Effective practice in Throughcare

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WHAT IS THROUGHCARE?

- Range of different models (different legislative frameworks, social work, prison officers, third sector)

- Throughcare is the mechanism: Resettlement and reintegration is the outcome – how defined and understood?

- Route to services to address basic needs, criminogenic needs, emotional support, reduced reoffending and active citizenship

Rationale for throughcare

- Prisoners most likely to reoffend in the first 3 months after release

- For most offence types, the longer people can desist, the less likely they are to reoffend

- Throughcare maximises impact of (good) prison programmes and individual support in prison

- Getting ex-prisoners into stable housing can act as a gateway to effective resettlement. Home Office research has found that prisoners who have accommodation arranged on release are four times more likely to have employment, education or training arranged than those who do not have accommodation in place.

THE EVIDENCE-BASE

Will draw on recent evidence reviews and evaluations

1. International best practice review in England and Wales, Austria, Italy, Estonia, Denmark, USA, the Netherlands, Canada and Australia

2. Scottish best practice review

3. Greenock Throughcare Support Officer evaluation – male and female short term prisoners

4. Community Reintegration Pilot evaluation – male short term prisoners in HMP Perth returning to Dundee. Female short termers in Cornton Vale, Edinburgh or Greenock returning to Dundee or Lanarkshire

Change Fund evaluation will provide us more evidence but not available until 2017.

EASING THE TRANSITION

Effective Practice

- Consistency of key worker throughout

- Early contact between support worker and prisoners, whist still *in* custody.

- Subsequent contact with support worker "at the gate" or shortly after release

- Contact between prisoners, their supporters and outside agencies beginning during custody.
    - Positive examples given of day-release for attendance of workshops, employment or training which continues after release (Denmark)

CRP and TSO evaluation

- Clients and external agencies very positive about TSO's

- TSOs seem to be very good at communicating with external agencies and were able to make arrangements even when external agencies closed

- But, shift patterns and other priorities could have disrupted engagement

- Evidence from case studies of real support, problem solving and advocacy in the community

- TSOs described as 'one stop shop' for clients and outside agencies but..

- They needed more info about services in the community (patchy provision)

- No in-reach from employers mentioned

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH KEY WORKER

Effective practice

- "Down to earth" attitude and strengths-based approaches valued

- Some early support for mentoring schemes using former prisoners

- Separation of monitoring and support roles can be helpful as ethos of the former can undermine trusting and open relationship with support worker.

- Prisoner involvement with support plans

CRP and TSO evaluation

- TSOs well selected but not clear what the skills were – skill audits to enhance recruitment in future

- More incentives for recruitment - training and clearer about the purpose, ethos and skills needed for all staff

- Peer mentors not included but PSP evaluation should tell us more – how can they support?

- Did roles separate 'monitoring' from the support role or if there were tensions?

- Prisoners were involved in reviews but evaluations suggest that more would reduced considerable attrition rates

- Lack of understanding of the purpose of some review meetings among prisoners

- Better needs assessments occurred later once relationships and trust has formed

FLEXIBILITY AND RESOURCES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF EX-PRISONERS

Effective practice

- Practical and emotional needs must be addressed first so clients can engage with services

- Need for family support to provide stable and supportive relationships for ex-prisoner.

- Flexibility of support and different points in the process (should be able to respond to changes in peoples' motivation)

- Drop-in centres for prisoners post-release can be helpful for those who don't initially engage.

- Effective communication and coordination between different agencies is essential to meet needs of released former prisoners

CRP and TSO evaluation

- Well thought out and structured approach to needs assessment valued. Not clear whether sequencing occurred. TSOs - barriers to practical support tackled to some degree.

- TSO able to provide some family support (case studies)

- Men lower engagement and high attrition – how could motivation be sustained?

- Not clear if drop-in services were available or used by clients who didn't want to engage in prison (important for men)

- TSOs good at this externally but less awareness or understanding of the role among regular prison officers

- Lack of explicit shared priorities between housing, health etc. barriers?

SCOTTISH AND INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH: SUCCESS REQURIES…

- Continuous services out-with the criminal justice system. If housing, addition problems etc are not addressed, other forms of support (including employment) very unlikely to succeed.

- Employment is key - more opportunities for coordinated reaching-in especially employers

- Longer term plans supported by longer term funding can increase ability to build partnerships.

- Lighter caseloads for support workers/social workers reduce gaps in provision.

- Can be prioritised for those at greatest risk of reoffending
  - Individual risk (short term prisoners, high number previous convictions)
  - Prioritise prisoners who returning to an area with relatively high crime rate and concentrate services there.

- Implementation planning, integrated paperwork and better progress data

A WORD ABOUT MEASURING SUCCESS..

- Pressure to demonstrate reduced reoffending

- Not about 2 year reconviction data. Hard to do without large and robust comparison groups – international and local evidence is scarce

- Reducing reoffending – long term complex outcome

- Only be achieved as long lasting social change though a collaborative effort by the CJS, interventions, universal services, families, communities, researchers and people who offend themselves

- So, shouldn't we be measuring the contribution of throughcare (or any intervention) to this wider effort rather than attribution?

- If you rely solely on 2 year reconviction or return to custody data (if had a control), the throughcare project could look as if it's failed even though it was housing, health or an intervention in the community that dropped the ball.

- Define what throughcare is trying to achieve within the bigger picture – what it's contribution is, and define and measure progress on it's own intermediate outcomes