

The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia

Report by Mindy Sotiri 2015 Churchill Fellow

AN EXPLORATION OF BEST PRACTICE IN COMMUNITY BASED REINTEGRATION PROGRAMS FOR PEOPLE LEAVING CUSTODY IN THE US AND THE UK



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Signed: Mindy Sotiri

Dated: 4/9/2016

Acknowledgements

This Churchill Fellowship provided an unprecedented opportunity to step outside of the day-to-day operations of my work at the Community Restorative Centre in Sydney, Australia, and spend five weeks immersed in the reintegration practice of community sector organisations in the US and the UK.

I was frequently overwhelmed with the generosity of my hosts and enlivened by their shared enthusiasm for talking all things imprisonment and reintegration. I was also mightily inspired by the willingness so many of these individuals to look front-on at the daunting task of addressing severe structural and cultural disadvantage at the level of community.

I have discovered (among many other things!) that meeting and talking with people who work in and around criminal justice in the community sector is without a doubt the best way to get to know a city, and I am first and foremost grateful to all of those individuals who facilitated my visits and who gave me hours – and sometimes days – out of their schedules in order to assist in this project. Particular thanks for all manner of ‘over-and-beyond-ness’ especially goes to Dr. Harry Alston (Safer Foundation), Matthew Ramadan (Green Re-Entry at IMAN), Andre Johnson and Dr. Calvin Trent (Recovery for Detroit), Professor Reuben Miller (University of Michigan), Max Lindeman (Fortune Society), and Professor Fergus McNeill (Scottish Centre for Criminal Justice).

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I am also enormously grateful to Professor Eileen Baldry from UNSW, who not only provided me with a referee report for my Churchill application so lovely it made me blush, but for being such a wonderful friend and mentor in all matters criminal justice, and much else besides that over the last twenty years.

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Finally, none of this would have happened without the remarkable support of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust. I don’t think I quite appreciated the enormity of what this fellowship meant until I was standing in the snow in South Chicago in early April about to conduct my second service visit. And now, many months later, the extent of this opportunity; the relentlessly inspiring nature of traveling, and *every day* having the chance to meet with people who care passionately about their work is still resonating and influencing the way in which I conduct

my work back home in Sydney. I am incredibly grateful to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust for so seamlessly facilitating the pragmatics of all aspects of the fellowship, and for their commitment and dedication in ensuring that the unique mission of the trust continues to be upheld. I suspect the impact of this fellowship will for me, be lifelong, and I hope very much that I can use my findings to alter the way in which we as a community address the devastating cycle of imprisonment and poverty in Australia.

Executive Summary

This project is an exploration of best practice in community-based reintegration services for people leaving prison; it has a particular focus on issues related to working with complex needs populations. Complex needs populations include people with cognitive impairment, mental illness, long histories of criminal justice system involvement, homelessness, and limited community connection and engagement. This research included an extensive literature review, hundreds of e-mail and phone conversations with experts around the world, and 26 direct service visits to community based programs in Chicago, Detroit, Washington, Providence, New York, London and Glasgow.

Best practice in community-based reintegration programs with complex needs clients is defined by the following characteristics:

1. **Reintegration framed outside of the lens of rehabilitation.** There is a need to create and facilitate pathways for people leaving prison that are not explicitly focused on *addressing offending behaviour*, but rather focused on the creation of an identity *outside* of the criminal justice system.
2. **Service delivery incorporating systemic advocacy.** Service delivery must include a significant advocacy component that addresses structural barriers for individuals (such as access to housing, employment, education, health and social security benefits), and advocates systemically for change when this is required (for instance in the case of discriminatory employment practices).
3. **Pre-release engagement.** Meeting and working with people prior to release is necessary with respect to building the engagement necessary to sustain the case-work relationship, building trust between someone in prison and the community organisation on the outside, and practically planning for re-entry into the community with complex needs populations.
4. **Holistic, relational and long-term casework models.** People with long histories of trauma in combination with the “referral fatigue” experienced by this group, require long-term support in order to build engagement and trust. Long-term support also allows people the opportunity to develop the skills required to navigate frequently hostile or unwieldy service systems.
5. **Community based outreach.** Services that work with people with long histories of criminal justice system involvement need to operate outside of the criminal justice system, and *in* the communities in which people are living.
6. **Housing first approaches** (and in some jurisdictions, employment first approaches). Support must be concrete. Most people require a solid base from which they can try and make the changes required to stay out of prison.
7. **Genuine collaboration and work with people with lived experience of incarceration** at all levels of program delivery. The expertise of people who have themselves been to prison is critical in both the design and the delivery of community based reintegration services.

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Program

Date	City	Organisation	Contact
31 st March	Chicago	Safer Foundation	Harry Alston Dianne Williams
1 st April	Chicago	Green Re-Entry (Inner City Muslim Network)	Matthew Ramadan
1 st April	Chicago	TASC (Treatment Alternatives for Safer Communities)	Pamela Rodriguez
2 nd April	Chicago	Truth Out (informal)	Maya Schenwar
4 th April	Detroit	Recovery for Detroit	Andre Johnson Calvin Trent
4 th April	Detroit	Wellness Centre Detroit	(Interagency chaired by Pamela Lamb)
4 th April	Detroit	Matrix Human Services	Karen Bisdorf
5 th April	Detroit/ Ann Arbor	Re-Entry Program and seminar	Reuben Miller
7 th April	Washington	Urban Institute	Margaret Ulle Nancy Levigne
8 th April	Providence	9 Yards Program Open Doors	Nick Horton
11 th April	New York	Cardozo University Re-entry conference	Glenn Martin (Just Leadership) Multiple presenters
12 th April	New York	Centre for Court Innovation	Debbie Boar
12 th April	New York	Informal	Shadd Maruna+ Fergus McNeill
13 th April	New York	Centre for State Government Justice Centre	Stefan LoBuglio
14 th April	New York	Fortune Society	Sherry Goldstein Max Lindeman
15 th April	New York	NeON Arts, Carnegie	Ann Gregg

		Hall	
18 th April	New York	Delancey St Foundation	Robert + John
21 st April	London	NACRO	David Watson
22 nd April	London	Revolving Doors	Lucy Terrey
22 nd April	London	Koestler Trust	Sarah Matheve
23 rd April	London	Irene Taylor Trust	Sara Lee
25 th April	London	Dovegate (Therapeutic Unit)	Ian Williams Vicki Pails
26 th April	Glasgow	Vox Liminis/Unbound	Alison Urie
27 th April	Glasgow	Scottish Centre for Criminal Justice	Fergus McNeill
28 th April	Glasgow	Positive Prisons/Positive Futures	Pete White
28 th April	Glasgow	Faith in Throughcare	Iain Johnston Morag Sievwright
29 th April	Glasgow	SACRO	Jim Borland

Introduction and Background

At the time of writing, Australia is reeling from the vision of Indigenous kids in detention in the Northern Territory being assaulted.¹ An announcement has been made that a Royal Commission will be held into their treatment. The force that was used by officers to subdue or contain children who were in deep distress was deeply shocking. But perhaps more shocking is the fact that many of the techniques of punishment used (for instance, restraint chairs and spit-hoods) were legal. The fact that this footage was made public and that this abuse was televised is new in Australia, however institutionalised violence and racism in our criminal justice system is certainly not.

Prisons failures in terms of its crime control ambitions are also nothing new. If anything *is* new, it is perhaps the scale of this failure in Australia. And despite the repeated (and increasing) failures of prison to reduce crime through rehabilitation or deterrence, we have remained stuck in a dreadful incarceration loop – as if there is still possibly some rehabilitative magic within prison walls that is yet to reveal itself. We *know* that one of the key predictors of recidivism is prior incarceration. We also know that going to prison makes people more likely to return. And we *know* that aside from the limited short-term impact of incapacitation, prisons in Australia have not had *any* success in achieving their crime control ambitions. And yet we have a habit of responding to the failures of the institutions of punishment (increasing prisoner numbers, high rates of recidivism) by building more prisons. In the continued reiteration of this approach, it is very easy to lose sight of even the possibility of an alternative, of ways of busting our reliance on, and acceptance of incarceration.

But the thing that *must* be remembered here is that alternatives *do* exist. They exist in small pockets all over the world, including Australia. Alternatives exist as community based interventions in early childhood. They exist in the form of community support *prior* to justice system involvement; too many people have spent their whole lives being managed in criminal justice system settings rather than being supported in their communities. Alternatives exist in the de-criminalisation of certain drug offences. They exist further down the track as court diversionary schemes for kids who are careening in the direction of juvenile justice. They exist in a range of alternative sentencing options and radical sentencing approaches, including for instance the abolition of short sentences. Alternatives exist in the form of a wild array of justice re-investment initiatives. And they also exist right down the end of the road, where I work, at the point of post release and reintegration.

This report is focused on this space – the point of re-entry, and the often lengthy transition between incarceration and freedom. It is argued throughout that there is potential for enormous change in this space. This includes the opportunity for personal change for individuals leaving prison (for instance living without drug and alcohol dependency). But more significantly (and connected to facilitating

¹ These assaults were exposed via footage obtained by a Four Corners investigation and televised on the ABC. See 'Australia's Shame'.
<http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/stories/2016/07/25/4504895.htm>

individual change) there is the need to change many of the structures and systems and cultural assumptions on the outside, which either actively exclude, discriminate, or downright ignore people exiting prison. There is a need also to change the insidious and perpetual punishment that occurs in the community long after someone's court ordered custodial period has expired (for instance the inability to access key services because of the experience of imprisonment).

Fourteen years ago I finished a gigantic beast of a doctoral thesis on the purpose of imprisonment in NSW. I wanted to understand how the crime-control ambitions of the agencies that are charged with locking people up exist alongside, and interact with, the often explicitly punitive and retributive sentiments expressed in the public and political spheres. I wanted to know how to make sense of a system that on the surface expressed such wildly optimistic rehabilitative and community safety ambitions, but that *felt and looked* to me, (and to the people I worked closely with who had done time in prison), like an often brutal and ultimately dehumanising system of punishment; a system that is simultaneously difficult to flourish in, *and* difficult to leave. I've now been working in post-release and reintegration in the community sector for twenty years, and *still* the meaning of all our locking up remains elusive.

This Churchill Fellowship has been a remarkable opportunity to continue to explore these questions with focused attention on how to build alternatives; specifically community based alternatives to breaking entrenched cycles of criminal justice system involvement. When working in this space, it very quickly becomes clear that our political and cultural reflex to imprison is often much more powerful than our reflex to find alternatives. And it also becomes clear that while the complex and structural disadvantage and racism that define prisoner populations around the world is in no way contentious, we are too often asked to separate our understandings of this disadvantage from the pragmatics of funded program delivery.

Similarly, while we know *who* we lock up, we are much less clear about how to confront the inequalities that lie at the heart of incarceration. We know that our prisons are filled with Indigenous people, people who have spent their lives on the social and economic margins, people with mental illness and cognitive impairment, and people who have histories of complex trauma often alongside raging drug and alcohol addictions. What we are less clear about is how to acknowledge this demographic reality in any real sense in the way we build programs on the outside. We *know* that our prisons are filled with the most disadvantaged people in our communities, and yet we tend to be funded to provide services that 'address offending behaviour'.

This project is ultimately about joining the dots between some of these questions. How do we work with people on release from prison? What does best-practice look like in this space? How do we design good programs that explicitly address structural inequalities? What is the role of programs that address 'offending behaviour?' And what is the role of the community in all of this?

This project has allowed for an exploration of a community sector that, I think, has often led the way in attempting to incorporate our understandings of the injustices and structural inequalities that define *who* we lock up when designing programs for this population. It has allowed for a clear distinction between the often well-intentioned, but narrowly focused programs that aim solely to address 'offending behaviour', and those that move beyond the framework of attempting to 'fix' people, and focus instead on supporting, building community, and confronting the systems that have so often failed those we lock up.

Key Findings

1. Reintegration Framed Outside of the Lens of Rehabilitation

Framing (and *funding*) reintegration programs *only* in terms of individual rehabilitation simply does not work. Best-practice models must place structural predictors of recidivism at the heart of service delivery design. When prison regimes are brutal, or over-crowded, or inhumane, we often (understandably) call for a response that has rehabilitation at its heart. However, in so many ways, this approach – and general orientation towards incarceration – misses the point. Calls for individual rehabilitation inevitably imply, that the people who are in prison, are broken, or unwell, or in need of being ‘fixed.’ And even if this *is* the case (and no-one would argue the fact that there is a deep well of unhappiness and disability and un-wellness inside our prisons) it is not *the* most important thing for the vast majority of people in prison and therefore should not be the primary focus for community based reintegration programs. The focus needs to be the broken systems and structures that so predictably *funnel* people with multiple and complex needs into prison. To only focus on the individual rehabilitation of people inside, distracts from the key structural issue. Which is that the majority of people in our prisons should not have *ever* been incarcerated.

Although the psychological factors that influence offending should not be ignored, it is *not enough* to frame conversations about reintegration in terms of ‘offender rehabilitation.’ So often – too often – services that provide support to people on release from custody are funded *only* to address offending behaviour and rehabilitate on the basis that this behaviour is what is needed to shift in order to break the cycle of imprisonment. Effective community based responses to reintegration require moving well beyond the parameters of anger management or impulse control programs.

Participants in this research talked explicitly about the difference between the ambitions of their funding providers, and the reality on the ground. That is, services were frequently funded to provide programs that ‘addressed offending behaviour’; however, the service was actually engaged in assisting people find housing, advocating around access to employment and education, and forging social connections and anchors for people who are isolated. Many services also recognised how critical forging an identity that was not connected with offending is in assisting people to stay out of prison.

Although many systems of imprisonment and punishment remain fixated with individual rehabilitation (often via criminogenic needs programs) there is clearly limited use of these programs, and indeed, deep cynicism about their utility in the community sector. Although access to psychological programs is considered important (particularly in terms of addressing mental health issues), it is in no way considered by the community sector as central to the reintegration process.

There are multiple examples of services that have turned their back on the language of rehabilitation entirely, and are framing their services primarily in terms of building community, reducing crime, or advocacy. Some organisations frame their work pragmatically in terms of finding jobs and houses for populations who have historically been locked out of both. Successful reintegration programs tend to frame their role as *supporting* individuals rather than ‘fixing’ them.

The individual rehabilitation of people on release from prison has become the template around which consensus between the funded community sector and government now exists. It is easy. It is the template that philanthropists understand. It is the template for every media story on post-release. It is the quick explanation at the pub. But it is too often a lazy explanation. And even when it’s not lazy, it is not nearly enough, because it situates offending at the centre of the conversation – as if understanding criminality and risk are the only explanatory tools we require to ease the grip of imprisonment on those groups who are relentlessly locked up.

There are structural and cultural threads that connect incarcerated people globally. There are threads of poverty, and disconnection and colonisation and racism. The demographics of *who* goes to prison are not contested by anybody. Yet when people are released we invariably choose to ignore those threads. We adopt instead an individualised approach. We ask people to take full personal responsibility for their crime and for their imprisonment. In Australia we ask them to participate in psychological programs to address their offending. If they’re *lucky* we might offer some service that is funded to assist them take this responsibility. And if they’re especially lucky, the services that are progressive might wrap concrete support around this process; housing, employment and education assistance.

And all of this is, on one level, vital. People *should* take responsibility for their crimes. Services *should* be funded to assist this process. But at some point, we need to be brave enough in Australia, to say that this is not nearly enough. We need to stop turning our backs on our structural understandings of imprisonment. And we need to start thinking carefully about what can happen at the level of community and culture to shift this. So that the process of reintegration stops *just* being an individual struggle and starts being something that all of us are part of.

Because if you stop framing the conversation in terms of curing and fixing and start thinking about it in terms of building community, you find yourself on very different ground. This is the kind of ground occupied by Vox Liminis, the small but vital group of folk in Glasgow who are sitting in rooms in and out of prisons writing tunes together. Or Green Re-Entry, the group of formerly incarcerated people fixing up broken down houses in South Chicago. Or the people with lived experience of addiction and imprisonment who are leading the charge in terms of recovery for the people of Detroit.

And of course these programs are not *all* that is needed, and there are frequently limits in terms of the scalability of grass roots community building projects. But these small projects during the course of this research became incredibly significant in the landscape of reintegration services and practices. Because of what they teach us about approach; about embedding social movement into practice, and more importantly about building connection and community. There is something radical and deeply pragmatic in terms of reintegration about finding ways to create spaces so that the common ground that exists between people can expand into something larger than all we might imagine divides.

2. Service Delivery Incorporating Systemic Advocacy

In addition (or perhaps, at the same time as) providing an approach to reintegration that moves beyond individual rehabilitation, the services that were making a difference in people's lives viewed themselves as advocates. They perceived themselves to be 'in the corner' of the people they were working with and viewed it as central to their role to assist individuals with overcoming both bureaucratic and legal discrimination. This advocacy approach was evident in direct service design (including having workers specifically act as advocates for clients) but also in the way in which organisations were structured.

Some organisations have developed advocacy or policy branches (see for instance 'CARE' at Safer Foundation, or the David Rothenberg Centre for Public Policy at the Fortune Society), others embed advocacy directly into their service provision. Many community organisations noted the way in which individuals within government frequently utilise the relative freedom that the community sector has to advocate, in order to facilitate reform on issues of shared concern (for instance, increasing prisoner numbers). When mechanisms exist, governments frequently work alongside community sector agencies in order to advance reform agendas. The importance of 'being at the table' and part of the discussion about key issues (rather than being government's adversaries) emerged as a key theme. The challenge of navigating this position was also recognised, especially when funding for service delivery is provided by the same government departments that are being criticised. However this challenge is not viewed in any sense as insurmountable. Some organisations had organised their advocacy work to be funded separately from the direct client service delivery. Others utilised the long and strong working histories and trust that had built up in order to gently 'nudge' for change.

Best practice services acknowledge directly (in both organisational and service delivery design), the complex interaction between individuals on release from prison and the frequently discriminatory structures and systems that frame both criminal justice system involvement and exclusion from community based opportunities for marginalised populations. There is an understanding that building pathways that break entrenched cycles of poverty and imprisonment, requires an acknowledgment of, *and response to* structural and systemic issues, specifically; racism, institutionalisation, explicit – and sometimes lifelong discrimination on the basis of criminal records, homelessness, limited education, un-recognised and undiagnosed mental illness and cognitive impairment, and complex trauma

There are of course many services working in this space (in Australia and internationally) who do not see it as their role to advocate, and see the function of service delivery as separate from the function of attempting to change systems or policies. There is quite rightly a lot of fear about taking on an advocacy function in competitive and resource limited funding environments. However, it was clear through the course of this research, that there is enormous benefit both on an individual level, and on a systemic level of having the community

sector unapologetically utilising their on-the-ground expertise in order to improve things for individuals leaving prison, and working structurally also when this is needed. In a concrete sense, this might mean advocating for changes to Centrelink benefits so that people leaving prison are not struggling quite as desperately for money during their first few weeks out. It might mean addressing Department of Housing policy that too frequently discriminates against people who have spent time in prison. It might mean building the capacity of other services who are frightened about working with people on release from prison because of common misconceptions about *who* this group actually are. It might mean running a campaign to reduce prisoner numbers and increase funding to alternatives. The community sector, and specifically agencies with specialist expertise in this space, have a role to play in ensuring the specific needs of people leaving custody are understood in the broader service landscape.

3. Pre-Release Engagement (Throughcare)

When working with people with both highly complex needs and limited support in the community, pre-release engagement is a powerful tool. It provides a metaphorical bridge between prison and the community, but it also provides a solid casework tool in terms of facilitating engagement. For many people in prison, knowing that there is someone that has taken the time to come in to a prison to meet with them (ideally a number of times) prior to release, and who is guaranteeing ongoing support in the community is in itself a significant hook for change. Too often people are released with absolutely nothing. When this has been someone's experience repeatedly, the experience of a community-supported release can be profound.

Wherever possible, community sector workers who are also providing reintegration support should meet with people prior to their release while they are in prison. In addition to planning for release, it's also an ideal time for engagement. Often people nearing the end of their sentence are fairly optimistic about what they want their lives to look like when they get out. This is a critical time for getting to know somebody, not just in terms of housing or employment needs, but in terms of *who* they would actually like to be, and *what* they would like their lives to look like on the outside. It is at the point prior to release that people talk about what their hopes and dreams for life on the outside are. This might be about getting a forklift ticket. It might be about volunteering. It might be about reconnecting with estranged family. Understanding these aspects of someone's identity are very important in trying to sustain engagement with people on the outside if life becomes messy and chaotic (as it frequently does in the post-release period).

Pre-release engagement works best when the personal connection that is forged inside prison is sustained on the outside, and if at all possible, on the day of release. This is especially important for people with multiple and complex needs, and no other form of support. Workers should drive to the prison to meet someone when they leave, and then assist intensively over the first few days of release. Support at this stage must be concrete, including for instance; driving people to appointments, waiting in line with them at Centrelink, helping them access methadone, and ensuring that any reporting requirements are met. Support during this period often lays the foundations for a therapeutic casework relationship down the track, and is vital in terms of establishing trust, and belief that the working relationship is worthwhile.

The disconnect that people leaving prison often feel between life inside and life outside can be disrupted by the presence of one person who has known them in both environments. People on release often feel acutely self-conscious, especially in the immediate re-entry period. A worker who walks alongside someone who is *ready* to make a change, from the moment they leave the prison gates, is frequently the lynchpin for shifting an entrenched cycle of release and re-offending.

4. Holistic, Relational and Long Term Case-work Models

People who have spent their lives being 'managed' by the criminal justice system require support and time to build pathways into the community. The option of long term support, including support that potentially extends for beyond *twelve months* or more is necessary to build trust and engagement, (and in a pragmatic sense in many contexts) essential to establish the housing and service partnerships required to implement lasting changes.

Long-term intensive case management with populations with complex needs and ongoing criminal justice system involvement is fundamentally important. People with long histories of trauma are not able to build the trust and engagement necessary to lay the foundations for making change if they know they are going to be referred on to a different service in a matter of weeks. Relational case-management approaches acknowledge that for many people coming out of prison who are isolated, the connection with their support worker is frequently a key factor in staying out of prison. The significance of human interaction and having 'someone in your corner' is explicitly recognised in this approach, as is the fact that for so many people, the support they receive from a caseworker may well be the *only* support they are able to access.

Skilled workers are required for this long term work. They must have the capacity to 'hold' clients with multiple and complex needs confidently over time (and avoid the chronic over-referral experienced by this population). Although referral is obviously important, as much as possible, transitional support case-workers need be able to work directly and holistically with a range of issues as they arise, and do so in a safe and confident manner. This includes working around active drug and alcohol addiction, working with people with histories of sex offending, mental illness and cognitive impairment. Community agencies offering this model are required to ensure that workers are supported, trained and skilled. They need to be able to provide basic welfare support, navigate complex service systems, and engage therapeutically over time.

There are some complicated conversations to be had around pro-active and intensive case management. There are certainly arguments to be made about the dangers of facilitating a kind of dependency or reducing somebody's agency by having workers that are more involved (and for longer) than generalist case-workers. But, what seems clear for this population is that in the first few months post-release, staying out of prison requires serious support. Workers need to regularly check in with people and see how they are going. They need to check if someone needs help getting to a doctors appointment or attending a support group. Because if specialist organisations don't take this hands on approach (especially during the high risk periods post-release), the chances are that nobody else will. And if nobody does, it is highly likely that people will end up back in prison.

We too often have an expectation that people on release from custody will stop committing crime, or stop doing drugs even without the necessary supports in place. So, with this in mind, and also keeping in mind what we know about the demographics of this population (that is, extremely high levels of cognitive

impairment and intellectual disability) there is a need for a model that explicitly accepts the significance of the relationship between the worker and the client in helping someone to stay out of prison and make significant changes. Making changes without anyone next to you, or anyone *caring* about this, is exceptionally difficult.

Long-term relational case-management creates a proper space for allowing someone the opportunity to experience feeling supported. For those people who have burnt bridges with family and friends, sometimes a worker is the only person there to fulfill this role. There are challenges in relational case-management in terms of ensuring professional boundaries are maintained during the process in which the worker and client get to know each other very well. However these challenges are easily surmountable with adequate training and support.

In order for people to make changes in their lives – and to move away from offending behaviour, they need more than a bed to sleep in and, once again, much more than programs that address behaviour directly related to offending. They need genuine non-judgmental support. They need people who are hopeful and positive about their capacity to change. They need to feel that they are not alone in trying to make massive changes in their lives. They need organisations that are realistic and honest – but not punitive in their dealings. And importantly, they need workers to take some time with them. For many clients who have spent a lot of time in prison, the presence of a worker who is genuinely committed to supporting them in making the changes that they want to make in order to avoid the cycle of re-offending and homelessness is a profoundly important experience. For many clients, it is the first time this mode of support has ever been offered.

5. Community Based Outreach Support

Services that assist to build, or re-build lives, are most effective if they occur in the context in which someone is living. Prison reformers for years have pointed to the difficulty inherent in training someone for freedom under the conditions of captivity. Although prisons have a role to play here in terms of facilitating access by community services into the prisons so that they might meet with people prior to release, reintegration support should ultimately be the responsibility of the community.

It is important also to make the distinction here between community based services and community corrections (or probation and parole). In recent times (in some Australian jurisdictions) there has been a blurring of these boundaries, and frequently requirements that NGOs and parole officers work utilising the same case-plan and strategy. However NGOs or NFPs frequently have a different approach to working with people on release to the agencies of justice which also have responsibility to ensure people are meeting parole conditions. Probation and Parole officers ultimately are able to facilitate the process which sends someone back to prison. People on release from prison are very aware of this, and very clear about the difference between talking candidly to a parole officer and talking candidly to somebody who is not connected to the prison administration.

Acknowledging these different roles is important, and one part of the reason why community agencies are best operated independently from the agencies of criminal justice. People *need* to be able to talk about their relationship to drugs and alcohol without the threat of returning to prison if they have relapsed. Similarly, people need to be able to disclose that their housing situation has fallen apart, without the threat of being returned to custody because they no longer have anywhere to live. Although there are many opportunities for Community Corrections and community based organisations to work together, there is also the need to be transparent about their different roles, responsibilities and mandates.

As well as being based in the community, best-practice reintegration support should ideally be based on an outreach model (especially when working with people with multiple and complex needs). This means that rather than waiting for people to turn up to appointments in an office, wherever possible, services need to go to where people already are. Or where they want to be. This can mean ensuring that workers from specialist reintegration services are placed in key welfare and health settings (to increase accessibility). But more often, this means assertive outreach into the community. Initially this means going into prisons to meet people prior to release. And then post-release it can involve a range of different settings (in peoples homes, coffee shops, McDonalds, the gym, the beach, or wherever works for the individual and the worker).

One of the key reasons for doing outreach, especially in the chaotic initial post-release period is very practical; people on release have a wild number of

appointments they need to get to and often limited or no means to attend them. Failure to attend appointments can at best be dispiriting, but at worst, can result in immediate re-incarceration. This period can be overwhelming, and distressing for people who are already struggling with the enormous psychological challenge of leaving the prison environment. For people with mental illness or intellectual disability, this period is often one of extreme stress and fear, including a very realistic fear of failure.

In Australia for instance, the first day of release typically involves visiting Centrelink, visiting housing, attending a parole appointment, finding clothes to wear (many people are released in their prison greens), getting to a methadone clinic and attending to other health matters. Frequently it also involves trying to find a place to stay that night. Most people have no access to a vehicle to get them around, and usually no money to pay for transport. Wherever possible services assisting with reintegration should assertively assist people with attending all of these appointments (often by driving them to each of them and supporting them through the often frustrating waiting periods). Even *this* style of support facilitates a significant reduction in the risk of re-offending in the initial release period.

Community outreach is also crucial with this population because of a common sense of disconnect that people on release from prison frequently have with the community on the outside. Things like going to cafes, or the gym or the beach are activities that many people who haven't spent their lives in criminal justice settings take for granted. For someone on release from prison, there is often enormous trepidation about 'entering' the community in this way. A lot of people on release from prison report experiencing an enormous sense of shame, stigma and disconnect when they get out, and a sense that people know where they have been. Having a worker, walk alongside someone, as they go to the gym for the first time, or go shopping, or catch public transport can make an enormous difference in terms of facilitating a sense of belonging and a sense of identity *in* the community, rather than in prison. It is often the case that people on release say that they know *how* to be in prison, but they have no idea how to *be* in the community. Intensive outreach support is not only practically important, but it *shows* people who are lacking confidence in living in the community, how it might be done.

It is also clear that the intense isolation that happens for people who are trying desperately hard to stay away from the same people or situations or geographic locations that they know are likely to trigger drug use and offending, can make life incredibly lonely. Having somebody (whether this is a worker, a mentor or a friend) who is able to go with you to the park, or have a cup of tea with you at home can be a profoundly humanising experience. It is very different to visiting a probation and parole office. It is very different from waiting in line at Centrelink. It is very different from meeting in the waiting room of a support service.

Supporting someone on release from prison is ultimately about finding those threads and connections in the community that can ultimately turn into solid

anchors over time. Things that really connect people to life outside of the criminal justice world. Community based outreach work (particularly when combining this with the relational case-management model described earlier) is focused on treating people with dignity and respect. Regardless of case-loads, it is about treating people with humanity, and in so doing, trying to undo some of the damage caused by years of institutional damage. This process allows people on release to experience what it is like to be treated as something *other* than an 'offender' or 'criminal'. It recognises that in order for somebody to start shifting their own personal narrative about where they belong (or don't belong) they need at least a couple of people around them, who encourage and support that process of change.

6. Housing First Approaches

Services in both the US and the UK view housing and employment as key centerpieces of reintegration. These are not viewed as 'welfare' considerations' to be addressed outside of criminogenic needs. Their role in reducing the likelihood of re-offending is not controversial. This is markedly different to the service environment in many Australian jurisdictions at the time of writing. There has been a de-funding of specialist long-term housing services, and an increase in short term funding for community based programs providing criminogenic support that is explicitly disconnected from housing and employment.

The centrality of employment to successful reintegration in the United States is related to the dismal state of social security, and the necessity for people on release from prison to immediately obtain work in order to have an income that allows them to stay off the street. The enormous barriers to employment for people with criminal records in the US do not make this easy (and are discussed in some more detail in the overview of the specific service visits). However, in the same way that housing first approaches frame housing as a 'right' and view housing as the secure base from which multiple other changes can be made, in many places in the US, employment is framed in the same way. While the welfare net in Australia allows us some flexibility with regard to the extent to which employment is viewed as an essential part of the immediate reintegration process, it is interesting to explore the role of employment in the context of the US. Services discussed employment not just in terms of its financial imperative, but also considered it to be central to the formation of identity and belonging outside of the criminal justice system.

Safe, secure, permanent accommodation allows people from chronically disadvantaged backgrounds to have a base from which to address their disadvantage, including significantly, creating opportunities for education and employment. Housing (or lack of housing) on release from prison is the most significant challenge for people with complex needs on release from prison. The reasons for the relationship between homelessness and imprisonment are complex but include the higher levels of surveillance experienced by people who are living outside of a conventional home, the relationship and overlap between the common *causes* of homelessness (for instance problematic drug and alcohol use and mental illness) and the likelihood of embroilment with the criminal justice system (for instance the commission of crime to obtain money for drugs or through behaviour associated with the chaotic combination of homelessness and untreated mental illness).

Homelessness itself also produces its own set of risk factors for involvement in crime – for both offenders and victims. Homeless people are more likely to be charged with public order offences partially because they spend so much time in public places (and thus have their behaviours monitored more than people who have their own homes) and also because the reasons for their homelessness are often risk factors for offending behaviour. People are more likely to be charged or fined for behaviour that was directly linked to their homelessness (i.e., public

space offences such as begging) or targeted by police because of the fact of their homelessness.

Safe, secure and permanent accommodation is a fundamental building block to post release and reintegration success. Reintegration programs need to unapologetically prioritise the housing needs of people on release from prison and build partnerships with housing providers wherever possible in order to procure property and facilitate leases. Long term, permanent housing should be considered a right, and it should not be dependent on someone's readiness, but rather should be seen as the base from which they are able to build capacity.

7. Genuine collaboration and work with people with lived experience of incarceration

One of the unexpected findings of this research trip was the extent to which people with lived experience of incarceration are themselves employed in the community sector in the US and the UK. There is a real recognition that the expertise of people who have themselves been to prison is an asset for professional community sector organisations. This is partly because of the way in which this population bring a unique and nuanced understanding of the challenges people face on release but also because of the extremely powerful impact of positive role-modeling. For people who are just at the start of their reintegration journey, meeting people a little further down the track, who have managed to stay out of prison, and are now 'giving back' to the community through their work in this space, was repeatedly described as inspiring, and central to facilitating change. This involvement was not relegated to tokenistic 'peer' roles, but rather, people with lived experience were embedded at all levels of almost all the agencies visited. The focus of this research was not at all on 'peer led' reintegration, but it emerged repeatedly as a theme. There was an acknowledgement by professional organisations, that the involvement of people with criminal justice system involvement afforded people leaving custody with a hope that was incredibly motivating.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Adopting Best Practice Models of Service Delivery

Wherever possible community reintegration services should adopt the principles of best practice service delivery including; pre-release engagement, long-term, holistic relational case-management, community outreach models, and housing first approaches. The adoption of long-term case-management models is absolutely crucial if attempting to build genuine pathways out of the criminal justice system.

Reintegration not Rehabilitation

There is the need for specialist community based reintegration programs to unapologetically support people's access to housing, employment, education, and social connection on the outside. It is not possible – or realistic, for people to begin to address the psychological issues related to offending behaviour until they have achieved a level of stability in their lives. Furthermore, with complex needs populations, it is frequently the case that imprisonment is directly related to poverty and limited access to opportunities outside of the criminal justice system. That is, frequently people are in prison on remand or for crimes that are not considered 'serious' in that they do not attract sentences of more than a few months. For this population, although there *may* be some benefit in rehabilitation, it is much more useful to focus attention on alleviating the problems of poverty and access than it is to focus attention on offending behaviour.

Even if there *is* the need to complete a criminogenic program, completing psychological rehabilitative programs is of limited value on the outside until someone is assisted to move out of crisis. At this stage in many states in Australia there is *no* welfare assistance that is specifically directed to people leaving custody who need help having their basic needs met. There is frequently an assumption that people receive assistance in preparing for release while they are inside. For the vast majority of people in prisons in Australia, this is simply not the case.

There is a need in Australia for community sector organisations to start pushing back with regard to the direction of many Corrections funded initiatives that are still fixated on Risk Needs and Responsivity frameworks. The insistence that the specialist community sector be contracted to work with people around their criminogenic needs (with the assumption that welfare concerns are secondary and can somehow be referred out to other agencies) is deeply problematic. The expertise of the community sector should be granted a space in determining the service models required on the outside. And finally it must be acknowledged that transplanting psychological frameworks and models from the prison environment to the community does not work. That is; findings about what works in prisons to reduce the risk factors for re-offending are not the same as findings about what works in the community setting to reduce re-offending.

There is the need to acknowledge the different focus and expertise of Corrections and the community sector, and the different sets of evidence that inform both

approaches to reintegration. Both the US and the UK recognise the centrality of addressing welfare concerns. Australia has historically (in some jurisdictions) recognised the need for holistic welfare approaches with its funded specialist reintegration programs. In recent times however, many of these programs have been abandoned. There is a need for governments in Australia to revisit programs that look directly at addressing the basic needs of people on release, with a particular focus on homelessness. There is also a need to move away from the criminogenic framework which has no evidence base in the community sector.

Arts and Music Programs

In addition to addressing welfare concerns, best practice reintegration programs must also facilitate pathways for people who are searching for an identity, or way of living and being outside of the criminal justice system. Australia would do well to learn from the remarkable arts and music programs that are well established in both the US and the UK. These programs recognise that arts programs support people not just in the development of artistic skills, but also in the development of confidence and self esteem which can have a remarkable flow-on effect in terms of building capacity in other areas of someone's life.

Arts programs that are targeted to people in the criminal justice system are incredibly powerful. They allow people the opportunity to develop an identity (as a musician or an artist), they provide social networks and a strong sense of belonging, as well as a remarkable opportunity for healthy and creative expression. In addition, the skills that are acquired as part of the process of learning how to collaborate with other artists and musicians (listening, trusting, patience, how to be vulnerable) are able to be used in multiple other settings. There are remarkable opportunities in Australia, for community and arts organisations to collaborate in order to initiate such projects.

Lived Experience of Incarceration

There is a need for people with lived experience of incarceration to be part of the service framework in the community sector at all levels of program governance, design and delivery. In both the US and the UK, people who had themselves been to custody were working as paid professionals in community sector organisations. In Australia, although there are some prisoner representative organisations which play a crucial independent lobbying and advocacy role, we have not had the same involvement of people with lived experience of imprisonment in our service organisations.

The community sector needs to look at ways to ensure that people with personal expertise are trained, supported and involved in the delivery of services. There are many options here including for instance, having designated board positions for people with lived experience, having consultancy groups and steering committees overseeing particular projects, as well as providing student and employment opportunities for people who have spent time in prison. Prioritising this student group and facilitating placements is one way to start in moving towards a professionalised workforce that is also representative.

“We are asking people to be heroic when they re-enter. We need to be heroic in the way we support re-entry”

Multi-Levelled Advocacy

Specialist community based reintegration services in Australia should utilise their on-the-ground expertise and deliver advocacy support as well as direct services. Community organisations in the UK and the US saw advocacy as central to this role, although this frequently was in the form of being advisors to government and ‘friendly critics’ when needed. This advocacy should occur in two separate ways

1. Case management advocacy.

Case-management should always have advocacy built into the case work framework. For instance if an individual is being discriminated against on the basis of a criminal record, or if someone is not being permitted access to services because of their history of imprisonment, the case-worker should work closely with the individual to challenge discriminatory or exclusionary practice. If in the course of this work, it becomes apparent that the issue is not an isolated individual case, but part of an embedded practice that impacts on many people leaving prison, then advocacy should be elevated to a policy and structural level.

2. Policy and systemic advocacy

Community sector organisations are well placed to inform and, where necessary challenge, the structures, policies and systems that impact on the reintegration process. At its most basic level community organisations working with people on release should provide consultancy, advice and briefings to government with regard to all aspects of justice and social services policy that impact on reintegration. This might include for instance, changes to the Newstart allowance, or housing policy with regard to how long someone might maintain a property while in prison.

Community sector organisations should also provide consultancy advice and briefings at the level of parliament. NGO’s and NFP’s have a unique position and insight ‘on the ground’ that is not always communicated through bureaucratic channels to the ministerial level. Specialist NGO’s should ensure that opportunities to deliver submissions into relevant parliamentary inquiries are adopted, and when necessary that ministerial briefings are provided around key issues of concern.

Community sector organisations need to be pro-active in this space. As an example, NSW would benefit enormously from a regular re-entry/recidivism round-table, with key representatives from justice, housing and health agencies alongside key community sector organisations. There are currently limited forums for community and government to work collaboratively in this space, and such an enormous need to utilise the diverse expertise. There are enormous opportunities for working collaboratively in this space. The community sector has a useful role to play in Australia as a facilitator of this collaboration.

Appendices: Overview of Service Visits

Many of the service visits involved hours of discussion (sometimes days!) and many pages of written notes. For the purposes of this report, I have attempted as much as possible to synthesise the key issues relevant to this research. The services are listed in the order in which they were visited. I have tried to convey the perspective of the service provider and the individuals in this section (without a great deal of editorialising). In many cases I have included direct quotations. This is especially the case when service visits involved meeting with people with lived experience of incarceration.

Safer Foundation, Chicago

“Too often people see employment as an add on...It is central”

The Safer Foundation provides a range of reintegration and transitional services to people on release from prison. The focus of the service is on employment. Alongside the direct services it provides a range of advocacy work around the structural issues of employment barriers and discrimination for people with criminal records. The advocacy work it provides is focused on addressing the structural and legislative barriers to employment at a political and policy level. The advocacy branch of Safer (CARE) is funded separately (and privately).

There is a need for a strategic approach to advocacy in this area, and a need to build relationships with multiple stakeholders in order to properly address the pragmatics of the barriers to employment for people with criminal records in the United States. The advocacy work carried out by Safer, is based on a network of a whole range of government and non-government representatives. Sometimes advocacy work originates in the community sector, but sometimes it is driven by individuals in government who rely on the relative flexibility within the community sector to carry campaigns.

The involvement of Safer in campaigns related to key pragmatic issues includes the movement to only permit the consideration of a criminal record if directly related to occupation. Safer is also working on trying to get licenses for people for particular occupations while they were in custody. Employment first approaches in the US are critical because of the impossibly small welfare assistance for people who do not have jobs. However discrimination on the basis of a criminal record is endemic.

The health industry is one of the key growth industries in the states, and there are some examples of health providers leading the way in terms of the employment of people with criminal records. However discrimination is difficult to overcome. There is no need for people to employ someone with a criminal record (as there is so much competition for jobs). There are also multiple issues with regard to insurance. Although there is optimism with regard to important shifts as a result of the ‘Ban the Box’ campaign, there is also widespread feeling that there is a long way to go. The Ban the Box campaign is best understood as a

'move the box' campaign; it has *shifted* the point at which the question with regard to criminal records could be asked, but it has not banned it.

Safer works closely with employers and employees and does a huge amount of work building relationships with these. In terms of service delivery, the support received is intensive usually for the first 30 days of employment, and then a retentive specialist is allocated to follow up on this work.

Safer also operates transitional centres (for Corrections). These house 550 beds and are focused on people who are incarcerated who are eligible for works release. Training and work revolves around the advanced manufacturing sector, including welding, forklift training, food safety and sanitation and an increase in computer and numerical work. They provide assistance with obtaining high school diplomas also.



If clients have highly complex needs including active drug and alcohol addiction it is very difficult to place somebody directly into employment. This can be frustrating for people who want to immediately get work. There are a number of different pathways available for people and some people are ready for work. There is a licensed substance abuse treatment service at Crossroads (a transitional centre), but as is the case in most US services, the approach is abstinence based. There are supportive services for people who are not job ready to get them to the point of being job ready, but widespread

acknowledgement that for people with very complex needs that this is not always an easy process.

Green Re-entry (IMAN), Chicago

“There are invisible chains when people get out. People are not physically incarcerated but it is difficult to escape being seen as a felon”

Green Re-Entry has been delivering services for 4 years although it is part of a much larger longer term support service; the “Inner City Muslim Action Network.” 5000 people use the medical clinic run by IMAN each year. Between 80-100 people have come through the re-entry program over the last 4 years.

The transitional program has a transitional house and a range of other properties. Long term support is offered to people who are in the transitional house. There is an acknowledgement that it can take a long time for men to ‘transition back’ to the community after having spent time in prison. The program ultimately is about building community; amongst the men who participate in the programs and *also* within the community in which the service is situated.

“Men who took part when we first started the prisoner re-entry programs- they still come around today because they feel a kinship with the program”

The transitional house is across from a school and down the street from a church, but their neighbours are now very pleased to have them around. The people who live in the houses are perceived as great asset to the community. The men in the program buy broken down houses. They fix them and then sell them. The community has embraced the program.

The transitional house has six bedrooms, and three bathrooms. Six men live there at any one time. It is very structured. The men sign a contract, and they communicate. They also are able to communicate about religious and spiritual matters. There is no pressure to push people out. There is encouragement to be hard working and also to pay back to the house and community if they are working.

The building and carpentry aspect of the program is a social enterprise at this stage and it is largely paying for itself. However there are ambitions for it become profitable. Green Re-Entry have just bought and done up their fifth property. One of the first clients of the service has gone on to become a home owner, and there are hopes that this might happen for a second client also. The re-building program is not just about the physical structures, it is about the process. There is a strong link between the carpentry and Islam. The men participating on the program obtain basic building and carpentry skills. They work four days a week and have one day in the classroom. There is currently some micro market reform- (between 59th and 63rd) and Chicago Lawn is in one of the targeted areas for reform. There is hope that perhaps the work being carried out might enable the organisation to acquire houses through partnerships with local government.



One man from the service was in the house for sixty days, and then Veterans of America assisted him with finding an apartment. He had been homeless and in prison for years. The transitional house gives people with nowhere to go with often the first opportunity to find their feet post-incarceration that they have ever have.

“Thankfulness and gratitude is very big in Islam. Gratitude to g-d- is shown through gratitude to fellow man”

The program offers a way of staying connected and showing moral support also. It is not exclusive to people who practice Islam. One man who is not a Muslim attends the prayer sessions because of the strong sense of community this fosters, and also as a show of his support for the organisation.

People within this program are able to practice faith in way that can be very difficult they get back to their communities. When conversion has happened inside prison, it is difficult getting out; the food isn't right and the lifestyle isn't right. The transformation has been so great for some of the men, that people they used to know say things like “I used to know someone who *looked* like you, and *sounded* like you...but they didn't *act* like you’

A number of the men noted their previously destructive role in communities particularly with regard to being in gangs or involved for a long time in crime. They see their role now very clearly as reparation.

Green Re-Entry was involved in doing up an old house locally, when they found out that one of their neighbours who was outside on his porch smoking had locked himself out. One of the IMAN men asked if they were able to help him. After some discussion, it was decided that they could. Later on, when the men were asked how they did, they noted that they had drawn on 'pre-Islamic knowledge' (breaking and entering!)

When people get out of prison they are given a bus fare. If they have nowhere to live they usually have to find a shelter. Although the experience of imprisonment itself clearly impacts on re-offending, the war on drugs is ultimately a war on black Americans. The only economies that open up to people without education are economies of crime. In the state run prisons it is hard to even get a high school certificate. It was noted that there are many services that won't work with violent offenders. However it was noted by the men on the program that often people have observed that often people who have done longer sentences are more ready to make a change than those who have only spend short periods of time in custody.

"The hardest thing about prison, and about getting out, is not having the opportunity to fulfill your dreams..the opportunity to go and work"

"The hardest thing is that other people won't accept that changes have been made. There is a big stigma attached to being an ex-felon"

"The great thing about the building skills and carpentry is that you can become self employed and contract- rather than having to work for someone else"

Treatment Alternatives to Safer Communities (TASC) Chicago

"We do anything we can to keep people out of prison and jail"

TASC is an independent case-management agency that works with people throughout the justice system with a focus on people with mental illness and substance abuse disorders. They oversee 250 providers of services across the state of Illinois. TASC offers a wide range of groups, recovery support and housing. Case managers put together a plan and access the resources for clients so they can achieve recovery and manage it themselves going forward. The TASC success rate is almost doubled what it would be for people without their support.

The secret to success in this area is about systemic advocacy. Too often services are too hard to get *in* the front door and too easy to get booted out. Case-managers are advocates for clients. And they advocate at all points of the system; jails, prisons, courts, probation and also at the point of diversion.

"A lot of providers tend to blame clients for failure to follow through. We tend to blame systems"

There is a lot of research that suggests that at the early point of contact with the criminal justice system the *less you do, the better off people are*.

That is, there is a need to try and refer them *away* from the criminal justice system. Part of TASC's role is to help the court system to understand that research

The idea with diversion is to narrow the front door. There have been some real successes in this area with mental illness, but drug use is much more difficult because it is criminalized. However, the current opiate epidemic is effecting white communities now, and judges are more likely to look at diversion if it is happening in rich white communities. Research indicates that 3 days in jail increases likelihood of recidivism by 40%. The idea with diversion is to ***close the front door.***



One of the biggest challenges is that there is no affordable housing. While case-managers are able to refer people to substance abuse programs, mental health programs, training and employment, safe affordable housing is not available. And this is a huge issue.

“If somebody is making \$750 a month on a minimum wage, and paying 1200 a month in rent, it’s not going to work.”

There is an important role that not-for-profits have in terms advocacy. Although it is not possible to do lobbying, there *is* a need to do advocacy. The issue with

this is around strategy, packaging and messaging. Education and advocacy is a big part of TASC's role.

An example of this was given by way of the women's prison in Illinois. There are significant problems with this problem. A recent report has described it as possibly the worst prison in the state. It is part of TASC's role to communicate this to the new Director of Corrections.

"We just have to keep beating the drum of education. What works for effective practices? How do we translate the evidence"

Systems change requires sustained leadership. NFP's can be viewed as strategic partners. We need change agents inside the system *and* outside the system.

"Change with government and legislators mimics the change process with clients. There needs to be understanding. Nobody likes being told what to do. People like to feel supported."

TASC has a strong presence inside the jails, and many referrals come from the gaols. Alerts are sent to TASC about who is being released and who meets the criteria in terms of mental health. Licensed social workers sit in the prison and do the assessments. They look at the most important issues. Although mental illness or drug use is often why they are referred, but housing is often the key issue. Motivational interviewing is used in acknowledgement of the fact that it is frequently a distrusting population

TASC manages 65 government contracts. It is primarily government funded. Foundations are typically more interested in the innovation and research phase of the projects. They can be involved in developing the proof of concept- and then money can be sought elsewhere to run the projects.

Generations have been lost due to the war on drugs. So much of that has a racial component. There is both a racial undertone and racial overtone to the imprisonment. Practices are changing because the costs are astronomical. Policies are changing slowly, but the effect of the mass incarceration is going to linger. There has been some solid work on reducing the juvenile justice system, which eventually should mean that the whole system will be smaller. But all of this will take a long time.

Recovery for Detroit (Detroit)

The Detroit Recovery Centre uses a peer approach to supporting people with addictions re-entering the community. When the project started they were really focused on people coming out of drug treatment programs. But then it became very clear that there are many more people coming out of prison who require support.



There is something very powerful and necessary about having peers supporting recovery. If you are not a peer it helps to be associated with peers. There is a need to have some kind of credentials; some kind of lived experience.

“It is important to note that peer recovery is not treatment. We have to talk about it as if it is treatment. We are forced into a treatment paradigm because that is what is funded. But I wonder if maybe we need to fight to be non-treatment. The whole philosophy of the peer thing is that it is not the disease model. We don’t think you have a disease. You have a social problem. You have an empowerment problem. But if the only way the money is going to come is through the treatment system than we will use it. But the disease model is not coming through strengths based practice. In some ways that is the dilemma of where we are at.”

The project works with people on probation, and uses a strong evidence base with regard to the case-management and programmatic approaches. The APIC program is utilised: Access, Plan, Integrate, Coordination, but at the same time a co-occurring peer empowerment program is used. The peers within the agency go back into the jails. They assist people prior to release with planning for transition out of custody and then they work with people at various stages of the criminal justice system including significantly at the point of reintegration.

There is a lot of poverty in Detroit and a lot of health disparities. Recovery for Detroit gears services around those areas where there is a clear need. This includes services to help families and children, services to help people who are

coming out of the court system with massive debts, and services to help people with housing and employment.

“They need somewhere to live, they need employment and they need recovery”

People coming out of prison get a little more hope and inspiration when they see someone they know who is a little further down the track. The peers are trained so that they are equipped to work around basic boundaries, but a multiple pathways approach is used (so that there is support wrapped around in addition to the peer support). People from various backgrounds and with diverse qualifications work for the organisation. A supportive and collaborative working environment exists between those with lived experience of addiction and incarceration and those without. There is a genuine respect of the expertise each person brings to the organisation.

The project attempts to be as inclusive as possible; unlike some others it does not exclude on the basis of methadone or on the basis of faith or on the basis of the *type* of drug use and preference for administering. Recovery for Detroit looks at where someone is at in terms of the stages of change model and meets people ‘where they are at’. The idea is to empower people with complex backgrounds and criminal justice system involvement, and as much as possible make the service available to the community to meet these needs. In a practical sense, this can mean a physical presence at another service, so that outreach and support is available to different groups (including for instance, support at disability and mental health services).

“We don’t tell them what to do. That is the whole idea behind using a strengths based approach.”

Engagement – including pre-release engagement is considered especially important. Motivational interviewing and strengths based approaches are used. Practical support in terms of health is available. For instance on-site HIV and Hep C testing is available for clients. There is also an illness and recovery support group for people with chronic and often drug related illness.

“...the thing about being in long term recovery is I know what its like to live at the bottom. I know what it’s like to beg borrow and steal. People see that, and knowing that, and seeing that I have been out of that life for a significant amount of time gives people hope”

Funding is inadequate with re-entry. Recovery for Detroit is funded through county (via Federal money). When going in and out of prison has been your life, you don’t often come with a whole lot of hope. There is an over-representation of people with addictions in prison. They are being treated a different way from other people; they are being treated more harshly. Drugs pose a problem for communities in terms of stigmatization. Even in places where there is no racial context, there is a very high stigma on addiction itself. There is also a heroin epidemic. Drug culture is fuelled by a majority population with the money. But

now there is a situation with over-prescribed prescription drugs, particularly over-prescribed codeine. People are getting addicted and turning to heroin because it is much cheaper than the prescription meds



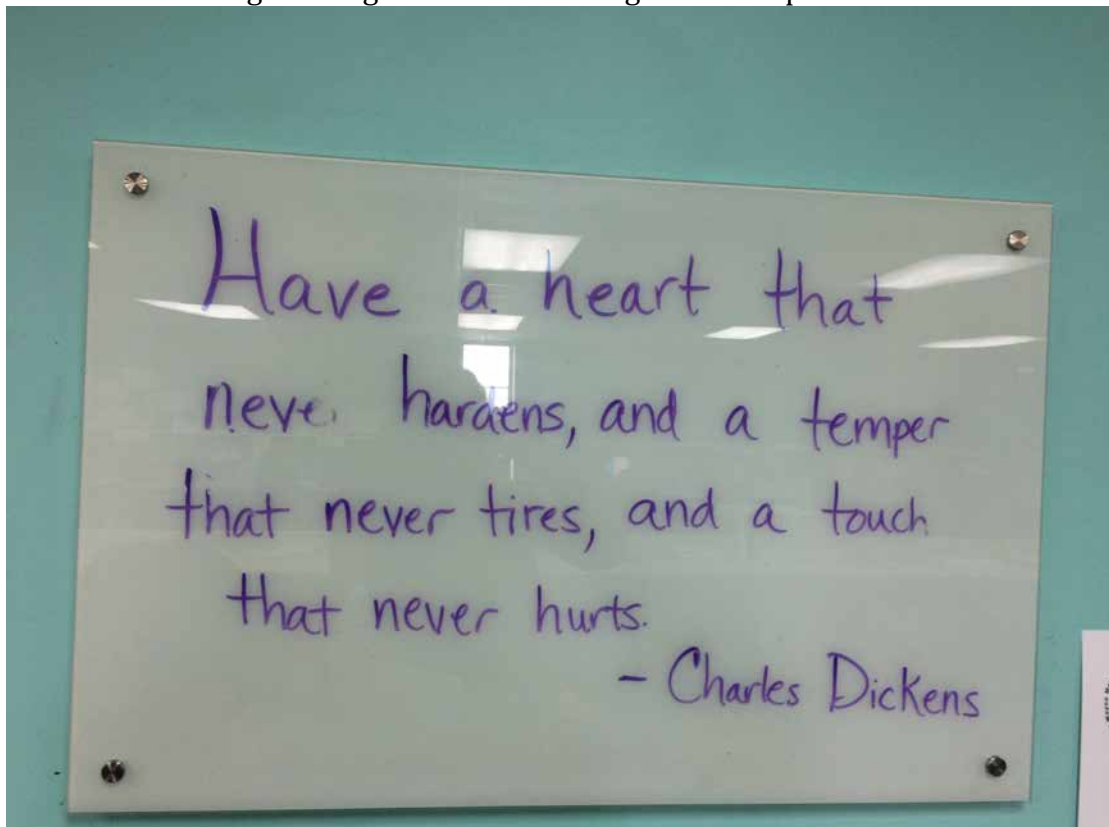
Team Wellness (Detroit)

Team Wellness is a privately operated health facility providing a range of different services and treatments to a diverse patient population. I was invited to participate in an interagency meeting which involved frank discussions about the challenges of working collaboratively in a complex service system and ways in which these challenges might be addressed.

It was made very clear that there is a large difference between truly 'integrating services' and referral. There is a need to be where the client is at. It is not about making the reception or the office prettier, but about genuinely trying to be (both physically and metaphorically) where the client is at. In a really practical sense, in Detroit, this means placing workers in other services. Examples of where this was working well were discussed.

Matrix Human Services (Detroit)

Matrix human services operates multiple programs in Detroit and in the surrounding areas, and offers services that are focused on breaking inter-generational poverty to more than 25,000 individuals each year. I became aware of Matrix as a provider of post-release and reintegration services during my research in the preparation of the fellowship, but by the time I had arrived in Detroit, Matrix were no longer providing a specific re-entry project. However we talked about the learning from the experience of the Detroit Safe Community Project. A group of community foundations were keen to do something about the issue of prisoners resettling, and grouped together to run the project. It ran out of a centre that had one of the highest crime rates in the area; zip code 48205. The idea with that post-code was that it was in such bad decline that there needed to be some urban regrowth, and so the decision to base it there was about contributing to this growth and building into that space.



“The people we were working with were the smartest, most intelligent people I can imagine. They knew how to get by”.

The idea with the pilot program was to serve 150 returning citizens with a particular focus on employment. The clients for this service were cherry picked. They were selected for their probability of success. It was initially funded for a 2 year period, but because of a slow uptake initially it stretched to 3 years. Initially there was some difficulty getting people interested. Although the project involved group and individual counseling, and employment centres, clients felt that they were being mandated to attend and many ended up re-entering. But more significantly, the project was meant to be place based, but people didn't want to be in their geographic location. People were stretching the truth about where they were living. When Matrix was able to convince the funding body that place based services were not the way to go and opened up the zip codes things markedly shifted. Over the course of the project, 217 people were served, and of those only 7% went back to prison over that time-frame.

Matrix generally tries to use a 'transition to success' model which connects individuals receiving services to multiple domains that they try and track via their data collection mechanisms. This includes things like tracking the stability of housing, the dosage of methadone etc. The biggest hurdle for people coming out of prison in Detroit is employment. The City of Detroit has been in chaos and unemployment is incredibly high. There are also really pragmatic issues around transportation and physically getting to work. Car insurance in the City of Detroit is incredibly high. Buses are not well connected and if people were working shifts they just couldn't get to them. Midtown is coming back- but poor neighbourhoods are still in decline. Neighbourhoods are in decline. Public services aren't there. Jobs are not necessarily in the city of Detroit and Detroit was never really a city for entrepreneurship.

Matrix also have a housing program which connects people to affordable housing. This is challenging because of the condition of the neighbourhoods. Even the newly returning are reticent to take a property in a neighbourhood they are not comfortable in or they feel is too scary. However there is an innovative approach which is of note. Matrix have entered into a landlord alliance with private business person who is buying up multiple properties in Detroit. The houses get destroyed if they are empty. Landlords want houses occupied. We work with the landlords, and have three way contracts with the clients. Matrix contract with the client to accept supportive services, and the landlords end up paying Matrix the necessary fees required to support them in the properties.

Matrix is primarily funded through federal grants (particularly for it's early intervention programs). Around 7% of the funding comes from state, local and foundation money. Agencies and foundations are demanding substantial movement of clients through the services. There have also been some shifts in terms of the level of detail various funders require.

Re-entry Programs and Seminar: People with lived experience of incarceration (Ann Arbor Re-Entry Project, Michigan)

"I did 27 years in prison and 2 years in juvenile. I got involved in NA, and I had a friend. One person who took an interest in me. One person can make a difference. I now own a transportation business. I'm a respectable name in the community. I have just celebrated 9 years of sobriety. And now I get a chance to walk in your shoes. What really grabbed me in NA is that you got to give it away to keep it. And then you have to give it back.

I tore up a lot of stuff. I did a lot of damage. I'm trying to make amends. Not just lip service. I am so grateful for my wife and my recovery family. When I first got out my first trip was to Catholic Social Services. I was determined not to be the same thing. I was determined to go somewhere I could be safe. Somewhere in an environment where I could stay clean"

"I want to mobilise and support people so that we can be more productive. Everyone shed that bad light on us and we become those bad things. I did 24 consecutive years. There are so many fees attached to being incarcerated. Restitution. Child support. Court fees. Parole fees.

All I heard was I wasn't going to be able to make it. There is such a contradiction between companies making money out of us when we're in prison, and then being told we can't have a job when we get out. On my first day out, I thought okay. My life begins now. I moved to a different state so that I could access re-entry services"

"Reentry is a wonderful but there are so many things - so many physical things. When you re-enter, everything around you moves very fast. I used to joke I'd get lost in the parking lot. You have to figure out what you want to do, where you are physically. You have to create a new life for yourself. But then there is the smell of the bread and you can smell the flowers and hear the kids laugh and play. I kept applying for jobs after I graduated. I couldn't get anything. And then this nurse from Taylor told me she couldn't find anybody for this social workers job. This nurse from Taylor....I take diapers, and I take formula and I take hope."

"My mum said to the judge "You're going to turn my son into a monster" I asked to get her kicked out of court. Because what she didn't know was that I already was a monster. I was in gangs. I was a thug. I had to live with the fact that I lived with the code. I did 24 years for a crime I didn't commit. And I wouldn't tell. My family were disappointed I didn't tell. There were no witnesses against me. I was so torn. My family looked to me to be what I was when I was incarcerated. To be a leader. But after six months they were over it. I had to figure it out my own. For me that belief in family is the thing that gives me the strength. I do have a prison family- those guys- who supported me- those are the ones I fight for now. You already did your time, don't let anyone convict you on the outside. Everyone was saying get a job. My idea was to educate myself. I didn't know how to make my decisions. Everyone else made my decisions for me. My family was dope-fiends, criminals. I had a praying grandmother. I had an uncle who played pro-football He tried to

take me with him. I got the opportunity to gaze into the window of what normal people do. When I went to prison I had a 4th grade education. I paid a guy a packet of cigarettes a week to teach me how to read. I wasn't getting visits or money orders- my family detached. I understand why. I keep giving this guy my heart and I kept breaking their heart

I dedicated my life to the gang. That was all I'm devoting all my life to- to have that reputation. One day this young worker said to me "How long are you going to keep standing up for non-existent virtues? They say until the pain gets great enough you won't change. Well the pain got great enough. I saw the other guys getting visits. Getting loved. I had nothing that was tangible in my life. Apart from convicts. I had no love. You can find comfort in a war zone. I got sick and tired to my core of my being of everybody looking at me like I was a piece of shit. I gave honour to the wrong stuff. I wanted to give honour to the right stuff. I didn't believe that a god would listen to anything I had to say."

"There really is a time that your family is a memory. You learn how to be your own best friend. Reentry is something that just never ends. Wherever you go, there you are. I have PTSD not from prison, but from the environment I existed in. You have to be brave, you have to"

The Urban Institute (Washington)

The point was made that many of the programs that have undergone the most rigorous evaluation no longer exist. There are key issues/challenges in terms of research. Sample size is an issue. Because if you want to look at outcomes you need to build in flows in and out of jail into the evaluation- and this adds time and expense to any evaluation. You need to enroll people in a study before they are released which means you have to go through the process of getting informed consent. You also need to figure out if there is enough demand for the programming that will also effect the ends and the enrolment. The follow up period is frequently expensive, and participants are often very difficult to maintain contact with. There is always a need to get as much data as possible 'is there a family member who always knows where you are'. Trying to figure out the right amount of time to be evaluating a project is also tricky. There tends to be a pattern where programs are impactful in the short term but not in the long term. Although there are some exceptions to this rule. One of the big problems is that there are a lot of evaluations that don't look at very closely at what they're evaluating. There really is the need to ask initially what the expected outcomes and outputs are.

"People need to ask was it a failure in theory or implementation?"

Recidivism is the most easy to measure outcome measure. But substance addiction measures, and other social and health and well-being measures are more complex. Having a rigorous evaluation framework is certainly useful in terms of achieving funding. There is a lot of interest amongst foundations to measuring performance. In the last decade there has really been a shift- and

people are interested in the detail of programs. The thing about having a positive evaluation is that it needs to ***be coupled with a really good communications strategy***. There needs to be brand name recognition and organisations need to think strategically about the way they brand their organisations in this way.

A few examples of some solid programs with really good evaluations were discussed. For instance, there is an example of some fatherhood programs which were federally funded which meant they couldn't provide direct housing or direct substance abuse treatment, but they did provide a range of different services and they had strong in-reach and strong depth of service. They were also incredibly flexible and able to change program models and offerings to meet the needs of the Dads. There were no examples of successful re-entry programs for people working with sex offenders

Project Hope

Diverting people from entering into prison and focusing on probationers
This uses swift and certain sanctions; People are sent to prison for short sentences (48 hours immediately after breaching probation). The thinking is that this is supposed to be connecting the breach with the punishment. There are some suggestions this has been effective, but this has also coincided with a period of incredibly stable or dropping crime rates (over the last decade).

The focus on re-entry really started with George W Bush. Although it is not well known, Bush struggled with addiction, and found his way out of it and attributes it to his faith system. Bush actually took up the issue of re-entry, and started asking the question 'Doesn't everyone deserve a second chance?' A lot of religious conservatives believe in redemption. Fiscal conservatives saw the waste in incarceration.

"The net of the criminal justice system has become wider and wider and ensnared so many people that it become much more personal. Everybody started knowing somebody in prison."

This has also all unfolded during a period of a decline in crime rates. It is very hard to know what is on the horizon politically as well. In terms of crime rates and perceptions of crime.

Open Doors – 9 Yards Program (Providence)

9 yards is one of multiple programs run by Open Doors in Providence. Open Doors was founded in 2003. It started out primarily with Department of Corrections funding. Open Doors is seen as a necessity and works in close partnership with the Department of Corrections. They work both inside and outside the prisons.

There is an employment program that is successful. Unemployment classes that are funder per client per service. It is a good model because it incentivizes us to go out and get more clients. Everything has to be tracked with regard to employment outcomes. It services 5-10 people each day in class. This includes

job-coaching, basic information about how to look for a job and practice interview skills. If you keep coming to the classes you get a bus pass.

Lot of people who come on the program are trying to do the right thing but just need a little bit of help. Often they don't know how to apply for jobs online They don't have a bus pass. In some ways this program is so basic that it hasn't actually been tested.

9 yards has a number of exclusionary criteria. Works with clients who are high risk but not too high risk. The minimum age is 22 but don't work with older clients (as they want to work with clients who are able to rebuild their lives). Consider 40 too old to re-start their lives again. Don't work with the chronically mentally ill. People are selected from medium security institutions. Their stability is assessed by counselors in prisons. This means that they don't work with a lot of homeless people or with people with really severe drug addiction. Noted that most people are in prison for selling drugs rather than using them.

Noted that they don't really have clients in the program who are using drugs One of the most important things is that they are in a positive environment. Employment becomes a big part of that. People get busy, and are surrounded by different people.

The program has 19 units that people can live in permanently. The program is funded through the federal state work force development Their primary concern is whether or not people get jobs. It is noted however that people wouldn't get paroled to the program if there wasn't housing Housing is considered absolutely fundamental. However the project ends up 'cherry picking' people, and vetting with some ferocity, because 'it has to work'.

There are 3,300 people in prison in Providence. There is one prison which includes 6 buildings. As is the case everywhere, minority groups are over-represented and the poor urban centres- vastly over-represented. There are some programs inside the prisons, but less than in the federal system. Notes that most classes are not available to people until the last three years of their sentence. Work is just part of the way in which they control the population. People are only paid a couple of dollars a day. There is a small subset of people in prison who end up getting industry jobs but it is not common.

Corrections primarily sub contracts discharge planning to other agencies. This usually means 1 or 2 appointments and basic referrals. There's not a lot to offer Sometimes people are being paroled to a place so help is provided to arrange this. If someone is homeless the shelters are called.

Federal dollars are competitive. There is a problem with working with a lot of agencies collaboratively because no agency has that much to give.

Cardozo University Re-Entry Conference and Just Leadership (Columbia, NYC)

Perpetual Punishment; The impact of incarceration and criminal records post-incarceration. There is a growing understanding about 'collateral consequences' and 'perpetual punishment' in terms of how contact with criminal justice system triggers consequences that extend far beyond the fact of imprisonment or conviction. There is optimism about the *direction* of change in this area; the internationally recognised campaigns around banning the box, the pardoning of hundreds of people imprisoned under the war on drugs, and an increased recognition of the impact of mass incarceration. People are talking about this in a way that people have not talked about this before. Criminal justice reform is one of the few areas where there is bipartisan support. Even Clinton has said that 'we went too far.' The next step is around owning responsibility for what change should look like, and an acknowledgement that this is not just about a small subset of the population. The passage of 2nd Chance Act was significant. There was a shift because a lot states simply couldn't keep up in terms of building new prisons. There were a lot more conservative reasons supporting the shift; fiscal reasons primarily and also in terms of faith communities. A lot of negotiating has happened at the level of congress. The situation right now is both tremendously hopeful and tremendously depressing.

Following on from the disaster of the mass incarceration of 90's (where no sentence was long enough, and it wasn't possible to lock enough people up!). It is not possible to solve social problems in criminal justice settings. Mass policing and mass incarceration have been a failure. There is now research into million dollar blocks; those geographic regions where the government is spending more money on incarceration than anything else. It has become such a default. The United States abandoned the concept of rehabilitation in favour of retribution. There are countless barriers to people's capacity to re-engage post-release. Barriers in terms of keeping work and securing public benefits; barriers to student loans and housing. It is entirely unsurprising people have such a high risk of re-offending. Too many people remain utterly isolated when they are released. People come back to the communities from which they have been taken.

Under federal law, people who have been convicted of a federal offence can't work in a health facility with any kind of federal funding. Health care covers about 14% of the economy which means this exclusion is significant. Criminal records are notoriously inaccurate. 48-50% of the time they are not accurate.

Bronx defenders does a lot of work around housing. There are state and federal laws around arrests and convictions that act as barriers to housing, and which enable eviction on the basis of criminal records. People with criminal records are held to a higher standard of conduct than rich white people. Housing is considered to be a privilege not a right. And if you have a conviction you are seen as unworthy of housing. Housing, benefits and jobs are as important as liberty. 85% of people in housing courts are un-represented. Families can be evicted on the suspicion of drug use

6 million people in the US are denied the right to vote because of their criminal records. There are four states in the United States where you lose your right to vote for the rest of your life on the basis of your conviction. In Florida alone, 1 million people are denied the right to vote for life. 12 states allow people to vote on probation and parole. 5 states allow people on probation but not on parole. 2 mill African American men denied the right to vote by state law
The system is not broken. The system is doing exactly what it is intending to do; and that is oppress a particular demographic.

Education: there is frequently a question of whether or not people with criminal justice system involvement are worthy of investment. There are multiple projects at John Jay which are about increasing access and opportunity to education. There is a 'prison to college' pipeline which facilitates a number of educational initiatives including access to credit bearing programs in various prisons. Education is able to begin while someone is incarcerated. If they maintain a C average they will be guaranteed a place in City University of New York. Part of the project is about creating communities of support

"We are asking people to be heroic when they re-enter. We need to be heroic in the way we support re-entry"

"If we're going to build real re-entry programs we need to understand that re-entry is not linear. If you listen to people who are coming out of prison you will find they have thoughts about getting out. They will have a critical analysis of what didn't work for them and what did work for them. People want to get it together. But it's the system stupid".

"Change; It is always a story about another human being. Another human being who reached out"

"The things that work are the things that governments don't pay for. The glue. The ability to plant the seed."

"The best re-entry is not to lock people up in the first place. We know how to divert people successfully. White skin and wealth has been the best diversion treatment"

"Re-entry is not just about evidence based practices. It is not just about navigating statutory or practical barriers. Re-entry is about repairing harm caused by the criminal justice system. At sentencing we must ask our judges 'and then what'"

Centre for Court Innovation (Harlem, NYC)

The Centre for Court Innovation started out as the research and development arm of the court system. Over time started earning the trust of government and legal partners. Service and program delivery began to become a core part of the centre.

CCI are considered the best implementers of the programs. This is partly about trying to live the values that drive the program; that is dignity and respect. Law enforcement partners are treated with dignity and respect also. They have been approached in an overt advocacy or lobbying fashion. The role of the CCI has been to nudge the court system gently. A safe space has been created for people to look at what they are doing and be able to say 'we don't know if we're doing this the right way- so let's be curious about this together'. The work started with a very small team- and the work started really trying to cultivate the relationship with parole.

At the justice centre it is possible to change the trajectories of people on release. People on release are assigned one of four specialist parole officers as well as social workers. The Parole officers get to do the job of parole. The centre's staff get to be the case-managers/social workers and people who assist. This works very well-because there is trust in the roles. At its essence it is just helpful having more hands. There is kind of a symbiotic relationship with the parole officers and the social workers. It is very clear cut. There is shared information and nothing that one party doesn't have access to. Case managers are very up-front with clients. But all are working to divert people from returning to prison. The centre also employs peer advocates; people who have themselves experienced re-entry to provide additional support to people on release.

People at high risk of re-offending are referred to the program. This includes a lot of young adults with gun offences or robbery offences as well as people who have been in the system for a long time. They also have to be returning to Harlem. 4 specialist parole officers work with them alongside specialist social workers and from the outset there is a collaborative approach to brainstorming the best programs. The service provided really basic support around getting identification and access to Medicaid. Sometimes things that can hold people back and that can take a year, the centre is able to offer quickly. There is a formal judge involved in the process of determining if people return to prison at the re-entry court. The power of the judge is really about procedural justice rather than actually having judicial powers. But it is also significant for the person going through the program. They meet with the judge within two weeks of release and the judge is able to check progress and check on the condition of parole and oversee the case-plan. The re-entry court was funded for about six years through the Second Chance Act. The outcomes of the program have been phenomenal. However the project hasn't been awarded another grant. When research was conducted to look at the outcomes between people who went through the re-entry court at Harlem and people on regular parole they found: 22% decrease in overall convictions, 60% reduction in felony convictions, 45% reduction in technical violations.



Centre for Council of State Government Justice Centre (NYC)

Works closely with the federal government to protect their investments in re-entry programs. Responsible for administering and evaluating multiple programs, and mentoring particular programs and grants. Currently oversee 213 active grants and work continuously with federal government around what is working

Initially the conversation in this space was about 'do inmates deserve

rehabilitation programs'. Re-entry programs are in many ways less emotive. The way this space has evolved is however a remarkable political story. George Bush introduced the Second Chance Act. There was an acknowledgement that there was a need to invest in re-entry and this acknowledgement became bipartisan.

There is now an assumption that most self-respecting prison administrators would focus on re-entry- but even 15 years ago that wasn't the case. There used to be a lot programs funded that had no evidence base. That is also shifting. People are now asking questions with regard to how meaningful programs might be; although therapy and Shakespeare are okay do they actually reduce recidivism?

Sustainability is difficult. Government can't keep funding programs, so demonstration programs tend to be funded. The grants have different purposes but really it is about trying to assist organisations to get more effective.

Mentoring programs are a good example. There is no strong evidence base for providing mentoring services for adults. It 'feels' right and there's lots of anecdotal evidence, but they haven't been substantially evaluated. The Centre works with organisations around the lack of evidence and research and looks at how that might be navigated in the future.

Until recently sentencing was separated from re-entry. Justice re-investment allows us to look at the overlap. Sentencing is much more controversial than prisoner re-entry. It is the fruit at the top of the tree. The low hanging fruit is in diversion and sentence modification. It is easier to do diversion than it is to change sentencing. Changing individual behaviour is much more difficult. Re-entry is a small piece of a giant piece of a big puzzle. Policing and the laws and how we legislate crime and how we deal with the prison industrial complex all need to be resolved. But re-entry is a critical piece in all of this. For the community providers working with high risk offenders is a challenging concept. A lot of services are not set up to do business like this, and there has been reticence. Programs that offer cognitive behavioural programs are able to position themselves or align themselves more coherently with probation departments and ideally maximize the effectiveness of some core correctional practices in terms of improving behaviour.

However on the outside, employment is still a key barrier on the outside. There is a need to be guided by risk and need. But work is a great leverage for people to participate in other programming. People can work but they also need to attend programs. In prison, advantage should be taken of the time allowed in the correctional setting and the maximum 'dosage' of cognitive behavioural programming can be given. But when in the community employment and family are both very big. Employment is essential. It is key to the political equation- we would not be able to have the bipartisan consensus where this was not central. Centering programs on employment gives us leverage to get some other programs. During the process of trying to find employment- here are the are things that need to be undertaken in order to achieve job-readiness.

Fortune Society (Long Island NY)

A large percentage of people working at Fortune, are themselves people who have done time. Clients come in and they see someone they ran the streets with or did time with. Or someone they heard about them on the streets. And they see the person as a productive member

“When I was in the street I was a terror. People say if this crazy no-good-fool can make it, I know that I can”

This means there is a form of silent role-modeling. The Senior Vice President at Fortune Society is someone who did time. Formerly incarcerated individuals are part of the fabric of the organisation. And then they mix with people who have never done time in their life. It becomes a min-community. A world within a world. The Fortune Society doesn't exclude on the basis of complexity.

“You would have to walk through the door with a bloody axe in your hand to be excluded from the services here. People end up being discharged dis-favourably for some breaches of the rules, but if they show a willingness to come back they will be able to do this. If someone is excluded from attending the building, we can meet with in parks. We would never discard someone if they wanted to work on themselves”

The Fortune Society offers a one-stop- model that ensures that the treatment of the individual post-release will stay continuous.

Fortune plays a very intricate role politically. It is okay to advocate and protest, but it is a lot better when you are sitting at the table with the decision makers

80-90% of Fortune is funded through government. Most of it is coming through Federal- Criminal Justice Department of Probation but with a range of probation, DOE, OASIS and city grants as well.

The housing situation in NYC is dire. The key for someone climbing out of the criminal justice system is stabilization. Without stable housing this is very difficult. Housing is leased from fortune. Rent is 30% of the clients' salary regardless of what that is. Rent subsidies are provided through the Housing Urban Development fund

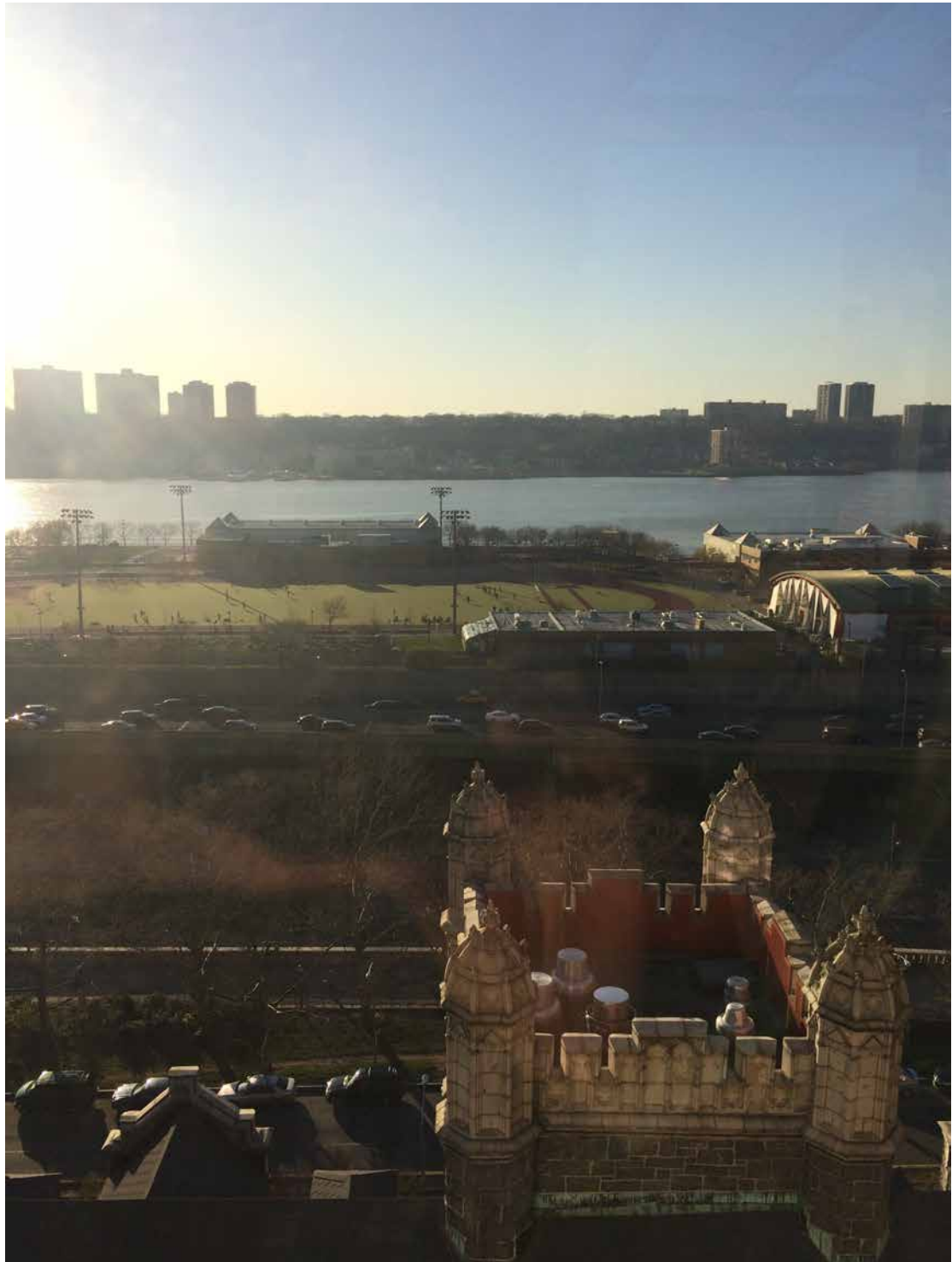
If in City gaol, on the day of release people are provided with a metro card. If in a state facility there is the need for people to have an approved address for parole. If there is no approved address then people are released into the NYC shelter system. If that person is not in the shelter at the time of bed check than parole will be revoked.

In NYC there is incredibly limited options for people convicted of sex offences. In NYC it is not permitted to live within 1000 feet of a school, For people in this situation with nowhere to go, often people are put in a shelter on Wards island. There are plenty of people who live long-term in the homeless shelters on Wards Island.

“In 1989- when I went in I decided I needed to do some self evaluating. I would act like an animal. I assumed that was what people wanted me to believe. Every time I used drugs I wound up in prison. I didn’t use drugs from 1991 until 2003. And then bang! Out of nowhere. It is about the way you think. Your own moral compass- allows you to engage or walk away. One issue for me was my psychopathic thinking. My sense of entitlement”

Fortune Society (Harlem, NYC)

Fortune Society in Harlem is a transitional residence for formerly incarcerated people. There are 61 beds and no exclusion criteria. Will work with anyone who is willing to work. People are assessed on the basis of need. The academy isn't intended as a place for people just to live. The main requirement is that people are willing and ready to work (on yourself). There is a program that comes first (and housing is the second priority). All residents have to go to morning and afternoon meetings, and life skills and financial classes. There is moral recognition therapy also. People need to seek out their benefits, and everybody pays rent. If a person is using drugs they will be assisted into rehab. The house is sober. And there are not to be relationships within the house.



Many of the people that come in here have been raised in the street. They were not given the tools they needed or the space they needed to work out their problems. Here people learn how to do this. They learn how to negotiate with room-mates.

People can stay at the academy for up to 24 months. The average length of stay is a little over a year. The average age of people who come here is 48. The length of stay in the transitional phase is a little under a year. There are apartments scattered all over the city. Fortune holds the lease, and then sublets the

apartments to the people on release. There is case-management attached to those properties. An outreach model is used. In addition to those, there are 60 supported units in Castle Gardens for people with mental illness and cognitive impairment. There really is a commitment to working with people for as long as they require.

NeON Arts, Carnegie Hall (NYC)

Carnegie Hall started working in justice settings 7 or 8 years ago. They were focused on the question of what arts and music can mean inside prisons. Arts in prisons used to be a big thing but all the funding was cut. Carnegie started doing a lot of work on Rikers Island as well as work in Juvenile Detention pre-sentencing. When Carnegie was starting up the project a lot of time was spent fine-tuning where the biggest impact might be made. A decision was made to focus on the transition piece; what was required to stay out of the system.

In Juvenile systems this means working with people in transition. There is a school to prison pipeline that Carnegie were interested in disrupting. If people get in trouble in school, this can result in court. In NYC you can be tried as an adult at the age of 16. Carnegie started exploring what kinds of things could be used as a bridge for young people. In the end, a very active project, where young people create music with professional artists, and perform it in as public a concert as possible. For instance in the first year there was a concert in a detention facility. The need to form relationships with people inside, and then embed a whole range of program elements into the one program. In Juvenile settings for instance, young people take a field trip to the Door (so they have some sense of what exists on the outside). People get course credit towards high school graduation for participation in programs.

There are now a number of 'pathways to Carnegie Hall.' The building has been revamped and there is now 60,000 square feet of space upstairs. There is now an open studio and afterschool programs that at risk kids can attend. The programs go for a year, and right now 10% of the kids that attend come from court involved channels. It is the ambition of the project to increase that to 50%.

NeOn arts a city wide project that are run with the Department of Probation Projects are open to clients and community members. Projects are selected by a group of community stake-holders. Key questions that determine selection about how the experience of an arts program ties to future employment. What are the opportunities in the arts? What are the capital investments in each NeOn where sustained projects can happen? Each project has three key objectives; the first is around providing services for clients, the second is about networking, and the third is about community engagement

Musical Connections is a project that has a roster of about 60 artists. Many have been with the program since the start. It is clear that we are not music therapists. Everything is framed in terms of human skills. We provide some professional development for the musicians in terms of trauma informed practice. They are paid at the professional New York teaching rate

At Sing Sing prison, the average sentence is for 10 years. The arts project works with about 30-40 men inside who learn songs and playing instruments. Some of the men have been with the program for 7 years. Part of the work is about looking at planning for transition. How might people be supported when they return? What is the responsibility and commitment of Carnegie? How is it possible to ensure that the program doesn't over-promise and under-deliver?

As part of this, digital learning portfolios have been created which enables everybody who has participated on the program to create an online presence via a website. When the men get out of prison they can access all the things they have accomplished. There are other mechanisms to connect people post-release. There is a monthly open jam that was initiated by someone who had been released from Sing Sin. There have professional get-togethers where people who have participated on the program are introduced to each other after they have been released. Some of the songs that were written on the project at Sing Sing were brought into public performances.

There are however some considerable difficulties in attempting to prove the 'evidence base' of the arts work. There is a need to build a tool that looks at outcomes and impact that is not just about recidivism. Partnering with larger organisations and seeing how partnerships with large cultural organisations pan out can be really powerful in bringing people together

Delancey St Foundation (Brewster NY)

"A lot of addicts stay so stuck on the past. Or some pipe dream in the future. It's okay to have dreams and goals. But this program is about being where you are at. At Delancey Street you learn how to live life through baby steps. Every small accomplishment is celebrated. We make a big deal out of everything. Just for these guys to stay here is an accomplishment. It really feels like wholesome family. The simple message is "to each one teach one. Everyone's always learning from somebody else"

"To get in, you just have to write a letter asking for help. Anyone can do that You can even do it before you go to prison. A lot of the time it is people who just say "I'm tired of living this way". We do house coverage and answer the phones 24/7. The only requirement is that you want to change your life There is exclusion for people who have been convicted of sex offences But aside from that if you want to change you are welcome."

"It is a family type setting. It is really about people learning how to be decent again. Learning how to be cordial, how to get up every day and go to work. If a guy is coming on to the program just because he doesn't want to go to prison we ask him to be honest about it. We let them know that it is a two year commitment. When people balk at that, we usually ask them, well what have you done with the last two years of your life?"

"At the interview they get to wrap their head around the rules of the service. We explain if you're involved in a relationship you're not going to see her in

18 months. You're able to walk away. If you have kids you can't see your kids for a year. It is about change. Real change. You can't drag your kids through all your own mess. And then slowly you start integrating."

"At the point of interview, we want to know if they can talk about who they are. Can they put a sentence together? And are they're going to have some energy to bring? At interview and intake we start looking at all the issues in terms of child support, probation and parole, legal. We make sure that's all taken care of. Then they go down to the warehouse, they get stripped of all their clothes and they get given new clothes. They start out working on maintenance. They start as soon as intake is finished. You're only the new guy until the next new guy comes. Everyone here is responsible for something and someone."



"Everyone expects things to move fast. For their kids to forgive them after 90 days. For their wives to take them back. But No- you've just crushed them for ten years. You have to earn all that back. We should prove to them that we've changed. And that takes time. It takes time to wash the past off. To learn how to be cordial and polite. We get to practice. We call it an 'as if' because we don't necessarily want to nice. But if you act as if you want to be nice, eventually you almost trick yourself into it. Anyway, you've got to have a relationship with yourself before you can mend relationships with your family."

"We have food services, construction plants, retail, maintenance. The every day chores of the house are turned into 'departments'. However the moving

company is what pays our bills. We also sell Christmas trees 30 days of the year. Each of the Delancey Streets run different projects. If you can become teachable you can learn everything."

"When people leave there is a 90 day 'work-out' process. This is where people are establishing their jobs on the outside, figuring out how where they're going to live. Graduating. We encourage people to save money for transition".

"Most residents stay three years. When it's time to go they get scared There are some that stay longer. I've got 8 guys that are working hard and preparing for the outside now. We go into the prisons and talk about Delancey St. We interview people on release. People sometimes come here from jail as an alternative to sentencing. Court systems work differently in different states, but parole officers often come here"

"People do mess up. But people come to make mistakes here in a safe environment. They forget how much they want to change. When they've had a few good meals. They go back to being who they were. We can usually see it before it happens. We see them winding up for the move. The only things that people get kicked out for are drugs and violence."

"If you mess up, you have to do yard work, do dishes. If you've expressed yourself a little too intensely you might be held accountable. On the floor (in the residence you need to be cordial). You have to learn accountability. There are no handcuffs here. You have learn how to say "I did this. I'll take responsibility"

"It doesn't really get any lower than asking a complete stranger how to live. It doesn't get any worse than that. The only place to go is up from there."

"When the guys interviewed me for intake I actually knew them from St Quentin. I knew if they could do it, I could do it. You actually believe that you're just a drug addict and you're just a guy who is going to spend your life in prison. It is that thing of playing the hand you're dealt. But we're bright. And here there is peer pressure to build lives instead of destroy lives. We're the opposite of a gang. We want people to be back with their loved ones. We want them to be out of prison. Everybody deserves help. We aren't qualified to work with sex offenders, and we're also not able to take people who light fires (arsonists). Anything else doesn't matter"

"Zero gang tolerance is allowed here. Everybody should be able to feel safe and comfortable here. There are no special arrangements in terms of skin colour or sleeping arrangements. We let them know that immediately"

"Thirty years ago (the community) didn't want us there. They threw rocks at us. Now we have keys to their houses (via the removal business). We don't smoke. We don't drink. We're very professional. We don't have enough people to meet demand at the moment. But we don't want to turn it into an industry.

We want to retain our sense of community. We are in the top five removal companies in the area. We are also deeply involved in all aspects of community. Retail shows. Spelling bees. Foodbanks. Soup kitchens. Talk at high schools. We're neighbours."

"We're not 'those guys on the top of the hill'. We're a part of the historical society. We're just involved in whatever. It's good for the guys to give back. It's nice to be nice. It's nice to give."

"People find waiting to fix the relationships the hardest thing. They often feel that they need to be fixed immediately. My mentor will tell me that you're here to develop character. Sometimes you fight the new with the things that you really believe in. It's hard to accept- for instance that all the things you believed might not be right. Surrender is not to quit- it's just to join"



"Everything starts slowly. If you are trying to re-establish your relationship or start dating, then first you invite her over here for lunch or dinner, and you hang out in your home. Just to see how it goes. Our job is to keep people safe and focused. These things are taken in a very old-fashioned and slow way. People need to learn how to have a relationship. Everything is slow here"

"There are a couple of groups at night- we don't really call it a group. We call it a game. On the floor (in the main residence) you're not to argue"

But when you're in the game you're in the game. It's where you get to let off steam, release the pressure valve a little. Everyone likes to shout at their boss. Things like; who do you think you are- you can't talk to me like that So there'll be a heated argument and we'll all yell at each other We get into it- it's a two hour game. There are rules though, you can't talk about anyone's sexual preference, and you can't talk about how people look (if they're skinny or fat). You can just let off steam about their behaviours and how they're acting. "

"Everybody is forced to be a boss here. To make decisions and learn from mistakes. Jobs change in quarters. You learn how to be able to work with different people. You need to find a different way for people to be able to work with you"

"In here, for once your word actually means something. For the first time people trust you. I don't think there is anything you could give me that would make me break that trust.. Even my own blood family wouldn't trust me with a dime. Delancey St has given me the opportunity to be a human being again"

"We all come in here rough and she (Mimi) allows us to get polished in a very slow way. It is about developing character and developing loyalty. People here have a sense of ownership and responsibility."

"We celebrate every religious holiday. We go on picnics. We go camping. We go up to Canada. People go and learn how to fun. We teach guys how to pull their pants up. We teach them how to stay clean shaved. Why would you play offensive music that promotes drug and alcohol use or be offensive towards women?"

"Mimi is the driving force and she won't take any of it. She knows us. She believes in us. When someone believes in you want to make it happen. No-one else is giving you that chance. Government involvement? I think they're dying to come in- but if they did that they would want to tell us what to do."

NACRO (London)

NACRO is a large reintegration service in London, and focuses on five key areas of service delivery; education (with a focus on 16-19 year olds), housing, employment, justice and health. They offer a resettlement advice line as well as an employers help line. They are also well known for their practice based research, advocacy and policy work. While they are not a "pressure group" they provide policy and research responses. They respond to parliamentary inquiries and government consultations.

There is an attempt to ensure that whatever is happening on the ground is evidence based. The research team is closely aligned with the service delivery team. Where there are barriers for people from a political and policy point of view, then NACRO attempt to facilitate a response to that on the ground. The work of the services is connected deeply with the research work. The ambition

with the research branch now is to really connect the voices of the people coming out of prison to these projects. The experience of service users need to be central to both the research itself, and the decisions with regard to what is 'important' to research.

The political environment can be complex. There are barriers for progression that are specifically about limiting the ability of charities to lobby and advocate or put pressure on government. This means for organisations like NACRO there needs to be care taken around decision making processes. Community sector organisations can not be seen to be criticising our funders. But there is still a need to speak if there is something to be said that is based on the expertise of the sector. But there is a need to strike a balance.

NACRO now works with all ages, and connects with people at all stages of the criminal justice system (from first point of contact with police). They also have multiple partners (including research partners) and work utilising a range of different models. The youth services projects (in partnership with two universities) is looking at different models of resettlement for young people between 10 and 25. The alcohol and other drug projects utilise different approaches to provide support and activities. The employment projects look at the structural issues for people with criminal records and provide a range of resettlement advice to employers and to people exiting custody that are related to people's criminal records. It is about both removing systemic barriers, and working with individuals about how to present in the best light. The health program works using a payment by results model.

There are many things that NACRO is not asked to measure. It is sometimes easier to think of output KPI's than outcome KPI's. Input measures tend to be about staffing and incidences and demonstrating value for money. However sometimes the more important things to measure are actually about jobs and stable homes and whether or not getting those things assists to reduce re-offending.

"We know what doesn't work is leaving custody without a stable home"

Revolving Doors (London)

Revolving doors no longer delivers services, but has a long history of service delivery experience. The focus for Revolving Doors are working and advocating for people with multiple and complex needs who are in a 'revolving door' type situation. The purpose of the projects has been to work with people who experience chronic exclusion. The underlying theoretical base for a lot of the advocacy around a persistent and consistent approach is attachment theory. The way in which workers relate with clients is significant. Revolving doors stopped delivering services directly and began working with partners to help them implement approaches that would work for this group. These partners include, prisons, police, probation and housing. There is a need to think about how to provide continuity of care, and a through-the-gate model it is difficult to prove the evidence in this space.

Revolving Doors is quite focused on how whole systems can be reformed. NHS has introduced a program called Liaison and Diversion. If someone is brought into police station with a mental health problem, they are then referred to specialist support (specialist teams in police and courts). The idea with this model is getting people into support before they go to prison.

There is the need in this area to look at the person first, and what the person considers to be the thing that would help them. There is quite a lot of overlap between recovery journeys and desistance from crime. There was a small exploratory study with a small group of people who had experience of prison. They were very clear about the importance of continuity, and receiving help with the basics (housing, benefits on release).

Revolving Doors has also been focused on people with short term sentences. The high levels of social exclusion for this group, and the high probability that they will return to prison.

There is both enormous competition and collaboration in the sector. Transforming Rehabilitation has changed the landscape. Revolving Doors don't have a formal position on *who* should deliver services, but are focused instead on how they deliver them.

Recidivism is a crude measure of success. It is much more useful to think instead of recovery and desistance journeys. Revolving Doors tends to view itself as a 'critical friend' rather than a campaign body and are officially neutral about who should provide services.

The key things in terms of people staying out of prison; in the short term it is about sorting out the basics first (money and housing). In the long-term there needs to be consideration given to the stigma against ex-offenders; how do people transition to that next stage of getting a job? How are social barriers broken down? There is a need to link in to things like building positive family relationships and finding a role in society. People talk about wanting to live a life that is 'normal'.

Koestler Trust (London)

The Koestler Trust has been operating arts based programs for people in prison and on release since 1962. It is one of the best known arts organisations in the UK, and is particularly well known for the prisoner art competition.

Since 2007 the trust has engaged practicing artists and writers (with at least 5 years of professionalism in whatever their area is) and trains them to work with people on release. People on release from prison who have an enthusiasm for the arts and want to continue practicing art on release are matched to artists on the outside. Alumni of the mentoring scheme have exhibited. The mentoring occurs over a 12 month period, meeting every 4-6 weeks for a couple of hours and sometimes for longer, and often there is communication in between. Often the meetings will happen in galleries, a way to get people plugged in to the art

scene and beginning to understand that there is a community out there for them. The relationship ideally commences prior to release.



There is sensitivity at the trust with regard to what is and isn't publicly acceptable. Quite a lot of thought goes into the publicity. If someone has been badly effected by a crime, there needs to be sensitivity about advertising and showcasing work by offenders. There is very rarely focused on attention on specific artists for this reason. 25% of all the funds raised via the art exhibitions goes to victims support funds. Koestler has also worked closely with victims groups, and in one case a victims group curated the exhibition.

Different ways of curating are approached each year. When an artwork is selected Koestler sends invites to the friends and families of the artist. Family member who get invited can be supported to travel to the exhibition (via financial assistance).

Irene Taylor Trust (London)

The Irene Taylor Trust has been operating music programs in and out of prisons for over 21 years. Arts in prisons is complicated because it doesn't have the concrete quantitative evidence that people would like. It is hard to link it directly to whether or not it stops people from re-offending. But it does provide that important middle ground from which you can build something; self-esteem,

Education is struggling generally. In the 80's and 90' arts flourished. However arts is not now seen to be something worthy of investment. It is seen as a hobby rather than a job, or linked to education. However the skills that it gives you

when you work together to create something is all the stuff that you need on a day-to-day basis when you turn up to work on time

Over the last 4 or 5 years, the Irene Taylor Trust have also been working out in challenging circumstances. It is a struggle to keep it afloat financially. Musicians are paid at musicians rates. Prisons contribute for the programs. The music programs inside prison operate well because of the individual relationships that exist with people inside prison. Music offers a relief from imprisonment. It is a group activity that by stealth teaches you on a daily basis what you need in your life. Listening, turning up on time, being part of a group. Not chucking a mental and expecting to get away with it. Music programs breathe life into prisons. They have a bigger impact than just on the participants. When you do something that people love, and that taps into their creativity it changes the way people live.

The Irene Taylor Trust runs either intensive 5 days projects or Musicians in residence. Musicians in residence to continue the work over the course of a longer period of time. During the intensives, 3 musicians go in to the prisons and take all own equipment and work with a maximum of 10 people. There is always a mix of experienced musicians with non-players. It is about relationship building and about building trust. The participants very quickly invest in the project. The compositions and songs are performed to fellow prisoners, and when possible to visitors also.

Since 2012 the Irene Taylor Trust has been funded to provide 'Sounding out' which offers post-release support. Lottery money was used to set up 3 new musicians in residence in 3 prisons that released people into London.

Dove Gate Therapeutic Unit (Uttoxeter)

Dove Gate Therapeutic Unit is a therapeutic community in a Serco run facility which works with people with multiple and complex needs. People with cognitive impairment are able to attend the unit. Participants in the unit are required to participate in intensive groups, many of which involve looking in great depth at the causes of offending, including trauma. The relationship between staff and prisoners is fundamental to the success of this unit. Both officers and welfare staff and people in prison are treated with enormous respect. The physical environment is designed in such a way as to provide places of calm and peace (via beautiful outdoors areas) and also through the focused attention to art and music inside the classroom areas.

Vox Liminis/Unbound (Glasgow)

Vox Liminis is a music based program working with prisoners, people who have been released from prison, and more recently with their families. It is focused on building a community of songwriters and musicians and although it has only been running for 2 ½ years it has been remarkably successful.

There are now multiple programs that are connected. The program is unique in that it's focus is not just focusing on the individual but also focusing on family and the wider community as well as the institutions that people are in contact

with. The program acknowledges the impact of public attitudes and social ideas about imprisonment. There was a desire to create an art project that didn't just focus on the individual. The set up stage involved getting buy in from a couple of key players (including the Innovation and Research Institute – Social Services), and the buy in and interest from the Scottish Centre for Criminal Justice. Some small grants enabled the project to become established, and a couple of projects to be trialed in some prisons.



The In Tune project is the most straight forward service delivery project Vox provides. This is a family music making project. Dads with kids under the age of 8 or 9 and their whole families come together and make music together over about 8-10 sessions. This project is also increasingly seeing prison officers as being very supportive.

Distant Voices is the songwriting project that operates inside the prisons, but also incorporates performances outside of the prisons. The groups include prison officers, prisoners and usually two paid musicians. Everybody is in a vulnerable position, because that is the nature of songwriting. The musicians are both highly creative and skilled artistically but also very good at running song writing workshops.

KIN- is a new project which runs in partnership with Families Outside. This project works with young people who have experience of family imprisonment.

Unbound is the weekly meeting which occurs in the community. It is where people who have been in some way involved in VOX come together to make music. It is not a service for former prisoners. It is a community. It is really about

building a community and making a social movement. Understanding that people who on paper are not like you, are in fact a little bit like you.

“So much about what happens in criminal justice is about fixing people and not about building relationships”

Positive Prisons/Positive Futures (Glasgow)

Positive Prisons/Positive Futures is an organisation made up of people who have lived experience of imprisonment. It performs a wide array of advocacy roles, and also provides direct support in the form of mentoring. A huge amount of energy went into convincing people from the prison service of the value of a service run by prisoners and for prisoners. After engaging with key players via a range of workshops that were facilitated by social workers and academics but that involved prison administrators and formerly incarcerated people, momentum was gained. In 2012 charitable registration status was received.

“When I was in prison I re-engaged with education; through the prison library- because I could read and write. I worked in every part of Edinburgh prison. My eyes were opened to the extent of the humanity inside the prison. I had the chance to engage with yoga and meditation. I read the art of happiness. It stripped away the layers of shit in my head. It was good to be aware of the fact I was breathing. I committed myself to being helpful.”

The organisation has regular access to policy makers, and multiple opportunities to become involved in the development of policy. There is a growing appreciation of the importance of having authentic voices. The organisation also goes and visits a lot of people in prison. It connects with individuals either one on one or in small groups. There is no formalised structure. People are assisted in a range of different ways. Advice and guidance is offered, and assistance (for instance with filling out complaint forms) is offered.

The level of engagement between people in prison and former prisoners is quite different. If anyone who was a prisoner goes back to speak with someone who is in prison, there is an understanding that the experience is something that you can't learn. There is an element of mutual respect which allows a level of discussion.

The organisation is neat and agile. It is able to be flexible and adapt to need. It aims to influence how people in prison are treated and influence how their choices might be improved on the outside. There was an advocacy campaign run around the experience of prisoners who were released on a Friday, and the (negative) difference this made in terms of reintegration. This has recently changed so that governors are able to have flexibility around the day of release. There has also been an advocacy campaign in conjunction with the Royal Bank of Scotland to enable people to open bank accounts.

“The long term ambition is for us to put ourselves out of business”

Faith in Through-care

Faith in Through-care provides services and support to people leaving prison. It is part of Scotland's Faith in Community raft of services. Faith in Throughcare uses a volunteer and mentoring model to work with people in some of the most disadvantaged areas of Scotland. The struggles that people coming out of prison face, and the limited support so many people received was the impetus for the project. There was a need for more focused specialist interventions. The through-care part of the service has been running for close to six years. Postcodes were identified in North Glasgow that had high numbers of people returning to them from prison. Volunteers are a mix of people who have come out of prison and are in recovery, people from the local community and students/retirees. There is real acknowledgement of the importance of getting the right mix. When the balance is out of kilter things do not run as well. People respond very well to someone who has 'walked the walk'. It is usually the case that 3 visits will be carried out prior to release.

If people continue to try, the service will continue to work with them. The project has also delved into community development. This wasn't part of the plan! It was envisaged that other organisations would do this. But the fragility of the sector and the faith based sector especially means that the service has morphed from helping to facilitate to actually run community development.

Wherever possible the person is picked up from the prison gates, taken to the house, benefits are sorted out, doctors appointments are organised, and practical things are taken care of. Assistance is also given to people with regard to finding accommodation, finding places to go, projects to be part of, or employment to take up.

SACRO (Glasgow)

SACRO has been providing a range of reintegration and support services to people in Scotland for over 30 years. The focus of many of the projects is on transition, although there are multiple specific services.

For instance there are some services that work specifically with women. Some services deal specifically with veterans. There are special programs for people who have committed particular types of crime (for instance honour based crimes).

Key issues for people on release are the absence of affordable housing. SACRO manages 40 houses and flats for people leaving prison. There are also units that are designed for registered sex-offenders. This project is a collaborative partnership with multiple key partners. SACRO are responsible for providing accommodation base and support. A range of transitional issues are also addressed.



Many of the services are about trying to break cycles of offending. If that is the environment someone has been brought up in, and that is all they have known, it can be challenging to break that train of thought and break that normality. The purpose of many of the projects is to offer people a different normality. Long term support is offered, as is pre-release engagement.

SACRO is a national organisation- that operates out of Edinburgh. Over 200 people working across the country

If someone is convicted of less serious crimes, as an alternative to prison they can be put on a community payback order. SACRO manages this scheme with around 40-45 clients each week.

The organisation takes all referrals, but there are some rare instances when SACRO would exclude. In these instances it is down to the level of risk. There is really clear evidence that intervention at the right level works. There has been a lot of work within the violence reduction unit in Scotland. Their work looks at the causal factors in terms of a reduction in recidivism. A lot of the arguments are that it is about health, family and social issues. Offending is starting to be framed as a health problem (rather than a police or criminal justice issue). It requires political intervention and political backing to shift focus though. There is no pressure put on SACRO with regard to recidivism. Although they are asked to report on it, no targets are set with regard to this. The question of what success looks like is complex. Recidivism is a blunt measure.

SACRO works with people to the point that they feel stable and like moving on. This is usually one or two years. Creating a structure is really important.

Why do people go back? People make bad decisions. Sometimes it is down to luck and circumstances. Often it is about how a person approaches it before they get released. If you can give someone a break and assist in their process. And show them a different mindset and different avenue, that can make a difference. A lot of it is to do with confidence. And loneliness. Loneliness is one of the causal factors in terms of why people migrate back to what they know.