison were there for jail terms of six months or less (Home Office, 2003). However, prison has a poor record in reducing re-offending – 59 per cent of prisoners are reconvicted within two years of being released. The reconviction rate for young male adults (under 21) over the same period is 72 per cent.

¹ This project is implemented by Nacro and the De Paul Trust and funded by the Northern Rock Foundation.

The Social Exclusion Unit has concluded that re-offending by ex-prisoners costs society at least £11 billion per year (SEU, 2002). Ex-prisoners are responsible for about one in five of all recorded crimes (*ibid*, 2002). It is within this context of an increasing prison population and renewed attention on reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners that the Second Chance project has been operating.

2.0 Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation of the Project was built into the original project proposal and was intended to achieve one of the key objectives of assessing the impact of the Project and promoting the findings to policy makers, commissioners of services and practitioners. The evaluation was planned to start and continue with the Project to inform project development using a formative approach. However, due to staffing changes in the evaluation team since the beginning of the Project, the evaluation has not been able to function as planned.

The evaluation has effectively been in operation since October 2003. The evaluation methodology is made up of:

1. Interviews with 50 offenders who have had contact with the Project in the prison before they were released;
2. Interviews with 20 of the same individuals after their release;
3. Interviews with the Project's partners both internal and external to the prison service;
4. Interviews with Project staff; and
5. Tracking of offenders through National Offender Management Service's (NOMS) Offender Index (OI). This service records whether individuals have re-offended. By providing them with a list of individuals who had received support from the Project and waiting for a period of two years, the OI was able to indicate whether their records show if those individuals had re-offended

It was initially planned to interview at least 50 people post-release. However, due to slippage caused by staff turnover and ex-offenders either being non-traceable or declining to participate in the post-release interviews, only 20 post-release interviews were possible. The difficulty in accessing offenders post-release is well known and understandable, as once people have left prison they want to forget about the experience as quickly as possible, severing any ties they once had.

Prisoners who had received support from the Project were interviewed in the last few weeks of their sentence and were questioned about the nature and quality of the support they had received. Their responses were coded and analysed and are presented as evidence in this report. Permission was sought to contact them after release and a contact details form was completed and signed by the interviewee. After a minimum of six weeks after their release, they were

contacted again and asked to complete an administered post-release questionnaire. The objective of this questionnaire was to determine their situation since their release and if any arrangements made by the Project had materialised.

3.0 The Project

The Second Chance project was funded by KPMG and HM Prison Service and was delivered by Nacro. The Project provided a pre and post resettlement support service dealing with education, training, accommodation and other needs of prisoners leaving HMP Holme House in Stockton in the Tees Valley. It ran from December 2001 to August 2004. The Project was initially conceived to work with men leaving HMP Holme House in Stockton to the Tees Valley area, who were serving less than 12 months.

3.1 Overall Aim and Objectives

The Project's development is outlined in detail in the timeline in section 3.3. However, the major project developments are outlined here.

The original objective stated that the service would be offered to all prisoners who fall under this category but the target age would be prisoners of 25 years or under. The rationale for this target was to attempt reduce re-offending by young repeat offenders, those who make up a large proportion of the prison population (nearly three in five prisoners are re-convicted within two years of leaving prison (SEU, 2002)).

By providing a service to prisoners leaving the prison to the Tees Valley area aimed at supporting them to find suitable accommodation, secure meaningful employment, access education or training, or address substance misuse issues, it is thought that this would reduce ex-offenders re-offending and thus re-entering prison and reducing regional crime.

The key objectives of the Project as stated in the original terms of reference were:

- To ensure that service users get the information, help and support they need to tackle the range of difficulties they face [when returning to the community];
- To provide a continuity of support pre and post release by linking service users with key workers who might act as mentors, advisers and advocates;
- To work with a network of other support agencies to ensure that those returning to the community can access relevant services; and
- To assess the impact of the Project and promote the findings to policy makers, commissioners of services and practitioners.

Although some post release work has been carried out, the Project has been unable to provide a sustained and coordinated level of post-release support as a result of a high caseload and staff turnover. This is discussed in further detail in the following pages.

The Project receives referrals through the prisoner induction process, self-referrals or through referrals by internal partners, i.e. probation, CARAT and education.

3.2 Project Evolution

After the first month (in January 2002) a decision was taken by the Project to abandon all the criteria that had been in operation and to take anyone who was in need of a resettlement service. This decision was due to a low number of referrals under the age of 25 who were returning to the Tees Valley area and the fact that, at that time, there was no probation housing service in the prison and housing advice and support was in high demand from the prisoners.

In August 2002, the referral criteria was refined to take only prisoners who were serving 12 months or less as a result of high workload and by March 2003, the original referral criteria were returned to. However, there was some flexibility in the criteria, for example they would work with prisoners serving up to two years if they were released into the Tees Valley area, and, if they could access information easily, they would occasionally help prisoners released into areas outside the Tees Valley.

After the Project has received a referral, an interview was held with the client and their needs are discussed. The Project then responded to those needs by providing information, contacting relevant outside agencies and completing relevant paperwork. They then made appointments, either for organisations to come into the prison to see the client or for the client to see the organisation on the outside.

The Project has been beset by changes in personnel through its lifetime. There have not only been project staff changes but there have been many changes in project management and in the institutional make up, including a change in Governor.

3.3 Project Timeline

The purpose of the timeline is to provide a chronological account of key activities within the Project. Any changes in service delivery, personnel or any other circumstance that impacts upon the Project have been recorded.

December 2001	Rebecca Coles (RC) and Justine Connor (JC) commence work as Resettlement Workers. Office based in House
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	<p>Block 2 – this was temporary housing for the Project. Previous to RC and JC working in the prison Nacro Stockton had provided an afternoon a week as a surgery for ex-offenders, this had concentrated on training issues. The centre manager had provided this and the surgery operated on an appointment based system. The initial criteria for the Project were under 25 years of age, serving under 12 months and resident in the Tees Valley area.</p> <p>The majority of the first month was spent networking, there was a visit to Blakenhurst prison where another Nacro project is based. Issues regarding housing were not on the agenda at this point. There was no real guidance about the Project and how it would develop. A number of services were visited such as CAB and community training groups. A “blank canvas”.</p>
January 2002	<p>First client released. The referral criteria was reviewed and a decision was taken to abandon all the criteria that had been in operation and to take any one who was in need of the resettlement service. Probation housing was not available in the prison and housing was becoming a key issue for the service. Advertising of the service commenced and included posters and leaflets. These were put on all wings, laundry, gym and hospital and an advert was put in the prison magazine (Holme Alone). A worker would attend induction and explain what the service could provide. Systems were set up including: referral form – self and agency; initial interview form; action logs; time sheets. There was a lack of clarity about post-release visits and no guidelines with regards to safety. Workers therefore decided to do joint visits, however, due to demand lone visits were then provided. On the whole the workers were able to provide a post release service.</p>
February 2002	<p>As above</p>
March 2002	<p>Although no supervision was provided to the workers, they would go to Nacro Stockton on a weekly basis. Both workers attended the Nacro Resettlement Advice Worker Training, although it would have been more helpful to have done this earlier. Increased housing contacts in order to access supported housing for clients. Referrals to drug and employment agencies, and a significant amount of post-release support. Both workers gave an informal presentation to Probation Officers in Stockton to make them aware of the Project.</p>
April 2002	<p>The Nacro Line Manager (Amanda Hartford) left. Workers attended Child Protection Training. Initial visit from</p>

	Middlesbrough Council Housing Dept. representatives with a view to setting up a protocol for referrals. This aimed at putting ex-offenders straight into residential tenancies. This started in July 2002 but stopped three months later, as a result of some tenants abusing the service. Now ex-offenders are put into a hostel for a trial period before they can go into a tenancy. Both workers visited Addaction in Redcar and Middlesbrough to promote the Project and learn Addaction's work.
May 2002	The new Nacro Resettlement Manager (Denise McNaughton) started, also based in Stockton. Visited prison fortnightly, supervisions began. A review of referrals showed that if the original criteria had been kept numbers would have been very low (under 20). Brian Roecroft offered the support of an admin worker, resettlement workers asked if they could have a part-time worker instead and this was agreed. They were now very busy and had an active prison Resettlement Manager who was very supportive. Established a contact at Working Links in Middlesbrough – an organisation who help people into work. Both workers attended a homeless strategy meeting organised by Stockton council.
June 2002	As above. The Nacro Divisional conference was held in Middlesbrough.
July 2002	Service re-housed to House Block 1, this was an unsettling period and took a month to sort out the office. Regular visits to the prison from project line manager. Both workers attended Nacro's 'Getting Sorted' training.
August 2002	"Concerted Indiscipline" (riots) led to change in senior management, including governor responsible for management. A new resettlement governor started who was interested and valued work of the service. Post-release support very stretched. Probation housing officer started and took on all over 12 months sentences. Referral criteria refined in that only under 12 months sentences seen. Resettlement manager left, and new one started. Interviews for part time post, resettlement workers involved in the recruitment process. Visits from line manager.
September 2002	Part-time post commenced. Denise McNaughton left and there was another Nacro resettlement manger. More difficult to attend the daily prisoner induction, because of time pressures on the Second Chance staff, so a leaflet explaining the Project's services was produced. RC was invited to talk about the Project at the local prison's conference in Wakefield.
October 2002	The way prisoner details were accessed was changed - now

	<p>all new prisoner details are accessed from the prison's LIDS database and all the new prisoners are sent a leaflet. This leads to increased referrals. Meetings arranged with CARATS and Probation to ensure that all short-term prisoners were aware of the service and to share information regarding caseloads. However, following this meeting the resettlement workers felt they were not senior enough to take this work forward. Resettlement Action Team (RAT) is started in the prison, set up by the Resettlement Governor and consists of the Senior Resettlement Officer, a Probation Officer, two other Prison Officers. As a result of this Second Chance got lots of referrals (often 10 every day from places all over the country). It was stopped after three months, for reasons unknown to the evaluation. Continued visits from line manager.</p>
November 2002	Continued visits from line manager.
December 2002	Nacro Manager left. Contact made with Stonham Housing project, who provide aftercare and support. Paul Cavadino and Anne Mace (present and former Nacro Chief Executives) visited the Project in the prison.
January 2003	A new Probation Housing Officer took over from the previous one. RC was interviewed for 'Holme Alone', the prison's in-house magazine. JC and RC attended Nacro's housing and employment training at Newbold Revel (a Nacro training centre in Coventry).
February 2003	New line manager started (this is the fourth that the Project has had).
March 2003	The 'motivational training day' was run in the prison for prisoners, funded by LSC. Nacro were assigned to follow up those prisoners who attended the course. JC and RC attended Personal Safety training, approved by the Suzy Lamplugh trust. Around this time the workload was very high (as a result of RAT) therefore the Project decided to alter their remit. The remit changed from dealing with prisoners from any area to dealing with prisoners who want help with accommodation if they are from the Tees Valley and sentenced to 12 months or less; and helping people from the Tees Valley with employment, training or education (ETE) regardless of sentence length (some discretion is used for ETE requests from outside the area which are for information which can be accessed easily).
April 2003	Official opening of Middlesbrough Council's Accommodation Agency – all three Nacro workers attended. JC and RC attended the NEPACS conference 'Resettlement, Responsibility and the Individual' at Durham University.

May 2003	First visit by the evaluation team. All three workers attended Race Equality training run by Nacro. JC and RC met with the homeless team at Hartlepool Council with a view to establishing a better referral system. The team met with Stockton Council with the intention of setting up a rent arrears repayment scheme. The part-time project worker left. JC and RC attended the Working Links awards event.
June 2003	Employees from Job Centre Plus started full time in the prison, sharing the Nacro team's office, intended to help prisoners with their benefits. The team met the West Middlesbrough Neighbourhood Trust, who offer help to those released to west Middlesbrough, particularly those with drug issues. The team had a meeting with a member of staff from the prison education department – she begins referring prisoners who want help with employment to the team. The Nacro regional conference was held in Middlesbrough, JC and RC presented a workshop on both days, designed to raise awareness of the work the Project does.
July 2003	JC and RC attended a conference at the Thistle hotel in Middlesbrough on Prisons and local government. They were asked to present the workshop that they had done at the conference to staff at Nacro in Newcastle. Around this time, discussions were started about running a job club in the prison.
August 2003	JC and RC were asked to go and speak to staff on Housing Block 5 in the prison to explain to them about exactly what the Project does and who it can help. JC and RC met Jackie Johnson, an outreach worker from the Grange Project in Darlington that helps people with drug problems. Jackie saw prisoners before their release and met up with them again after their release, also helping with accommodation issues. The team were visited by Nacro auditors. A contact was established with the IAG in Stockton who came into the prison to help and advise prisoners who wanted to do courses or training after release. Interviews were held for the part-time post.
September 2003	A second meeting was held with Stockton council re: the rent arrears scheme. Heather, part-time worker, started. The team attended mental health training, run at the prison. A link was established with Teesside Mentoring, who saw prisoners who needed extra support after their release, as well as those who wished to become mentors themselves.
October 2003	A meeting was held about starting of a job club. KPMG meeting. Second Chance team appear on Prisons North East website.

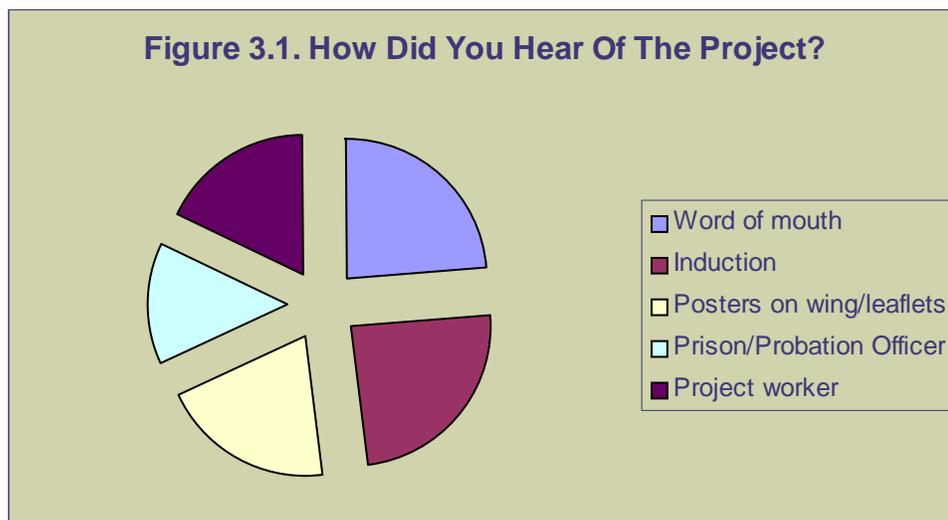
November 2003	JC and Heather, the part time worker, left. There is a change in probation housing officer and referrals drop.
December 2003	Interviews were held for the full-time post. Presentation by resettlement workers at an IAG event in Middlesbrough.
January 2004	Louise Morrison (LM) joined RC as a full-time member of staff. The job club started. A tracking system is put in place to start monitoring clients' ETE progress.
February 2004	LM attends Nacro's Prison Link Unit Housing and Employment course at Newbold Revel.
March 2004	Nacro Stockton runs 'Getting into Work' course with a group of nine prisoners. Very positive feedback received.
April 2004	Meetings with local authority housing departments in the Tees Valley to attempt to improve housing options available to the Project. Also meetings with the Registered Social Landlord, Stonham Housing which resulted in two of the Project's clients receiving tenancies. Discussions with the new Probation Housing Officer results in an improved referral system to identify prisoners housing needs. Presentation by the Project and Nacro Stockton to KMPG to apply for further funding. Project learns that funding for a new three year resettlement project has been agreed. The Project will be based in HMP Holme House and HMP Low Newton, delivered by Nacro and De Paul Trust and funded by the Northern Rock Foundation.
May 2004	Project workers visit housing agencies in the Tees Valley. Visit to the prison by Hartlepool Local Authority to discuss procedures for housing ex-offenders.
June 2004	Visit to the prison by Stockton Local Authority's Homeless Department. Meeting with Coast and Country Housing and Redcar and Cleveland Council's Homeless Department to discuss a joint working protocol.
July 2004	Project workers delivered resettlement training to organisations across Teeside. KPMG notify Nacro that they will not re-fund the Project.
August 2004	The Project ends and the Project staff transfer to the new project, after being selected through formal interviews. The new project employs two workers in HMP Holme House, and one in Low Newton who will work with prisoners before their release, three outreach workers and a mentoring coordinator to work with prisoners after their release in the Tees Valley.

3.4 Presentation of Project Statistics

This section presents the Project's statistics, including the number and nature of referrals, and also the findings of the primary research that was carried out both pre- and post-release.

Referrals

Referrals are defined as prisoners that the Project has worked with and supported. These have been accessed through a series of ways, as shown in Figure 3.1.



The Project has worked with a total of **954** referrals since its beginning in December 2001 (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Total Project Referrals: December 2001 to August 2004

Year	ETE Referrals	Housing Referrals	Other Referrals	Total Referrals
2002 ²	150	108	38	296
2003	177	180	41	398
2004	109	129	51	260
Total	436	417	130	954

The 'Other' category is made up of people needing support for a range of issues, including drug problems, liaising with external agencies, benefit claims and clothing grants.

² Including figures for December 2001.

Table 3.2 shows the outcomes that the Project recorded throughout its lifetime, i.e. how many tenancies were secured, how many training courses were accessed, etc. The figures show that positive outcomes were achieved with fifteen percent of the total client group.

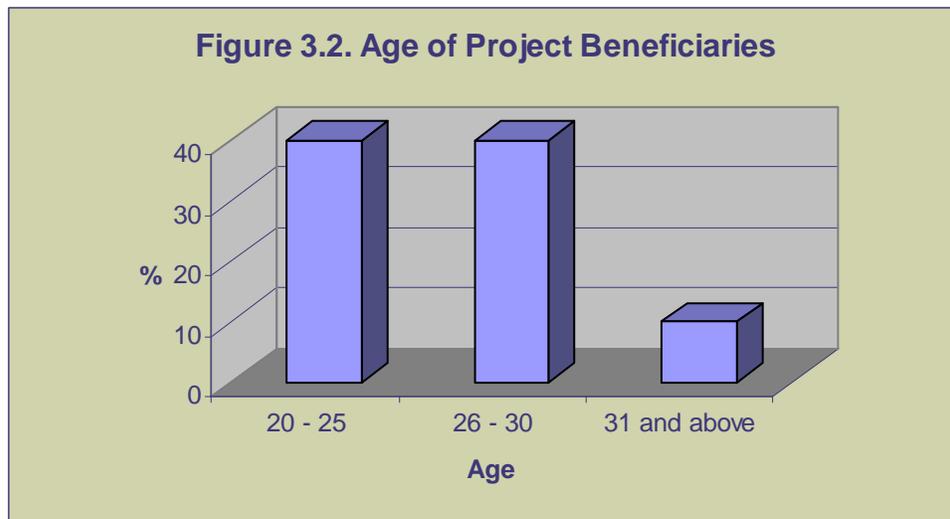
Table 3.2. Outcomes

	Housing	ETE	Drugs	Other	Total
2002	30	14	4	4	52
2003	20	15	1	8	44
2004	23	15	0	6	44
Total	73	44	5	18	140

Profile of Project Beneficiaries

The majority of the beneficiaries have been made up of the White British ethnic group, with less than 20 from other ethnic groups. 80 percent of the Project's clients were being released to the Tees Valley region, 19 percent were released to other areas in the North East, e.g. Newcastle, Durham, Darlington and one percent came from outside of the North East.

The ages of the beneficiaries in the sample are presented in Figure 3.2.

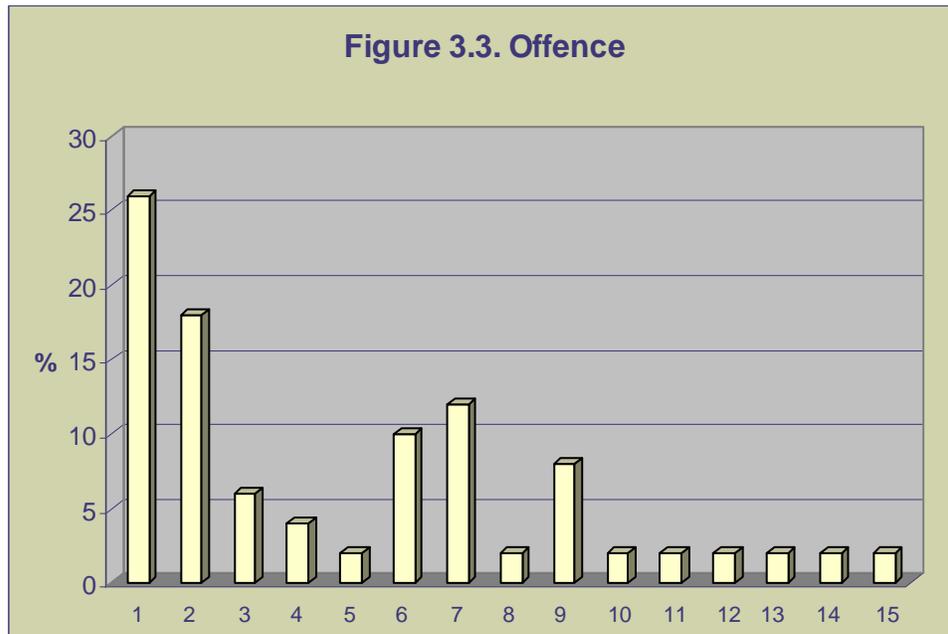


The Figure shows that the majority of the Project's beneficiaries were under 30 years old.

Type of Offence

Figure 3.3 shows the offences committed by beneficiaries that were interviewed.

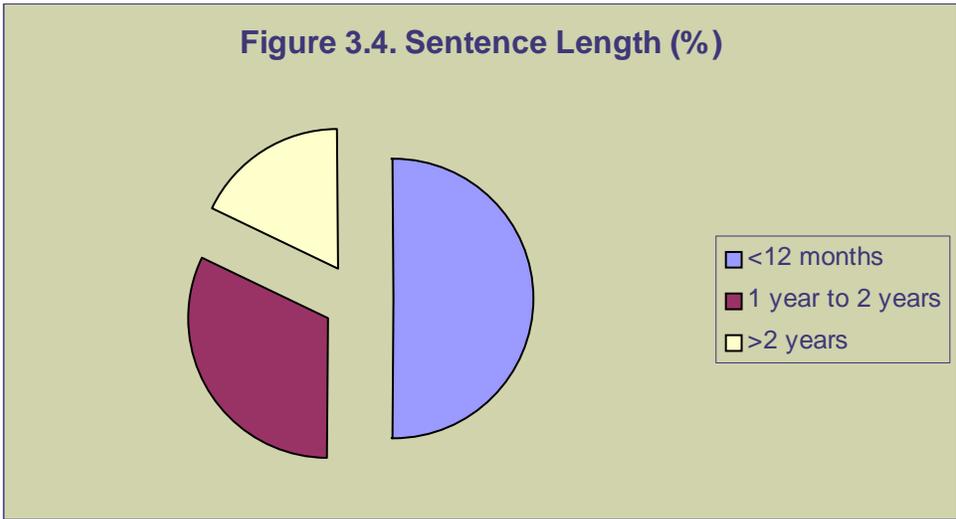
The most common offence amongst those sampled was Burglary, followed by Driving Whilst Disqualified, then Theft, ABH and Affray.



Key

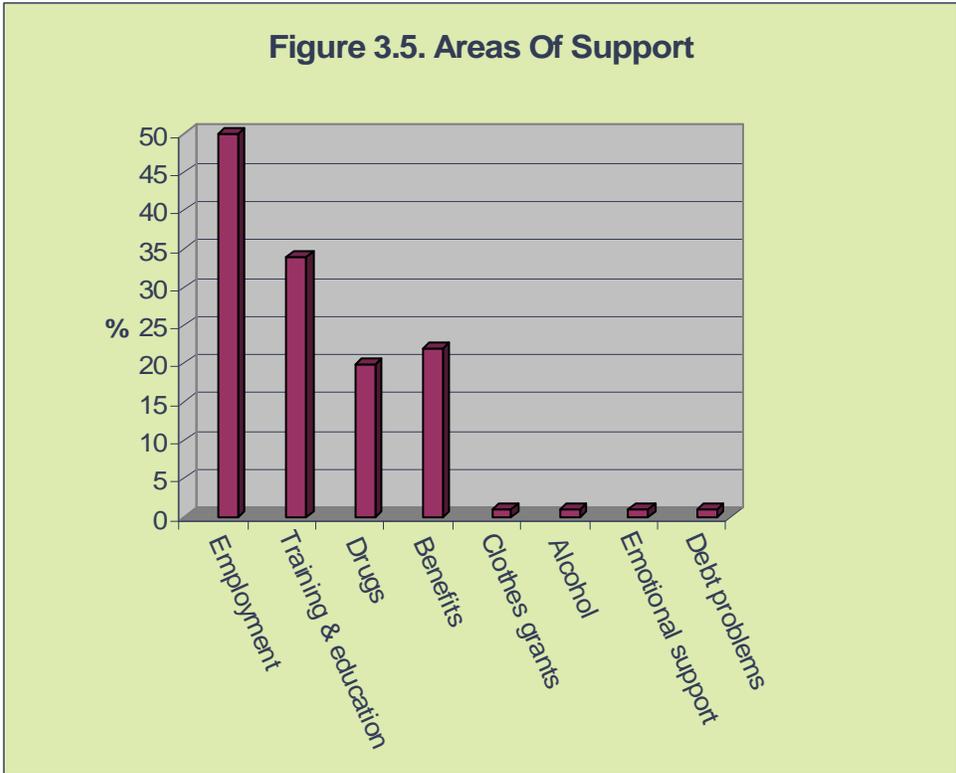
Number	Offence
1	Burglary
2	Driving Whilst Disqualified
3	Robbery
4	Sexual Offences
5	Breaking an Injunction
6	ABH
7	Theft
8	Possession of a Firearm
9	Affray
10	Harassment
11	Deception
12	Drug dealing
13	Drink driving
14	Threats to Kill
15	Arson

The length of the sentence of the beneficiaries sampled, is shown in Figure 3.4. Half of those interviewed were serving sentences of less than one year. 32 percent of the sample were serving sentences of between one and two years.



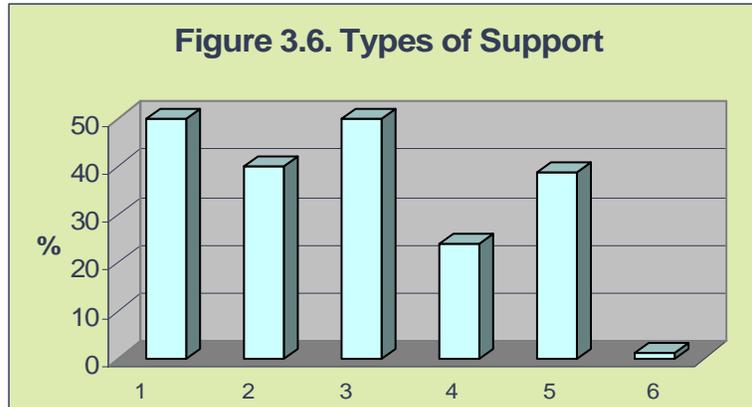
Support Provided to Prisoners

Figure 3.5 shows the areas of support that was received by beneficiaries in the sample and provides more detail than the figures shown in Table 3.1.



Note that prisoners often received help in more than one area of need, e.g. with housing and education.

Figure 3.6 shows the kind of help and support that was provided to prisoners.



Key

Number	Type of Support
1	Provision of information
2	Meetings in prison with external agencies
3	Meetings outside of prison with external agencies
4	Discussion of needs
5	Liaising with external orgs on prisoner's behalf
6	Emotional support

The Figure shows that information, e.g. information on courses, housing and services available outside of prison, was provided to 50 percent of prisoners. Meetings with external organisations in prison were also arranged for 50 percent of the beneficiaries sampled and meetings were arranged outside of the prison for a further 40 percent. The Project liaised with external organisations on behalf of prisoners in 39 percent of cases

Figure 3.7 shows that, of those interviewed over 90 percent said that the Project had helped them with everything they had asked for.

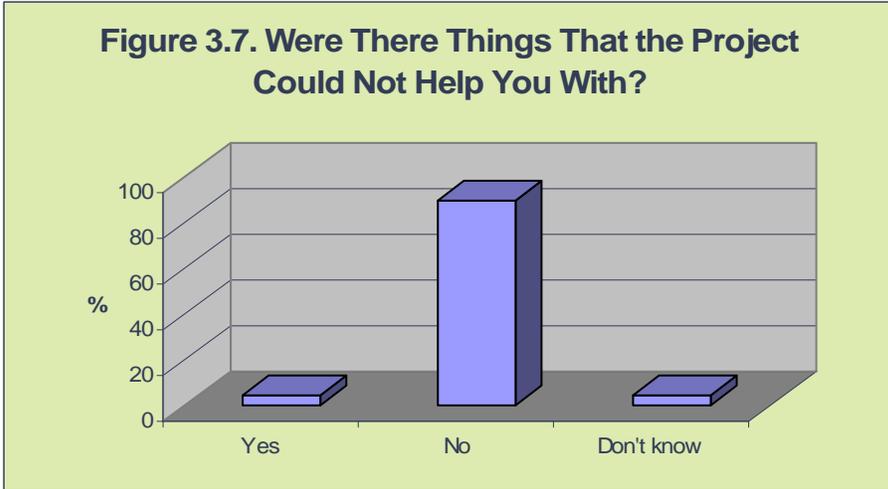
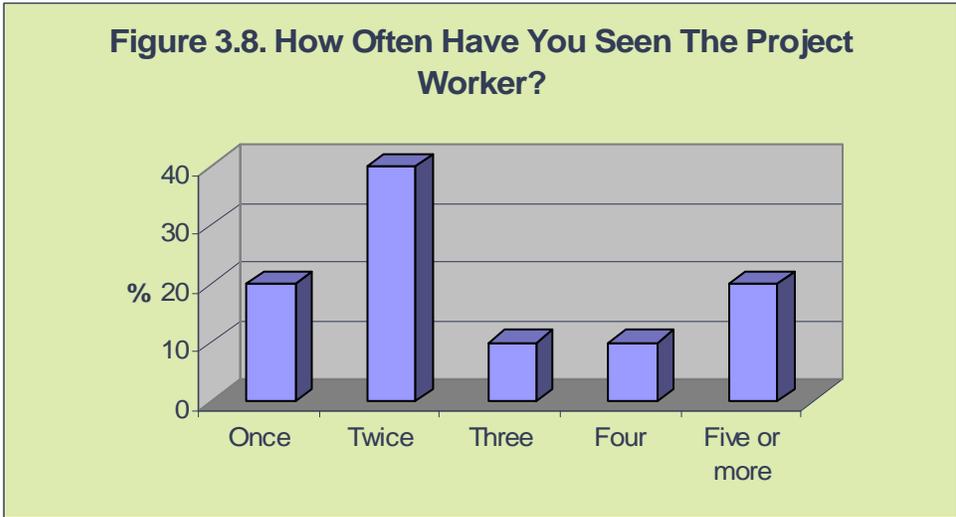


Figure 3.8 shows how often those interviewed had seen the Second Chance project workers. The number of times a beneficiary was seen is a reflection of their needs; the more they were seen the more complex their needs. Almost 40 percent of people were seen three or more times, showing the same number had complex needs.



82 percent of those interviewed said that the number of times they had been seen was enough and 18 percent said it was insufficient.

Pre-Sentence

Figure 3.9 shows what beneficiaries sampled were doing before they came to prison. Almost 20 percent of people were working, with the second most common activities were 'on the sick' and 'taking drugs', followed by being 'on the dole'.

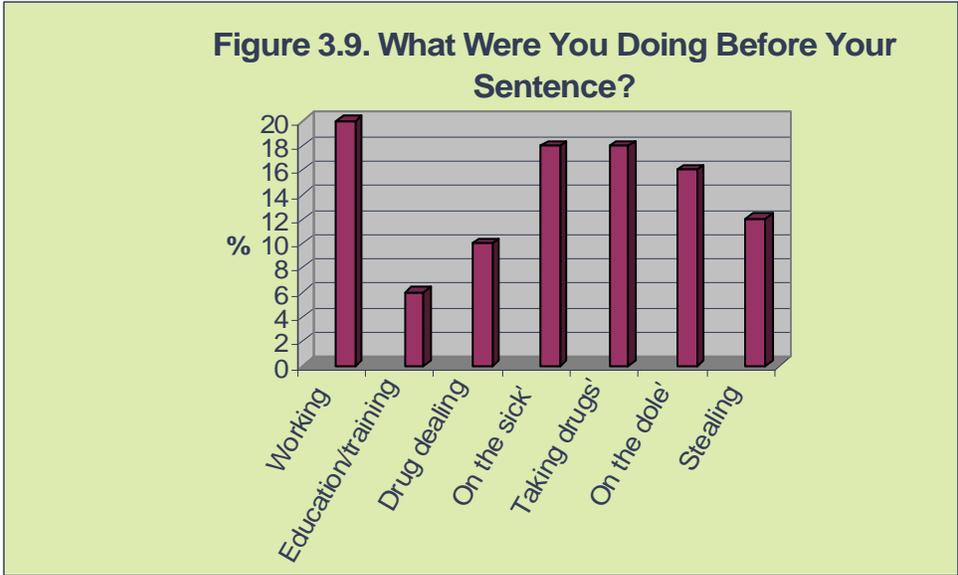


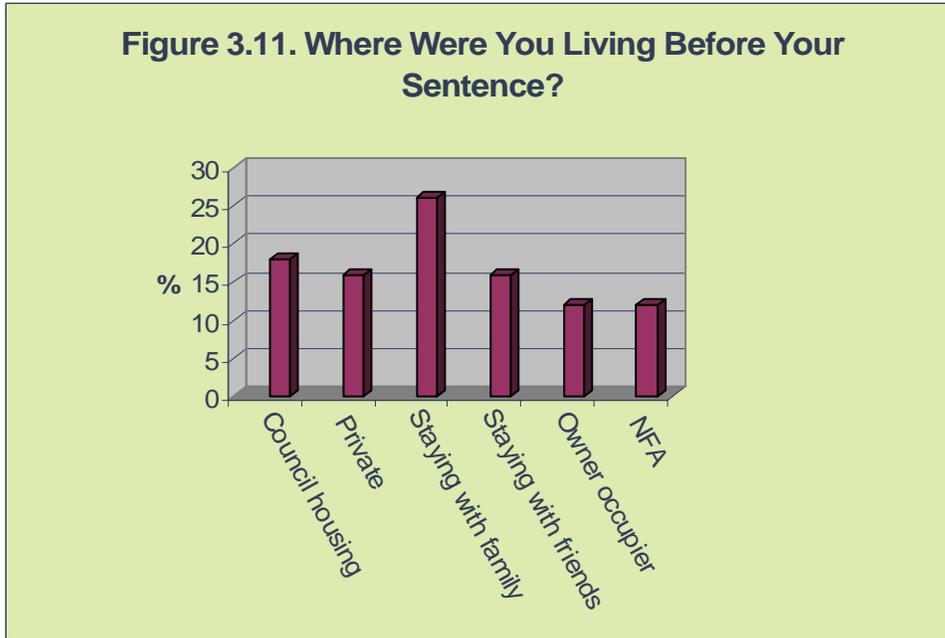
Figure 3.10 shows what prisoners had planned for their release.



Over 50 percent of people had nothing arranged and 22 percent of people interviewed said that they had work or training organised. 24 percent of prisoners interviewed said that they had either an interview for work or the possibility of work when they were released.

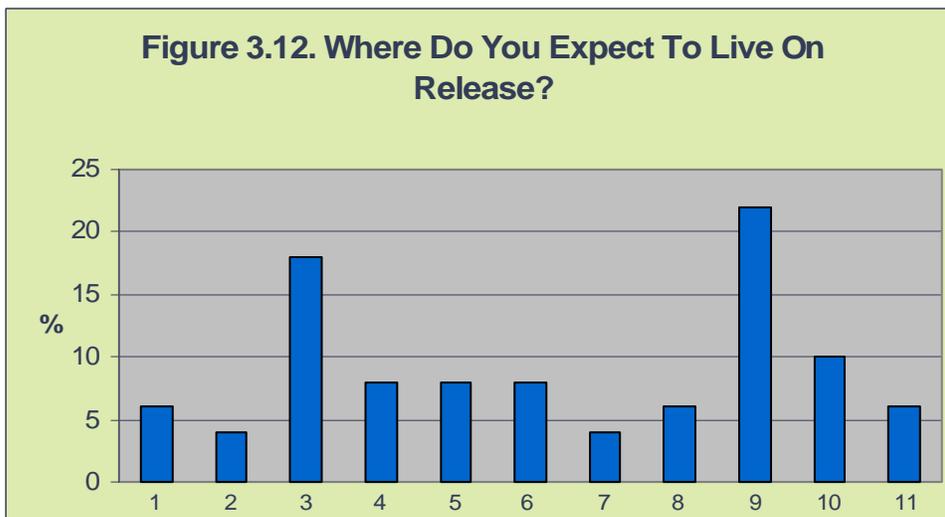
Accommodation

Figure 3.11 shows where prisoners were living before they came to prison.



Just over 25 percent were staying with family, this means their mother, father or other family relation. This category does not mean living with a wife and child(ren).

Figure 3.12 shows where the same prisoners would be living after they were released.



Key

Number	Description
1	Council housing
2	Private
3	Staying with family
4	Staying with family until Nacro helps me find Accommodation
5	Staying with friends
6	Owner occupies
7	NFA
8	B&B
9	Serving <12 months and hoping Nacro will arrange somewhere, if not No Fixed Abode
10	Serving >12 months and hoping Nacro will arrange somewhere, if not B&B
11	Hostel

Over 20 percent of prisoners sampled were hoping that the Project would organise suitable accommodation and 18 percent were returning to live with their families (again mother, father or other family member).

Figures 3.11 and 3.12 show a significant decline in the status and quality of people's accommodation in the time between entering and leaving prison. The figures show:

- 12 percent less people living in council accommodation; demonstrating that people lose their council properties whilst in prison;
- 12 percent less people living in private rented accommodation; demonstrating that people also lose their private accommodation whilst in prison;
- Eight percent less people staying at their friends;
- Four percent less people being owner occupiers; all of these have experienced relationship breakdowns with their family (wife and children) and have been prohibited from returning to their homes;
- 14 percent more people of No Fixed Abode;
- No increase or decrease in those staying with family, although this is a temporary arrangement for eight percent of those leaving prison whilst they are waiting for accommodation which is arranged through the Second Chance Project (on waiting lists or waiting to attend tenancy interviews);
- Six percent of people going to B&Bs which rises to 16 percent if the Project cannot organise more permanent accommodation; and
- Six percent of people going to hostels.

Perceptions on Re-Offending

Figure 3.13 shows the responses of those sampled when they were asked whether the Project will help them on release. 48 percent of respondents said that the Project will help them on release and 36 percent of those sampled said that it would help them on the condition that there were results from the Project's efforts, e.g. if accommodation or employment materialised. Six percent of

respondents thought that the Project would not help them and ten percent said they didn't know if it would help them or not.

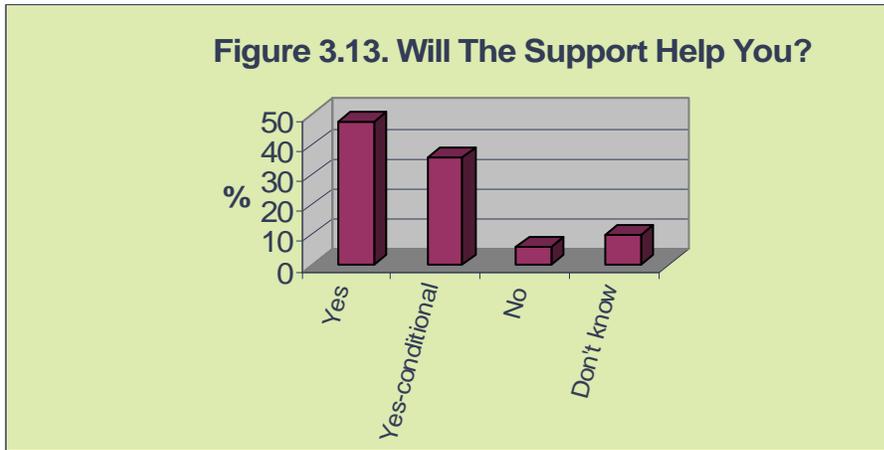
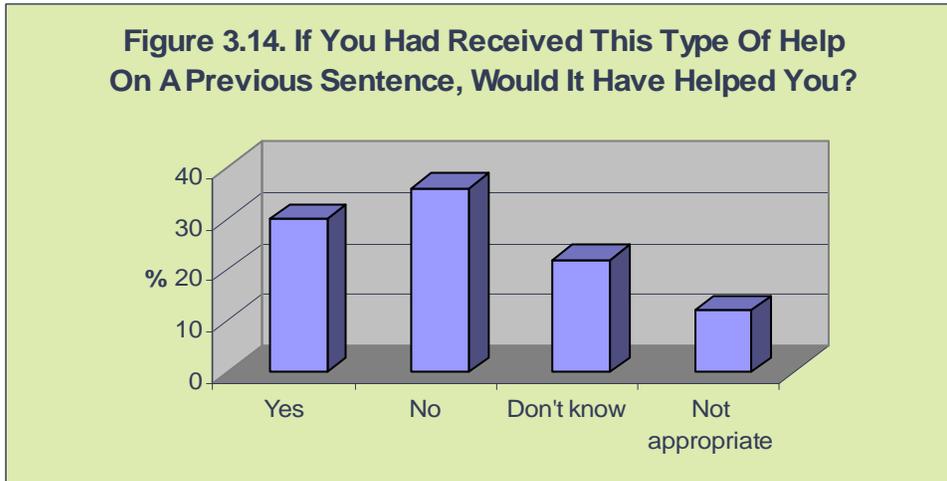


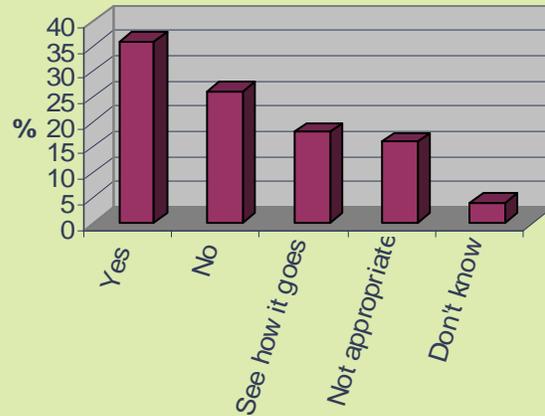
Figure 3.14 shows the responses from those sampled when asked if they had been offered this type of support on a previous sentence would it have had any impact on whether they chose to re-offend.



30 percent said yes, 36 percent said no, 22 percent didn't know and 10 percent of respondents said that the issue was not appropriate either because they felt their re-offending was unintentional or that the last time they were in prison was many years ago.

Figure 3.15 shows the responses from those sampled when they were asked whether the support they had received from the Project has made any difference to whether or not they choose to re-offend.

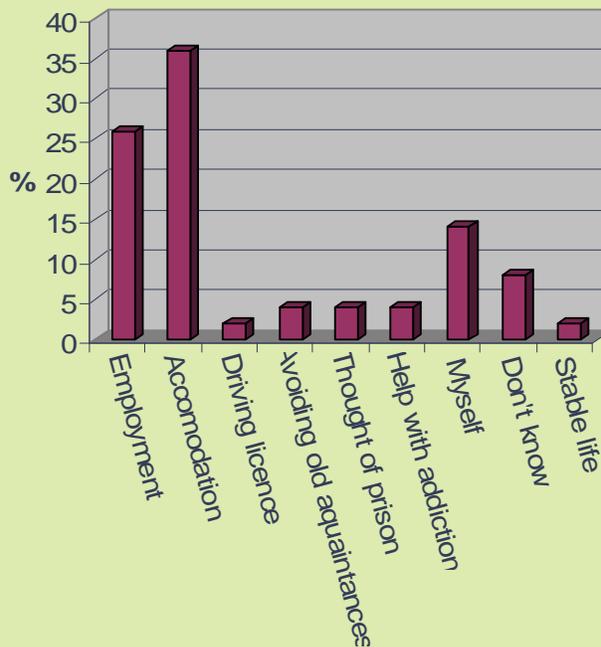
Figure 3.15. Has The Project Made Any Difference To Whether You Re-Offend?



36 percent of respondents said yes and 26 said no. 18 percent said they would 'see how it goes', 16 percent said the question was not appropriate as they did not intend to re-offend anyway and four percent did not know.

When asked what would prevent the respondents re-offending, Figure 3.16 shows the results.

Figure 3.16. What Would Prevent You Re-Offending?



The most common responses were good accommodation and a good job.

Post-Release Findings

All ex-offenders interviewed had been out of prison for less than three months.

Those people who responded to the request for a follow-up interview were more likely to be those with a more stable life, having an address where they could be contacted at the very minimum, than those that did not respond to the request. They are also more likely to have received successful support from the Project and so have a positive perception of the Project, which is demonstrated by their willingness to be interviewed.

65 percent of respondents stated that the Project had helped them prepare for life on the outside (see Figure 3.17).

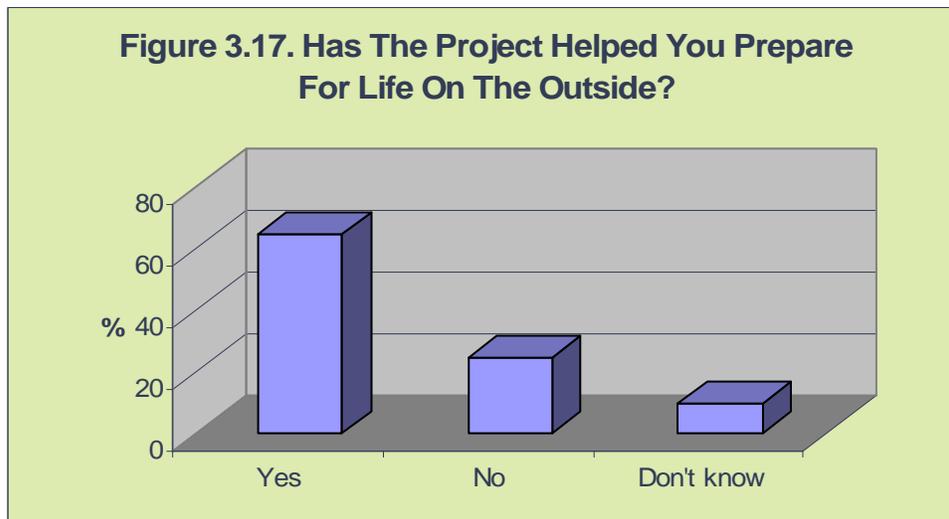
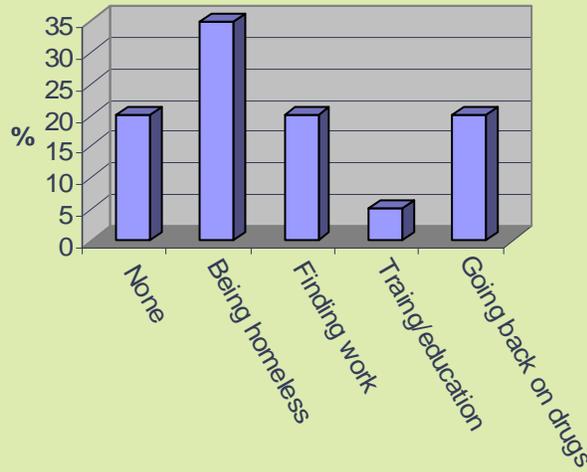


Figure 3.18 shows the issues that concerned those interviewed before they left prison. The concern felt by most respondents was being homeless.

Figure 3.18. Issues You Were Concerned About Pre-Release



This worry is reflected in the following Figure 3.19, which shows that accommodation arranged through the Project is most help to the ex-offenders.

Figure 3.19. What Is The Most Help Now?

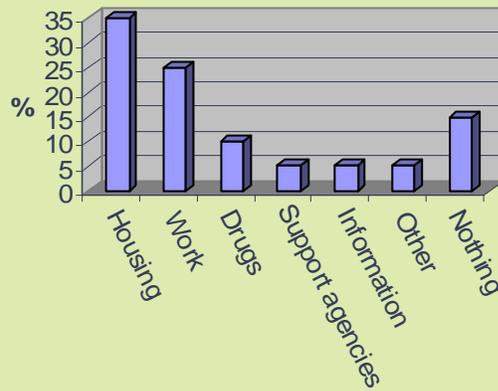
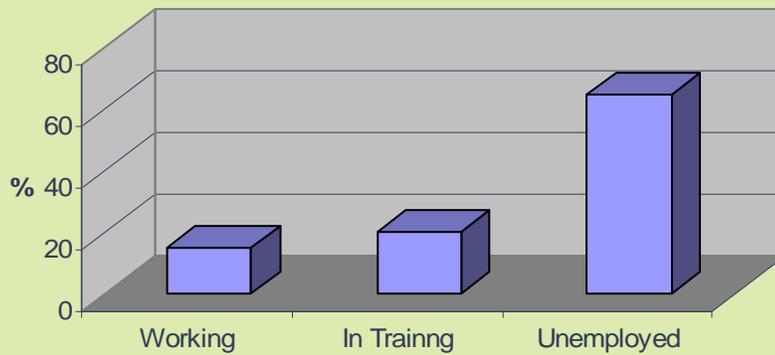


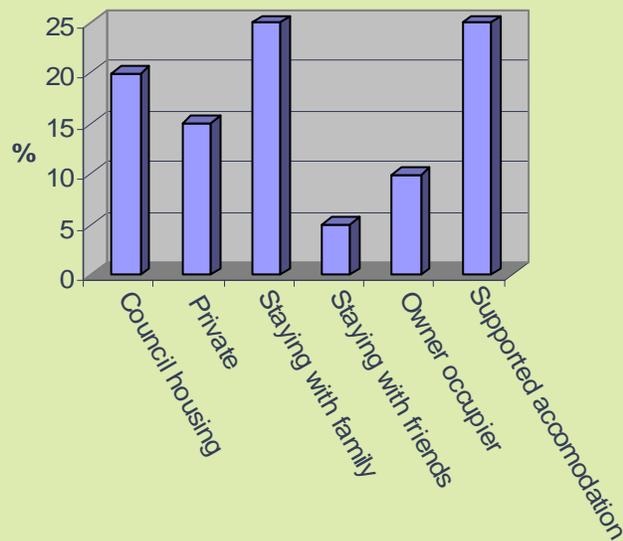
Figure 3.20 shows that the majority of respondents were unemployed when they were interviewed.

Figure 3.20. Employed, in Training or Unemployed?



However, Figure 3.21 shows that all were in accommodation.

Figure 3.21. Where Are You Living?



60 percent of respondents also stated that they had contact with support organisations since they left Holme House.

Figure 3.22. Have You Had Contact With Other Support Organisations?

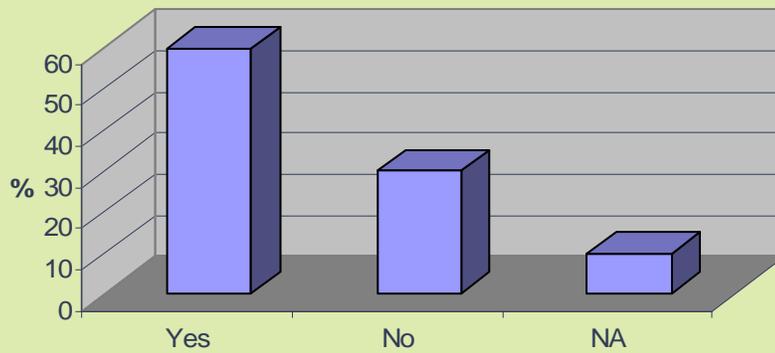
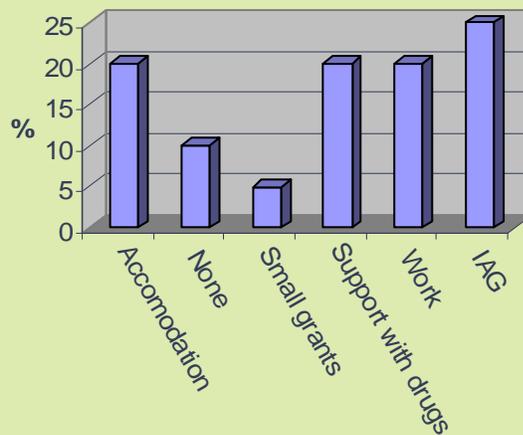


Figure 3.23 shows the range of services that ex-offenders felt they would like to access on the outside.

Figure 3.23. If Other Help Was Available, What Help Would You Like?



4.0 Impact and Effectiveness

4.1 Impact

For the purposes of clarification, we take 'impact' to mean the impact the Project has had on the re-offending rates of its clients. This was determined by using the NOMS' Offender Index on offenders two years after they have been through the Project and left Holme House. Repeat re-offending is defined by the SEU (2002) as ex-offenders being put back into custody within a two year period. **The SEU report states that 58 percent of ex-offenders are convicted of another crime within two years.**

This time lag of two years (that is required to determine re-offending) limits the number of Project beneficiaries that can put through the NOMS' Offender Index. Only those beneficiaries that received support in the first seven months of the Project, from December 2001 to July 2002, were used to determine re-offending.

A total of 103 individuals were cross referenced through the NOMS' Offender Index. The results showed **56 percent of individuals that the Project had worked with in the first seven months in HMP Holme House had re-offended. This shows very little variance from the SEU figure of 58 percent.**

These figures indicate that the Project has had very little impact on the reduction of re-offending amongst its client group.

Whilst providing an indication of the impact of the Project, the results of the Offender Index analysis do not tell the whole story as only 10 percent of the total number of project beneficiaries were put through the Index. In order to judge total impact we would have to wait until 2006, when all of the beneficiaries will have been theoretically out of prison for two years.

4.2 Effectiveness

Effectiveness is taken to mean how successfully the Project carries out its support services that are aimed at offenders, also how successfully it builds good partnerships with other organisations that can, in turn, provide support services to offenders. This is ultimately measured by interviewing those offenders the Project has worked with and its partners.

4.2.1 Partner Interviews

A selection of the Project's partners were interviewed over the course of the evaluation.

External Partners

The Project's partner organisations fall into a series of categories. These include:

- Housing Associations, including, DASH and Norcare;
- Drug and Alcohol Support Services, including the Grange Project;
- Advice and guidance organisations, including IAG and Citizen's Advice Bureau;
- Education, Training and Employment (ETE) support organisations such as Prince's Trust, the WISE group, Job Centre Plus and Connexions (Tees Valley Mentoring); and
- Local Authority Housing Departments, including those of Middlesbrough, Hartlepool, Redcar and Cleveland and Darlington.

With the exception of the local authorities, all the partners have a very strong working relationship and have regular contact with the Project. The relations between the Project and local authorities range from weak to almost non-existent.

All of the partner organisations had an informal relationship with the Project – none had formalised relations or had any memoranda of understanding.

None of the partner organisations had ever been formally told, or had the Project's objectives explained to them. Although each partner organisation interviewed had a broad understanding that the Project aimed to support ex-offenders, each organisation thought that the Project had similar aims to that particular organisation. For example, the Grange Project (part of the North East Council on Addictions, or NECA) are an organisation that provides, among other things, support to individuals with problems with drug abuse. The Grange Project thought that the Second Chance project provides resettlement and through care to prisoners with drug and alcohol related issues.

The relationship between the Second Chance project and its partner organisations consisted of the supply of referrals, i.e. offenders were referred to the partners whilst in Holme House to receive support and guidance when they were released. The supply of referrals happened in one of two ways: either the Project contacted the partner organisation on behalf of the named beneficiary, discussed that individual's needs and then made an appointment for the client to see the organisation when they were released; or, the partner was contacted and then came into Holme House to see the beneficiary. The latter was the commonest form of referral. Very occasionally, a member of the Project would

accompany a beneficiary, either after they have been released or if the client was on a temporary release license, to attend a referral interview outside of the prison.

The network of partner organisations and the good relations that the Project has built therein, provides an integral part of the Project.

In the absence of the Project's ability to provide post-release support, the partners provided a link for ex-offenders between Holme House and life on the outside.

If the Project had not existed, many of the partners would have been unable to, or found it more difficult, to access an ex-offender client group. For example, the Second Chance project provided 20 percent of the Grange Project's drug service referrals and 90 percent of the WISE group's caseload of ex-offenders.

Many of the partners interviewed felt that they were a logical next step for the work of the Second Chance project. For example, Tees Valley Mentoring said that "*we extend the work that Nacro does*"

However, although the partners played a link role (between Holme House and life on the outside), they all tended to be single-sectorally focussed, i.e. providing a housing role, an employment service or a drugs service. They did not provide a service which coordinated services or provided a holistic support service, which evidence has shown to be most effective at reducing re-offending by ex-offenders.

The only suggested project improvement was better advertising, with an outline of exactly what the Project offered and a presentation of their service aims.

Some examples of cooperation between the Project and partners, and their referrals are presented below:

- A woman coming out of Lower Newton prison who was a client of the WISE group, was looking for work and courses and wanted to know what her criminal record would exclude her from. WISE contacted the Project who provided them with the information they required and the woman successfully completed a child care course;
- The Project accompanied a previously problematic 'revolving door' prisoner on a temporary license to Durham Action on Single Housing;
- On a fortnightly basis, the IAG interview five prisoners to help with employment and training on release. They had a client who was moving into the Sunderland area with whom they discussed job opportunities, voluntary work that is needed for his chosen career path, details of the nearest job centre to him, local college courses and other contacts from the IAG network in the Sunderland area that would help him with job hunting;

- The WISE group had a referral from the Project who was a repeat offender. They provided him with three weeks woodwork training to which he always turned up and was very punctual. He was placed in a local school as a classroom assistant to a woodwork class. He did two days then did not turn up. They found out that he did not like the school environment. He was then put onto a regeneration project with a local authority. He turned up for four weeks and was very punctual. He then did not turn up and they do not know where he went.
- Tees Valley Mentoring had a referral from the Project, who they had met in Holme House, who was very interested in getting involved with sports and football coaching. They got him involved with a Football First project in Middlesbrough and they met him on a weekly basis. He was doing very well but then stopped turning up as a result of drugs and “*falling in with the wrong crowd*”. Tees Valley Mentoring stated that when the client needed help he did not ask for it.

The Project’s information providing role was highly valued by both prisoners and partners. Project partners and prisoners alike have expressed their high regard for the Project’s role as an important source of information, that would be difficult to find elsewhere. For example, one prisoner had lost contact with an old pad-mate (a friend that he made whilst sharing a cell) who had been released previously. The Project tracked his friend down and passed on his contact details and they started to write to one another. Another example was provided in the previous section on Partner Interviews about a woman from Lower Newton prison looking for courses available to ex-offenders. Job Centre Plus said of the Project “*they have a broad knowledge of the outside agencies that can assist on release*”.

Internal Partners

The Project’s partners within the prison service and inside Holme House are classed as internal partners. They include the probation service, CARAT, housing and the resettlement service. In addition to these services, the Governor of Holme House was also interviewed to gain a strategic view.

Within Holme House, the Project was seen as an integral part of the current resettlement activities and the broader resettlement strategy.

The prison has been in the process of developing a coherent resettlement strategy for the last 16 months, since the appointment of the current governor. Soon after his appointment, the Governor appointed a Resettlement Governor and a Resettlement Manager to oversee resettlement activities within the prison. A Resettlement Policy Group was set up and meets regularly and a structure has been put in place for all resettlement work.

There is an intention in the prison, coming from the highest level, to work more closely with organisations in the community, including strategic partnerships, such as Safe in Tees Valley (a community safety and crime prevention partnership). This broad policy move has the objective of seeing prisoners 'through the prison gate' and is ultimately about reducing re-offending. The Governor felt Nacro's Second Chance project was an important part of this process and has described the Project as "a *hub within a hub*" which connects the resettlement work in the prison to organisations in the wider community.

The internal partners, in a similar way to the external partners, viewed the Project as an invaluable addition to the services that already exist in the prison which help resettle offenders (when they become ex-offenders).

The Project, since its arrival in December 2001, integrated extremely well into the prison's institutional set up and was held in high regard by prison staff and departments. This is a significant achievement for an external organisation in a prison environment. When questioned about this integration, the internal partners stated that it was a combination of the high quality of project staff and their comportment, and the broader ethos and approach of Nacro as an organisation.

It was felt that, in the absence of the Project, the prison's resettlement services would not have been able to reach all the prisoners who require resettlement support. In addition to this, the prisoners that they would see, would have received a poorer quality of support as their services would be stretched, i.e. they have insufficient human resources to cope with demand. Also, as noted above, some, more vulnerable and needy prisoners, would have received no support as they are considered 'lost causes'.

Some quotes by the partners organisations are presented below:

"I am not saying we can't live without it [the Project] but it's valuable".

"They have become embedded in the work of the prison".

"They have got the ball rolling [for resettlement work] and have been very successful so far".

"They create pathways for personal development [for prisoners]".

"[if the Project goes] it will result in poorer outcomes for prisoners ... some prisoners won't be seen".

"[the Project is] very person-centred ... very much about helping people, which keeps and maintains the ethos of Nacro about care and resettlement. They help prisoners and that's what we want them to do".

“I’d like to see more of them, rather than less”.

“Three years ago there was no Nacro, no Job Centre Plus and we were snowed under, we couldn’t cope. Now, there’s a division of labour and we don’t want less we want more. There’s about 1000 inmates, two Nacro workers, two probation, and that’s not enough. We are the fourth largest local prison in the country ... if anything we need more [staff] so we could widen the workload”.

The only major improvement suggested by the internal partners was a rationalisation of the referral process. The internal partners and the Project had a two way referral process, e.g. if the Project sees a prisoner who is outside of their remit (e.g. serving more than 12 months, from outside the Tees Valley or has a need that they cannot address) they will refer them to another service, similarly if CARAT or probation sees a prisoner with a housing or ETE need, they will refer them to the Project. However, each service has a different referral form or recording process. This means some prisoner records are lost or not kept, or needs are not specified. It was stated that it would significantly help cooperation, referrals or record keeping is one common referral system could be developed.

4.2.2 Staff Interviews

The staff that were interviewed had an in-depth knowledge about the Project, the role it plays, both strategically and practically, and were very creative in implementing the Project.

One of the identified weaknesses of the Project was its relations with local authorities and their housing departments. It was stated that where accommodation is offered, the wait between the release of the prisoners and the tenancies becoming available was too long. This weakness was corroborated by the research, yet the evidence points towards the problem not being on the part of the Project, but on the part of the local authority. The Project made many attempts with each local authority to establish working relations, yet there was no progress made. In the light of the strength of the relations the Project’s external and internal partners, this further points towards a weakness and a reluctance on the part of the local authorities to become involved with resettlement of ex-offenders returning to their communities. This is supported by the following response from a local authority:

“We have met Resettlement Officers from Holme House before and do get occasional contact from them about people due to be released, but we do not really have any well defined procedures set out”.

An ex-project worker stated:

“Relationships with the housing sector [of the local authorities] need to be improved. Meetings have been held but nothing really moves forward. The

councils expect some guarantees from the Nacro workers, but still put released prisoners onto estates where there are problems with drugs. Most of the time inmates want to move to a new council area, but they are prevented from doing this because of council rules”.

It was proposed that more senior level negotiations need to be employed to rectify this situation.

It was recognised by the Project workers that their caseload made it impossible to cater sufficiently for the post-release element of the Project. One ex-project worker stated:

“We need to look at the pre- and post-release elements of the Project separately. It is too much for one member of staff to do both, as the caseload on just pre release work is high enough. This causes the post release work to suffer and consequently a number of inmates are lost to the Project within the first critical weeks of release”.

The following example illustrates a need for the post release element of the Project.

“One released prisoner had an alcohol problem. For the first few days after release he was sleeping rough in a derelict house as the local council had no accommodation ready for him. He turned to drink to cope with this which exacerbated the financial problems he already had. He did eventually get a flat and was successful with independent living. However he needed help even to contact the gas and electricity services in the first instance. He almost lost the flat when he fell behind on the rent and needed intervention from Nacro to liaise with the council. Basically no case is straightforward - inmates have a variety of issues accommodation, employment, drugs, lack of family support and financial difficulties and that can be just for one case”.

4.2.3 Beneficiary Interviews

Pre-Release

The reaction from the Project's clients has been extremely positive, with only one person stating that they had been of no help to him.

"They've let me know what's going on and put me in contact with organisations to help me, like for my cocaine addiction problem. They've done loads and been really good".

There was a great appreciation for the Project staff and the way they conduct themselves, particularly in relation to affording the prisoners respect.

"... [the Project worker] has been the only one that's been helpful whilst I've been in here".

"... just talking to them has been good – I was feeling hopeless and just knowing someone was there who doesn't have to help you but does 'cos they want to, has been a great help".

"... they've upped my mood and helped me through this [prison] a bit".

There was also a great appreciation for the Project's role in providing and sourcing information not readily available to prisoners.

"... if they haven't known something then they have put me in contact with someone who does know ... for example, getting information in here is impossible ... I wanted to get the address for Corgi so I could find out how to register, it took me a week to get a copy of the Yellow Pages form an Officer and when I got it I realised that it only gave phone numbers and I didn't have enough money to make the call. Nacro got me the number immediately when I asked for it. It's things like that which are just so much help".

"They've been brilliant ... anything that she [the Project worker] didn't know she'd go and find it out for you and she's the only one in here that when she says she'll do something, she'll do it, like if she says I'll get a letter to you on Wednesday, then you get one on Wednesday".

The Project also provided a role which has been more difficult to quantify; it provided an option to the prisoners to enable them to take the opportunity to try and secure education, training, employment, accommodation or drug support services. In other words, the Project presented the prisoners with a range of choices.

"It's made me look at other options – it's opened my eyes to what I'm entitled to and what I'm not".

"I don't think it they [the Project] can stop you re-offending but they can point you in the right direction but ultimately it's you who choose between right and wrong".

"... every time I've been in jail it's been me on my own, but now Nacro have put me in the right direction".

"... when I first got in here I thought it was the end of the world but, after seeing Nacro, now I know that I have options".

"... I was worried about getting out, now I've got something to look forward to, like work".

Many of the prisoners also valued the fact that the Project put them into contact with appropriate organisations and people that could directly cater for their educational, training, employment, accommodation or other needs.

Post-Release

One of the Project's clients worked for the health service as a driver before he was convicted. As a result of Nacro's efforts to negotiate with his employer, including successfully arranging for a temporary licence to attend an interview with the employer, he was able to keep his job.

"If it wasn't for Nacro I wouldn't have kept my job. They pushed things for me ... they got me home leave so I could go for an interview with my old employer and they came with me".

For another prisoner, a series of appointments were made whilst he was still in Holme House. He says:

"Everything was put in place for me, like appointments, people to see. Like the Job Centre didn't get in contact with me, I was out on the Monday and I had no forms by the Thursday ... Rebecca got the forms to fill in over the weekend and I had an appointment on the Tuesday".

Ex-offenders consistently said that they thought that Nacro helped stop ex-offenders re-offending.

"More stays out 'cos of Nacro than goes back in".

The reaction from ex-offenders interviewed was as positive about the Project outside the prison as reactions were from prisoners inside Holme House. For example, one ex-offender said:

“I don’t think they could’ve done any more ... accommodation, benefits, job apps ... they are a hell of an asset to the jail”.

Another comment sentiment shared by many of those interviewed both inside and outside of prison was the Project’s ability to provide people with options:

“They provided me with options ... they gave me the best accommodation I could get ... they coulda put me in a hostel ... ten for ten”.

“They made us look at things different ‘stead of lounging about on the couch ... showed me options”.

This ability of the Project to provide people with options must be seen in the context of 14 percent of prisoners who said that the main determinant as to whether or not they committed another offence was themselves. Many of the respondents stated that a major benefit of the Project was that it gave them choices. Therefore, once they decide not to offend, they have other options, like housing, work, training, or other areas of support to follow.

5.0 Findings and Conclusions

To evaluate the Project we must revisit the original aims and objectives and to gauge, through research and evaluation methods (detailed in section 2), the extent to which they have been achieved.

Objective	Degree to Which Completed
To ensure that service users get the information, help and support they need to tackle the range of difficulties they face.	Done – but, although valued by the Project clients, the level of support provided seems to be insufficient to prevent clients re-offending.
To provide a continuity of support pre and post release by linking service users with key workers who might act as mentors, advisers and advocates;	Done to a limited degree - post-release work not done in a sustained or constant manner.
To work with a network of other support agencies to ensure that those returning to the community can access relevant services;	Done – to a successful level within their present working framework. However, with dedicated post-release support coordination of client and partners could be significantly stronger. No formal agreements with partners a significant weakness.
To assess the impact of the Project and promote the findings to policy makers, commissioners of services and practitioners.	Done – the findings show that the Project has had no impact on reducing re-offending.

5.1 Findings

In the light of the current evaluation, we can make a series of conclusions based on the evidence presented in this report.

The major findings are presented below.

- The Project provided a resettlement service in Holme House Prison that dealt with accommodation, employment, training and other needs and was valued by prisoners. It was valued by prisoners because of the time, energy and respect given to them by the Project workers; it provided an appropriate and effective service to meet their needs; it gave them a choice and presented them with options for life on the outside; and it acted as a provider of information.

- The Project played a key role in the resettlement activities of Holme House Prison, on both a practical level, i.e. catering for prisoners that the probation service could not normally devote enough attention to (e.g. ‘revolving door’ prisoners) and lightening the probation services workload; and a strategic role, i.e. by being a “*hub within a hub*” linking the prisons resettlement activities with organisations on the outside, moving the prison into the community.
- The Project had a very high caseload. This caseload made it impossible to carry out post-release work as it was conceived in the original project proposal. This was compounded by a high staff turnover.
- In the absence of capacity to operate post-release work with prisoners, the Project developed a wide network of partner organisations, outside of the prison. All project partners held the Second Chance project in high regard and commented on its effectiveness and how their work would have suffered if the Project had not existed. However, there were no formal relations or agreements between the Project and its partners which meant that tracking beneficiaries and providing support for ex-offenders in need, was almost impossible.
- The Project linked beneficiaries with outside support and service organisations, including the Benefits Agency, facilitating the move from inside to outside. However, there was no support on release for ex-offenders.
- The Project provided a range of its partner organisations with referrals; referrals that they would have otherwise found difficult to find.
- The Project had a very close relationship with the prison service and professionals within Holme House Prison.
- The Project has had no tracking system for clients until January 2004, so it has been difficult to determine the outcomes of their support services since the beginning of the Project.
- The Project realised successful outcomes (i.e. secured tenancies, places on education or training courses, etc) for 15 percent of its clients.
- The Project had little impact on re-offending rates of beneficiaries worked with in the first seven months of the Project.

5.2 Conclusions

The Project has been successful at building good relations both inside and outside the prison. It is widely recognised that the internal institutional arrangements of a prison can create an environment in which it is difficult to integrate. The Second Chance project established itself within the prison and became an integral part of the wider resettlement service that operates in the prison. The Project also created and maintained a network of service providers to cater for prisoners’ needs outside of prison.

The Project’s beneficiaries almost exclusively expressed positive reactions about the contact they had with the Project. In many cases beneficiaries said that the Project had made a difference to whether or not they chose to re-offend.

However, the results from the Offenders Index show that the Project has had no impact on re-offending rates on the people that were supported in the first seven months of the project.

This seeming contradiction leads to the conclusion that while the type of support and the Project's approach was appropriate and valued, it did not go far enough as a method of support to provide ex-offenders with viable livelihood alternatives. In other words, if more of the same support which led to concrete and positive outcomes, i.e. good homes, jobs, training opportunities or drug therapies, was available outside of the prison then it arguably would have had a bigger impact on reducing re-offending.

An element that the Project failed to capitalise on was not establishing formal relations with their partner organisations outside of the prison. If formal agreements had been drawn up then ex-offenders could have been tracked more efficiently and effectively and problems that they experienced could have been identified at an early stage and dealt with. This is particularly relevant for the more vulnerable ex-offenders who are in need of sustained support or at the very minimum, support at critical times whilst adjusting to life outside of prison. A formal agreement and monitoring arrangements need not be complex and could consist of a simple form or an agreement about regular telephone updates.

The absence of post-release support and the inability of the Project to sufficiently capitalise on their partner network are arguably due to a high caseload of prisoners in prison. However, the Project was at fault for altering the criteria for referrals as a result of an initial low caseload. If the original criteria were adhered to from the beginning and the small number of original referrals were provided with adequate and sustained pre- and post-release support then the Project may have had a bigger impact. The evaluation must also raise the question as to why the number of referrals was allowed to become so high resulting in the inability to provide post-release support. Frequent changes in criteria and the absence of post-release support have been the result of ineffective project management. However, the evaluation notes that there have been several different Project Managers over the Project's lifetime.

It seems, from the available evidence, that the Project did not provide enough support to the majority of their clients to make a difference to their re-offending.

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