



# **Through the Gate: the implementation, management and delivery of resettlement service provision for short term prisoners**

*Briefing Report from LJMU Funded Research Activity*

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## ***Structure of the Report***

This report draws on data generated from research activity with groups of managers and professionals working for a range of agencies involved in the delivery of rehabilitation services within and outside HMP Liverpool; groups of men who are or have served short-term prison sentences in HMP Liverpool; and representatives from the families of these men. The interview and focus group based fieldwork activity took place between July 2016 and June 2017 and constitutes phases two and three of an 18-month long project, funded by Liverpool John Moores University, that seeks to explore the continuing impact of the implementation of the Transforming Rehabilitation reforms within the prison setting.

The report focuses on participants experiences of the operation of Through the Gate service provision. The research is not an evaluation of the efficacy of the Transforming Rehabilitation Agenda but an attempt to document the experiences of those involved in its implementation and those who deliver and engage with the practice models it has created. As such, throughout the report we give voice to those who took part in the study and direct quotes from interviewees are used routinely to allow the strength of their contributions to come through.

The project team, and the strategic leaders within prison and probation services who sanctioned the research, are keen that the generated research reports stimulate dialogue and share good practice in the furtherance of the on-going learning and development work of partners involved in delivering rehabilitation services within HMP Liverpool. To this end, the project employs an ‘action-orientated’ research model, meaning that emergent findings are disseminated amongst partners in ‘real-time’ to provide a stimulus for collective learning and to ultimately feed into the continued delivery of resettlement services. An interim report which summarised the findings from phase one of the project was distributed in October 2016 and accompanied by a Research Planning Event (RPE) which saw representatives of partner agencies come together to reflect on the emergent themes, consider progress made and identify pathways forward. A second interim report was disseminated in December 2017, preceded by a further RPE which was attended by 25 professionals.

The report will begin by briefly mapping out the context of the research, documenting the research activity that has taken place in this period and how previous learning has been taken forward by partners. Three discrete sections then follow that in turn explore the emergent themes from the interviews conducted with professionals (managers and practitioners involved in service delivery); offenders (men who are or have served short-term prison sentences at HMP Liverpool); and families (members of families of men who are or have served short-term prison sentences at HMP Liverpool). A case study from one of the tracker cohort of individuals we have routinely engaged with across the past 18-months is then provided to illustrate the complexity and tensions of individual’s resettlement journey. Following this, an overview of the prominent themes to emerge from the second RPE allows an insight into how the research findings were received by those tasked with managing/delivering resettlement services. Finally, the report concludes with a short summary which identifies key themes for consideration and potential pathways to enhancing future service provision.

## **Introduction to the Research**

In 2013, the UK government published plans to reform resettlement provision for (short-term) prisoners via a *Through the Gate (TTG)* scheme introduced as part of its *Transforming Rehabilitation (TR)* agenda. The plans proposed two key changes to the structure and delivery of resettlement services. Firstly, that 89 of the 123 prisons in England and Wales (CJI, 2016) would be re-designated as *resettlement prisons* and tasked with establishing an integrated approach to service delivery; secondly, that the management and provision of resettlement services would form part of the contractual obligations of the newly formed Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC). Furthermore, it was announced that an extended 12-month period of post-release community supervision would become mandatory for all offenders serving custodial sentences of under 12-months, affording longer-term support to a group with a re-offending rate of 60% (Ministry of Justice, 2013).

Through the Gate commenced on 1 May 2015, with the new process establishing that prisoners serving up to 12-months 'be moved to a resettlement prison local to their home area at least three months before release' (CJI, 2016: 11). At the beginning of their sentence, each prisoner is screened twice to identify their resettlement needs and whilst work can be undertaken throughout their sentence, there is exit velocity in the final 12-weeks with specific support provided around employment, accommodation, finance and debt issues. On release, individuals receive a tailored package of supervision allowing rehabilitative support to extend from custody into the community. In practice, this sees the prison, then the CRC undertake a screening of all new prisoners. The CRC then devise and manage a resettlement plan for prisoners for the duration of their sentence with a specific pre-release planning and resettlement plan drafted when an individual enters the final 12-weeks of their sentence. Throughout this process, the prison-based CRC staff communicate with the external CRC/National Probation Service (NPS) supervisor to allow for joined up working.

This report focuses on the implementation of TTG arrangements in HMP Liverpool, a Category B resettlement prison. Resettlement services within the prison are contracted to Merseyside CRC but are delivered by the national charity Shelter, who provide their services on a sub-contractual basis. In essence, Shelter has responsibility for delivering resettlement services 'to the gate' with follow-up support and supervision provided by the responsible officer in the community who is employed directly by Merseyside CRC/NPS. This collaborative research enterprise between Liverpool John Moores University, HMP Liverpool and Merseyside CRC represents an attempt to provide an empirical insight into the implementation and operational deployment of practice reform from the perspectives of those most intimately effected; the staff, prisoners, and their families.

The project commenced in January 2016 and ran until January 2018. The research focused on HMP Liverpool's transition to the resettlement prison model and Merseyside CRC's new contractual obligation to manage and deliver TTG provision. The production of research reports and facilitation of workshops (stimulated by the findings of these reports) helped partners reflect upon and collaboratively develop their partnership working arrangements and practices. The generation of rich

localised interview based data was designed to complement the assessments of service impact drawn from statistical data and Her Majesty Inspectorate of Prisons and Probation reporting mechanisms.

Within this action research spirit, the project team's previous project report (published in November 2016) concluded with a call to partners to engage with five key issues in order to enhance the capacity of TTG provision to deliver on the ambitions of supporting the resettlement processes of short-term sentence prisoners leaving HMP Liverpool. The identification of these specific areas for attention was informed by the research activity completed during the first phase of the project (conducted between January 2016 and June 2016) and the RPE with partner participants that took place in November 2016. The process helped generate a rooted HMP Liverpool evidence-base to support leaders in shaping policy and practice development and next to each identified concern we briefly allude to work that has taken place subsequently to renew TTG provision;

1. **Enhancing partnership work: communication and duplication** – The introduction of partnership meetings that bring together the different teams and organisations involved in delivering resettlement services in order to identify blockages and discuss joint working.
2. **Developing a resettlement identity** – The introduction of a 12-week pre-release course (facilitated by Shelter), which offers all prisoners the opportunity to identify and discuss issues in preparation for release.
3. **Engaging prisoners** – The publication (by HMP Liverpool) of a 'first point directory', which maps out the resettlement process and attempts to enhance understanding of available services.
4. **Engaging families** - The introduction of a relationship link worker/family liaison pilot (managed by POPS) to enhance communication between inmates and their families and to therefore augment preparations for release.
5. **Tasking change** – The on-going commitment to developing an empirical evidence base through research and knowledge exchange events that bring partners together to collectively consider the findings.

Whilst these developments represent a positive response to the emerging evidence base, it is important to recognise that the impact of local interventions are vulnerable to, and mitigated by, the wider criminal justice context that in respect of penal policy is characterised by volatility and uncertainty. On a national level, the impact of austerity measures on prison resources and staffing; of unprecedented levels of violence; and of the emergence of new psychoactive substances, have led to a questioning of the ability to deliver effective resettlement services during a supposed penal crisis (Taylor et al., 2017). A number of critical reports have urged reform (see CJI 2016, 2017), to enable prisons to transform from places of 'dehabilitation' (Scott, 2016) to environments that can positively foster lasting change. However, whilst the government has renewed investment in prison staff and continually restated its commitment to enhancing supervision and support structures for prisoners the proposals to further restructure resettlement services and to establish a new network of reform

prisons (as outlined in the Prison and Courts Bill) were announced but then shelved in the aftermath of the 2017 General Election. More latterly in October 2017 the Justice Select Committee launched an inquiry into the TR reforms more generally concerned as they were with limited evidence of impact on reoffending.

Given this ever changing and unsettling landscape, it is perhaps unsurprising that localised solutions to extant problems continue to encounter a number of blockages which inhibit the efficacy of service delivery. Evidence of this is apparent in how closely aligned the emergent themes in phase one of this research were with the Criminal Justice Joint Inspection's national review of TTG (CJJI, 2016) published one month earlier. Consistent with the challenges to effect service delivery in HMP Liverpool, the Joint Inspection identified the need to increase knowledge of TTG; to deliver more meaningful resettlement work; to protect the operational capacity those engaged in resettlement planning; and to enhance communication/continuity of service between prisons and community. Whilst some of the issues identified through this research are undoubtedly specific to HMP Liverpool/Merseyside, there are others which are nationally evident and indicative of more systematic problems prompted by the roll-out of TR and long-standing issues within the prison estate (Taylor et al., 2017), something which the emergent themes in this report provide a further insight into.

### ***Project Methodology***

This Briefing report presents the findings from phases two and three of the study (July 2016-June 2017) which emerged via interviews with a sample of 115 individuals, comprising;

- 20 professionals involved in the management/delivery of resettlement service provision;
- 18 tracker cases of inmates serving sentences of 12-months or under where each individual, where possible, was interviewed twice during the final 12-weeks of their time in custody and once on their release in the community (it should be noted that 2 of the tracker cohort have died since the project commenced in January 2016);
- 15 NPS Probation Officers and/or CRC Case Managers (responsible for supervising the individual tracker cases);
- 7 members of the tracker cases families (each interviewed once whilst their relation was in custody and once on their release)
- 10 focus groups (with 55 inmates), all of whom were serving sentences of 12-months or under and who had entered the final 12-weeks of their sentence.

In the following sections of this report we organize the emergent themes around three groups of respondents. The first, *Professionals*, brings together employees from HMP Liverpool, Merseyside CRC, NPS and partner agencies. The second and largest group concerns the *Offenders*, whilst the third smaller grouping concerns the views of *family members* of those serving or recently released from HMP Liverpool. Finally, we move our attention to the themes emerging from the RPE held in January

2017 which was attended by 25 professionals – at the event, three focus groups were facilitated and the prominent themes to emerge from these form the substantive content of the ‘RPE: key issues’ section whilst also helping to forge the recommendations outlined in the conclusion.



Both Managers and practitioners were asked a series of questions that encouraged them to reflect on the **initial, and continued, implementation of Through the Gate (TTG)** provision within and beyond HMP Liverpool. There was no single predominant theme that emerged with the responses of individuals grouped around one of three positions; those who reported being positive about improvements being made to enhance resettlement provision; those who struggled to identify progress in operational practice; and those who remain fundamentally unsettled by the Transforming Rehabilitation (TR) reform agenda more generally.

All respondents agreed that the speed of the introduction of the TR reforms had compromised the early operation and establishment of partner roles and, in line with views captured in the first report, were candid in their assessment in how far working relationships needed to develop. The challenges created by such a significant policy reform was perhaps best encapsulated in the response of one of the Senior Managers in the prison;

*“I think it was driven through too quickly and as a result I don’t think things were embedded enough with the scale of the change required. I don’t personally think that it was implemented in a staged approach. I think it was driven through, if I’m honest at the time, and I still think we’re suffering because of that now”*

For those who felt more optimistic about the current state of programme implementation they pointed to improved channels and forums of communication between partners, and many identified improvement in staff numbers across partner agencies as stimulating more effective working and bringing about a generally calmer working environment;

*“it was implemented and there was no additional resource [for the prison service] that came with the implementation of this model. It feels as though the future might look better because we’ve got 60 additional staff now. For me, the prison is already starting to feel better because of the sheer numbers of staff that can help the men. It doesn’t feel as frantic. People are helping them find answers, they’re able to listen more and it just feels a little bit healthier...I think we’re moving in the right direction”*

Others went further, identifying what they saw as much more meaningful **professional buy-in from partners** and cited what they saw as a growing willingness to see resettlement as a shared operational imperative. The two statements below from prison service practitioners allude to the shift in terms of the collective participation in developing practice;

*“It’s sharing the workload, it’s bringing in the community, and it’s a Through The Gate process, whereas we never really had that Through The Gate process before. I’m not saying we’re 100% yet, but having something is better than nothing and we’re actually getting there...[previously] it was, “They will attend work, they will attend education,” was it a rehabilitative culture? I don’t think so, no”*

*“Twelve months ago, I don’t feel that Reducing Reoffending was necessarily a high priority within the prison...it was security and safety, a focus on the decency of the prison, purely because of the poor state that was in...I feel now that we’re much more interlinked...residential staff have far more of an awareness of their ability to impact positively and also how their reaction can impact negatively as well. I think there’s more of an awareness of the Reducing Reoffending role and purpose...We’re not just the fluffy stuff. We’re not just the ‘nice to do’ stuff. Really, this is important. We’re involved in violence reduction. We’re involved in reducing reoffending rates”*

In contrast, there were many who work within the prison setting who are still struggling to see and experience progress in the operational activities associated with resettlement. Their concerns continue to focus on what they viewed as an on-going tendency of partners (within the prison and the community) to work in silos and that at times representatives from the partner agencies needed to engage in more routine and constructive dialogue than has characterised the early operation of TTG provision. The comments of staff below capture these tensions and also highlight how concerns around the extent to which organisational structures more broadly are still hindered in engaging with the ambitions of resettlement provision;

*“The idea is that we tie in, [prison and probation services teams] because we’re one. I think that one of the issues that comes up is that CRC relationship. That seems slightly strained...of uniformed staff [engaged through key worker training] I would say 90% didn’t know what a CRC was and what they should do while they’re here”*

*“It’s not been a smooth transition and that hasn’t really got much better for us in the last 12 months...some of it is personnel issues, some of it is about the fact that we still see ourselves as a local prison, rather than a resettlement prison and the focus I don’t think is embedded fully. There are some people that get the importance, but there’s still a whole tranche that don’t, so until we can make progress on that, I don’t think that will change”*

It is not just that organisational structures have not been embedded that shaped the anxieties of those who were concerned about the modest progress being made. Conceptually too there were concerns expressed that the “churn” of the prison population in HMP Liverpool made it difficult to deliver meaningful and structured work and this was further undermined by the **failure to establish an accepted and shared understanding of what constitutes a resettlement prison.**



*“In a local prison like here, because people are in for such a short length of time, the volumes are massive. It’s chaotic. It’s a lot of different types of people. So we’re constantly up against it just to get to see people never mind deliver any interventions”*

As the two quotes below illustrate there are concerns that service users themselves do not fully understand how they are being supported and managed, and that allayed to that are significant practice implications that are frustrating professionals. The need to develop more efficient partnership mechanisms to process service users is a chief concern for many, but sat behind that is a need to enhance the ethos of long-term rehabilitation journeys that service users need to be more complicit with;

*“I think the men have found that difficult. When I speak to men who are coming back in I’m not sure they fully understand that they’re going out now on this extended licence. That for that period of time any breach or any slight issue really can result in them having their licence revoked and coming back into custody...the frustration that causes and the impact it has on their lives I think is very difficult”*

*“we have offenders who rotate through the system...we end up being forced to give a lot of time and attention to people who don’t want it and don’t need it, as opposed to those that do. We have not got that professional discretion any more as to who we can apply the work with and how we can’t...it has been sold to the public, as though it’s a license period where it can be breached and there can be enforcement. The reality is that there is no teeth to it. Quite often, technically, we should issue a breach [but] there is just no point...you end up getting them back. Even though you have said they are not manageable, you always get them back”.*

Conversely, there were concerns expressed by a number of respondents as to what they perceived to be an inflexible application of post-release supervision and the impact that this was having on recalls to the prison and the ensuing pressures this created;

*“Probation’s answer is, “Not our problem. He’s on a 14 recall. If he breaches again, we’ll just recall him”. That’s the carte blanche answer you’re getting at the minute”*

*“They [prisoners] are just coming straight back around. Do you know what I mean? We’ve got lads with 20 files. They’ve been into this prison 20 times. What’s happening for them?”*

In some instances the concerns expressed with the operation of TTG provision appeared to be informed by an enduring antagonism with the TR reforms more generally. Whilst the individuals concerned outlined their continued commitment to try to deliver services within current partnership frameworks their reservations about the policy agenda did make them weary about how successful intervention could be. The two quotes below capture concerns around the credibility of operational structures voiced by a number of respondents in the research. The on-going perceived impact of privatisation clearly informed the anxiety they reported;

*“I’m not sure prisoners see the integrity of the agencies that contribute to TR as well. I think they’re just seen as maybe like, “Oh, they’re just paid to come in and this is what they do”. So, yes, I’m not cynical, in terms of what it’s about, because obviously I believe in it, I’m very passionate about helping prisoners, but I’m cynical about the reasons for it”*

*“There has definitely been a downgrading. In order to assess somebody as a high risk of harm, there are so many different criteria it [is] almost impossible...What do you do?...Ultimately, you go with management guidance. If management gives you a case and says it’s a medium, then it’s a medium. I had a guy three years ago...him, today, he would a be a medium to high risk offender. Three years ago he was MAPPA 2, and he was given an extended sentence. If he was sentenced today, he wouldn’t get the sentence he got, the whole risk arena has been dragged down to the bottom half to go to private companies”*

The consensus amongst managers and staff alike was that the pace and frantic nature of the introduction of TTG provision had made developing smooth operational practices difficult and was characteristic too of responses in our first report. In this second round of activity, it is clear that individuals vary in their assessment of progress made since that time. There are those based within the prison - working at strategic and tactical levels, within the prison service and devolved probation services – who are seeing a discernable shift in how resettlement work is being delivered. A driver for change here would appear to be the momentum gained from a renewal of efforts to promote reducing reoffending by prison staff (primarily through the key-worker scheme and plans for the establishment of a resettlement wing within the prison) and external to HMP Liverpool the ambitions of Shelter to import good practice from other TTG programmes. Regular partnership meetings are now embedded into the prison structures and being driven and supported by the head of Reducing Reoffending. These efforts combined with staff increases are clearly making many staff more optimistic about the change happening even if at times they struggled to pinpoint tangible improvements in outcomes. There are others though who remain much more skeptical, and who need to see the progress made in terms of integrated working developed and sustained to enhance their confidence in structural arrangements to deliver impact.

When attention turned to service delivery specifically, a consistent message among managers and staff was the **need for clearer systems of operation between partners and of the need to provide clearer information to service users**. A number of respondents expressed concerns around the way in which the men were inducted into the prison, citing the tendency to try to achieve too much in the early engagement with prisoners on their arrival. The following quote is representative of the views of many who voiced anxiety about the dangers of not getting the initial engagement right and of outlining the provision available to such an extent that it overwhelms them and compromises the motivations to engage;

*“It’s looking at improving the quality of induction, our quality has improved massively [but] it’s still only one day...to put it into a bit of context, Manchester’s induction is five days and they have more receptions than we do...we can improve induction, [it] is the best time to get information to people, providing you’re not overloading that person. If you try and give all that same information on one day, if you came in the previous day, this is your first night in custody I’m bothered about my family. I’m bothered about my job. I’m bothered about my finances. I’m not interested in going on an English Language course over in education, it’s not a priority”*

For some staff the concern with induction activities and mapping out services was a matter of presentation and developing clearer messages for prisoners. For others though the challenge of presenting new arrivals with a coherent vision of available services and pathways through and beyond the prison aligned with deeper concerns they had around service delivery. Many staff, echoing themes from the first report, continued to see partnership arrangements as disjointed and in need of renewal. The first quote below captures the views of many who still struggle to see TTG provision as fully coherent, whilst the second quote is more specifically focused on the completion of in-prison assessments. Consistent in both is the notion that further work is still required in developing collective responsibility for service delivery;

*“That is the bit that we still need to work on. I say ‘we’. It’s not just about the CRC, but it’s about the partners as well and the prisoners themselves. It’s about that joined-up approach. At the moment, I think it’s quite stilted, “That bit, then that bit, then that bit and then this bit.”...part of our focus is, “How do we [partners] together take ownership of that to understand what the individual’s needs are and start to identify, early doors, ‘What does this person need to sustain what they’ve done in prison and to make it real in the community?’” It’s sourcing local community interventions and support that will allow them to continue with that. That’s the bit that we still need to develop”*

*“It’s not complicated [completing assessments part one and two] though. The process is quite straight forward. I think the pre-disposition of prisons, in my experience, is that if it’s done by an outside agency, you can file it and you don’t have to worry about it. And we’ve seen a lot where [leaders] have paid personal attention to the importance of getting men to their part twos and to their meetings at the end of their sentence. That’s happened and it’s happened efficiently and the men always want to go”*

Respondents reported what they saw as examples of positive practice developments. Prison based staff identified the introduction of prisoner information desks on each wing as establishing uniformity of service and providing prisoners with much clearer information about the services available and the support for applying to engage. The creation of a directory of available services to help raise awareness was seen as another improvement and the creation of engagement mechanisms to highlight TTG provision like a prisoner newsletter, promotion through prison radio and the television system were also highlighted. Some Shelter staff reported improvements in being able to both access prisoners and operate on the wings more readily. Prison staff also cited the benefit of Shelter being more able to engage on the wings. Managers reported positives in their ability to oversee practice delivery as organisational structures were being developed, embedded and proving efficient. Within this process the increased involvement of new staff from Shelter is seen as important;

*“The new staff have had a few months now to get to where they need to be. They seem to be a little bit more structured in attending some of the meetings. We have the strategy, the interventions, and the partnership meeting [and] different forums of the family pathway meeting...instead of one person trying to get to all of those meetings they’ve identified case workers to go...which is much more structured [and] that’s how it should be. They then go back*

*and brief the rest of the team. I would say they are getting into a better place now and our relationship is fine”*

At a managerial level there did appear to be evidence of optimism in how the increase in resources, level of interaction, and evolution of the key worker model is positively shaping working relationships.

*“All the changes around Offender Management feel like really positive changes to me. It feels it’s absolutely the right way to be going. I think we’ve got all the challenges I’ve talked about around coordination still, making sure things are sequenced in the right way and that people have the right type of access. It doesn’t manage all that, but it certainly feels like the right steps to be taking in terms of moving forward, without a doubt. I think it professionalises the prison officer role, which I think was lacking. I think it really professionalises it because you’ve got a link now directly to Offender Management”*

There was also a growing confidence that improved monitoring systems were enabling much more robust oversight and examination of the performance of TTG provision and that there was increased scope to import good practice from other areas;

*“it’s very much a commitment to see what works and what works well, and then, actually, “How do we upscale this and how do we move it into other prisons and develop it with the local governors, the local staff and the local prisoners?” So, yes, I think there’s very much a commitment towards that, and that’s how we will do it, that [evidence base] will influence what needs to happen in terms of the contracts as well, moving forward, [and we can say] actually, these contracts don’t lend themselves to what everybody expected, and this is what needs to change”*

However, at a more operational level, staff from all partner agencies and across roles still reported concerns at what they considered to be **flaws in service delivery practice** and of the impact of professional’s anxiety around the continuing influence of TR reforms on the working environment. All participants reported how difficult they found engaging the men in meaningful rehabilitative work within the prison environment, more so in light of routine lock-downs (despite these occurring less frequently). A number of other respondents identified the frequency of staff turnover as compromising consistency and were able to identify cases where individual inmates had encountered a series of different practitioners in the space of a matter of months. In citing what some saw as a gap in provision a number of practitioners and managers identified a need to engage more proactively with mental health provision in better tackling under-lying influences on behaviour;

*“I think we’re lacking in psychological support here for the men. There are a high level with a personality disorder and mental health issues. Some of those are self-declared learning disabilities. We have a crisis team and we have a mental health team, but we don’t have that informed psychological services, which I think would make a difference. I think some of the men who behave very badly are the most complex men. There’s a reason why they’re behaving that way. I think if you understand why they’re behaving that way you can start to engage with them. They’re not just being bad and naughty, actually there’s maybe some trauma there and it’s identifying that”*

More specifically, the fear that extracting inmates from education and training classes may impact negatively upon prison performance statistics meant some Shelter staff felt they needed to “*trawl the corridors to find service users*”. A number of partners identified the limited accommodation options – in terms of both quantity and quality – as compromising the support that can be offered to service users, and NPS Case Managers reported being frustrated at having to operate through multi-layered and bureaucratic processes to make a referral, “*where it takes 17 steps to make an accommodation referral*”. The concerns around the functioning of service provision weaved across partner agencies and the two quotes below capture the sense of unease felt by those working across the sector;

*“it would be nice to know when you’ve got the likes of Shelter for example, understanding what they do...do they get given the details of the offender manager? Do they know how to contact? Are they on the same email system as us? I’ve got no idea how easy it is for them to contact us. Maybe give us a directory of people to contact when things change. They just seem like very simple things. It’s not practical to say, “Let’s hold a professional meeting for every prisoner in the prison.” It would be great if you could do that, but that’s never going to happen and it’s not realistic”*

*“I mean we have all these meetings, well managers do, you've got to link in with these and these are going to give you the information ready for your pre-release plan, other agencies within the prison and that lasts about a week and then that doesn't happen anymore. I was doing a last-minute referral for a client a couple of weeks ago, I had two days' notice, so was panicking doing his referrals and then on his day of release I find out he's going to rehab, it all been set up. But he didn't tell me that. He told me he was homeless, because in his head he didn't want to go to rehab. But nobody had told me that so I did all that work”*

Other managers and staff relayed similar concerns around the processing of specific cases and of what they viewed as systemic breakdowns in procedures. The on-going absence of a joined-up IT system appeared to be a continuing source of frustration for many stakeholders. Cumulatively the commentaries illustrate how disjointed some partners perceived TTG service arrangements and, in often candid interviews, the unease it created for individuals was evident. With a lack of certainty surrounding partner roles and a clear understanding of partnership arrangements, individuals became wary and skeptical about the TTG model more generally. As the two quotes below sharply capture, the consequences for working relationships can be damaging;

*“I think this is the issue when you come into private companies, who does what?...to go back a while the offender supervisor [it's] somebody who is qualified to the same level as you are, same objectives as you have with the same goals and outcomes and the same targets. So you would go in, you would meet in a three-way meeting with the offender, you would talk about the criminogenic need, the offending behaviour, and move on to the resettlement stuff. As you just described is what has always gone on before, it has just been rebranded and packaged using PSS to justify it. Somebody is making a lot of money for doing absolutely nothing and has ruined a system that was effective”*

*“Who actually made that person not re-offend? It’s really difficult. I mean, the peer mentors have a lot of integrity, and that real-life experience, which prisoners and ex-prisoners can*

*relate to...we could do a lot of the prep work in the prison, we could do a lot of the stuff, give them that motivation, build that confidence, build that self-esteem, give them hope, and then they go out and Merseyside CRC take the credit and the money...I might start invoicing them for every prisoner I work with. But yes, really, really difficult, complex”*

The first quote below was characteristic of a number of responses that identified a specific pinch-point in the working relationship between Shelter and external probation services workers and the transitioning of cases into the community. The communication gaps between the prison and community based CRC staff that were highlighted in our report into the initial implementation phase of TTG were clearly enduring and a source of concern. Others, in a similar vein, would level criticism at the depth of detail contained within CRC conducted assessments and would be quite dismissive of the contribution such assessments made to their interactions with service users. The second quote identifies how keenly the need to enhance this working relationship is being felt and considered by the CRC as they seek to anchor their work in evidence-based practice;

*“I would say regardless of [TTG] it’s my case, I manage that case. I go and do a sentence plan with that person and if I’m making a decision about approved premises that’s a conversation I’ll have with that person and they’re the plans I’ll put into place because I’m managing that individual’s licence. Ultimately I would say they [CRC] might have the contract and they might be responsible for delivering those services, but we’re managing the case”*

*“the NPS are doing their job and we’re [CRC] doing ours. Through the Gate very much sits with us. I think there are still some myths and everything that we need to bust with the NPS...that, actually, either don’t engage with it because they don’t understand what it is and have never been involved in it or they have and they can see the benefits but there are not enough of them to share that work. We’ve got to go back to basics, and what I want to do is get our stuff right, [get] myth busting, but get some of our practice right and show that it works. Then, feed that into the NPS and say, “Look, this is what we’re doing. This is what can be achieved.” At the moment, it’s going in blind because [we’ve] got to get case managers to do that work as well”*

These criticisms were not made flippantly and were clearly informed by the unease that the majority reported in responding to organisational change during a period of great uncertainty. For community-based probation staff the profound impact of the TR reform programme continues to resonate with many and adapting to new formal relationships with partners shaped their anxiety. For many working in the prison service having to operate within a climate that features contract management and commercial confidentiality has added a complexity to their work. So too has having to share and jointly manage systems and procedures within the prison environment with new partners. For Shelter workers, many of whom have been recently appointed during a period of staff turnover, the challenge has been to establish new working practices and new working relationships in an atmosphere where partner agencies routinely report uncertainty about the role they are to perform in TTG and in supporting service users in and outside the prison gate. The combination of all these anxieties and frustrations is clearly affecting upon the professional allegiances being formed (or not) and clearly was a source of great concern for many. However, within this it is possible to identify how empathetic

colleagues were regarding the challenges faced by their counterparts and within those reflections, as below, the scope to build more positive working relationships can be identified;

*“People maybe in our office can sit here and call CRC for not doing nothing while they're out there, but I've seen it and they haven't got time. They haven't got time to breathe”*

The renewal of the **role and identify of Shelter within the context of the wider CRC structure** was identified by some as providing the potential to enrich service delivery. There were some partners who felt that retaining a strong Shelter identity *“hasn't let them move on”* from being seen as an accommodation provider exclusively, and that by not *“re-branding, nobody really perceived change”*. For others more closely connected to Shelter some felt more work needed to be done (and had been done) to allow the staff to feel more closely associated with the CRC, where *“changing red posters and having our CRC posters there”* and harmonising lanyards is seen to help shape a clearer collective identity. The argument used here is that it will help staff feel a clearer sense of togetherness and help prisoners and partners be clearer about the work of the CRC.

However, there were those who argued to the contrary and who saw Shelter's long history in the field of resettlement as a source of strength that needed to be retained. Citing the work taking place within the context of TTG and beyond into the community the Shelter staff here felt that the organisational values that attract staff to work for the organisation enrich efforts to rehabilitate. There was recognition that Shelter is a partner within the TTG provision but that the connection to their wider programme of activities and broader engagement with service users is a strength that should be a source of pride within a more holistic CRC identity.

Looking forward into the future the introduction of the **key worker model** is proving to be a source of optimism for partners with many citing it as the stimulus for greater resettlement focused working forms. Conceptually the idea of stimulating prison officer engagement within the approach to working with the men is seen as helping embed the emphasis on rehabilitation and resettlement within the prison. Practitioner's confidence in the model was bolstered by what they saw as the endorsement of the approach by leaders within the prison;

*“I always want to see a reiteration of the fact that our desire to make people constructive members of society has got to always be our overriding aim and it should be that, almost over everything...people think that resettlement is about being soft and it's not, it's about being harder with people, making them look at what they've done, look at themselves and look at what they want to be in the future. What we should be doing with TR is making sure we've got the right structures, the right resources and the right knowledge to help people...I think we're getting there”*

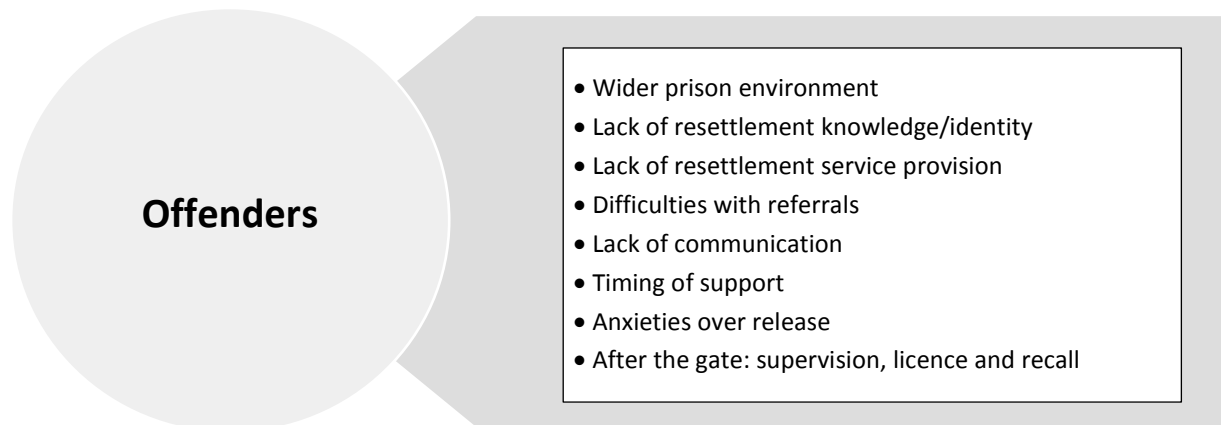
*“The great thing is that all the staff are through that as well there is a bit more of a buzz, its a jail wide approach. The prisoner officers are a really influential group of staff and we have had cases where agencies have gone on [the wings] and 'no you're not seeing him, you're not unlocking him' whereas now there's a bit more, I'm not saying go on the landings and they're all skipping through hoops but there is, I think, the start of that cultural change, they've approached it better”*

Prison and Shelter staff alike felt the legitimacy derived from Senior Management in their support for the key worker approach was being translated into an increased curiosity and interest among prison staff in the activities of support agencies. All observed that this is a model in its infancy and understood the impact of the increased demands placed upon the role of individual officers, however many drew confidence from how prison staff were engaging with the model. Securing prison officer staff buy-in within the resettlement process was seen as vital in enriching efforts to support rehabilitation;

*“I think that key workers getting 45 minutes for each prisoner per week is a very good idea, because some of the complaints that we receive overall from families is that the prisoner doesn’t have much contact with their offender supervisor or haven’t done in the past two years or so. The idea that somebody can be allocated 45 minutes a week almost feels luxurious compared to what they’ve previously had”*

Moving forwards, this presented opportunities for a more collective approach to providing meaningful rehabilitative support. This in turn, it was felt could be strengthened by opportunities for shared training and a more explicit emphasis on how the roles and responsibilities of those tasked with delivering TTG were complemented and demarcated within the prison setting and beyond.





The somewhat optimistic messages conveyed by professionals were tempered by the cynical and often angry outlook of prisoners. An explanation for this juxtaposition is not that prisoners simply perceived resettlement services as inadequate (although some did), but that the **wider prison environment** induced extreme feelings of negativity and frustration that permeated views on all aspects of the custodial experience. It needs to be recognised, therefore, that prisoner’s attitudes were grounded in their lived experiences of the physical prison environment. The number of incidents resulting in lockdowns were less regularly reported across phases two and three however a significant number of prisoners reported being confined to their cells for “23-hours a day”. Practical issues ranged from a lack of hot-water, to faulty lighting (meaning cells are left in darkness), to unhygienic conditions (with no access to cleaning materials and cockroaches being abundant). When combined with a belief that inmates are treated like “cattle”, this elicited dehumanising emotions;

*“You feel a bit more of a burden. I know you’re a prisoner, I know you’re being punished, but you feel a burden about everything in here. You’ve got to tell yourself, “Hang on, I’m still a f\*\*\*\*\*g human being here”*

*“I caught a virus and never seen no doctor and I was spewing blood and everything. They just ignored me and ignored me. I sh\*t the bed and everything, that’s how bad it was.”*

*“As soon as I got to Kennet it was like I was a valued person. I was heard, I was listened to. In here, you’re just a number, you’re a piece of sh\*t really”*

These powerful commentaries were representative of a series of as similarly charged accounts respondents offered of the prison environment. They capture the highly personal torment of being in prison and were often accompanied with an air of resignation in terms of how conditions could be improved. The below comments, empathetic to the challenges facing prison staff, illustrate how many of the men perceive there to be a lack of human and financial resources leading to staff shortages;

*“The officers are overworked and underpaid and I feel sorry for them. It’s tension, constantly on a daily basis in here it’s all tension”*

*“That’s the main issue is the staffing. It’s nothing down to the prison system, it’s the staffing situation. I feel sorry for them because they’ve only got a job to do”*

*“I haven’t been out of that cell except to go for visits or to come here. The prison officers now, they’ve got no time and resources. The way it’s going, it’s going to be down to 100% lockup because it’s getting more violent and more violent”*

In their reflections on resettlement specifically prisoners offered a largely negative commentary. Whilst they generally understood resettlement as meaning “re-integration back into the community” and consisting of issues of accommodation, employment, mental health, drug and alcohol support, they reported “no strategy” being in place to support them with this. A key reason being that they were **unaware of who was responsible for managing their resettlement and what this process entailed**. None of the offender sample (73 in total) could name an individual who was overseeing their resettlement, and very few could identify which organisation was responsible for this.

No participants reported knowledge of having a resettlement plan whilst only a small number acknowledged having been offered/attended a pre-release course. Instead of inmates feeling that they were at the centre of a seamless, supported resettlement journey, they expressed feelings of isolation within the malaise of the prison regime. Whilst some inmates *did* speak of receiving support, they construed this as ad hoc rather than forming part of an orchestrated resettlement process, underlining the lack of a definitive resettlement identity. Nonetheless, for many there was **a belief that service provision was severely lacking**;

*“I’ve spoken to nobody since I’ve been here about preparing me to go to release, not one person yet... They haven’t been to see me to say, “Listen, this is this and this and this is that.” No one has done anything yet, no one has been to see me”*

*“I’m out on Wednesday, so Tuesday is my last day in here, and I still haven’t had a resettlement thing, still haven’t sat down with anyone, like someone from the jail and my probation officer, going, “Right, you need to do this, you need to do that, or find this, do that.” You don’t get anything. All I’m going to get is woken up Wednesday morning, taken to the gate, and then, “See you later.” That is all that is going to happen”*

Whilst prisoners understood that they played a crucial role in their own resettlement, and many expressed an appetite for change, they simultaneously spoke of needing help but of feeling that this was not forthcoming;

*“I want to get out, don’t get me wrong, and I want to go in the right direction. I worked all my life so I need a fresh start, but I don’t feel there’s any support for me in place to be honest with you from the prison or probation”*

*“Where’s the help? There’s no help there. I don’t understand. I’ve worked all my life, I’ve paid taxes all my life, I’m a grafter. I’m not a bad person. I’ve put into society, but yet I’m in this position now needing and wanting help. Where is it?”*

The perceived lack of support was coupled with a sense that ‘the prison’ failed to provide the services that it outlined during induction – whether this belief is driven by a lack of service provision per se or a lack of knowledge around service provision is a moot point;

*“The poor buggers that actually need that support genuinely aren’t clued up enough to go and seek it because it’s not put in their face every day and they are not reminded about it.”*

*“Well, it’s not made clear enough who you can go and speak to... Where is the information, where’s the documentation?”*

It is clear that some inmates were aware of available services, yet making contact with them was a source of frustration. Referrals made via the applications system were problematic due to the regularity of such requests failing to receive a response. A key issue, therefore, was **making initial contact with services** (*“Don’t get me wrong, if they come and see you about it, they’ll probably go off and do it, but it’s getting them to come and see you”*) and staff who tempered expectations of accessing such services further compounded the belief that referrals were unlikely to materialise;

*“They even say to you, they say, ‘I’ll try my best, but don’t hold your breath”*

*“I got told from an officer, if you do less than three months, you won’t get any help. They won’t even look at the paperwork because they haven’t got time to do it. That’s what I’ve been told... If you do less than three months, there is no point in helping you. There’s not enough time to”*

When services were accessed, accounts varied, from positive (*“I cannot thank that woman enough. I wouldn’t be here where I am now with all this in front of me if it wasn’t for her”*) to negative (*“they are unfit for purpose”*). An issue which influenced accounts of service efficacy, was a lack of communication;

*“Fair enough, I understand that I’ve got to get in touch with them but when I’m getting in touch with them, I’m not hearing anything back. I spoke to Shelter... Then she was going to get back in touch with me. Well, I’ve heard nothing, and it’s been over six weeks. Now, I’ve got six weeks left of my sentence, I’ve still heard nothing and I’m obviously starting to panic.”*

A rational explanation for this **lack of communication** was that an issue was logged and ‘live’ but was not acted upon until the latter stages of a sentence. There was recognition that *“You’re mainly a priority the last three days, they leave it until the last minute”*, a process which (when paired with a lack of communication), prompted distress;

*“They’ve left it until two weeks before I get out...how can you leave someone who has been in jail for five or six months...I haven’t got a clue what’s going on. What am I supposed to do?”*

*“Apparently, I’m in the system with Shelter but no one’s given me confirmation as to where I might be going. Obviously, due to physical disabilities, it makes it all the more worse. I should have been sorted, pre-informed about something instead of just being in a limbo state.”*

Shelter is the agency that offenders reported having most frequent contact. Whilst there were those who offered positive commentary on their experience with Shelter it was apparent that in the main, many failed to understand the organisation’s formal resettlement role and they continued to be

viewed as concerned exclusively with accommodation - *"I thought Shelter was just for somewhere to live when you're homeless"*. Those who had engaged Shelter reported challenges in terms of making initial contact, **the timing of support**, frustration at the lack of communication and of concerns around a lack of definitive plans for release;

*"I've got two days before I get out and I still don't know what Shelter are doing with me. I've been in since December [it was June]"*

*"... so Shelter came back, "Oh, it'll be Monday now." I've got to wait until Monday and find out where I'm going, and I'm released on the Wednesday"*

*"Shelter have got me two nights paid for in a hotel, and now they've closed my Shelter thingy down, there's nothing more they can do for me apparently"*

But the **reported anxieties around being released** extended beyond Shelter and exposed much deeper concerns that ranged from antipathy and cynicism, to acute frustration and fatalism. A number of respondents shared a belief that they felt *"prison ill-equips you to walk out"* and as the quotes below allude to some men were very pessimistic about their prospects for successfully reintegrating into the community;

*"I suppose resettlement into the community to help find you somewhere to stay. Hopefully they'll get you some interviews for a job, get you back on with the job centre, get your appointments for when you get out so you get paid as soon as possible to stop you grafting. Helping you. That's resettlement to me. All I get is a piece of paper where you've got to sign, you get released at the gate and then, "See you later""*

*"It's just like cattle. You just get your stamp, "You've been inside, so here's your £46". They're not bothered what happens once you walk through that gate"*

*"But to be honest, I don't want to go home now... because I'm supposed to be going home and proving I've turned my life around and changed. So, I get out... and then I've got nowhere to live.... That's not me changed, that's me just got out in a worse situation than I was before I came to jail"*

*"If I were to be hit by a bus walking out that gate, it'd be doing me a favour. I've just become robotic now. Being in prison has just made me worse, to be honest"*

The negative feelings relating to release were enhanced through a lack of interaction with community-based services throughout the custodial element of the sentence, and the challenges this presented for a continuity of service **through and after the gate**. The majority of participants were unable to name their Probation Officer/CRC Case Manager and were unaware of whether they were being supervised by the NPS/CRC. Only a small minority had received anything other than a letter from their supervisor during their time in custody. The absence of this relationship frustrated prisoners as many emphasised that they needed their supervisor's support preparing for release rather than on release, feeding into a belief that the NPS/CRC were motivated more by a desire to police than support;

*“That’s exactly what I’m on about. I don’t need probation when I get out. Don’t need them at all. No use to me whatsoever on the out. I needed them in here and I’ve not got to see them, but yet I guarantee the day I get out if I’m ten minutes late I’ll be breached”*

Whilst the focus group participants expressed largely negative feelings towards licence and a skepticism that the extended supervision period would provide extra support, the post release interviews with the tracker sample highlighted more mixed attitudes. Some spoke highly of their supervisors, stating that they had supported them with an array of issues, whilst some spoke more negatively (*“There is no support. There was no support when I was in prison and there’s no support now”*). At the time of the third tracker interviews, 7 of the 18 individuals had been recalled (on at least one occasion) for breach of their licence, whilst 2 were deceased (due to a drug overdose and suicide respectively). An issue to emerge within these interviews was a questioning of the integrated nature of resettlement;

*“Not one person has contacted me on the outside since I’ve been out, from any of the forces [events for veterans], from any of those things that I filled in [requesting support on release]. Not one of them have been to see me or contacted me since I’ve been on the outside”*

When asked how resettlement services could move forward, a reoccurring message was the need for offenders to feel that they were being treated as individuals. A number of prisoners acknowledged that they didn’t require any help, that they had settled accommodation and employment. Yet for those that required support the process was more akin to an exercise in “box ticking” which removed any degree of individualism from the process meaning *“there are no personal questions”* leading to prisoners being processed in a generic one size fits all fashion;

*“You can’t treat everybody the same - we’re all different, we’re all in for something. The only thing we’ve got in common is we’re all male and criminals. We’ve all been sentenced. We’ve all got something different going on”*

*“It comes down to personal - everybody is treated exactly the same. Whereas, when you’re being released, everybody is being released into different circumstances. That individual person should be assessed. Right, you’re being released, like you say, with me. Within a week, we both get £46. I’m not being big-headed or anything like that, but that £46, it’s not going to help me. It doesn’t matter to me. So, why not say, “Right, well you’re alright, you’ve got somewhere to live, you’re working and all that. We don’t really need to give you that £46.” That could go into a kitty for somebody in your situation. “You need that a bit more. He doesn’t. We’ll take it off him and we’ll give it to him.” Alright, it’s another £46, but you’re going out with £100 in your pocket rather than £50 in your pocket. It’s got to help you”*

A key to providing more individual, tailored support was seen as having an identified person (across the duration of a sentence) to speak to, someone who was willing to listen;

*“Listen, listen to people instead of just brushing them off. It’s all about listening and resolving issues. If you can’t resolve the issues people are going to get tense, get angry and pissed off... A bit more interaction... That’s all people need in here is assurance. I know they’re not here to*

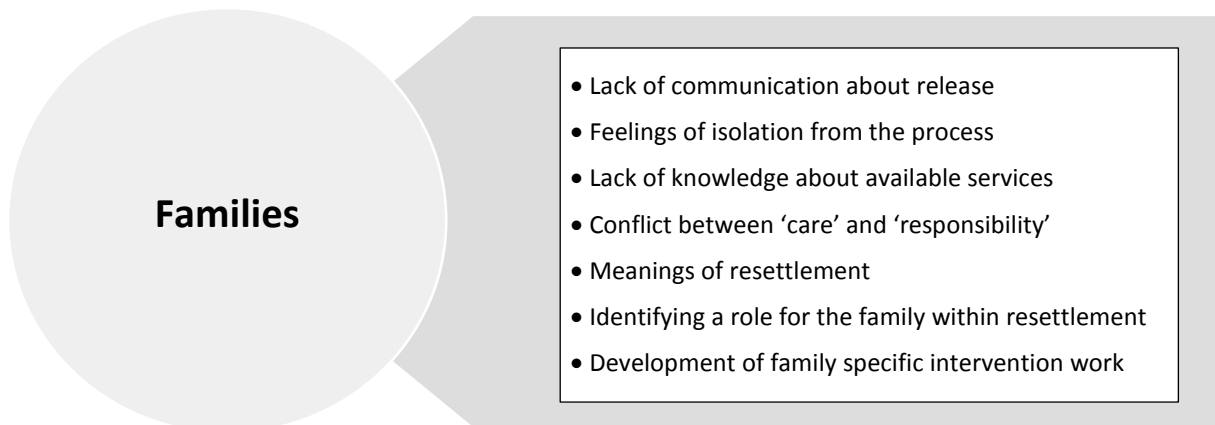
*mother us because we're in jail. At the same time have a bit more about you, listen to people a bit more"*

Instead, offenders felt largely isolated and this was clearly influenced by their belief that support was only provided at the very end of their sentences – the need to engage earlier, for this engagement to form part of a continuous resettlement journey, and for support to be more consistently and easily available therefore is another crucial element in progressing service provision;

*"You should be kept in contact at least once a month with someone. You should go and see someone or speak to someone. They should come and see you, see how you're getting on you know like an offender manager or something like that, or someone from Shelter. As you gradually get closer to the end of your sentence, you should be able to be given options"*

*"... if there was someone there to go, "This is the plan. You're here for 13-weeks, we'll see you every week, have a chat, see how you're getting on and see what you need on the outside." That would mean a lot to some of the prisoners in here, it really would"*

*"There needs to be a certain office at the end of the wing. You should be able to just pick up a phone, which will have a link to Shelter, a link to the Jobcentre, and a link to Probation"*



Whilst not a new phenomenon for those involved in the delivery of rehabilitation services, the Criminal Justice Joint Inspection's (2014:15) reiteration of the 'central role of positive family relationships in the rehabilitation process' has refocused policy initiatives in this area. However, the families of those serving prison sentences we engaged during this phase did not generally feel as though they had a role in this process or that their views, feelings or knowledge of the person was important. The frustrations reported by professionals and prisoners concerning coherence over systems and mechanisms for administering through the gate provision were echoed by families whose understanding of intervention work was often vague. Communication or the lack of it was a consistent theme during the interviews with families both during the prison sentence and after release. The majority of family members claimed that they had received very little or no contact regarding their family members with the majority stating that they had had no contact – they were **not aware of release dates or the details of the release plan**. None of the families interviewed could name a person responsible for their family members release and resettlement.

This became more evident with those family members who were not in contact with each other and particularly where the family member had made the decision not to visit or write or for those who had limited knowledge and understanding of the prison system. Feelings of worry, anger and frustration were described. Contact was described as vital but that the contact needed to be timely and supportive.

*"But now, no...because I think I'm hardened to it. I don't want somebody to say to me, "well, you know, you could do this, you could do that". No. I'm too old.....Maybe when he was first sentenced.....but now, no. I wouldn't appreciate anybody coming now"*

Feelings of **isolation from the process** of the prison sentence were common and were accentuated by the perceived lack of communication. Family members, as in the first briefing report, described the importance of not only knowing but also understanding details concerning the prison sentence and the role this had in easing the emotions they experienced. Whilst some described some improvement

in this knowledge, the majority were still unsure of the reality relying mainly on what they were being told by their family member. They described feelings of worry, anger, stress, upset and confusion, which added to and compounded the feelings of isolation.

*“I’m stressed, everything. I’ll end up in my grave.....No, its too stressful for me, even though I love him”*

*“All it means is we’re going to start worrying again”*

Family members routinely reported that they were **unaware of services** available and, regardless of what stage their family member was at in terms of serving or having served a sentence, were unable to name any services available to either themselves or their family member. Often they could not assert what services were currently being engaged by their relative with those that did specify identifying Probation and Social Services. Family members described how knowing a little bit more would enable them to support and encourage relations in a much more structured and encouraging way.

Whilst the majority of family members were looking forward to their relative’s release, others were not and described a real **conflict between ‘care’ and ‘responsibility’**. The family members we engaged understood that they had a key role to play in the successful re-integration of their family members as they very often provided accommodation, money and emotional support. However, they often described mixed emotions regarding the assumptions that were placed on them and their role – how did the prison know if they would be able to or want to offer support;

*“So guilty because you’ve said he can’t come back here”*

*“I think he thinks I am soft. So I think he’ll think, “well, if I say to my mum, ‘well I’ve got nowhere to live” but what can you do? You can’t see them on the street. I think the prison service will just say, “he’s got somewhere to live; that’s it”*

The family members when asked **spoke about resettlement in a variety of ways** – having a job, having money, having a permanent place to live, having support, feeling safe and secure and being able to not return to the same lifestyle, friends and behaviour. They all spoke of hoping that it would be different this time but as in the previous report feeling that their family members were unprepared for their release.

*“I know it’s hard with the housing situation and everything, but if they could sort out a little place for him to move into, help them furnish it and give them that chance”*

*“For someone that does want to start afresh, it’s hard for them, I think. I mean, I know they’ve done wrong and they’re in there for what they’ve done, but when they come out, they’ve served their time. Give them a chance. Not every one of them is bad”*

The reflections of family members on the experience of TTG provision were routinely characterised by the sense of being removed from the process and being unclear about how their relative’s resettlement journey was being managed. The Farmer Review published in August 2017 stated clearly that families and friends were the “the golden thread” to help reduce reoffending. That belief and its



manifestation in the guidelines and recommendations that The Ministry of Justice are currently developing would seem to go some way to addressing the live concerns of family members in maintaining and developing family relationships with prisoners. The importance of a named person within the prison with responsibility for family contact would help with the need many reported for increased communication regarding the reality of what is happening within prison;

*“even though they are adults to you, they are still your children and you still like to know what’s happening to them. They’re your children until you die, at the end of the day. I think they should be more informative to parents”*

Having a single point of contact would help families build a clearer picture of intervention work taking place (or being offered) and place less reliance on prisoners to provide the detail of their engagement activity. A more inclusive approach to sharing release plans was seen as important in helping maintain support beyond the prison gate for the prisoner and their families. The use of peer mentors within the support process, a desired outcome of the TR reform programme, was viewed as a model that would help support engagement efforts.

### Tracker case study

We below profile an anonymised tracker cohort of an individual who has been engaged by the research on a number of occasions through their time within and beyond HMP Liverpool. The case study approach allows us to build in the observations of professionals and family members associated with the individual to help develop a fuller assessment of the challenges and tensions involved in working with TTG service users. The focusing on one example helps illuminate the experience of TTG from the service user and helps identify vulnerabilities within the operational delivery of TTG.

David, 39, was serving his fourth custodial sentence, this being his first in 12 years. His current sentence was for perjury, having provided false information in relation to a driving offence. He described himself as having a heroin addiction since the age of 15 but that his use over the past decade had been controlled in the sense that he only used when he could afford to – he funded his use through legal means (before entering custody he had held a long-term full-time position but had been signed off sick just before this sentence). Prior to entering prison he and his children lived with his mother, but this arrangement had broken down as a result of his offence - whilst his children were to remain with his mother, he had to find accommodation on release.

David began his sentence in HMP Liverpool, he spoke to various people at his induction (including Shelter) but stated that he was asked the same thing a variety of times by different people with little understanding of why. He was provided with a methadone script. He worked in the laundry, declining educational courses as he did not feel they were beneficial. He had no knowledge of his resettlement plan. He attended a Pre-Release Course and found it useful but was unsure who had run this.

*“They asked me if I needed a bank account, and I’ve already got one of them. They’ve put my name forward for this BASS, or some place to put a roof over my head. But they’ll fill them forms in closer to release. Lifeline asked me would I need help on the release to keep my drug habit, you know, keep my finger in the pie so I’m not just left alone...and someone from the dole was there as well. But, as I say, I’m on six months sick note so I said I’d be going on the sick. So, he was offering to find me work if I needed help to find work. But because I’m going on the sick he said I didn’t need him”*

During his first interview, David spoke of being apprehensive about his release as he had no accommodation. He was also concerned about returning to drug use as he would have no means of funding this. He saw the responsibility of resettlement as lying firmly with himself yet expressed that he would have liked much more support around his release.

At the time of his second interview, a day before his release, David had been moved to HMP Kennet. He still had no accommodation in place and was angry about this. He had received no contact from his CRC case manager during his time in custody and was unaware of who was supervising him. He identified Shelter as providing the most support but that this had been around issues unrelated to accommodation which in his view was “*not their job*”. As far as David understood, it was the Offender Management Unit who were responsible for overseeing his resettlement.

At the third interview, David stated that the support he received in custody had been virtually non-existent with no continuity between the two prisons or from custody into the community. He had been released homeless, staying in a shelter for the first three nights;

*“I’ve come out and I’ve had to go homeless. They put me in a homeless shelter in a pop-up bed, which they told me I couldn’t have a pillow because management didn’t want to make me too comfortable... I could only get in after 9:30 at night and they were kicking me out at 7:30 in the morning. It was freezing cold. On the Monday, I came back and I saw XXXX [Case Manager] and I said that I wish I could go back to jail”*

During this period, David spent time at his mum’s house during the day but the time he had spent on the streets had exacerbated his extant health problems. Through his CRC case manager he was able to secure transient accommodation [in a hotel] for a week before attaining a room in a hostel on a half-board basis. At the hostel, he had a support worker who had assisted with financial, employment and accommodation issues. David spoke highly of his ‘probation officer’ [CRC case manager] but noted that due to the hostel support worker’s daily assistance, he did not require any help from her at their fortnightly meetings – he therefore spent the 30-40 minute appointments talking about his circumstances;

*I think it’s negative that you have to turn up but it can be positive considering if you need anything done or if she can help in any way she will do. We’ve had no trouble. She doesn’t say, “If you don’t do this, I’m going to breach you.” That’s never come up. She just asks what do I need, what do I think”*

David spoke about his lack of financial means (he had been unable to access any money until 15-days after his release) and whilst he was now claiming benefits explained that after paying for the hostel and making payments on previous loans, he was left with £70 a month. It was only due to his mother who was providing him with regular cash sums that he was able to live. He had smoked heroin a “few” times since release when friends had offered it but had not actively sought it out nor bought it. Overall, David felt confident that he would continue to adhere to the terms of his licence and that he would not re-offend. He was hoping that his health would return enabling him to find work and that in turn he would secure settled accommodation for himself and his children.

David’s case manager (CM) spoke of a breakdown in communication between the prison, Shelter and the external CRC. Whether this was caused by the late allocation of David (due to him originally being allocated to another case manager) or due to logistical issues is unclear;

*“Hence why David ended up with no accommodation, because the actual forms that were meant to be filled out weeks prior were sent to me the day before his release. By the time I sent them back, there was nothing that could be done”*

Due to a lack of communication between the prison, Shelter and the CRC, David’s CM knew little about his resettlement journey through custody. The CM noted only having access to the basic custody screening tool which provided “quite limited information. It’s not really helping us get an idea of them

as an individual” meaning that “I don’t have an insight into exactly what Shelter are doing with them prior to release”. The CM admitted that David was vulnerable on his release;

*“David, he could have easily just gone and committed a further offense to go back into custody. Like he said, he had three meals a day, a roof over his head, stability. He had a bed. He came out with nothing. He ended up in a bed and breakfast, which was two bus rides away from his actual appointment”*

David’s CM stated that she felt that he would not re-offend, and that his support worker was undertaking positive efforts enabling her to act as a sounding board;

*“With David, I don’t sit down with structured work. It kind of just flows within conversation. Then, I’ll pick up on something that he’s said, and explore that, in terms of, “Well, why do you think that?” or, “Why did you react in that way?” things like that. I work on, basically, his attitude, his thinking, beliefs, look at victim awareness, all that sort of stuff, which will come in time. It is great that he has got that support worker, because I am like, “Have you completed your forms with her? Have you done this? Have you done that?” He is like, “Yes, I have done that. I have got this benefit sorted”. Really, [name of hostel] for him has been a godsend in terms of that”*

David’s mother had stipulated that he would not return to live with her on his release as he needed to take responsibility for his own life/actions. This had not been an easy to decision for her to make and she spoke of the guilt that this brought. The key to him avoiding re-offending in her view was to have someone (other than herself) to guide and support him. She stated that this process needed to begin within the prison and that whilst David had previously completed courses within custody, there had never been any framework of support in place to prepare him for release. She expressed surprise that he was released homeless as she believed that the prison had a “duty of care” to find him accommodation but had instead “dumped” him knowing “he had nowhere to go”. She stated that it had been hard seeing him stay in transient accommodation but had been determined to encourage him to stand on his own two feet. She thought that he had made progress since release, speaking highly of his support worker. David’s mother highlighted that it would be beneficial if ‘Probation’ could communicate with families to inform them of progress or problems their loved ones are facing but that she had little motivation or interest in being involved in such a process due to David’s age. Indeed, she spoke of being tired of the issues that David’s lifestyle had brought her over the years and of having to care for his children. Whilst not entirely convinced that he would not re-offend she believed that he was currently “plodding along” in the right direction.

### **Research Planning Event: key issues**

The Research Planning Event (RPE) provided a forum for partners to collectively reflect on the interim report, consider progress made, and present ideas for moving forward. The RPE involved the project team delivering an overview of the emergent research themes before attendees split into smaller groups to discuss these issues in relation to the past, present and future – the main points relating to the past and present are summarised here, whilst those pertaining to the future are encapsulated in the recommendations made in the conclusion.

In general, it was felt that the research findings painted an accurate picture of the status quo. Furthermore, there was a belief that the key themes resonated with wider reaching experiences of TTG;

*“I’ve probably been at Liverpool since January last year although I worked in another resettlement establishment previously, and that report could have been about both houses, it transposes from one establishment to the other... it’s a parallel path”*

*“What you were saying about stakeholders and, you know, payment by results and a lot of repetition, because they’re all wanting to get the same cohort of prisoners and do the same type of thing, because they get paid with their results. That’s something that’s been a national issue”*

*“...that issue of communication it’s not just in this prison, it’s across all the prisons. I really think we do need a strategy in terms of how we can get that communication flowing through the gate and back in”*

On a local level, it was believed that progress had been made to address the key issues identified in the first briefing report (see p4), meaning that services were working more efficiently. For example, in terms of partnership work and the communication between agencies;

*“It’s definitely better. The systems don’t necessarily help because the officers report on NOMIS and we report on a separate system, but we can manage that because we have sight of it and we can read, but it’s having that communication. But now we know that they have a plan on the wing, we can go and look at that plan and then we’re not duplicating because we can just make sure that it’s there”*

*“I think there has been improvement, particularly around - from my knowledge about being involved for probably the last nine months around the communication with the prison and Shelter in particular. And one of the things that we’ve done in the CRC community based is to ensure that we have a representation down at the partnership meeting in custody. And part of that is to try and start to build those bridges from the prison into the community”*

Whilst progress was evident, it was simultaneously acknowledged that problems and blockages remained;

*"I just think partnership working is getting better, but I think the more you're accessible to one another the better it will work, because you're too dysfunctional and you're duplicating stuff. People have got targets to achieve and other people haven't. We should be working together and not against one another. It is getting better, but I still think there's a way to go"*

There was a belief, however, that certain issues affecting the efficacy of service delivery were outside the remit of those involved in the localised delivery of resettlement services and that stronger central governance was a necessity. This line of thinking was evident in relation to the TR reforms specifically, but also wider structures for supporting prisoners;

*"I think this almost needs a systematic review of how DWP, Probation, all these services and how they interact and work together, because ultimately it's the same service users accessing all these services. The services aren't fit for purpose and they're not integrating and working with each other. One bits been privatised, one bits under reform, it needs a whole look"*

*"I'll put it in layman's terms, we are the jam in the sandwich at Shelter... at the minute we've got the prisoners directly underneath, we have the staff at the side and we have probation at the top, and we're being squeezed down to meet the targets and KPIs and stuff like that. We're there under massive pressure points because we've got two days, three days, to find someone accommodation, never mind the pathways of what they're going to link up to outside, because that's not going to be done. Your main concern is finding somewhere to live when you get out, because when you get and you've got nowhere to live, straight away probation, breach, you're back inside, Sonny Jim, because they're out for 7 days, 14 days, and then we start the cycle all over again"*

*"So unless there's that buy-in by central governments as to the problem with resource of local authorities to enable that Through the Gate process, because we are measured and we are KPT'd and KPI'd around that stuff, and once they get to the gate, that's where that process stops and there ends, and that's why you have a to-the-gate and from-the-gate process, because the funding's separate, and the measure's separate. Until it becomes a seamless process, you will always get that stammer, that stutter, in the handover service and in the process"*

*"The contract is literally to do your BCST and to do your resettlement plan, isn't it. The contract doesn't give you that space to do added value"*

*"I think it changes so much as well. You lose track yourself, don't you, who's coming in, who's got new funding, who's lost funding, who's bringing whoever else in and it's just a constant chain. It's really hard to work out. The lads will normally tell us, "Oh I'm working with-" and you're like, "What?" Because everyone's got their own pathways or leads or stuff, it's just a really difficult thing to keep on top of"*

*“It’s great to work together on the ground and I think we’re probably doing much better than we did. If you’re from a higher level, there are things that are standing in your way from a higher level that you can’t solve on the ground at a local level. That’s where your stumbling blocks are, isn’t it. Not to say that we shouldn’t try to fix things at local level, but there are things, like you were saying, about accommodation, about this pool of accommodation that doesn’t exist, it’s not there”*

Despite such macro level issues, it was recognised that local arrangements for the delivery of resettlement services could be improved and that additional work was required to hone service delivery and further unlock the potentials of TTG. Indeed, this was a factor highlighted by the recent HMIP inspection of HMP Liverpool, which for some had provided a stimulus for action due to it asserting that progress had been made *‘but not quick enough, not enough’*. The RPE further emphasised this notion as whilst advancements were evident, problems endured. For example, the logistics of accessing prisoners had improved but was still considered an on-going problem which restricted engagement. Likewise, the ability to engage prisoners in meaningful ways had moved forward yet difficulties remained, particularly during induction and the early stages of a sentence;

*“The induction period. Straight away the induction period is very short and... you can’t get the information for the prisoners, because again, everyone wants a piece of that prisoner”*

*“And within two days, that prisoner has answered the same questions numerous times to different people. In the end, he doesn’t know who he’s answering to and he doesn’t know what he’s signing up for. And, again, because everyone wants the target-led, they’re all signing them up for their pieces of work. And he could be signed up to like three different areas. He could be signed up to something from Achieve. He could be signed up to something through DWP. He could be signed up- education, through Novus, healthcare, they’re another one. They all want to do this little bit of work with that individual. He doesn’t know what he’s signed up- there’s a confusion there”*

*“That’s reflected though in the report, the things where you’re talking about they might see someone but it’s a box ticking exercise. That’s where that’s reflected because we’re seeing people, yes, we’re seeing people and we’re ticking that box, but no value is coming out of it”*

It was also agreed that both inter and intra-agency working had developed, with roles and responsibilities clarified yet there were continued concerns around issues of communication and duplication;

*“No wonder they get disenchanted with us and switch off with this because, “I told this to the last guy. I told it to the last girl. I’ve said this a thousand times. Will youse just talk to each other?””*

*“I think the problem is because the IT systems don’t talk to each other...were all supposed to talk to each other, but they don’t”*

*“Two and a half years and when you’re still saying, “We’re based in the prison, we are there to do...” and doing the whole of that initial spiel again and again... or when you’re phoning and saying to them, “Have you had a look?” And they’re like, “Oh I don’t know what you mean, what’s a resettlement plan?””*

Simultaneously, greater interaction between prison and community based partners was reported, however, the ambition of a seamless through the gate service had yet to become a reality;

*“Why aren’t those case managers not coming in and meeting him and saying, “I’m your case manager and this is a journey””*

*“a lot of case managers that I speak to go, “They’re not my responsibility whilst they’re in prison. They’re your responsibility or they’re OMU””*

*“I mean that’s always been a problem, hasn’t it? It’s the lack of community. We do a lot of good work here with Shelter and DARS, you name it, we do a lot of good work. Next thing you know, “Go on, off you go”. There’s nothing out there or very little out there. We’ll give them all the support, but when we boot them out, might give them a house, but that’s about it. And there’s a lack of communication and a lack of support when they get out”*

*“Yes, and it’s called ‘through the gate service’, but Shelter support stops at the gate, so why do we call it a ‘through the gate service’? We’re marketing what it isn’t. So I think it all needs a bit of a - because then that puts an expectation on Shelter, “You’re through the gate but our contract only says to the gate.” So it’s a challenge to say the least”*

One of the original designs through which it was envisaged TR would deliver seamless provision was via the use of peer mentors. Many professionals spoke of the utility of such an approach yet concurrently described its use as limited, as one respondent noted *“what’s happened to all that?”*. A new peer mentoring scheme, however, is due to be launched in January (albeit only for CRC cases);

*“... they will start to come in and meet people in special visits, have that appointment. So that they know that person, then meet them at the gate or meet them after the gate and it will be somebody they will know. Then they will engage with the case worker as well and we’ll get that feedback from the case worker. That’s joining up the loop”*

There is potential, therefore, for this scheme to enhance the fluidity of service provision, as these mentors will link in with both prison and community based services prior to release. It will also provide prisoners with a further named person alongside their key worker. Indeed, the new key worker model prompted a great deal of optimism amongst professionals, to the point where it appeared to represent a potential panacea for all of the extant problems described above;

*“the relationship between staff and prisoners is changing here because it has to, because people have to sit down for 45 minutes or half an hour and talk to prisoners. They’ve never really had to do that before, and they have to do that now”*



*“If you have to see a guy for 15, half an hour every week and the guy’s asking you the same question every week, eventually he’s going to be pissed off, so you can only go and sort it out for him, and that’s the reality of what we’ve got there”*

*“all those prior agencies, rather than staff shutting the door and saying, “You’re not opening that,” they’ll go over to you and say, “Come here,” and they just come and talk to us. So that’s where the relationship I think developed, but it’s about that key worker”*

*“Because part of the HMIP was that everyone was doing a support plan but nobody was out there talking to one another. So this guy had seven different plans going on and seven different people talking to him, whereas really it just needs one. But we have our bit to do because it has to be on a specific database in a specific way, but that doesn’t mean we can’t just pull off whatever we can off NOMIS or the key working notes. So for me, it’s about me encouraging the staff to tap into that key work, that to me is the key to getting those results”*

*“I’ve utilised the key worker process previously through the juvenile estates...it’s effective and it works, and it does pull those departments together. That key worker who’s face-to-face with the offender is linking in in email and communicating with those other partners, because when they’re having a face-to-face with the offender and he says, “That external agency is not doing this,” straight on the email and saying, “Following the conversation””*

*“We get key workers coming up to the office, and there are lads there, officers I’ve known for a long time going, “Can you tell us a bit about this guy? Can you tell us any updates on him.” Asking for feedback all the time. It’s just brilliant because that communication then opens up massive playing fields, and it shows that the prison as a whole is going in the right direction”*

*“the key worker will bring all that together because they’ll be focal point...this time they’ve funded it better and that’s why it’s going to work out and that’s why people are engaging with it, because they can say, “You’re not asking me to speak to him for half an hour bolted on to 13 other jobs I’ve got. You’ve actually given me a specific time to go and do that. You’ve given me a specific time to do the report.” You’ve built all that into the programme”*

*“I’m using the keyworkers to promote this and they are doing - they’re signposting it for me and they’ll take applicants, which is another good thing as well. It’s helping the education system, when they’re coming direct to me, because a lot of the prisoners do not have faith in the current application system, because they go missing. They put it in that box and they go not all of them, I’m just saying a percentage of them”*

With such high aspirations for this model, its ownership and evolution will require careful management. It is also imperative that the model is coordinated in conjunction with partners to further establishing working relationships and boundaries to fully realise its potential;

*“Yes. I think one of the things that we haven’t bottomed out is the keyworker stuff that’s happening in the prison, the offender management model, and how the CRC Through the Gate*

*services can marry up to it. And we haven't really been involved up to this point, in that development work. And I get a bit edgy about are we missing opportunities to integrate as opposed to carry on working in a sort of silo. And there may well be some crossover between those - to build those relationships, which can make the difference"*

Another aspect of the key worker and peer mentoring schemes is the ability to link in with the families of prisoners to further enhance their role within the resettlement process. It was noted amongst the RPE attendees, however, that identifying the role that families should play in resettlement was difficult and indeed a moot point, and that *'you need to strike a balance'* in how they are involved;

*"I've had the lady contact me, once they get your name, they just don't leave you alone. They want to know every little thing and it becomes hard work"*

*"I mean it is quite sensitive... some of the people will get my name through the switchboard and they will sort of ring me up. And like, I had a mum who was ringing me up and she was saying, "I can't understand it, you know, my son's turned things around." And I was reading that this guy was under the influence of NPS nearly every single day. And, obviously, you can't give that information out. But you're like, "Well, I'm doing the best that I can. And you can only be quite general, you can't really sort of tell them about the specifics of what's happening to their son or other family member in prison, you do have to be very careful"*

Overall, the prominent themes that emerged within the RPE indicated that the findings of the report resonated with professional's experiences of TTG. There was optimism born from a belief that progress had been made, working relationships were performing better than ever and that the peer mentoring and key worker schemes offered real potential for the future. Nonetheless, there was acknowledgement of ongoing problems requiring further attention. Whilst some of these issues were viewed as systemic and warranting governmental level attention, others were considered to be localised, meaning that they could be addressed and advanced through local action – with the recommendations section of this report proposing a number of ways of achieving this.

### ***Conclusion: moving forward together***

This report, through exploring the views of professionals, prisoners and their families illustrates the complexities of trying to deliver and engage with meaningful rehabilitative work within the prison setting. Within an environment that can be characterised by threatened and actual antagonistic violent relationships between prisoners and where staff reductions and turnover create unease it is difficult for all involved, across the prison estate, to direct their focus towards rehabilitation work. The ambitions of the Transforming Rehabilitation reforms in respect of prisons had revolved around, amongst other things, the establishment of resettlement prisons and the delivery of new innovative service provision that would seek to support individuals through their sentences and back into the community. As the report has shown the realisation of this vision has been a considerable challenge and much work is still required to coherently knit partners and processes together to facilitate the smoother transition of individuals through systems of support.

In respect of professional working relationships there is evidence of positive development since the production of the last report and with the rolling out of the key-worker model there is optimism that further progress can be made. Many of the professionals we engaged were quick to point to improved knowledge of partners activities and of building relationships with named individuals from their counterparts in the prison service, Shelter, CRC or NPS. There were others too who identified the recent increase in staff numbers and the sense that the prison felt a little calmer as helping positively extend capacity and a feeling that blockages could be addressed quicker and processed sooner. However, these optimistic overtones were not universal and many provided rich and detailed commentary on what they saw as embedded systemic problems with the models of working where extensive partner engagement and training would appear to be required. For Probation Officers in the NPS there is attention required to ensure that they better understand the role of Shelter CRC staff within the prison and the concerns they harbour around the depth and quality of data they receive needs to be fed back to Merseyside CRC partners. Likewise, staff within the CRC who have engaged in inventive and resourceful working practices to engage service users should be supported in drawing attention to this activity and in their ambitions to develop evidence-informed practices to import and export between the different prison establishments they operate within. The professional engagement with partners in this way will enrich communication channels, enhance the efficiency of intervention activity, and should help better capture the impact of service provision.

For service users and their families there are, similarly, signs of progress and existent on-going practice concerns. From some came an awareness of increased activity to support their rehabilitation efforts and recognition of the difficulties services faced in trying to operate in the challenging environment of the prison. Some respondents did show greater awareness of the different forms of support available and indicated a willingness to engage with services, in respect of families some were very keen to be involved more. However, once more, these respondents were in a minority and there remain clear concerns around advancing prisoner's understandings of resettlement and their awareness of the services available. At times the prisoners lack of awareness of services manifested

itself in anger and deep frustration at the sense of abandonment they reported. Both service users and families reported they felt isolated and marginalised by processes they too often saw as opaque and inconsistent.

The diversity of views captured within the report and the lack of consensus across a number of themes highlights the challenges for those charged with overseeing and implementing TTG provision. There are very real challenges to working with service users and providing manifest forms of support by way of accommodation and counselling that will support individuals. We were able to observe Shelter staff on the wing engage a prisoner, discuss support options with them, only to then interview the individual the next day who mistakenly identified the agency they had engaged with and claimed not to have understood the reason for or seen any value in the exchange. This case is not flippantly selected but it is one that helps identify the challenges of communicating clearly and completing full engagement activity with individuals within the frenetic prison environment.

Going forward, from our assessment of respondent's views there are identifiable actions that can be pursued. At a basic level, there is clearly a need to renew communication channels to raise awareness of the layers of service provision in place. That is, communication with the service users and their families to more explicitly outline what services are available as, in some cases, there is support provision in place to help prisoners with the very needs they are identifying with. But communication is as much an issue for professionals too and there is a need to keep developing the forums that seek to address blockages and foster clearer exchanges of dialogue between partner agencies, either about service users or the work each other is engaged in to deliver rehabilitation. On a bigger scale is the work around renewing systems and ensuring service users and partners are clearer about when engagement work takes place, who does it, and how partners link in with one another. Clearly, there are issues around the credibility of current processes when service users report bewilderment in terms of the amount of professionals they encounter and when professional colleagues aren't routinely engaging with the referral information being shared. The challenge would appear to be to ensure that professionals and service users alike better understand a model that they can more clearly position themselves in and that delineates clearer roles and responsibilities for others involved in these processes too; namely professionals, services users and families.

## **Recommendations**

Grounded in the data collated during phases two and three of this project alongside those issues identified within the second RPE, a number of recommendations can be identified for the future evolution of resettlement service provision.

### ***Enhancing partnership work***

- Greater transparency of the CRCs contractual obligations to address existing operational ambiguity. This will ensure that professionals and service users alike better understand a model that they can more clearly position themselves in and that delineates clearer roles and responsibilities. This is of upmost importance given the roll-out of the key worker model and peer mentor scheme.
- Multiple providers duplicate questions during induction whilst the Basic Custody Screening Tool (BCST) represents a box ticking exercise rather than a meaningful method of engagement. A streamlined process, with a single assessment which all referrals subsequently stem from, appears worthy of consideration.
- All organisations who feed into resettlement should share an IT database. The ability to access information in real-time would avoid duplication whilst also allowing a clearer picture to emerge of what work is being undertaken, when and by whom.
- HMP Liverpool should consider establishing a hub whereby all partners are co-located (or at least have representatives). This would encourage closer joint working and enhance channels of communication. This could be co-ordinated alongside a resettlement wing (see below).
- Services continue to be 'to the gate' rather than 'through the gate'. Consideration of how prison based providers co-work with community-based staff is required.

### ***Developing a resettlement identity***

- HMP Liverpool does not operate as resettlement prison in practice. As part of a strategic consultation of the structural framework of services consideration needs to be given to a specific resettlement wing allowing all those within 12-weeks of release to receive tailored support with ready access to partner services.
- The establishment of a more definitive resettlement brand that encourages prisoners to view their sentence as part of an orchestrated resettlement journey. Potential solutions are a resettlement passport (mapping out planned/undertaken activities) and a resettlement refresher programme (taking place sometime after induction, allowing individuals to re-visit the process and available services).

- Enhancing knowledge of resettlement services. The first point directory provides a comprehensive overview of services but individual prisoners would benefit from a specific document which maps out the resettlement process and available provision.
- Keeping resettlement 'active' throughout a sentence. It is crucial that once the BCSTs are completed, resettlement work is ongoing and not left until the commencement of the 12-week resettlement period. Whilst the keyworker model should allow this ambition to be partially realised, the providing of timely support (particularly in relation to accommodation) requires attention. A strategic consultation of the structural framework of resettlement would identify how earlier interventions can be undertaken and actions agreed.
- A need for prisoners to be allocated a named CRC/NPS supervisor at the earliest opportunity and for communication (throughout the sentence) to be both meaningful and consistent. If relationships are built, prisoners should feel more invested in this process, both during their time in custody and on release – the latter of which may address feelings of hostility and anxiety towards licence.

### ***Engaging prisoners***

- The physical conditions within HMP Liverpool require urgent attention.
- A streamlining and restructuring of the induction process. A gentler, extended induction period could encourage prisoner buy-in whilst allowing more meaningful work to be undertaken.
- Prisoners identified a number of areas to enhance engagement. At a basic level, this concerned raising awareness of services and addressing resettlement prior to the final weeks of their sentence. Of more substance was the need for a named person within both the prison and community to support the management of their resettlement; to maintain routine dialogue; and to increase the reliability of referral processes. These should be elements of good practice for all providers.
- Key worker and peer mentor models. These schemes offer great potential to both engaging prisoners and developing a seamless transition through the gate. There is a need, however, to establish methods of co-working in terms of how and when partners will feed into these frameworks, and for boundaries of responsibility between the prison, the CRC and partners to be drawn.

### ***Engaging families***

- How to involve families in the resettlement process remains a moot point. Consultation activity amongst partners and families themselves should consider whether further developments (such as structured pre-release family days, where inmates, their families, their offender manager and partner agencies come together) are feasible. Such activity should also consider the recommendations of the Farmer Review, 2017.

### ***Developing an empirical evidence base***

- The rolling out of the key worker model should be accompanied by research activity scrutinising its implementation, operation and performance. Similarly, an empirical insight into peer mentoring would also seem prudent.

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