



The Scottish  
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Riaghaltas na h-Alba

# Evaluation of the Community Reintegration Project

Crime and Justice



social  
research

# **EVALUATION OF THE COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION PROJECT**

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Scottish Government Social Research  
2014

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The researchers would like to thank all those who contributed to or assisted with this evaluation of the Community Reintegration Project. First and foremost we would like to thank all those who took part in an interview: Scottish Prison Service staff, criminal justice social work staff, court staff, staff at different community agencies and individual CRP participants in each of the CRP pilot areas. We are grateful to all of them for sharing their views and experiences with the research team. We would also like to thank all those who assisted us in setting up interviews in each prison or local authority area, and who helped our fieldwork visits run smoothly.

Thanks are also due to David Gatherum, Sacha Rawlence and Lisa Taylor at the Scottish Government/Scottish Prison Service who oversaw the evaluation and provided support and assistance throughout the duration of the project.

Finally, we should also note the input and advice of our NatCen and ScotCen colleagues, and the hard work of those who transcribed the interviews.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

- 1 Launched in March 2012, the Community Reintegration Project (CRP) formed part of the Scottish Government's wider Reducing Reoffending Programme (RRP) and focused on addressing the needs of short-term offenders (i.e. those serving between six months and less than four years). The CRP represented an attempt to increase the provision and take-up of throughcare services for short-term offenders in Scotland. Specifically, it involved the piloting of a single business process for the effective and tailored needs screening of short-term offenders, the provision of appropriate services and support whilst in prison, referral to the relevant community criminal justice social work (CJSW) team, and continuing support on transition to the community. Key partners in the CRP process were the Scottish Government, Scottish Prison Service (SPS), the Association of Directors of Social Work (ADSW) and the Scottish Court Service (SCS).
- 2 The CRP was launched in March 2012 for an initial 12 month pilot period. It was then extended for a further 12 months, with additional project management input from the Scottish Government and SPS.
- 3 The pilot focused on: male offenders with home addresses in the City of Dundee serving short-term sentences (six months to less than four years) in HMP Perth; and on female offenders with home addresses in the City of Dundee or Lanarkshire (North and South) serving short-term sentences in HMP Cornton Vale, Edinburgh or Greenock.
- 4 The main aims of the evaluation, which was carried out by ScotCen Social Research, were: first, to examine the CRP process and assess how it is working in practice; secondly, to explore the evidence that the project achieved its short and medium-term outcomes; and thirdly, to consider lessons for any future roll out of the scheme or other expansion of throughcare for short-term offenders.

### The implementation and operation of the CRP

- 5 All four sites operated a process that was recognisably part of the CRP, in that it involved structured engagement with eligible offenders through five broad stages; referral to CJSW; and an element of coordinated pre- and post-release support. But there were significant variations in how each establishment organised itself to deliver these activities and, to a lesser extent, in the character of the activities themselves. There were also some modifications to the process during the period in which the CRP was running, both locally and at the level of the project as a whole.
- 6 The total number of offenders eligible for and actually participating in the CRP was relatively small in all prisons except HMP Perth, raising questions about the scope to generalise from a pilot phase in which it was not necessarily possible to achieve the 'critical mass' needed for all relevant staff to be fully aware of (and trained in) the project and for the project to have a sufficiently

high profile to 'compete' with other services and initiatives already known to inmates.

- 7 The sharp increase in numbers identified as eligible after March 2013 suggests that not all eligible offenders were necessarily identified prior to that; the picture of throughput and attrition is, however, rendered uncertain by an incomplete set of monitoring data.
- 8 What might be considered the minimal level of meaningful engagement with the CRP – participation in a Comprehensive Screen (Stage 3) – appears to have happened in relation to around half of eligible admissions.
- 9 The monitoring data suggest a high degree of attrition beyond Stage 3, with many of the meetings due to take place not actually doing so. While there is evidence that offenders are being referred to other services, it is not clear from the monitoring data whether such referrals would have been generated in other ways in the absence of the project, or whether offenders are interacting directly with CJSW in the community.

#### **Practitioner views and experiences of the CRP process**

- 10 Practitioner views about the specifics of the CRP process were mixed. There was general support for a structured approach to needs assessment and for mechanisms for connecting offenders more effectively to external services; but there were also concerns about particular aspects of the CRP as implemented.
- 11 Prison staff generally found it helpful to have access to CJSW reports as part of the needs assessment process and the system for obtaining these now seems to be working effectively, although a considerable proportion of reports (around a third) are, however, sourced on request from CJSW offices rather than being provided automatically by SCS.
- 12 The Comprehensive Screen (at Stage 3) was generally felt to be useful but there was consensus that it should not take place too early, while offenders were still adjusting to being admitted to prison, and that new needs were perhaps more likely to be identified during Standard Reviews (at Stage 4), once a degree of trust had built up between offenders and their Personal Officer (PO).
- 13 At three of the prisons, the pre-release meeting (or an additional meeting scheduled with CJSW) was happening closer to the release date as it was felt that the original plan to hold the pre-release meeting five weeks before release might miss offender needs that emerged or changed during the subsequent period. Having representation from the relevant PO at the meeting was felt to be very valuable, though was not always possible because of shift patterns and other commitments.
- 14 While lack of offender motivation was seen as a key factor in explaining why scheduled meetings did not go ahead, there was also variation in the extent to which different prisons prioritised or monitored progress on undertaking the stages of the process.

- 15 There was significant dissatisfaction among prison staff with the CRP paperwork and procedures for information recording. The CRP forms in particular were criticised for being too dependent on 'tick boxes' and insufficiently integrated with existing electronic systems (such as PR2 and the PR2-based ICM process).
- 16 Training and support for staff in relation to the CRP was widely felt to have been inadequate. Despite the training sessions which were held in the participating establishments, some staff indicated that they had received no training, while others felt that the training they had received had lacked detail about the process or rationale for the project.

### **Evidence of organisational and staff outcomes**

- 17 There was clear support for the principle of joint working across staff from SPS, CJSW and SCS; although this was sometimes tempered by the need to avoid duplication and clearly demonstrate added value. This is likely to have pre-dated the CRP rather than be an outcome of the project; nevertheless, it does suggest that an important pre-condition for success may be in place.
- 18 The nature of the links between prison staff and CJSW influenced the way in which the CRP was delivered, with some evidence that the 'embedded' rather than 'arms-length' model offered potential advantages in terms of familiarity between SPS and CJSW staff, ease of information sharing and an increased profile for CJSW within prisons. But the embedded model, in itself, did not ensure working links between frontline staff on a case-specific basis.
- 19 On the ground, communication and coordination with external agencies appeared to be limited. Some POs gave accounts of direct dealings with external agencies, but most had what could be described as a 'hands off' approach once a referral was made.
- 20 There was evidence of generally strong links and regular communication between CJSW and other external agencies. However, awareness of the CRP itself was low and agency staff were often unaware that a referral had originated with the project.
- 21 Although the identification of offender needs was seen as a core part of the PO's role (now and in the past), there was also a clear view that the CRP's structured and staged process helped to identify needs more systematically than might otherwise have been the case. In particular, it was felt that the system reduced reliance on proactive members of staff and reduced the risk of overlooking the needs of less demanding, more reserved offenders.
- 22 Although there is little doubt that the CRP has resulted in an increase in the level of interaction with offenders pre-release, there is a significant problem of attrition across the various stages of the project. Where meetings do occur, there are also questions about the quality of interaction, with offenders not always aware of the purpose of the meeting or having made a positive decision to engage with CJSW.

23 Overall the evaluation suggests the CRP is facilitating progress towards the expected short and medium-term outcomes for organisations and staff, but that the practice of joint working could be further improved and that more effective motivation and engagement of offenders would improve needs assessment further and increase interaction relating to reintegration.

#### **Evidence of offender outcomes**

24 In general, the CRP process appears to support POs in their interaction with individual offenders and role of promoting engagement with relevant services. But some prison staff were not clear about the importance of actively promoting the CRP to offenders or felt poorly equipped to do so. As a result, the quality of staff-offender interaction around the project varied, with the result that some offenders – when presenting to CJSW – showed little awareness of the reason for their referral or motivation to engage.

25 While some prisons took positive steps to promote the project, CJSW staff sometimes viewed this as a mixed blessing, as increased numbers of referrals might also lead to an increase in individuals lacking any real motivation to engage.

26 Many of the offenders who had taken part in the CRP appeared to have a good awareness of their own needs. Although it is not possible to show that the associated referrals were a direct result of the CRP and would not have happened anyway, there were some specific accounts from offenders of how interactions around the CRP had helped them to understand or address their needs.

27 Trust was considered fundamental to the development of productive offender-practitioner relationships and, again, there were aspects of the CRP process (in particular the regular review meetings) which appear to have supported this.

28 Staff and offenders emphasised the importance of staff being able to deliver real practical benefits; and, equally, the dangers of failing to do so. The opportunity to address pressing needs (such as housing) was also a key driver of offender motivation to engage and staff were conscious of the impact of being unable to meet those needs because of external resource constraints.

29 The CRP process was also seen as providing a helpful mechanism for identifying, tapping into and supporting wider offender motivations to change – whether triggered by significant life events, circumstances or simply life stage.

30 Involvement in the CRP led to increased engagement with reintegration planning – in that a number of offenders are attending reviews and pre-release meetings during the course of their sentence that would not otherwise have happened. However, the rates of engagement and attrition suggest that there is scope to increase this level of engagement further.

31 It is less clear whether the CRP led to increased post-release engagement with services, although both offenders and staff felt that contact pre-release

made such engagement more likely once offenders returned to the community. The challenges of sustaining service involvement beyond the prison gate are greatest in relation to male offenders, and the evaluation identified a number of ways in which this might be addressed.

- 32 Across all the offender outcomes – whether short, medium or long-term – the evidence is limited and does not allow for causal attribution. However, the indication of positive impacts is in line with existing evidence on addressing recidivism. There is enough evidence of good practice and positive offender experience to suggest that there are features of the CRP which have proved helpful and that support the plausibility of the model in increasing reintegration and reducing reoffending.

### **Key contextual factors shaping the implementation, operation and outcomes of the CRP**

- 33 Three broad contextual factors shaped the implementation, outcomes and operation of the CRP. While these are not simple ‘barriers’ or ‘enablers’ that can be easily addressed or replicated, they need to be factored in to thinking about why the project has operated in the way that it has and how it might be developed in the future.
- 34 The most significant is the challenge of carving out a distinctive role and identity for the project within a ‘crowded landscape’ of overlapping and sometimes competing service provision. This makes CRP difficult to explain to SPS staff and other practitioners, and also – even more importantly – to offenders, for whom word of mouth is a critical means of learning and making decisions about service use.
- 35 An important enabling factor has been the general direction of travel within SPS, which has led to a renewed emphasis on constructive work with offenders, a recognition of the importance of partnership working ‘beyond the prison gate’ and a restatement of the importance of the PO role. While there are pockets of resistance to aspects of this shift in organisational priorities and culture, it is also clear that there is a strong basis of support – at various levels – for many of the underlying principles (and overarching objectives) of the CRP.
- 36 A further set of important contextual factors relate to the character of the local prison environments within which the CRP was implemented. The highly diverse built environment within the participating establishments greatly shaped the nature and extent of inter-agency contact, and also the opportunities for offenders and staff (from SPS and other agencies) to interact in informal and productive ways. The inevitable flux associated with offender movement within and between prisons, staff changes and flexible working patterns also posed significant challenges in terms of maintaining individual relationships and awareness and understanding of the project more generally.

### **Key lessons and implications**

- 37 The evaluation identified a number of specific lessons for potential roll-out of the process and some wider considerations about the future of voluntary throughcare more generally.

- 38 The most obvious is that a pilot intervention of this kind will always struggle to generate the critical mass necessary to establish familiarity and understanding among both staff and offenders, and effective working relationships with external partners.
- 39 Training needs to be more compelling and comprehensive than has been the case to date, particularly for staff in prisons. It needs to provide detail not only of the process but also of the underlying objectives of the project and roles of key stakeholders within it. And it needs to be ongoing, so that knowledge and awareness are not disrupted by staff turnover or absence.
- 40 While much of the attrition across the various stages of the CRP process will be a result of offender disengagement, it is also likely that there are failures to monitor and progress meetings and referrals from the staff side. More effective mechanisms – and clearer responsibilities – for doing this would help to maximise engagement at each stage.
- 41 The paperwork associated with the project needs to be streamlined and integrated with existing systems, so that it is not seen as burdensome by staff. At the same time, there should be greater scope to include narrative information that is likely to help POs and others to work effectively with individual offenders.
- 42 The CRP is built around the principle of partnership working but inter-agency relationships are often under-developed and over-reliant on personal links between individual staff. This should be addressed through the development of clearer statements of respective roles and responsibilities, greater attention to attendance at cross-agency meetings, and improved communication channels more generally.
- 43 The resource implications of expanding provision for voluntary throughcare – although not insignificant within SPS and SCS – appear to be greatest in relation to CJSW, where there was particular concern about the ability to meet increased demand for intensive support. More generally, and across practitioner groups, there was concern about the availability of suitable accommodation for offenders leaving prison and the critical role that this plays in the resettlement process.
- 44 Wider considerations raised by the evaluation in relation to the overall character and ethos of an expanded voluntary throughcare service include: the question of whether CJSW should be delivering services directly or should focus primarily on signposting and coordinating; the issue of whether throughcare for short-term offenders should operate on an opt-in or opt-out basis; and the need for greater integration with other aspects of the custodial system (such as Home Detention Curfew).
- 45 In terms of key contextual factors, there is a need to bring greater coherence to the service landscape in this area and to build a distinctive ‘brand’ identity for voluntary throughcare. Recent strategic and cultural shifts within SPS mean the organisational context is potentially conducive to such a development. However, a genuinely multi-agency approach will require

creative responses to the physical and administrative constraints of the prison environment.

## Conclusions

- 46 The evaluation has shown that the core CRP process was implemented broadly as intended across the four prisons and two social work areas involved in the project, but that there was wide variation in terms of approaches to delivery across different settings. Moreover, the process itself evolved significantly in response to ‘on the ground’ experience, local circumstances and needs. The *level* of activity was also lower than might perhaps have been expected. In the women’s prisons, this resulted from relatively few offenders being identified as eligible to participate, but in the men’s prison, too, there was a high degree of attrition across the various stages of the project.
- 47 Overall, the evaluation found considerable evidence that a structured and staged approach to offender engagement, coupled with the strengthening of inter-agency links, has the potential to lead to improvements in pre-release planning and a higher level of contact with services in the community. In that sense, the CRP’s underlying theory of change remains broadly plausible and intact. For it to achieve such impacts on any significant scale, however, throughput would need to be increased and attrition reduced; and adequately resourced, evidence-based services would need to be available within community settings.
- 48 The evaluation found strong support for the principle of improving support for short-term offenders and enhancing provision of and access to throughcare. There was also evidence of good or innovative practice across a range of settings. However, for the CRP to deliver – at scale – its intended outcomes, the process itself would need to be improved in some of the ways identified above. The gains would perhaps be greater still if those lessons were to form the basis of a system-wide, coherent and consistent approach to voluntary throughcare and related support services. Such an approach would have significant resource implications, especially – though not solely – within community settings, signalling the need for this issue to be seen as not belonging not to any one agency but as integral to the wider preventative spend agenda and debate around public service reform.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an evaluation of the Community Reintegration Project (CRP). The CRP forms part of the Scottish Government's wider Reducing Reoffending Programme (RRP) and focuses on addressing the needs of short-term offenders (i.e. those serving between six months and less than four years). Launched in March 2012, the CRP involved a process for the identification and ongoing review of needs of offenders in custody; referrals to appropriate agencies and services; and effective transition to local community criminal justice social work teams on release.
- 1.2 The evaluation was commissioned by the Scottish Government Justice Analytical Services and carried out by ScotCen Social Research, a not-for-profit independent research agency. It was broadly structured around the 'logic model' for the CRP – an explanation of how the project was intended to achieve its long-term outcomes. As such, this report looks at whether the CRP was implemented as planned, and at whether or not the available evidence of short and medium-term outcomes lends plausibility to the basic ideas (or 'theory of change') underlying the project.
- 1.3 In doing so, the report also examines the way in which the operation of the CRP has been shaped by the specific context in which it was implemented and – in the final chapters – considers the implications of the evaluation for the future of the project and for voluntary throughcare for short-term offenders in Scotland more generally.

## Policy context

- 1.4 Although there has been a slight fall in reconviction rates in Scotland in recent years, reoffending remains a serious problem. In 2010/11, over 44,000 people were convicted of an offence and 28% of those were convicted again within one year.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.5 One of the key predictors of recidivism is sentence type. According to international evidence relating to Scotland and comparable jurisdictions<sup>2</sup>, reconviction rates are higher for those leaving prison than for those serving community sentences, even once other differences between the two groups are controlled for. Despite this, and the fact that recorded crime overall has been falling for some years<sup>3</sup>, the Scottish prison population has increased substantially over the past decade and currently sits at around 8,000 on any

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<sup>1</sup> *Reconviction Rates in Scotland: 2010-11 Offender Cohort*. Scottish Government Statistical Bulletin: Crime and Justice Series, September 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Armstrong, S., and McNeill, F., (2012) *Reducing Reoffending: Review of Selected Countries*, SCCJR Research Report No: 04/2012.

<sup>3</sup> *Scottish Policing Performance Framework Annual Report, 2012-13*. Scottish Government, November 2013.

particular day<sup>4</sup>, making it among the highest per head of population in any Western European country.<sup>5</sup>

- 1.6 The costs associated with recidivism and attempts to address it are, of course, considerable. The Scottish Government, Community Justice Authorities and Scottish Prison Service (SPS) estimated that in 2010/11 they spent £128m specifically on services and activities aimed at reducing reoffending – roughly half the amount spent on reducing the liberty of offenders. But both these figures are dwarfed by the total social and economic costs of reoffending in Scotland, estimated to be around £3bn per year<sup>6</sup>.
- 1.7 Against this backdrop, and following the report of the Scottish Prisons (McLeish) Commission, the RRP was launched by the Scottish Government in 2009. This is a wide-ranging policy initiative looking across the whole criminal justice system involving a range of stakeholders – including Community Justice Authorities, voluntary sector organisations, the SPS, the Association of Directors of Social Work (ADSW) and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) – which puts improved support for offenders at the centre of the strategy for reducing reoffending. The initial phase of the programme, which was completed in 2011, introduced the Community Payback Order and the Whole System Approach for young people who offend, along with other changes. The second phase of the programme – of which the CRP forms one part – was launched in 2012.
- 1.8 Alongside the Scottish Government’s system-wide work under the Reducing Reoffending banner, relevant work has also been ongoing within specific partner agencies. In relation to the CRP, the current work within the SPS is of key relevance. The SPS is a government agency and clearly aligns itself with the Scottish Government’s strategic objective of achieving a safer Scotland and highlights reducing reoffending as one of its key aims. There has, though, been a recognition of the need for change if the service is to maximise its contribution to the achievement of these objectives. The SPS report, *Unlocking Potential, Transforming Lives*<sup>7</sup>, published in January 2014, presents the results of an organisational review, and provides a vision for the future with renewed emphasis on rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders, with this to be achieved through organisational and cultural change, staff development and partnership working.
- 1.9 Those entering prisons often do so from difficult circumstances – an analysis conducted by the SPS in March 2012 (and cited by Audit Scotland<sup>8</sup>) showed that 40% of offenders in prison came from the most deprived areas of Scotland, while 44% were under the influence of drugs at the time of their

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<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.sps.gov.uk/Publications/ScottishPrisonPopulation.aspx> for up to date figures.

<sup>5</sup> *Prison statistics and population projections Scotland: 2011-12*. Scottish Government Statistical Bulletin: Crime and Justice Series, June 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Unpublished Scottish Government estimates cited in *Reducing Reoffending in Scotland*. Prepared for the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission. November 2012

<sup>7</sup> *Organisational Review - Unlocking Potential, Transforming Lives*. Scottish Prison Service, January 2014.

<sup>8</sup> *Reducing Reoffending in Scotland*. Prepared for the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission. November 2012

offence. According to *Scotland's Choice – the report of the Scottish Prisons Commission*<sup>9</sup> those in prison are also much more likely than the population more generally to:

- have been looked after (by a local authority) as a child;
- been a regular truant from school;
- be unemployed;
- have the reading, writing and numeracy skills typical of an 11 year old;
- have suffered from at least two mental disorders;
- have previously attempted suicide.

1.10 Whilst programmes in prison may help offenders to address some of these problems, the experience of imprisonment may exacerbate others (such as family breakdown), and a recent review of international evidence<sup>10</sup> suggests that prison-based interventions will have greater impact if stable accommodation and employment opportunities are available and there is continuity in service provision or support upon release (hence an emphasis on services such as 'throughcare', 'transitional care' or 'aftercare'<sup>11</sup>). Indeed, the review reported that 'Reductions in reoffending appear to be directly related to the availability of support following release, with international evidence suggesting that after-care may be as important as the provision of interventions during the period of custody.' The review highlighted specific service features such as early contact between workers and offenders, continuity and flexibility of service, multi-agency working and support at the point of release (at the prison gate) as being linked to successful outcomes.

1.11 Local authorities in Scotland have a statutory obligation (under Section 71 of the Criminal Justice Scotland Act 2003) to provide throughcare to offenders sentenced to four years or more, serving extended sentences or subject to supervised release. Proactive throughcare arrangements are well established in relation to this group, via a multi-agency plan for each offender to address needs and access services in a sequenced and coordinated manner. The arrangements for offenders serving shorter sentences (i.e. less than four years) are, however, less comprehensive – despite the fact that this group is far more numerous. Short-term offenders are not subject to statutory throughcare but are entitled to advice, guidance and assistance from their

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<sup>9</sup> *Scotland's Choice. Report of the Scottish Prisons Commission*, The Scottish Prisons Commission 2008

<sup>10</sup> Malloch, M.S., McIvor, G., Schinkel, M. and Armstrong, S. (2013), *The Elements of Effective Through-Care Part 1: International Review*. SCCJR Report No. 03/2014.

<sup>11</sup> Although these terms are often used interchangeably, we have opted to use the concept of throughcare throughout the report, and the associated definition from the *National Objectives and Standards for Social Work Services in the Criminal Justice System*: 'The provision of a range of Social Work and associated services to prisoners and their families from the point of sentence or remand, during the period of imprisonment and following release into the community. The services are primarily concerned to assist prisoners to prepare for release and to help them settle in the community, within the law'.

local authority in the twelve months following their release from prison and whilst in custody if requested.

## **Overview of the Community Reintegration Project**

- 1.12 The CRP represents an attempt to increase the provision and take-up of throughcare services for short-term offenders in Scotland and thus address their needs by means of structured engagement with offenders during their sentence and an attempt to improve their connection to services upon release.
- 1.13 Recent years have seen a variety of calls to improve service continuity and provision for offenders serving short-term sentences – for example, from Audit Scotland in its (2011) report on *Reducing Reoffending* and from the Social Work Inspection Agency in its (2011) review of *Social Work Services in Scotland's Prisons*. Against this backdrop, as part of Phase Two of the Reducing Reoffending Programme, the Throughcare Services Project is reviewing throughcare services and interventions for offenders serving short-term sentences and aims to promote more effective engagement by universal services with the offender population. The CRP formed part of this strand of work.
- 1.14 Launched in March 2012, the CRP was intended to test new approaches to needs screening for short-term offenders and was jointly developed by representatives from the Scottish Government, SPS and ADSW, reflecting the importance attached to collaborative working, and the recognition that no agency could single-handedly deliver reductions in reoffending.
- 1.15 The CRP involved the piloting of a single business process for the effective and tailored needs screening of short-term offenders, the provision of appropriate services and support whilst in prison, referral to the relevant community criminal justice social work team, and continuing support on transition to the community.
- 1.16 The process involved an initial interview between the offender and a prison officer to ascertain immediate needs, followed by a more in-depth interview (the Comprehensive Screen) utilising the Criminal Justice Social Work Report (CJSW report) as a starting point for discussion. The specific circumstances that led to the offence would be discussed and the offender encouraged to address their offending behaviour. Referrals to relevant services would then be made, and the individual also referred to the relevant CJSW team. There would then be monthly reviews between the offender and their Personal Officer, meetings with a criminal justice support worker and representatives of other relevant agencies, and a pre-liberation meeting involving relevant partners in order to assess the individual's needs and how these will continue to be addressed in the community. The CJSW team would provide ongoing support in the community through appropriate case management which might include visits, meetings and phone calls, and liaison with appropriate services.

- 1.17 The CRP was offered to short-term offenders on a voluntary basis. They were able to disengage at any point whilst in custody and following their return to the community.
- 1.18 The CRP was launched in March 2012 for an initial 12 month pilot period. The pilot was then extended for a further 12 month period until March 2014, with the pilot extension benefitting from the funding of additional SPS/SG project management resources.
- 1.19 During its pilot period the CRP focused on the following groups of offenders:
- Male offenders with home addresses in the Dundee serving short-term sentences (six months to less than four years) in HMP Perth
  - Female offenders with home addresses in the Dundee or Lanarkshire (North and South) serving short-term sentences in HMP Cornton Vale, Edinburgh or Greenock.
- 1.20 Thus, the CRP operated in a single prison and corresponding local authority area for male offenders but multiple prisons and local authority areas for women offenders. This differential approach was intended to ensure sufficient throughput of female participants, given the lower numbers of female offenders and the much smaller female prison population<sup>12</sup>.
- 1.21 The project was overseen by a Steering Group made up of representatives of key stakeholder organisations, and an Operational Group made up of representatives from each of the organisations/sites involved in delivering the project.

## **The evaluation**

### The CRP logic model

- 1.22 The CRP was underpinned by a theory of change and an accompanying logic model (see Fig 1.1). The theory of change in this case suggested that (low level) criminal behaviour is associated with factors present in the lives of the offenders (addictions, mental health issues, low educational levels, homelessness etc.) and that a more structured approach to identifying and addressing those needs would help individuals to reduce their offending behaviour. The logic model shows the relationships between the resources that are invested (e.g. prison, CJSW staff and other practical resources), the planned activities (the various stages of the CRP process), and the anticipated benefits or changes in terms of staff and offender attitudes and behaviour (in both the short/medium and longer-term).
- 1.23 The logic model was developed as part of the planning and implementation of the CRP, but it has also been used to structure and focus the evaluation. In

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<sup>12</sup> SPS prison population figures for April 2014 show 5,541 convicted and sentenced male prisoners and 293 convicted and sentenced female prisoners. Women thus make up around 5% of the total prison population. (Source: SPS website – see <http://www.sps.gov.uk/Publications/ScottishPrisonPopulation.aspx> for up to date figures)

particular, the evaluation has sought to determine the extent to which the underlying theory of change is recognised and shared by key actors; whether the activities and outputs have occurred as planned; and whether there is evidence of short, medium and longer-term outcomes – in other words, whether the ‘causal chain’ identified in the model remains plausible.

- 1.24 It should be noted, however, that the logic model itself has some limitations in that it presents a generic set of mechanisms and outcomes and does not specify underlying assumptions or key contextual factors. With this in mind, towards the end of the report, we step outside the model as outlined here to try to describe and incorporate some of the contextual factors that shaped the operation of the CRP in practice and would need to be taken into account in any planning for future roll-out or wider work around voluntary throughcare for short-term offenders.

### Aims and research questions

- 1.25 The formal aims of the evaluation were, then, to:

- examine the CRP process and assess how it is working in practice
- explore short and medium-term outcomes (see para 1.33 below for an explanation of why long-term outcomes were considered out of scope)
- consider lessons for any future roll-out of throughcare for short-term offenders.

- 1.26 Specifically, this involved considering questions such as the following:

- To what extent did the activities, as outlined in the logic model, take place as planned? In particular:
  - What were the characteristics of service users, and the throughput and attrition rate of the services?
  - Was there sufficient communication and coordination between partners, and with offenders, to support referral, screening and planning?
- Was needs assessment enhanced? Was there better release planning, were services matched to their needs/risk levels?
- What resources were required and what was the impact on wider services?
- Have there been barriers to implementation? If so what were they, what was their impact, and how were or will they be addressed?
- To what extent were short and medium-term outcomes realised during the project?

- What are the key lessons learned from the project? What impact have such changes had on the service provided? What is the feasibility of and key recommendations for the possible roll-out across the prison estate?

1.27 These questions informed the overall evaluation and are further addressed in the concluding chapters of the report.

**Figure 1.1: Logic model for the Community Reintegration Project**

Inputs	Outputs		2. Outcomes -- Impact		
	Activities	Participation	Short	Medium	Long
<p><b>Pre-custody</b> CJSW (report writing) SCS (transmit report) CJSW (locate &amp; transmit reports) SPS (request reports from CJSW)</p> <p><b>Custody</b> SPS Admin SPS Case Officers Custody CJSW Community CJSW Service provider</p> <p><b>Post-custody</b> Community CJSW Service provider</p> <p><b>Added funding resource:</b> SG additional funding to Community CJSW, to provide services</p> <p><b>Practical resources:</b> Court Reports; Communications / email; Prison estate facility; CJSW facility; CJSW / Service provider support services;</p>	<p><b>Reallocation of staffing &amp; resource</b></p>	CJSW/SPS/SCS staff	<p>SPS, CJSW &amp; SCS staff buy in to joint working approach</p> <p>Improved prison awareness of offender's needs</p> <p>Improved offender knowledge about their needs and services available</p> <p>Increased offender trust in SPS &amp; CJSW staff</p> <p>Increased offender motivation to engage in services on release</p>	<p>Coordination of SPS and CJSW response to offender needs</p> <p>Increased interaction with offenders about reintegration before release</p> <p>Increased offender engagement with reintegration planning in prison, and with services in prison &amp; the community</p> <p>Increased addressing of criminogenic needs</p>	<p>Reduction in reoffending</p> <p>Increased reintegration</p>
	<p><b>Sharing of CJSWR from CJSW/SCS to SPS</b></p>				
	<p><b>Immediate Needs Screening for eligibility, immediate action &amp; referrals, and consent</b></p>	Offenders			
	<p><b>Comprehensive Needs Screening &amp; referrals</b></p>				
	<p><b>Custodial Case Management Activities – meetings with offender, plans and referrals made</b></p>				
	<p><b>Pre-release interview</b></p>				
	<p><b>Community Case management by community CJSW</b></p>	SPS			
<p><b>Data Collection &amp; evaluation activities</b></p>					

## Methods

- 1.28 The evaluation involved analysis of available monitoring data and in-depth interviews with (1) practitioners involved in the delivery of CRP and (2) offenders eligible to take part in CRP. A total of 69 interviews were undertaken with the following groups:
- SPS staff at the four participating prisons (n=19 interviews)
  - SPS staff at the Open Estate (n=1)
  - CJSW staff in the two participating local authority areas (Dundee and Lanarkshire) (n=11, including one joint interview)
  - Staff at the four sheriff courts in the relevant local authority areas (Dundee, Airdrie, Hamilton and Lanark) (n=2 - one individual and one group interview involving representatives from each of the courts)
  - Representatives of local agencies delivering support services to CRP participants (n=9, including one joint interview)
  - Offenders in custody who are participating in/have been eligible for the CRP (n=22)
  - Offenders in the community who are participating in/have been eligible for the CRP (n=5).
- 1.29 See Table A.1 in Annex A for further details of the interviews undertaken.
- 1.30 The final stage of the evaluation involved a validation event at which preliminary findings were presented to an invited audience of policymakers and practitioners. This provided the opportunity for attendees to reflect on and respond to emerging findings, and provide feedback to the research team to inform the drafting of this report.
- 1.31 The evaluation was carried out over a six month period between December 2013 and May 2014, with fieldwork carried out in February and March 2014.
- 1.32 Further details of the research methods used can be found in Annex A.

## Scope and limitations

- 1.33 This was a small-scale evaluation, conducted over a relatively short time period. As such, it is important to be clear about its scope and limitations.
- 1.34 Perhaps the most significant thing to note is that assessing the long-term outcomes (or overall purpose) of the CRP – namely a reduction in offending and increase in effective reintegration to the community – were beyond the scope of this exercise. In order to demonstrate such impacts, one would need – at minimum – a longer time frame, longitudinal data on the progress of individual offenders, and an experimental or control group design that would allow one to arrive at conclusions about the ‘counterfactual’ (i.e. what would have happened in the absence of the intervention).
- 1.35 As such, the evaluation was necessarily focused on the earlier stages of the logic model – on questions of process (how the CRP was implemented and the extent to

which that matches the original intentions), outputs (the activities and throughput associated with the project) and indicators of early outcomes.

1.36 A number of other limitations are also worth bearing in mind:

- Much of the evidence about early outcomes is based on individual views and experiences. As such, it is relatively 'soft' in character. Individuals may be mistaken in their understanding of particular issues or hold views that are atypical in other respects. That said, across the full range of interviews conducted for the study we would expect such variation to be largely accounted for.
- As will be seen in Chapter 2, the CRP has taken a different form in each of the specific institutional settings, and this has limited the extent to which it can be regarded – and evaluated – as a clearly defined, single approach.
- This variation in how the CRP has been implemented is, of course, partly a reflection of the very different contexts in which it has been operating. As noted earlier, within each of those settings, the CRP has been implemented alongside other services and interventions aimed at achieving broadly similar outcomes. This can make it difficult to identify and isolate the CRP as a distinct set of activities, outputs and outcomes – not only for the evaluation team but also for staff and, especially, offenders, for whom there can be a blurring of different kinds of service provision.
- Although the evaluation as a whole canvassed the views and experiences of relatively large numbers of people, the numbers interviewed within specific sites were limited, restricting the scope for detailed 'within site' analysis.
- Those who did take part – both staff and offenders – may not have been wholly representative of the population from which they were drawn, in part because availability and motivation to take part in a research interview may be related to participation or involvement in the CRP itself. This may mean that less positive views may have been under-represented. Within the timescales and resources available, in particular, it was not easy to recruit offenders who had declined to participate in the CRP or who had participated initially and then disengaged – especially once back in a community setting. To some extent, therefore, we have been dependent on interviews with CRP participants and staff for explanations of why individuals may choose not to take part or to disengage.
- There was considerable variation in the accuracy and completeness of the monitoring data across the different CRP sites (see page 21) and an absence of unit-level data on the characteristics of CRP participants. This has limited the scope for detailed quantitative analysis, although it has been possible to conduct basic analyses of throughput and attrition.
- Finally, the fact that the CRP was a pilot project – with a relatively low profile and limited resources, and focusing on a subset of offenders in each site – will have shaped the way in which it was implemented and operated. This has important implications in terms of the potential lessons for any large-scale or national roll-out.

1.37 Despite these caveats and limitations, the evaluation has offered the opportunity for external and independent scrutiny of the project and for an examination of whether the theory of change outlined in the original logic model can be recognised – and remains plausible – in the specific contexts in which the CRP was piloted.

## **The structure of the report**

- 1.38 Chapter 2 describes how the CRP was implemented across the four prison sites – focusing, in particular, on whether the project was implemented as intended, on how the participating prisons set about delivering the core CRP processes, and the number of participants reaching each stage.
- 1.39 Chapter 3 considers practitioners’ views and experiences of specific aspects of the CRP process, and their reactions to the training and resources associated with the project.
- 1.40 Chapters 4 and 5 move on from questions of activities, outputs and process to consider whether there is evidence that the CRP actually achieved its short and medium-term outcomes and, by extension, whether it remains plausible that it might achieve its dual longer-term objectives of a reduction in reoffending and increase in offender reintegration into the community. Chapter 4 focuses on organisational and staff outcomes, while Chapter 5 looks at outcomes associated with offenders.
- 1.41 Chapter 6 discusses some of the contextual factors that have shaped the implementation and effectiveness of the CRP, identifying both barriers to and enablers of success.
- 1.42 Chapter 7 considers changes that would help to optimise the existing CRP model and suggests some wider lessons for the future of voluntary throughcare for short-term offenders more generally.
- 1.43 Chapter 8 considers the findings as a whole and presents some overall concluding comments.
- 1.44 The report also contains appendices providing a detailed account of the evaluation methods, a chart summarising the CRP process and a glossary of key terms.

## **Approach to anonymisation**

- 1.45 The report presents supporting evidence from the interviews carried out. These have been anonymised and use the following identifier system:
- Prison staff: SPS1, SPS2 etc
  - CJSW staff: CJSW1, CJSW2 etc
  - Court staff: CS1, CS2 etc
  - Community support agency A1, A2 etc
  - Offenders in prison: OP1, OP2 etc
  - Offenders in the community OC1, OC2 etc
- 1.46 We have referred to prisons by name in descriptive material where it is pertinent to the issue under consideration.

## 2 THE IMPLEMENTATION AND OPERATION OF THE CRP

- 2.1 This chapter provides a descriptive overview of the implementation of the CRP within the four prisons and the two associated CJSW areas. It considers issues of 'fidelity' – the extent to which the basic process elements of the project were implemented as intended – but also whether the activities or outputs associated with the project were at the expected levels. It begins with a description of the CRP process and how it was implemented in each site, before looking at quantitative indicators of CRP activity across the different stages.
- 2.2 We will argue that the implementation within the four sites was broadly consistent with the original model and guidance, but that there were also significant variations in how the CRP was implemented across settings and that its operation evolved over the course of the project. We will also show that the number of offenders engaging with the project was relatively low – especially within the women's prisons – and that there was a high degree of attrition across the various stages of the project. That said, the evaluation also provides evidence that offender needs which might otherwise have been missed were identified and potentially addressed through referrals to and contact with community-based services.

### Outline of the CRP process

- 2.3 In broad terms, the CRP involves the identification and assessment of offender needs in custody; referral to services and support to address those needs while in custody; referral to CJSW to allow a plan to be put in place to facilitate transition to the community; and access to continuing CJSW support following release. More specifically, however, the project is intended to be underpinned by a consistent and structured process with a number of key stages. These are outlined below, and a chart summarising the stages of the process is included at Annex B.

#### *Sentencing of individuals*

- **Transfer of the CJSW report** from the sentencing court to the receiving prison (CRP Stage 1).
- **Immediate Needs Screening** (CRP Stage 2): A CRP specific Core Screen is carried out in the first few days in custody. This incorporates the first night in custody checklist and screening process carried out for all offenders on arrival at prison in identifying needs (part 2a), but those eligible to take part in CRP are offered the opportunity to do so at this point and are taken through a fuller screening process (part 2b).
- **Referral to CJSW**: The relevant CJSW team is notified of those engaging with the scheme; a CJSW worker then arranges to meet the participant in custody and will arrange subsequent meetings as required.
- **Comprehensive Needs Screening** (CRP Stage 3): The Comprehensive Screen is carried out between the offender and his or her Personal Officer (PO) within 28 days of entering custody. The CJSW report forms the basis of the discussion and leads to fuller assessment of the offender's needs and referrals to appropriate services.
- **Referral to services and support in custody**: The participant is referred on to appropriate services in response to the identified needs.
- **Standard Review** (CRP Stage 4): Standard Reviews are held on a monthly basis in order to review needs and check on the progress of referrals.

- **Summary Review** (CRP Stage 5): The Summary Review is held 5 or 6 weeks prior to release and involves a meeting between the offender and their PO in order to review progress to date and update the Community Integration Plan (CIP)<sup>13</sup> prior to the pre-release meeting.
- **Pre-release meeting:** This meeting is held around 4 weeks prior to liberation and brings together the offender, the CJSW representative, the PO and any other key personnel in order to agree a plan for release and reintegration into the community and make/confirm arrangements for referrals to community-based services.

#### *Transition to the community*

- **CJSW case management:** This is flexible but generally involves an initial appointment and follow-up supervision and appointments as required. Cases are reviewed after three months, and closed once a participant is stable in the community and no longer requires CJSW support or when the participant disengages from the process. When a participant disengages from the process they remain eligible to request voluntary throughcare for 12 months following their release from prison.

2.4 The prison-based stages of the process use specifically designed forms, allowing staff to record identified needs, indicators of engagement, and a brief narrative account of the meeting. Completed forms are then uploaded to the SPS case management system, PR2.

### **Implementation of the process in the project sites**

2.5 The research found that the CRP process implemented in each of the sites was broadly in line with the staged process as set out in the original guidance. However, while the CRP process was recognisable at each site there were notable differences in the way in which it was implemented and delivered in terms of the management and supervisory arrangements, types of staff involved, and the links with CJSW teams. A brief description of each site is presented below, followed by a discussion of some of the key aspects of variation identified.

#### HMP Perth/Dundee CJSW

2.6 HMP Perth is a male-only establishment with most offenders coming from the surrounding area (of Perth and Kinross, Dundee, Fife and Angus). For the purposes of the project, the prison-CJSW link was between HMP Perth and Dundee CJSW. The introduction of the CRP at the prison in spring 2012 was supported by training sessions offered to residential staff with additional follow-up sessions in mid-2013. The Link Centre manager was also available to provide advice and assistance to staff on an ad hoc and ongoing basis.

2.7 Key features of the CRP within HMP Perth included a central role for the Link Centre, supervisory input provided at residential manager level, a focus on specific residential halls and a CJSW team with the use of office space in the Link Centre and access to PR2. The CRP process operated as follows:

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<sup>13</sup> Prisons prepare a Community Integration Plan for each offender, containing information about the offender, their progress during the custodial sentence and plans for their return to the community.

- Accommodation of CRP participants: Offenders from the designated Dundee postcode areas were housed within two residential halls.
- Who was involved within the prison: The process was overseen by Link Centre staff. They oversaw the identification of eligible participants, carried out Stage 2b and maintained the CRP database. All POs in the relevant residential areas (potentially) carried out the process with offenders (representing a change from the original approach of a small number of designated officers). Administrative support was put in place from late 2013.
- Who was involved within CJSW: The CRP project was staffed by two main CJSW support workers, and one additional support worker. A social worker team leader oversaw the work and provided case supervision. There was administrative support for maintaining records.
- Liaison between the prison and CJSW: The CJSW team had office space in the Link Centre and spent (at least) one day in prison each week. There was regular communication and liaison between the Link Centre and CJSW.
- Recording and sharing information: Information was recorded on the CRP forms and then uploaded to PR2 by the relevant Link Centre staff and POs. The CJSW team had access to PR2 in prison for background information – and completed the Stage 5 report on PR2 – but did not have access from their own office in the community.
- Prison activity: The Link Centre manager had responsibility for determining eligibility and Link Centre staff carried out stage 2b, made initial referrals and notified CJSW of eligible cases. Cases were then added to the CRP database and hall managers had responsibility for allocating cases to individual POs. Hall managers supervised the process, following up non-completion of stages and disengagement. POs carried out Stage 3 and 4 meetings and made referrals – some directly on PR2, and others as paper referrals – for the Link Centre to pick up. An officer attended the pre-release meeting, although this was not always the relevant PO.
- Referrals to CJSW: The Link Centre sent notification of new CRP participants to CJSW on a regular basis.
- CJSW activity in prison: CJSW picked up CRP referrals and drew up a schedule of meetings (new cases and follow-up appointments) for their forthcoming prison visits. The Link Centre then liaised with residential areas about notifying individuals and bringing them over for meetings. On the day of meetings, Link Centre staff took a proactive approach to following up non-attendance of those listed for meetings. Following an initial meeting and needs assessment, the CJSW team saw individuals as many times as required (generally on between two and six occasions) to ensure that support and services were put in place for their release.
- CJSW activity in the community: Participants were given a community appointment to attend on release though most tended to disengage at this point. Those who did not attend were offered a second appointment and a further follow-up letter was then sent before the case was closed. Post-release activity included occasional gate pick-ups and intensive support in community.
- Referrals to other agencies: POs recorded referrals on paper forms and occasionally directly onto PR2 to be picked up by staff/agencies in the Link Centre. CJSW workers were able to see referrals made on PR2 and to make referrals and negotiate with external agencies on behalf of clients.
- Pre-release meeting: This was organised by the Link Centre and typically attended by the participant, CJSW and a residential officer (although this was often not the relevant PO). Attendance by other agencies was not common. A

subsequent meeting with CJSW was held prior to release to confirm arrangements.

### HMP Cornton Vale/Lanarkshire CJSW (and Dundee CJSW)

- 2.8 HMP Cornton Vale is a women-only national facility taking all categories of short and long-term female offenders from across the country. It is the initial receiving establishment for all convicted female offenders in Scotland, although some may subsequently be transferred to other more local establishments. The prison regime involves a progression through different blocks based on an assessment of risk. The implementation of the CRP at Cornton Vale involved a main link between HMP Cornton Vale and North Lanarkshire CJSW. Training sessions were provided at the outset of the project targeting CRP 'champions' in residential areas, and the Offender Outcomes Manager had offered follow-up awareness sessions and operated an open door policy in offering advice and support to staff.
- 2.9 Key features of the process at Cornton Vale included the role of the Integrated Case Management (ICM) Unit and the use of administrative support to assist with adherence to the process. The process operated as follows:
- Accommodation of CRP participants: Offenders from the designated postcode areas were housed throughout the prison and progressed through the estate in line with standard practice.
  - Who was involved within the prison: The CRP process was overseen by the ICM Unit, where administrative staff maintained a database and issued paperwork and reminders for staged meetings. Reception staff carried out the Immediate Needs Screen (parts 2a and 2b). Any PO across the establishment could potentially be required to carry out CRP duties if allocated an eligible offender.
  - Who was involved within CJSW: Two CJSW support workers carried out CRP duties alongside a mixed criminal justice caseload. The social worker team leader provided ad hoc support and regular case supervision.
  - Liaison between prison and CJSW: Contact was on a case-by-case basis, and sometimes included liaison between CJSW and the Vulnerable Prisoner Officer. CJSW meetings with clients generally took place in the agents' room at the prison gate, meaning that there was limited contact with prison staff.
  - Recording and sharing information: The ICM administrator was responsible for maintaining records in prison - information was recorded on CRP forms and then typed up and uploaded to PR2 by the administrator. CJSW did not have direct access to PR2, but were provided with a copy of the SPS CIP in preparation for the pre-release meeting.
  - Prison activity: The ICM Unit notified residential managers of CRP participants who allocated cases to POs. The ICM administrator emailed the residential manager when each CRP stage was due, prepared paperwork for collection and then recorded the outcome on PR2 once paperwork was returned; paperwork was signed for on uplift and signed back in on return. POs confirmed offenders' consent to participate and carried out the Comprehensive Screen and subsequent stages.
  - Referrals to CJSW: Referrals were made on an individual basis using the existing voluntary throughcare request form.
  - CJSW activity in prison: CJSW aimed to see offenders three or four times if possible during their time in custody, with activity involving an initial needs

assessment and appropriate follow-up to ensure support and services were put in place for release.

- CJSW activity in the community: Participants were given a community appointment for the day of release (or the day after), with most taking up the offer or responding to a reminder; a second appointment was offered and a follow-up letter sent before cases were closed. The support provided included gate pick-ups and ongoing engagement in the community – such as regular meetings, visits, phone calls, attending appointments, acting as advocate in dealing with other agencies and services – though some engagement was relatively short-term.
- Referrals to other agencies: Referrals were recorded on PR2 by the ICM administrator and picked up by staff/agencies in the Link Centre.
- Pre-release meeting: This was organised by the ICM administrator in advance and typically attended by the participant, CJSW support worker and an officer (though not necessarily the participant's PO); other attendees sometimes included the Vulnerable Prisoner Officer and representatives of other support agencies.

### HMP Edinburgh/Dundee CJSW

2.10 HMP Edinburgh is a predominantly male prison but also accommodates some female offenders from the east of Scotland in a single residential hall. Women offenders may be transferred to HMP Edinburgh following initial admission to Cornton Vale. The CRP link was between HMP Edinburgh and Dundee CJSW. No formal CRP training was provided to staff in the prison; the staff involved had relied on the CRP documentation for information and guidance, and the hall manager provided ongoing support to frontline staff. Key features of the CRP process at Edinburgh were the hall-based focus and the allocation of all CRP cases to a single designated PO (and deputy). The HMP Edinburgh process is outlined below.

- Accommodation of CRP participants: Offenders from the designated Dundee area were housed within the single women's hall in the prison.
- Who was involved within the prison: Admission staff carried out the first stages of the process, with offenders consenting to the CRP allocated to a designated PO by the hall manager. The PO (or deputy) then carried out subsequent stages.
- Who was involved within CJSW: Two CJSW support workers carried out CRP duties alongside a general women's criminal justice caseload. The social work team leader provided ad hoc support and regular case supervision.
- Liaison between prison and CJSW: Contact was on a case-by-case basis. CJSW visited the residential hall for meetings, which allowed for liaison; administrative arrangements for organising meetings and booking rooms were dealt with via the hall manager and PO.
- Recording and sharing information: Information was recorded on the CRP forms and then uploaded to PR2 by the PO. The prison shared the CIP and minutes of pre-release meeting with CJSW. Although CJSW did not have access to PR2, other agencies did.
- Prison activity: Admission staff carried out the initial stages with CRP participants who were then allocated to the designated PO to carry out subsequent stages. There was some flexibility in relation to timing as offenders were transferred to Edinburgh at different stages in their sentence and in the CRP process. The PO reconfirmed consent and carried out the Comprehensive

Screen, encouraging participants to make self-referrals which were sent to the Link Centre and then put on PR2 for agencies to pick up. A narrative approach was adopted to the paperwork associated with Stage 4.

- Referrals to CJSW: Referrals came from the prison on a case-by-case basis, but also came from other agencies (e.g. Phoenix) or as self-referrals. CJSW then made contact with the offender outlining the service and made arrangements to visit.
- CJSW activity in prison: CJSW workers focused on engagement in the six months leading up to release. Support workers visited the residential hall for meetings and were able to approach people informally in that setting.
- CJSW activity in the community: Participants were given a community appointment for release; a second appointment was offered to those not attending, and a follow-up letter was issued before cases were closed. The team offered gate pick-ups, and community engagement sometimes involved frequent initial contact, reducing in response to progress but lasting as long as required. Intensive support involving multi-agency working was initiated when required.
- Referrals to other agencies: Participants were encouraged to make self-referrals within the prison; CJSW also made referrals and negotiated with external agencies on behalf of clients.
- Pre-release meeting: This was organised by the PO and ideally accommodated within shift patterns. It was generally held two to three weeks before release and attended by the participant, CJSW and PO, with other agencies also invited to attend.

#### HMP Greenock/Lanarkshire CJSW

- 2.11 HMP Greenock is a predominantly male prison which also accommodates female offenders from the west of Scotland in a single residential hall. Women offenders may be transferred to Greenock following initial admission to Cornton Vale. The CRP link is with North Lanarkshire CJSW. A training session for staff was held at the prison at the beginning of the project.
- 2.12 Key features of the CRP process at Greenock were the hall-based focus and the integration of the CRP within a standard PR2-based review system for all short-term offenders. Alongside the CRP process, Greenock was also piloting a Throughcare Support Officer (TSO) scheme offering assistance to both male and female offenders six weeks before and six weeks after release. The CRP process at Greenock included the following:
- Accommodation of CRP participants: Offenders from the designated Lanarkshire postcode areas were housed within the single women's hall in the prison.
  - Who was involved within the prison: Initial screening of transfers-in was carried out in the Link Centre. The hall manager identified eligible individuals and residential staff carried out subsequent stages.
  - Who was involved within CJSW: Two CJSW support workers carried out CRP duties alongside a mixed criminal justice caseload. The social worker team leader provided ad hoc support and regular case supervision.
  - Liaison between prison and CJSW: Contact was on a case-by-case basis. CJSW developed links with relevant staff and made contact following referrals to arrange meetings.
  - Recording and sharing information: Greenock did not use the CRP forms; instead information was recorded directly in narrative form onto PR2 by the PO

or other relevant staff. CJSW did not have access to PR2 but a printout of information was provided to CJSW for meetings.

- Prison activity: Following initial screening in the Link Centre, the Comprehensive Screen was carried out by a residential officer in the following few days and prior to the allocation of a PO. The hall manager then identified CRP-eligible individuals and alerted the allocated PO to the need for a CJSW referral. The prison then followed a PR2-based system of regular reviews carried out by POs for all offenders, with the referral to CJSW being the defining feature of CRP cases.
- CJSW activity in prison: CJSW arranged to meet people following referral, with meetings held in the hall. Activity involved an initial needs assessment and appropriate follow-up to ensure support and services were put in place for release. Meetings were arranged by CJSW.
- CJSW activity in the community: Participants were given a community appointment for the day of release (or the day after) with most taking up the offer or responding to a reminder; a second appointment was offered and a follow-up letter sent before cases were closed. Support included gate pick-ups and ongoing engagement in community - regular meetings, visits, phone calls, attending appointments, acting as advocate in dealing with other agencies and services.
- Referrals to CJSW: Referrals were made on an individual basis using the existing voluntary throughcare request form.
- Referrals to other agencies: Referrals were recorded on PR2 by the PO and picked up by staff/agencies in the Link Centre. CJSW also made referrals and negotiated with external agencies on behalf of clients.
- Pre-release meeting: A pre-release meeting was held by the prison six weeks prior to release – typically attended by the participant and SPS officer (though not necessarily the participant's PO) although TSOs and other agencies (most frequently, addictions services) were sometimes involved. CJSW organised a meeting with the offender closer to the release date.

### **Variation between the CRP sites**

- 2.13 As the above accounts illustrate, the same staged CRP process with related CJSW referral was broadly followed at each site, but there were also some important variations in how the project was implemented. These are summarised below.
- 2.14 *Training, management and supervisory arrangements:* The level of CRP training provided across the sites varied. While on-site training was offered at all but one of the prisons (HMP Edinburgh) at the outset of the project, follow-up familiarisation sessions provided by local staff featured at two of the sites only (HMP Perth and Cornton Vale). Otherwise, less formal on-the-job training was the main approach used to equip staff for CRP duties, although this was supplemented at Perth and Cornton Vale by support from the Link Centre/ICM Unit.
- 2.15 In terms of day-to-day oversight, the Greenock and Edinburgh hall-based systems relied on the residential managers in the relevant halls to supervise the process, and to liaise with staff, although no explicit supervisory pathway was identified. At Cornton Vale, the ICM Unit oversaw the process: administrative staff prepared the paperwork and prompted individual staff and hall managers to undertake the various stages of the process; and the Offender Outcomes Manager operated an open door policy in terms of offering assistance to individual members of staff. At

Perth, the Link Centre took a lead role in overseeing the process and worked with hall managers to improve delivery: the Link Centre manager delivered a series of familiarisation sessions for staff; disengagement and non-completion of stages was monitored and followed up by hall managers.

- 2.16 *Types of staff involved:* At each of the four prisons, POs – as envisaged – were key to the delivery of the CRP. At Perth, Cornton Vale and Greenock all POs were potentially involved in CRP cases if allocated an offender eligible for the scheme (albeit in Perth and Greenock all such offenders were accommodated in one or two halls). In Edinburgh the scheme was delivered by a single designated PO (and a deputy), with all eligible offenders allocated to this officer. In practice, at Cornton Vale and Greenock, where there were relatively few eligible offenders, most members of staff had only limited experience of the CRP.
- 2.17 Link Centre staff at Perth conducted the key CRP Stage 2b meeting, offering offenders the opportunity to participate in CRP and dealing with the initial needs assessment and referrals – a change from the original arrangement. Link Centre staff there also took a role in facilitating the attendance of offenders at meetings. Link Centre staff at all sites were involved in picking up referrals. Only Cornton Vale had dedicated CRP administrative support for the project throughout the pilot, although Perth had administrative support for the latter part of the pilot period; elsewhere individual staff were responsible for completing forms and maintaining records on PR2.
- 2.18 *Links between prisons and CJSW teams:* Perth had ongoing links with the Dundee CJSW team, with the support workers having use of an office in the Link Centre and spending one or two days there each week, and also having access to PR2. On the women's side, contact was less regular and on a case-by-case basis, with personal links between individual officers and social workers often being cited as key to the process. Cornton Vale's administrator-led process, however, incorporated a systematic initial referral to CJSW and the administrator also took the lead in organising pre-release meetings. While three of the prisons experienced the CRP as a one-to-one link with a single CJSW team, Cornton Vale dealt with North Lanarkshire and (to a lesser extent) Dundee CJSW. Correspondingly, North Lanarkshire CJSW dealt with two prisons (Cornton Vale and Greenock) while each of the Dundee CJSW teams dealt with one.
- 2.19 *Information recording and sharing:* Practices varied here. At Cornton Vale, the project administrator had a role in typing up meetings and uploading CRP information onto the system; elsewhere, this was the responsibility of individual POs. Staff at Greenock reported that they had subsumed the CRP within a PR2-based prison-wide case management system for short-term offenders rather than using the CRP paperwork. Perth was the only establishment where the CJSW team had direct access to PR2, although Greenock provided a printout from PR2 of all activity as background for meetings with participants, and other sites provided copies of relevant CRP reports and CIPs.
- 2.20 These different arrangements appeared to both influence and be influenced by the delivery of the project. On the women's side, the small number of eligible offenders spread across three institutions (see below) meant there was less exposure for individual staff members and less frequent contact between CJSW and the prison staff, with the result that regular visits and provision of prison accommodation would therefore be harder to justify. In contrast, the number of eligible offenders at Perth

provided a critical mass that merited the CJSW-embedded approach and allowed closer working relationships to develop. Similarly, the low throughput of CRP-eligible offenders at Edinburgh led to the approach involving a designated PO for all cases. The impact of these and other arrangements – e.g. the roles of Link Centre and administrative staff – are considered in later sections of the report.

## **An evolving process**

2.21 It is important to note that the CRP process evolved during the implementation period and that there were a number of examples of modifications or adaptations at a project-wide or local level.

- Following feedback from the CRP Operational Group that the 10 day target for the Comprehensive Screen was too short, it was agreed by the Steering Group that this should be extended to 28 days (with appropriate monitoring arrangements in place) to allow offenders longer to settle down into prison routine.
- At three of the four sites, the formal pre-release meeting or an additional subsequent meeting was held two to three weeks prior to liberation. This meant that account could be taken of changes in offender circumstances which often occur in the critical period immediately before release.
- HMP Edinburgh took the decision to move to a system based on a designated PO (and deputy) – this was a response to the low number of cases at the prison and was intended to allow the designated staff to build up a level of expertise in dealing with the CRP.
- HMP Perth moved Stage 2b of Immediate Needs Screening to the Link Centre and introduced follow-up by a residential manager whenever a participant disengaged from the CRP process.

2.22 All these refinements reflect staff input in developing the process to meet local needs and the needs of the short-term prison population – themes which we return to at various points during the later chapters of the report.

## **Data on levels and patterns of CRP activity**

2.23 Having provided a brief account of what the CRP process was intended to look like and how it was implemented in each setting, we turn now to some quantitative indicators of the activity associated with the project. These are drawn from two main sources: unit-level data relating to the CRP process within the participating prisons during the period covered by the CRP as a whole; and aggregate-level statistics compiled by each participating prison and by partners in CJSW for the last six months of the project. We also present some information provided directly by the CJSW teams. Information collected from Scottish Court Service (SCS) relating to the transfer of CJSW reports is covered in Chapter 3.

2.24 The unit-level records collated by the prisons relate to the period from May 2012 to March 2014 and are based not on individual offenders *per se*, but on individual admissions, as some individuals were admitted on more than one occasion during that period. Although it was possible to conduct some analysis using these unit-level data, there were several important limitations:

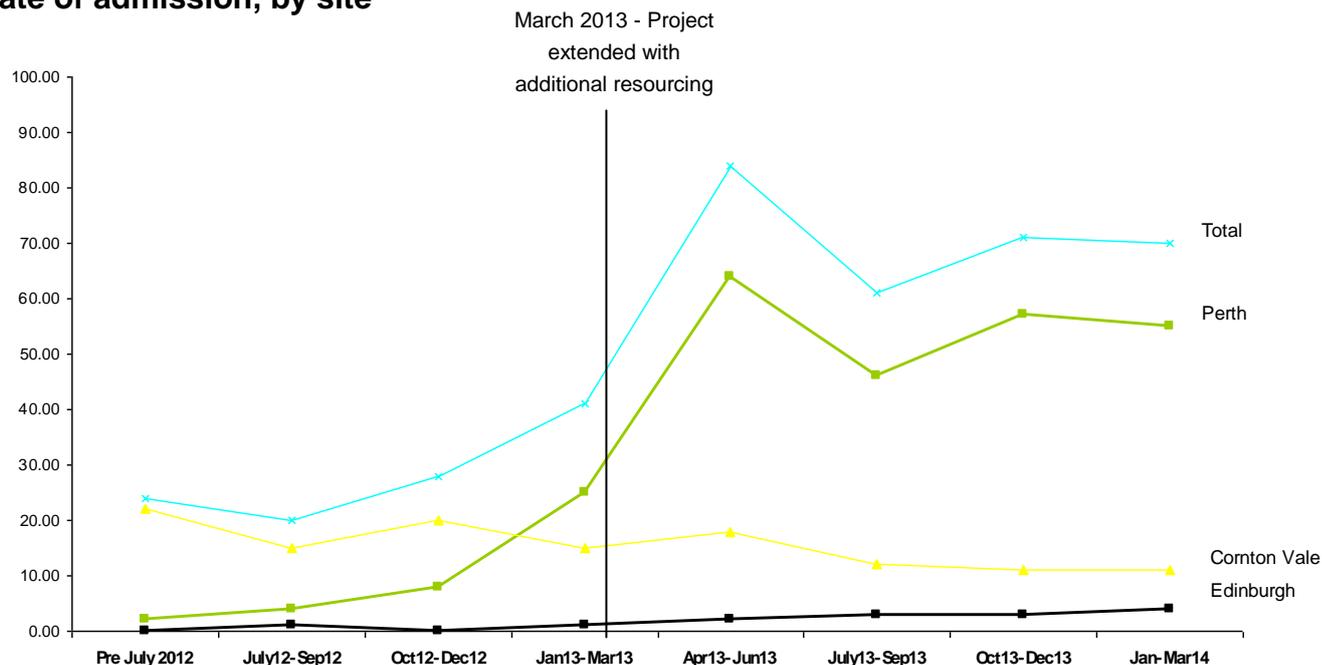
- Some of the participating prisons customised the original standard data-collection sheets, greatly reducing the scope for comparison across sites and the creation of a single overarching dataset.
- There was some duplication of records – e.g. as a result of offender transfers.
- There were gaps in individual records and it was often not clear whether a field in the sheet was blank because the relevant stage/meeting had not taken place, or simply because such activity had not been recorded.

- 2.25 In response to some of these limitations, participating prisons and other key agencies were asked by the Scottish Government to provide additional, aggregate-level data, which they did for the period between October 2013 and March 2014 (inclusive). Although these data do not cover the whole period in which the CRP was running, for some purposes they arguably represent a more reliable indicator of how the CRP was operating during its ‘mature’ phase once any initial problems had been identified and addressed.
- 2.26 However, neither of these two datasets (offering unit-level or aggregate information) should be regarded as offering a definitive source of information about levels and patterns of CRP activity. The two do not map neatly onto each other and, in the unit-level data in particular, it is often impossible to determine whether the absence of data indicates that a particular activity (e.g. a Stage 3 meeting) had not happened or simply has not been recorded. As such, the following estimates should generally be regarded as worst case estimates of the proportion of cases reaching each stage, since we have counted only those cases where there is clear evidence that a meeting has taken place or that the relevant paperwork has been uploaded.
- 2.27 These failings in the systems for monitoring relevant activity represent a significant problem in the implementation of the CRP and a lesson for future initiatives of this type (and the potential roll-out of the CRP itself). Nevertheless, with the above caveats about data quality and completeness in mind, it is possible to build a rough picture of how extensive the activity has been around the CRP, in each of the participating areas and across the project as a whole.

#### Numbers of offenders identified as eligible to participate in the CRP

- 2.28 The unit-level data suggest that, between May 2012 and the end of March 2014, around 436 offenders (or individual admissions) were identified as eligible to participate within HMPs Perth, Cornton Vale and Edinburgh. (No comparable data were available for HMP Greenock, but it appears from other sources that the numbers would have been very small). Of these, the majority (around three-quarters) were male admissions at HMP Perth (293). Of the remainder (all of which were female admissions), the largest single group of offenders identified as eligible for the CRP was at HMP Cornton Vale (125), followed by HMP Edinburgh (18).
- 2.29 In terms of patterns over time, the early phases of the project (prior to March 2013) were marked by relatively low numbers of offenders being identified as eligible to participate in the project. Beyond March 2013, at which point the project was given additional resource within the Scottish Government, numbers increased significantly, driven specifically by a sharp increase in the identification of eligible offenders within Perth. Figure 2.1 shows the best estimate of the number of eligible offenders by establishment by quarter.

**Figure 2.1 Number of offenders identified as eligible to participate in the CRP by date of admission, by site**



Source: Unit-level monitoring data (unique admissions), n=399

Note: Does not include data for HMP Greenock or cases where date of admission not available

2.30 This variation over time suggests that the number of offenders identified as eligible for the CRP should not be regarded as a straightforward indicator of the size of the potential target population for the intervention, and that the identification of eligible participants is partly a product of SPS staff activity. In other words, the greater number of offenders identified as eligible in the period after March 2013 is likely to reflect changes in staff awareness of and attention to the CRP rather than an underlying shift in the proportion of inmates from relevant home postcodes. This suggests that any intervention based on eligibility criteria (such as postcode) needs to be actively promoted and monitored to ensure that it is actually offered to the relevant group.

### Numbers of offenders identified as engaging with the CRP within prison

2.31 It is also difficult to establish definitively the proportion of those offered the CRP who actually engaged with the project. In principle, offenders might be said to have engaged at the point at which they initially agreed to take part – i.e. when offered the opportunity to do so as part of the Immediate Needs Screen (at Stage 2). Evidence of such agreement is not, however, recorded systematically within the monitoring data. Moreover, a proportion of those who initially agreed to participate will have effectively disengaged before any meaningful CRP activity occurred.

### Participation in Stage 3 meeting

2.32 A more useful indicator of engagement with the project is, therefore, participation in the Comprehensive Screen (Stage 3) – a process that lies at the heart of the CRP approach and which is not available, as a matter of course, to other short-term offenders. The unit-level dataset suggests that approximately 223 Stage 3 meetings took place during the period of the project as a whole representing 51% of those admissions identified as eligible for the CRP.

- 2.33 Not surprisingly, in absolute terms, many more such meetings were held with male than female offenders (and in Perth than in other sites, where there was evidence of 182 such meetings having been held, compared with 44 at Cornton Vale and 8 at Edinburgh). *Rates of participation in Stage 3 meetings, however, were higher among female offenders (61% compared with 46%) – see Figure 2.2.*
- 2.34 Although there is little further that can be said about offender characteristics, rates of engagement at Stage 3 appear to have been slightly higher among those serving longer sentences. For example, among those whose earliest release date was within 90 days of admission, 39% had evidence of a Stage 3 meeting, compared with a figure of 53% among those whose earliest release date was more than 91 days after their date of admission.<sup>14</sup> The fact that those with relatively little time to serve upon admission were less likely to have a Stage 3 meeting may reflect the differing needs of this group; but it may also result from differences in how they are dealt with by SPS staff or in the opportunities for constructive engagement.

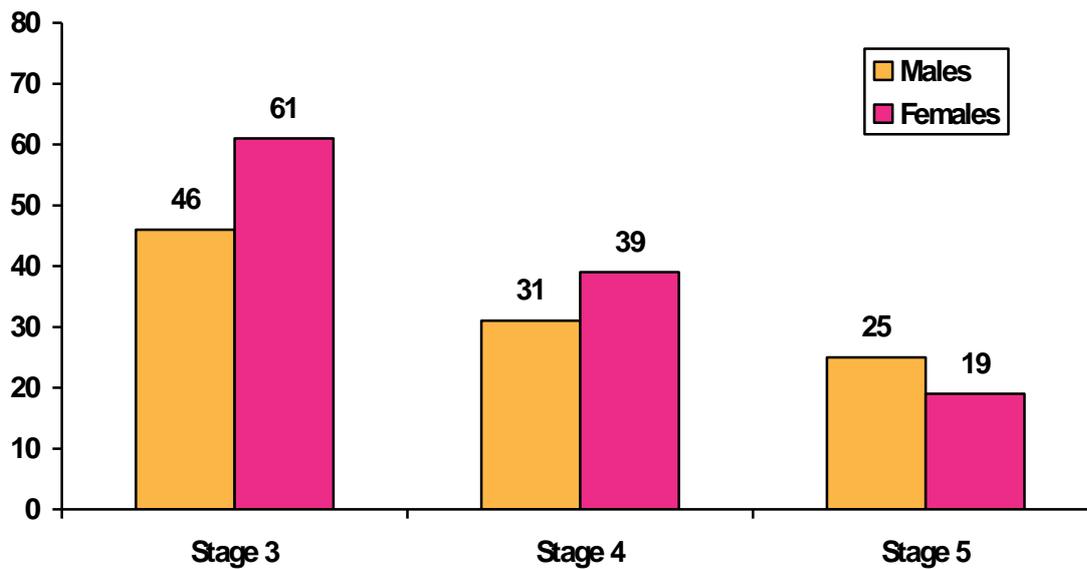
#### Participation in Stage 4 and 5 meetings

- 2.35 The unit-level data also provide an estimate of the number and proportion of CRP-eligible offenders for whom there was evidence that each subsequent stage of the process had been completed. This suggests that female offenders were somewhat more likely to have evidence of a Stage 4 meeting (39%, compared with 31% of males) and to slightly less likely to have evidence of a Stage 5 meeting (19%, compared with 25% of males).
- 2.36 Overall, the attrition rate is striking, even after offenders have engaged meaningfully with the project – for example, of all CRP-eligible offenders who took part in a Stage 3 meeting, only 35% took part at Stage 5. However, it should not be assumed that the process of attrition is entirely linear: for example, 10% of those for whom there was no evidence of a meeting at Stage 4 did appear to have taken part in a Stage 5 meeting. While this may be partly about incomplete records for individuals involved in the project, it may also suggest that some of those who disengage (formally or informally) during the course of their sentence may re-engage as they approach release and develop a stronger awareness of their needs or motivation to address them.

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<sup>14</sup> It should be noted that the gap between admission and earliest release date does not relate directly to sentence length, as offenders may have been transferred from other establishments, or have already served time on remand.

**Figure 2.2 Percentage of eligible admissions with evidence of meetings at Stages 3, 4 and 5**



Source: Unit-level monitoring data (based on unique admissions between May 2012 and March 2013)

Note: Does not include data for HMP Greenock

Additional evidence from the aggregate-level data for the most recent period

2.37 The aggregate data, covering the period October 2013 to March 2014 (inclusive), offer an alternative perspective on the issue of engagement. These show, within that period, the total number of offenders eligible for the CRP and the number who were due to have, and actually had, a meeting at each stage (see Table 2.1). It should be noted that there are some inconsistencies in these returns and that no direct comparison is possible with the unit-level data (as these do not represent a single cohort of offenders moving through the process but the level of each type of activity within a specific time frame, and with a changing cast of offenders). Overall, however, these figures reinforce the suggestion from the unit-level data that there is significant attrition at each stage and across the process as a whole.

**Table 2.1 Number of offenders engaged at each stage of the CRP, by gender (October 2013-March 2014 inclusive)**

	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>All</b>
Qualify for the CRP	122	57	179
Initially engaged in the CRP	116	46	162
<i>Stage 2a</i>			
Meetings required	118	49	167
Undertaken	59	31	90
<i>Stage 2b</i>			
Meetings required	117	50	167
Undertaken	96	40	136
<i>Stage 3</i>			
Meetings required	95	32	127
Undertaken	20	23	43
<i>Stage 4</i>			
Meetings required	339	45	384
Undertaken	64	34	98
<i>Stage 5</i>			
Meetings required	56	14	70
Undertaken	37	13	50

Source: Aggregate-level monitoring data (based on activity by stage within period Oct 2013-March 2014)

2.38 For example, Table 2.1 shows that in total, 127 Stage 3 meetings were scheduled for this period and, of these, only 43 (or 34%) actually took place. (It is worth noting that this represents a lower level of activity than was suggested by the unit-level data, and it is not clear why the number of Stage 3 meetings was so low during this period.) The number of Stage 4 and Stage 5 reviews required also significantly outnumbered those conducted. At Stage 4, for example, 384 reviews were required during this period but only 98 (26%) were recorded as having taken place. During this period, the proportion of Stage 4 reviews going ahead was much higher for female than male offenders (76% compared with 19%). At Stage 5, some 70 reviews were required, 50 of which (or 71%) took place. Again, the proportion going ahead was higher for female than male offenders (93% compared with 66%).

2.39 There are two main possible explanations for this gap between meetings 'required' and proceeding: first, that there are failings on the staff side to progress, facilitate or attend such meetings; second, that offenders are disengaging, formally or informally, in advance of meetings being held. Both possibilities are explored through the qualitative data in subsequent chapters.

#### Indicators of engagement with CJSW and other CRP-related activity 'beyond the prison gate'

2.40 Although the main focus of the evaluation was on the operation of the CRP within the four prison settings, aggregate data provided by CJSW also shed some light on CRP-related activity within partner organisations. In this section, we review

evidence about the extent of offender engagement with CJSW and other agencies in the community.

#### Engagement between CJSW and offenders

- 2.41 The aggregate-level monitoring data suggest that, between October 2013 and March 2014, CJSW conducted 145 CRP interviews with CRP participants within prison settings. Not surprisingly, given the total number of male offenders involved in the project, the vast majority of these involved Dundee CJSW (139). Even allowing for overall levels of engagement, however, the number of CRP meetings recorded by Lanarkshire CJSW during this period (just 6) was especially low and does not appear to be entirely consistent with soft indicators of CJSW activity from the qualitative interviews. The reason for this apparent discrepancy is not clear.
- 2.42 Supplementary information provided to the evaluation team by CJSW in the two areas also allows a basic comparison of the number of requests for voluntary throughcare in the period 2011 to 2014. The figures for the more recent period include those offenders who were referred to CJSW through the CRP, in addition to those who might otherwise have requested support (via a prison social worker or once released into the community) under the existing voluntary throughcare provision. This provides some evidence – particularly in relation to male offenders – of a sharp increase in such requests in comparison to the period prior to the introduction of CRP.

**Table 2.2 Requests for voluntary throughcare in Dundee and Lanarkshire CJSW areas (2011-2014)**

	<b>Dundee (Male offenders)</b>	<b>Lanarkshire (Female offenders)</b>
2011-12	63	20
2012-13	200	22
2013-14	255	37

Source: Supplementary statistics provided by CJSW in relevant areas

2.43 Unfortunately, neither the unit-level nor aggregate-level monitoring data provide any means of gauging the number or proportion of offenders who engaged directly with CJSW in the community upon release (for example, by attending an initial meeting). Some indication of the extent of community engagement is, however, provided by the qualitative data in Chapter 5.

#### Referrals made by CJSW to external service providers

2.44 Aggregate-level data from CJSW for the period October 2013 to March 2014 do, however, provide an indication of the level of referral to external agencies. As the following table shows, during this time, a total of 589 referrals were made (it should be noted that multiple referrals may have been made for any one individual). Not surprisingly, given the numbers associated with the CRP at HMP Perth, the vast majority of these were in Dundee. Across the CRP as a whole, needs were most likely to be identified in relation to housing, addictions and benefits. The overall volume and the pattern of referrals provides some indication of where additional resource may be required as a result of a more systematic approach to voluntary throughcare – an issue we return to in the concluding chapter.

**Table 2.3 Referrals to external partner agencies by CJSW in Dundee and Lanarkshire (October 2013-March 2014 inclusive)**

Identified needs	Referral made to external partner		
	Dundee	Lanarkshire	All
Housing	181	8	189
Addictions	183	13	196
Health Care	9	8	17
Benefits	177	8	185
Education	2	0	2
Total	552	37	589

Source: Aggregate-level monitoring data (based on activity by stage within period Oct 2013-March 2014)

2.45 From these data, it is not possible to determine the *difference* that the CRP made – in other words, the extent to which the project resulted in referrals that would not otherwise have been made.

#### Summary

2.46 All four sites operated a process that was recognisably part of the CRP, in that it involved structured engagement with eligible offenders through five broad stages; referral to CJSW; and an element of coordinated pre- and post-release support.

2.47 But there were significant variations in how each establishment organised itself to deliver these activities and, to a lesser extent, in the character of the activities themselves. There were also some modifications to the process during the period in which the CRP was running, both locally and at the level of the project as a whole.

2.48 The total number of offenders eligible for and actually participating in the CRP was relatively small in all prisons except HMP Perth, raising questions about the scope to generalise from a pilot phase in which it was not necessarily possible to achieve

the 'critical mass' needed for all relevant staff to be fully aware of (and trained in) the project and for the project to have a sufficiently high profile to 'compete' with other services and initiatives already operating within the prisons.

- 2.49 Not all eligible offenders were necessarily identified. The sharp increase in numbers identified as eligible after March 2013 suggests that this was not happening systematically in the period before then.
- 2.50 An understanding of the potential and actual engagement with the CRP requires a more comprehensive and accurate set of monitoring data than was generated in the course of the project to date. Although it has been possible to piece together a broad picture of the operation of the CRP, this needs to be treated cautiously because of problems with the data. Any future provision will require better information.
- 2.51 What might be considered the minimal level of meaningful engagement with the CRP – participation in a Comprehensive Screen (Stage 3) – appears to have happened in relation to around half of eligible admissions.
- 2.52 The unit-level data indicate that this level of minimum engagement with the CRP was slightly higher (proportionately) among female than male offenders, and among those serving slightly longer sentences.
- 2.53 Both sets of monitoring data suggest a fairly high degree of attrition beyond Stage 3. The aggregate data, in particular, indicate that many of the meetings due to take place (between October 2013 and March 2014) did not actually proceed. The question of why engagement with the later stages of the CRP process within prisons tailed off in this way is explored in the following chapters.
- 2.54 Monitoring data from CJSW – especially in Dundee – provide evidence that offenders are being referred to other services in the community. What is less clear is the extent to which such referrals would have been generated in other ways in the absence of the project or the extent to which offenders are interacting directly with CJSW.

### **3 PRACTITIONER VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES OF THE CRP PROCESS**

- 3.1 This chapter moves from a descriptive account of how the CRP was implemented in each setting to an exploration of the views and experiences of those involved in its delivery. It concentrates on what might be regarded as the core CRP activities outlined in the original project guidance (and expressed as outputs in the CRP logic model). The chapter examines practitioner views and experiences in relation to key stages of the CRP process and delivery of key tasks, the CRP paperwork and information requirements, and the adequacy of the training and resources associated with the project.
- 3.2 The emphasis of the chapter is on the prison-based stages of the CRP process. This reflects the concentration of both CRP and evaluation activity. The views and experiences presented are those of staff from SPS, CJSW and, to a limited extent, the SCS. Offender views and experience are largely addressed in relation to outcomes in Chapter 5.
- 3.3 We will argue that, despite a general consensus among all practitioner groups that more should be done to address reoffending amongst short-term offenders, support for the CRP was undermined by concern about specific aspects of the process and, in particular, by dissatisfaction with the paperwork and training associated with the project.

#### **The CRP process: refining the pathway**

- 3.4 The CRP process was fairly closely structured, with defined activities and associated paperwork, and – despite general support for the concept of throughcare for short-term offenders – there were mixed views about these more detailed aspects of the process. Some of the issues raised by interviewees were technical; some were more wide-reaching but all are relevant to the way the CRP is operating. Issues covered here include: the transfer of the CJSW report; the defined CRP stages; making referrals; the CRP paperwork and information recording.

#### Transfer of the CJSW report

- 3.5 The CJSW report was seen as integral to the Stage 3 Comprehensive Screen interview, providing background for the PO and the basis for discussion and challenge. The CRP process, thus, incorporated the transfer of an electronic copy of the report from the sentencing court to the receiving prison (HMP Perth or HMP Cornton Vale – convicted offenders are not generally sent directly to Edinburgh and Greenock but are transferred there from Cornton Vale). An electronic version was required so it could be saved and made available to staff via PR2. Direct transfer from the court was intended to ensure that reports were available without delay at the beginning of the process. Requesting a copy of the report from CJSW was regarded as a secondary route for obtaining a report when one was not forthcoming from the court.
- 3.6 Feedback from SPS staff during the early phase of CRP indicated that CJSW reports were not being provided by the sentencing court in a substantial proportion of cases with implications for carrying out the needs assessment process as originally envisaged. Follow-up work by the Scottish Government project manager in the latter half of 2013 established that, in a significant proportion of cases, particularly in relation to male offenders, there was simply no CJSW report

requested by the court, meaning that this part of the CRP process could not be fulfilled.

- 3.7 The monitoring data collected during the latter period in which the project operated and after the issue of absent reports had been followed up provides fuller information on the provision of CJSW reports during the period October 2013 to March 2014. The figures show that in roughly a fifth of cases (22%) there was no CJSW report prepared, in a third of cases (34%) the report was provided by the courts, in a further third (36%) the report was provided by CJSW and in a small proportion of cases (8%), a report was apparently prepared but was not provided to SPS by either the courts or CJSW. Thus, the data suggest that SPS had access to a CJSW report as envisaged in around two thirds of cases, with half coming from the courts as originally proposed, and half from CJSW. The small proportion of cases where no report is prepared for the court means there is only limited scope to increase the availability of reports to the prisons further.
- 3.8 Given the importance of the CJSW reports to the process and the value of ensuring an efficient process for receiving them, interviews with court staff explored their experience of the transfer process and their perceptions of the issues which contributed to their non-transfer. Staff indicated a number of issues, although the significance of some of these had reduced as the project progressed and the Scottish Government and SCS staff took action to address the problem:
- There had been a lack of familiarity with the requirement among court staff (particularly those dealing with women CRP participants) since it arose relatively infrequently, and there was some initial confusion about who exactly was responsible for ensuring that the report was transferred (e.g. the court clerk or the minute taker).
  - There had been a lack of understanding among some court staff about why the transfer was required.
  - There were occasional oversights by staff following the completion of a court sitting, in the context of a range of other tasks to be undertaken – one court reported adding the task to their own end of court checklist, and the longer-term option of flagging up on the SCS's organisation-wide system was raised.
- 3.9 Staff from different courts indicated that they generally followed a practice of sending CJSW reports as pdf files, created by scanning hard copies of the reports. There were two practices here: scanning reports for those given a custodial sentence after the hearing or scanning all reports routinely prior to the court hearing. The latter approach seemed to make it more likely that the transfer of the report was treated as a routine part of court practice.
- 3.10 Staff raised three issues in the context of any continuation of the requirement to transfer CJSW reports from the court to the prison:
- Staff highlighted the fact that the courts did not know definitively which prison someone was being sent to. While this was not an issue in the course of the pilot, it might become more of an issue if the requirement was to be extended to all cases.

- There were data protection concerns in relation to emailing sensitive personal information.
  - Despite guidance that reports should be in pdf format, there was uncertainty in one court area as to whether a Word or pdf version of the report was required and clarification was sought on this.
- 3.11 Staff also questioned the general role of the courts in the CRP process. Court staff in one area explained that a hard copy of the report – if one was prepared for the court – would generally be sent with the warrant accompanying the offender to the receiving prison. They suggested that it might be easier for the receiving prison to scan this or for the electronic version of the report to be requested from and sent by the relevant CJSW office. Certainly, prisons and CJSW staff reported good working arrangements for requesting and providing reports when one was not forthcoming from the court. CJSW offices were in some cases able to provide previously prepared reports, even if one was not available in relation to the current sentence.
- 3.12 It was clear from the interviews that initial internal communication with court staff had been too focused on the task rather than its wider purpose. Staff reported that they only became aware of the CRP and the purpose of sending the report in the latter stages of the project and, even then, were not fully convinced of the value of their role in the process, as opposed to a direct transfer from CJSW to the prison, or scanning of hard copies reports in the prison. Experience to date suggests that there may be merit in reconsidering the role of SCS in the process. However, should their role continue, it will be important that staff are fully aware of and understand their part in the process, that arrangements are as streamlined as possible to facilitate transfer, and that a national approach to the task is agreed, and built into SCS's standard working practices.

### The stages of the CRP pathway

- 3.13 Staff (SPS and to a lesser extent CJSW) offered a range of views on the individual activities which form part of the CRP process: these are addressed in turn below.

#### Immediate Needs Screen (Stage 2)

- 3.14 The Immediate Needs Screening (incorporating the SPS Core Screen) is carried out in the first few days in custody. This follows the process carried out for all offenders on arrival at prison in identifying needs (part 2a), but those eligible to take part in CRP are offered the opportunity to do so at this point (part 2b). A small number of interviewees commented on this stage in the process.
- 3.15 At Cornton Vale, this responsibility lay with admissions staff and there had been issues with staff there not completing the correct paperwork for those eligible for the project, which meant that this then had to be followed up by an administrative worker. This was identified as a problem associated with new officers coming into the admission role (e.g. as a result of staff movement within the prison).
- 3.16 At Perth, it was decided to carry out Stage 2b as a separate task. From mid 2013, this has been carried out by staff in the Link Centre in the couple of days following admission to the prison rather than as part of the standard admissions process. This offered two perceived benefits: first, the Link Centre staff had greater familiarity with the process than admissions staff and were able to take a more proactive

approach to promoting the scheme; second, it was carried out at a potentially more conducive time and in a potentially more conducive atmosphere for the offender, away from the stress of the initial admissions process. Figures derived from the monitoring data indicate that this change of approach has coincided with an upturn in engagement with the CRP process at HMP Perth.

- 3.17 In looking ahead, the experiences at the two prisons indicate some issues associated with awareness of the CRP across the staffing body during the project, and scope for optimising engagement if the initial CRP offer is made by appropriately briefed staff at an appropriate time.

### Comprehensive Screen (Stage 3)

- 3.18 The Comprehensive Screen was originally planned to take place within the first 10 days in custody. SPS staff were of the view that this was too soon following someone's arrival in prison and offenders were not necessarily ready to engage with the process in a constructive way:

"I've seen it and they're just not thinking straight at all. And they just bombard them whatever, with, you need this, you need this, you need this when you're in here." SPS7

- 3.19 Those serving a first sentence, in particular, were often disorientated and adjusting to the prison environment; many offenders were also still in an unstable state because of addiction issues. Interviews with offenders provided support for this view. One indicated, for example, that "everything was a bit much to take in...it was a bit of a blur" (OP14).

- 3.20 In response to feedback based on the experience of staff – and with the agreement of the Steering Group, subject to certain monitoring provisions – the Comprehensive Screen was moved back to within 28 days of arrival in prison.

- 3.21 Timing aside, specific comments on the Comprehensive Screen were broadly positive, particularly in respect of the use of the CJSW report, with staff reporting that they found this to be a useful tool in getting to know the offender and in informing the needs assessment process:

"...I think it gives you an idea of what the prisoner's been like at that time, what's led to their crime, because it obviously gives you information on their family background or substance misuse...I would read it before I interviewed the prisoner, just so that I had so that if what they're saying, you can see that it does tie up... I think it gives you a good basis to move forward with the prisoner... you get a bit more of an understanding of the person." SPS19

- 3.22 This PO also indicated that the requirement to consult the CJSW report had changed their general approach to dealing with short-term offenders in that they would not previously have given much consideration to the offence and background of this group of individuals.

- 3.23 While most SPS staff were positive about the use of the CJSW report, one reported that its use as part of the Comprehensive Screen could be problematic if the offender disagreed with the content:

“For instance, as an example, somebody had been described as being non-communicative or that [they had a] chaotic lifestyle, ‘I’d disagree with that, that didn’t happen!’ ‘Oh right really, okay!’ You’re well within your rights to disagree with that. Then what? It’s quite difficult because as a personal officer your prisoner has to trust that you believe them whether you do or you don’t so then it’s the challenging and the understanding how the prisoner feels because there is an element that the writer has met them once! So it’s quite difficult...” SPS9

3.24 The fact that no CJSW report was available in a proportion of cases (see para 3.7) was noted by SPS staff as an issue, although it was generally agreed that this situation had improved. There were also comments, however, indicating that SPS staff did not always know where to access CJSW reports.

3.25 Others who had reservations about the Comprehensive Screen (Stage 3) felt either that it tended not to highlight many new issues beyond those already captured at the Stage 2 screening or that new needs were more likely to come to light during the Standard Review (at Stage 4), once a relationship had been established between the offender and PO.

“I would argue the monthly reviews thereafter become more and more important because you’re going to get more out of your prisoner as that trust is built up and as they realise that this guy’s actually here to help me. The process itself is very much geared up to, in my opinion, the Stage 3, which is where the personal officer comes in...but I would argue, over the course of time and they’ve built up trust and getting to know each other, you’ll have more needs come forward at the monthly reviews.” SPS16

3.26 This view aligned with the general view expressed by other SPS staff who felt that it took time to develop a level of trust with offenders which allowed them to open up about issues affecting their lives. This perhaps highlights the importance of seeing the Comprehensive Screen as the start of a process of ongoing needs assessment and review, rather than as an end itself.

#### Standard and Summary Reviews (Stages 4 and 5)

3.27 Stage 4 meetings (Standard Reviews) attracted a limited amount of comment from interviewees. As noted above, a small number of interviewees saw this as the key phase of the process for identifying needs, once an offender was settled into prison life and the PO was getting to know the individual. In terms of the frequency of the reviews there were two views on this: firstly that a monthly review (the frequency indicated in the CRP guidance) was ‘about right’ or ‘not unrealistic’; and secondly that reviews should instead be undertaken on an ‘as required’ basis responding, for example, to a change in circumstances. There was also a view that this stage of the process should be used to review interaction and activity over the previous month and that the recording requirements should involve capturing this in a narrative form. This reflected a more general dissatisfaction with the tick-box format of the forms as discussed further in paras 3.46 to 3.54 below.

## The pre-release meeting

3.28 It was envisaged that the pre-release meeting would take place four or five weeks prior to release and that the meeting would be used to agree a plan for the offender's release, with identification of appropriate community services and support. At three of the prisons, the pre-release meeting or an additional CJSW meeting was typically held two or three weeks prior to the date of liberation. It thus appears that a consensus has developed about the need for a meeting as close as possible to release, because of the possibility that offender needs might emerge or change (e.g. an anticipated housing arrangement may break down). As one CJSW interviewee explained:

“... given the chaotic nature of a lot of the guys, six weeks is a lifetime, d' you know? ... What we've tried to do is see them the week or the fortnight before they get out. That's been really successful...” CJSW5

3.29 This adaptation might, therefore, be usefully incorporated into the process on a more formal basis.

3.30 Representation at the pre-release meeting was a key issue for CJSW interviewees. Those present at the meeting typically comprised the offender, a prison officer (though not necessarily the offender's PO) and a CJSW support worker. Relevant POs were not always able to attend because of shift patterns, leave and other commitments, although there were reports of POs coming in on days off for such meetings. The absence of appropriate POs caused some frustration amongst CJSW workers who did not find that substitute officers could always make a useful contribution to the meeting; however, alongside this, CJSW workers also spoke positively of meetings where POs had attended and been able to provide valuable input to the meeting:

“...it's very beneficial to have their Personal Officer there... We've had a few good ones ... and they can [say] 'What about this? What about the problems with your family?' – something like that – which they're not always forthcoming in telling you.” CJSW6

3.31 More generally, CJSW workers recognised that prison staff had an existing relationship with individual offenders and that their attendance at meetings could be helpful in providing a reassuring presence.

3.32 There was also evidence of POs themselves valuing the opportunity to attend such meetings and contribute to the reintegration process:

“It's good for me to hear them discussing about what happened when she was out last. ... it's good for me to speak to social work, you know, and, and input how that person's been doing well in prison and if I've got any comments how I think they should be doing things when they're out. It's just, it's good to see, I've only done a couple but it's good to see the other side from when they're out of prison as well, which we don't get to see enough of.” SPS5

3.33 The involvement of an officer who dealt with vulnerable offenders at one prison at such meetings also attracted positive comment. One CJSW worker described how

the officer had been instrumental in securing the attendance of other agencies and how she and the officer had worked together at the meeting to arrive at a plan for release.

- 3.34 Attendance by other agencies at pre-release meetings did not, however, appear to be particularly common, although one SPS interviewee said it was something they were aware of and were working to address. CJSW representatives cited a small number of examples where other agencies, particularly drugs workers, had been involved, providing the opportunity for effective discussion and planning for release. However, the process for including other agencies in these meetings did not seem very consistent or clear. At one prison the designated PO or hall manger notified relevant agencies of meetings; at another a CJSW worker reported notifying prison drugs workers of the meetings although they did not often attend; at another site, a CJSW worker reported instances where she had alerted the drugs worker to a forthcoming meeting which had allowed her to make arrangements to attend. A number of SPS and CJSW interviewees felt that ensuring attendance of appropriate people would be one way of enhancing the value of the pre-release meeting.

#### Non-completion of CRP stages

- 3.35 The monitoring data indicated that a significant proportion of scheduled CRP meetings do not go ahead as planned. This phenomenon was also recognised by staff (SPS and CJSW), who indicated a number of factors related to offender motivation which they saw as contributing this situation, and leading to non-attendance:
- Offender apathy on the day of a particular scheduled meeting;
  - Offender preference for other activities on the day of scheduled meeting;
  - Offenders not wishing to spend time waiting in the Link Centre (where this was used as a meeting venue) for a range of reasons (e.g. the availability of more attractive options; the wish to avoid the risk of intimidation from other inmates);
  - Offenders disengaging (informally) from the process once they felt their (practical) needs had been met.
- 3.36 CJSW staff also indicated that in their experience many offenders had low levels of awareness of CRP and/or low levels of motivation to engage from the outset, and that this was compounded by prisons opting to engage people on the scheme initially and keep them on the scheme subsequently, rather than facilitating formal disengagement. This was felt to be a particular issue at Perth where the CJSW team continued to schedule meetings with participants in the absence of formal disengagement resulting in high levels of non-appearance at meetings (as indicated by the monitoring data).
- 3.37 The issue of offender motivation is discussed further in Chapters 4 and 5. However, it was also recognised by POs and managers that SPS staff also had a role in making the CRP stages happen, and that staff not prioritising the task or taking an active role in encouraging people to take part in meetings could also be a factor. Here the evaluation found that different sites followed different managerial practices in addressing this. The administrative worker in one prison sent reminders to hall managers about scheduled activities which had not taken place. In another site staff

had access to a database indicating when tasks were due, and the hall manager took an active role in prompting staff and following up the reasons for non-completion; elsewhere there was a more informal approach to prompts between the manager and PO. The strategies in place will all offer possible lessons as to the steps that might be taken to help ensure that CRP tasks are prioritised and carried out.

- 3.38 There was, however, also a view amongst some hall staff that there was no organisational reason for CRP tasks not to be carried out, although they acknowledged there may sometimes be a delay because of leave or shift patterns. One of the prisons appeared to follow a practice of allocating tasks to staff other than individual POs to get round this, and one interviewee felt that the CRP information held on PR2 allowed meetings to go ahead effectively in this way. However, this may not be an optimal arrangement if done on a regular basis as it may not support the sort of continuity of relationship (in this case the PO-offender relationship) which appears helpful to maintaining offender engagement in throughcare. This is explored further in Chapter 5.

#### Summary of views on the individual stages

- 3.39 Within the context of general support for a staged approach to needs assessment, the key messages emerging from the evaluation appear to be around refining the timing of the first and last interventions, and ensuring the right people are involved at each stage, whether that be appropriately briefed staff at the first stages of the process, or specific POs (where possible) and relevant agencies at the latter stages; and working to ensure meetings go ahead as planned. For those issues more readily within the control of the prison, there was already positive action in evidence in adapting the process in terms of timings in particular, and a number of different supervisory strategies were in place to help ensure CRP stages went ahead successfully.

#### Making referrals in response to needs

- 3.40 The CRP process involves SPS staff making appropriate referrals to agencies and support services in response to identified offender needs. SPS interviewees indicated that these most commonly related to housing, addictions and benefits. The evaluation identified a range of approaches to making referrals, both within and between prisons, with most POs describing their role in relation to the CRP as being similar to their non-CRP role: they made referrals by encouraging offenders to make self-referrals; by highlighting for the Link Centre to pick up and refer on to appropriate agencies; or by raising referrals directly with agencies on PR2. The approach adopted was influenced by the PO's understanding of their role in relation to the CRP, as well as their existing knowledge and competence in relation to making referrals.
- 3.41 In relation to understanding of their role, for example, some POs considered that it was their job to complete the CRP forms but not personally to raise or follow up the referrals. Where this practice was followed, there was nevertheless concern that this approach reduced the extent to which staff felt involved in the process and the likelihood of them following up on behalf of offenders.
- 3.42 In relation to knowledge and expertise, there was an indication that not all staff knew how to make referrals on PR2 or were confident in doing so. A manager

highlighted that knowledge in using PR2 was an issue and that his preference was for Link Centre staff to put referrals on the system to ensure this was done correctly. Another manager commented on the use of paper referrals which could be overlooked and suggested it was preferable that referrals were made directly on PR2 to be picked up in the Link Centre and passed on to relevant staff or agencies.

- 3.43 Practices varied in relation to following up referrals: most often this was done via the Link Centre, usually by phone, although there were some instances of POs following up directly with services and agencies. Although it is possible to track referrals on PR2, there was a suggestion that not all staff knew about this – one PO indicated he had only recently become aware of this.
- 3.44 Mostly, though, there was what could be described as a ‘hands off’ approach once an agency referral was made. However, whether or not an agency had a presence and a profile within a prison appeared to be a factor here. POs appeared to have more direct knowledge of and dealings with such agencies, with Shine, Circle and housing representatives all mentioned in this context.
- 3.45 The experience of staff as reported in interviews suggest that referrals are raised in a range of ways and that some staff at least may approach this task in a fairly ‘transactional’ manner; i.e. they do not take full ownership in pursuing referrals on behalf of offenders. Thus, there appears to be scope to develop a more consistent approach to referrals resulting from the CRP process. This might involve clarifying expectations of the staff role, and encouraging staff to take ownership of the process, as well as ensuring staff have the necessary knowledge and skills in terms of making and following up referrals on PR2, all with implications for staff training (an issue discussed further in paras 3.55 to 3.69 below)

#### CRP paperwork and information recording

- 3.46 The CRP paperwork and procedures for information recording attracted significant comment, with widespread dissatisfaction amongst POs with the forms used for recording the outcome of CRP meetings with offenders, and the process for uploading these to PR2. One PO commented as follows, expressing the views put forward by other SPS colleagues:

“I’m not a fan of the forms. I think they are quite poor. I think they could be re-looked at”...*He continued describing his experience of the process for uploading the forms:* “...So maybe that could be rejigged. And this having to do it there, and then you’ve got to save it there, and then, from there, you’ve got to go into PR2 and then attach a document... and then you go to do it, and ... oh, it’s not been opened up, so we have to then go into his community integration plan to kick-start that ...and then you’ve got ...and it’s just a *kerfuffle*...” SPS14

- 3.47 A common view was that there were too many different forms and staff were also unhappy about the effort involved in completing paper forms, typing up and uploading the information onto PR2:

“What’s the logic of doing paperwork when it can all be done electronically?” SPS13

3.48 There was evidence of local variations and adaptations to the information rerecording system at both organisational and individual levels. As noted above one prison had adopted a PR2 based recording system which staff were positive about; one used an administrative resource to type up handwritten forms submitted by POs; and another interviewee elsewhere noted the practice of adopting a narrative approach to the Stage 4 reviews, rather than using the tick boxes on the standard CRP form. The use of administrative support helped keep information recording up to date, but there was a concern that it introduced scope for transcribing errors, and – more importantly – reduced the level of PO ‘ownership’ of the process. Generally, though, there was a view that the information recording process needed to be ‘streamlined’ and/or more closely aligned with the PR2-based ICM process which some staff were familiar with.

3.49 In relation to the design of the forms in particular, SPS staff were often critical of the prescriptive format, which many felt encouraged a ‘tick box’ approach to staff-offender interaction and needs assessment. This was seen as not sitting comfortably with the more personal approach which they adopted in relation to their wider PO duties:

“...the way the forms are, it’s very easy to just go tick, tick, tick.” SPS6

“It really just is a paper exercise for us. That’s all I feel this is for me is a paper exercise and that’s it.” SPS1

3.50 This officer went on to describe how the paperwork contributed to their perception of CRP as a process in which they did not have an integral role; rather, they saw themselves as providing information to feed in to a process which operated outwith the normal PO-offender relationship:

“...once I do this it goes away ... and that’s it, I don’t know [what happens next]”. SPS1

3.51 Another officer outlined how people may be able to complete the CRP paperwork without engaging with the offender in any substantive way:

“Some people maybe wouldn’t even bother interviewing the prisoner, they’d just be like that, ‘Yeah, yeah. Oh, she’s engaging with that. She’s engaging with that. Yeah. I know she’s not been engaging so more referrals made’, but not said to the prisoner, ‘Do you want these referrals? Do you feel you need these issues, because -?’ And the first one obviously is questions about, ‘Have you seen the criminal justice report?’ So you know that you’re supposed to discuss it with the prisoner, but then for the form, some people will just, ‘Oh, just say yes, or no’.” SPS5

3.52 There were a number of specific issues reported with how some staff were completing the forms, including reported examples of people cutting and pasting narrative content from one form to the next, and completing either the tick boxes or the narrative box but not both. More generally, some staff appeared unclear about the expectations about how they should complete the forms:

“As I say, because it’s the first time I’d done a comprehensive one and, at the end, I wasn’t sure if what I was putting in was entirely

*correct...* And I'm writing that, and I'm thinking, 'Should I actually be writing this?', but I thought, 'No. That's what I *want* to put.'" SPS3

- 3.53 It is worth noting that the views on the forms and information recording requirements were expressed most strongly by frontline staff but were also echoed by supervisors and managers who recognised the impact this could have on the success of the process:

"If we have forms that are clunky for want of a better word, the process of doing it, that then demotivates staff as well. The easier something is for staff to do, the more likely it is to be done." SPS6

- 3.54 The negative perception of the forms and procedures for information recording suggests that this is something which requires attention to ensure it does not hinder any future development of throughcare for short-term offenders. Staff comments indicated more favourable attitudes towards the ICM recording system and there may be lessons to be learnt here. More generally, the evaluation suggests that more work is required to arrive at a streamlined set of documentation (paper or electronic) which staff can see supports and adds value to the work they do with offenders, and that appropriate training and accessible guidance needs to be provided to ensure staff are carrying out their duties in a consistent and confident way.

### **Staff views on training, support and supervision**

- 3.55 When the CRP was initially launched in spring 2012, introductory presentations were held at the relevant prisons. In spring 2013, at the point at which the project was given additional resource within the Scottish Government, additional sessions were held for SPS staff. In addition, two events were held at the SPS College, bringing together staff from SPS and CJSW involved in delivering CRP. At a local level, managerial staff in prisons also offered some supplementary support to staff on a proactive and/or reactive basis.
- 3.56 The interviews explored staff views of the adequacy of this training and the extent to which staff felt equipped to carry out CRP-related work.
- 3.57 Overall, while staff were broadly aware of the purpose of the CRP, the evaluation found a low level of knowledge and understanding of the specifics of the CRP process among many frontline SPS staff. Although there was a minority view that the process did not merit significant training input, it was more common for staff to express dissatisfaction with the limited extent and character of the training and support they had received.
- 3.58 Despite training having been offered, some staff simply reported not having received any – "It's null and void. I've had no training" (SPS2) – and had effectively worked the process out for themselves. Others did recall attending either the original or the more recent training sessions but felt that these had been somewhat cursory:

"It was...here's your forms, they are on the computer here, you can print them off...it was about half an hour, it was quite poor..." SPS17

3.59 More generally, there was a view that early communication about the project had been inadequate – in particular, that it was announced without appropriate consultation or advance warning:

“...It’s just, so this is happening. You’re the pilot and you’re it... stuff we were doing anyway, but different forms; it wasn’t discussed with staff.” SPS7

3.60 Staff also commented on a lack of routinely available guidance on the process with a number of interviewees suggesting that a checklist or flow chart or something similar would be a useful aid to their work. It is worth noting that staff at Perth had developed such a chart reflecting the process in their own local environment.

3.61 Residential managers also questioned the level of training provided for staff, and indicated that they themselves were training others based on limited knowledge, and staff acknowledged the likely impact of this in leading to inconsistencies in practice:

“There was no actually formal training. I think that that’s helped create issues they’re finding with each site, it’s sort of different in doing things, because a lot of it was left to our own interpretation on things.” SPS2

3.62 It is possible to see how the narrow geographic focus of the project has been a compounding factor here, in the women’s prisons in particular. Because of the low numbers going through the programme, any initial training was not reinforced by sufficient on the job experience to allow the process to become properly embedded and individual members of staff lacked the exposure to the process needed to develop expertise. Further, what seemed a theoretically sound approach of identifying individual staff to act as CRP ‘champions’ in their area proved unsustainable because these staff moved on before their colleagues had gained enough experience to take on the process.

3.63 Some staff were clear about the implications of the perceived inadequacies in staff understanding and training for the success of the process as a whole:

“How can someone who has never seen one of these [the CRP forms] be expected to go through it with a prisoner and that is basically the size of it...” SPS2

“I think if they’ve not got a clear understanding of what a particular project’s aims are then they can’t advise the prisoners the best that they can.” SPS11

3.64 In addition to CRP-specific training issues, interviewees also noted other training and competency issues which impacted on their ability or the ability of others to deliver the CRP process effectively. These related to using PR2, making referrals, and knowledge and experience of the ICM process for long-term offenders which some staff indicated provided a useful background to the process.

3.65 SPS staff were not the only group to raise the issue of knowledge and understanding. Court staff offered similar comments:

“I think it’s like everything else. If you know why you are having to do something, you can understand it, whereas if it’s just a case of ‘This is what you have to do’ but you don’t understand why, then it’s...yet another job we’ve got to do...” CS1

3.66 Here the requirement to ensure transfer of the CJSW report in appropriate cases had been agreed centrally and passed down to sheriff clerks from SCS headquarters, and sheriff clerks had passed on to relevant staff. It was not until the autumn of 2013, however, that staff had understood the background to the request.

3.67 Knowledge and understanding did not, however, appear to be a significant issue for CJSW staff. This group perceived their CRP role to be largely in line with their existing throughcare responsibilities and duties and in that context did not appear to see themselves as having significant training needs:

“It’s resettlement by another name...[The aim is to] link people with appropriate services prior to being released as well, as they were ready...The main difference being that there is now a formal pre-release meeting...” CJSW5

3.68 The CRP paperwork did not impact on CJSW to any great extent and they responded to referrals in much the same way as they would have done with previous voluntary requests for throughcare. As such, CJSW staff had generally relied on a combination of project documentation, team briefings and previous experience. Those that had come into post more recently also reported shadowing colleagues. However, there were positive comments from CJSW staff about the training workshops at the SPS College which had brought staff (SPS and CJSW) together, and one support worker suggested that finding out more about the role of prison officers through job shadowing might be beneficial.

3.69 Overall, then, staff training on CRP appears to have been inadequate – especially within prisons, but also to a lesser extent within the courts. Many frontline staff within SPS did not feel they had been involved or engaged at the outset, and thought that the training they had received had conveyed too little detail about the process or rationale for the project. This apparent lack of information and training appears to have had implications for staff buy-in to the CRP process and is something that would need to be addressed in any future development of the project – a theme returned to in Chapter 7.

## **Staff views of the resourcing of the CRP**

### Resource implications for the SPS

3.70 As discussed earlier, a range of different SPS staff were involved in delivering the CRP process, including POs, residential managers, other managers (Link Centre/ICM/offender outcome managers), Link Centre staff, and administrative staff. In terms of central administrative support, this was a minor part of the work of the ICM administrative team at Cornton Vale, and the absence of administrative support at other establishments was noted as an issue, particularly at Perth which was dealing with the greatest number of cases (although in late 2013 a dedicated CRP administration resource was provided to assist the process).

- 3.71 The majority of PO interviewees reported having been responsible for just a small number of CRP cases over the course of the project (typically between one and six, but up to 20). The postcode element of the project design will have been a factor here, particularly at the women's prisons with their larger 'catchment areas' which meant that eligible offenders from specific local authority areas made up only a small proportion of the prison population. Not surprisingly, therefore, residential SPS staff did not report the CRP as having had a significant impact in terms of overall workload. There was also a view articulated by some that the CRP process had had little impact in terms of staff time as "it's what we do anyway".
- 3.72 However, in relation to dealing with individual cases, POs described challenges in finding the time to carry out and record CRP meetings with offenders. This was a particular issue at HMP Edinburgh where the model operated meant that CRP-related duties were a more significant part of the designated PO's workload. Staff described how they might, for example, be the only member of staff on duty in a particular area and be trying to carry out CRP duties alongside other general duties, or might have to catch up on CRP work after a period of leave. A number of SPS interviewees expressed concern about how residential staff would manage any increased CRP caseload. Any assumptions regarding how CRP duties will be accommodated alongside existing routine work of POs will therefore need to be considered fully and communicated clearly to staff.

#### Resource implications for CJSW

- 3.73 For CJSW teams involved in the project, CRP work was concentrated on a small number of workers. While it could be resource intensive for these workers, the nature of the work was similar to existing throughcare work in which they were involved. In Dundee, CJSW resources for male CRP participants had increased from one to two main support workers over the life of the project in response to the demands of the role, with a third worker also contributing to the work of the team. The support workers spent up to two days in HMP Perth each week and were involved in community-based work outwith that. Post-release intensive support work did not feature strongly in the work of the team. Although this was associated with low levels of engagement following release, the direction of cause and effect is perhaps not straightforward here. However, the team was in a transition period with moves underway to spread CRP work across a greater number of staff members in order to increase 'resilience', i.e. to create greater flexibility to accommodate staff absences (leave, sickness etc) and respond to any future increase in community-based work.
- 3.74 In comparison to the Dundee team dealing with male offenders, the resource implications were different for the teams dealing with women offenders in Dundee and Lanarkshire given the lower numbers of eligible female offenders. In both areas CRP work was accommodated alongside other criminal justice support work, although the team arrangements were somewhat different: in Dundee the support workers were part of a dedicated women offenders team while in Lanarkshire, CRP cases were dealt with by two support workers based in a team dealing with a mixed caseload of justice work for both men and women<sup>15</sup>. Absolute numbers of female CRP participants have been low (as we saw in Chapter 2) and in both areas CRP

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<sup>15</sup> As a direct response to the CRP experience and the increase in referrals for voluntary throughcare, Lanarkshire has now established a dedicated women's criminal justice team which undertakes the provision of throughcare.

cases were described as forming a small part of the case load of the individual workers. However, the balance of prison and community-based work appeared to be different for those dealing with women offenders, with interviewees indicating a greater emphasis on resource intensive reintegration work in the community for female compared to male CRP participants. Their prison visits were also done on an ad hoc basis and necessarily involved significant travelling time given the geographic spread of the prisons involved.

### **Attitudes towards the CRP as a whole**

3.75 Taken as a whole, then, views of specific aspects of the CRP process among key practitioner groups were mixed. The structured, staged approach was generally supported but there were concerns about some of the more detailed aspects of how the process had been set up.

3.76 Nevertheless, there was a general consensus that more work needed to be done to address reoffending amongst short-term offenders, that a structured process could play a useful part in that and that the development of stronger links to community services (discussed more fully in Chapter 5) was essential. As such, there was widespread support for the principle of the CRP process, or more frequently for what might be described as a '*CRP-type* process'. However, for SPS staff in particular, this was often tempered by criticism of the specific way in which the project was implemented, or by recognition that the CRP was, at best, a work in progress:

“There needs to be something like this in place for all prisoners ... it's heading in the right direction.” SPS2

“[I]f it's managed properly and it's worked properly with the staff, aye it works. However, CRP I think they are duplicating work we actually do with them. It's not fair on staff and it's not fair on prisoners too” SPS7

“I do believe in throughcare, I think there is a definite need for it, but not necessarily in the capacity it is being done.” SPS9

“I've felt the scheme, *in theory*, is a brilliant thing.” SPS14

“It's the way to go...stuff like this is the way to go...but it needs to be streamlined.” SPS13

3.77 A range of issues seemed to contribute to what might be seen as a lack of buy-in amongst SPS staff. While the core CRP processes and the perceived lack of information and training as discussed in this chapter appeared to contribute to this general level of dissatisfaction, broader issues such as familiarity with CJSW and community services also seemed to play a part – this is discussed in the following chapter. Interestingly, several POs talked about the need for a process incorporating a clear link to the community to coordinate offender support, but either did not see CRP as offering that mechanism or were unaware of its function in this area.

3.78 Buy-in is clearly important to the long-term sustainability of any process. It is particularly critical in relation to frontline SPS staff given their role in working with offenders and engaging them with the CRP process. It will therefore be important to

address the concerns of staff in relation to specific aspects of the process with a view to increasing overall buy-in.

- 3.79 CJSW staff offered a generally positive assessment of the overall process. Any reservations they had about the process stemmed from the variable experience of linking with the prison and included concerns about routine liaison and communication; the way SPS staff were engaging offenders on the CRP; and attendance of SPS staff at meetings. A wider issue for CJSW staff related to the ability to respond to offender needs on transition to the community. All these issues are discussed in later chapters.

## Summary

- 3.80 Practitioner views about the specifics of the CRP process were mixed. There was general support for a structured approach to needs assessment and for mechanisms for connecting offenders more effectively to external services; but there were also concerns about particular aspects of the CRP as implemented.
- 3.81 Prison staff generally found it helpful to have access to CJSW reports as part of the needs assessment process and the system for obtaining these now seems to be working effectively, although a significant proportion of reports are, however, sourced on request from CJSW offices rather than being provided automatically by SCS. The need to request reports from CJSW is an additional step in the process and creates a potential delay in providing SPS staff with required information. Given the experience of SCS staff, there may be scope for considering how the transfer of CJSW reports could be optimised.
- 3.82 There were some issues relating to the systematic identification of eligible offenders (at Stage 2 of the process) but these also appear to have reduced as the project bedded down.
- 3.83 The Comprehensive Screen (at Stage 3) was generally felt to be useful – particularly if a CJSW report was available – but there was consensus that it should not take place too early, while offenders were still adjusting to being admitted to prison, and that new needs were perhaps more likely to be identified during Standard Reviews (at Stage 4), once a degree of trust had built up between offenders and their PO.
- 3.84 At three of the prisons, the pre-release meeting (or an additional meeting scheduled with CJSW) was happening closer to the release date as it was felt that the pre-release meeting five weeks before release might miss offender needs that emerged or changed during the subsequent period. Having representation from the relevant PO at the meeting was felt to be very valuable, though was not always possible because of shift patterns and other commitments.
- 3.85 While lack of offender motivation was seen as a key factor in explaining why scheduled meetings did not go ahead, there was also variation in the extent to which different prisons prioritised or monitored progress on undertaking the stages of the process.
- 3.86 Not all SPS staff appeared to know how to make referrals on PR2 or were confident in doing so. There was also variation in the extent to which referrals were followed up once made.

- 3.87 There was significant dissatisfaction among prison staff with the CRP paperwork and procedures for information recording. The CRP forms in particular were criticised for being too dependent on 'tick boxes' and insufficiently integrated with existing electronic systems (such as the PR2-based ICM process). This was felt to demotivate staff and reduce the likelihood that information would be collected accurately or systematically.
- 3.88 Training and support for staff in relation to the CRP was widely felt to have been inadequate and there seem to have been missed opportunities to launch the project and engage staff effectively at the outset. Despite the training sessions which had been held, some staff indicated that they had received no training, while others felt that the training they had received had lacked detail about the process or rationale for the project.

## 4 EVIDENCE OF ORGANISATIONAL AND STAFF OUTCOMES

- 4.1 So far, we have focused on how the CRP was implemented and on practitioner views of its core processes. In this and the following chapter, we move on to consider whether there is evidence that the CRP actually achieved its short and medium-term outcomes and, by extension, whether it remains plausible that it might achieve its dual longer-term objectives of a reduction in reoffending and an increase in offender reintegration into the community.
- 4.2 In this chapter, we focus on a number of outcomes relating to staff engagement and organisational effectiveness. (Chapter 5 examines evidence relating to outcomes for offenders.) In the original logic model, these were described as follows:
- SPS, CJSW & SCS staff buy in to joint working approach (short-term outcome)
  - Coordination of SPS and CJSW response to offender needs (medium-term outcome)
  - Improved prison awareness of offender's needs (short-term outcome)
  - Increased interaction with offenders about reintegration before release (medium-term outcome)
- 4.3 Broadly speaking, the first two of these relate to issues of communication, coordination and partnership working across organisations, while the latter two relate to the effectiveness of the CRP in supporting the needs assessment process in working with offenders. Each of these areas is discussed in turn below.
- 4.4 Overall, we will show that CRP appears to have facilitated progress towards the expected short and medium-term outcomes for organisations and staff. However, we will also argue that there is scope to clarify expectations around joint working on the frontline and to consider how this might be better supported; and that encouraging greater offender motivation and engagement might improve needs assessment and increase interaction relating to reintegration – issues addressed in further detail in Chapter 6.

### **SPS, CJSW & SCS staff buy in to joint working approach**

- 4.5 The evaluation found clear support for the principle of – and recognition of the need for – joint working, not just among staff within the three key partners of SPS, CJSW and SCS, but across other community-based partner agencies too.
- 4.6 Interviewees from various organisations talked positively about the contribution made by different partners and described close and effective working relations. One CJSW representative, for example, described links with prison staff as “fantastic” and said “...we're colleagues now more than we ever were”. Others talked of the value that joined up working could bring to effective throughcare, indicating a respect for what other parties could bring to the process and a recognition of the need for a joined up approach:

“We are all trying to achieve the same goals, [we have] slightly different skillset and experience and knowledge, which I hope will only add to a more holistic approach.” CJSW4

4.7 There was, however, also some evidence of reservations about joint working. For SPS staff working in residential halls, for example, a commitment to partnership working was for some tempered by lack of familiarity with the relevant CJSW teams and with the services and resources available in the community, and the part played by community agencies in the CRP process post-release; by a lack of evidence about the benefits of joined up working for offenders, or by previous experience of having been disappointed by social work input to offender throughcare.

4.8 SCS staff, too, expressed a commitment to the principle of joined up working but felt that this was only merited where it brought clear added value to the process:

“We’re all aware of MJW [Making Justice Work] and joined up working and – absolutely – you know, we’ll sign up to that every time, but only if there’s a good reason for it.” CS2

4.9 Similar views about the need for clarity around the aims and added value of partnership working were also expressed by some representatives of SPS, CJSW and community agencies, who felt that there were too many organisations working in the area of offender rehabilitation, with new players continuing to enter the field. In this context, interviewees called for a more coordinated approach, with a focus on capitalising on the experience of those already working in the area:

“I think really bringing in too many agencies can cause more chaos than it solves sometimes ... I think sometimes you have to consolidate. And sometimes too many agencies together would appear to be causing a bit of the confusion. They probably need to amalgamate rather than bring in new ones and they need to streamline processes so that everybody knows where they join in, where they link up.” A2

4.10 Subject to the caveats noted above, interviewees expressed support for further development of more coordinated joined up working and offered a range of examples of current activity designed to take this forward. These included an open day at one prison for agencies involved in working with offenders, and the development of multi-agency community ‘hubs’ with an addictions focus providing one-stop access to a range of services for offenders. Prisons were also involved in a range of Public Social Partnership projects relating to supporting offenders supported by the Scottish Government Reducing Reoffending Change Fund<sup>16</sup>.

4.11 A number of interviewees touched on the importance of the role of senior management in relation to joined up working, indicating either that this was a factor in supporting current successful working arrangements, or indicating the need for high level strategic decisions around resources to underpin further joined up working.

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<sup>16</sup> For further information about the Scottish Government Reducing Reoffending Change Fund, see: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/archive/law-order/offender-management/changefund>

4.12 Of course, the buy-in identified by the research is, to some extent, likely to have pre-dated the CRP, rather than being a product or outcome of it. However, the general support for the principle of joined-up working identified by the research suggests that the experience of the CRP has certainly not undermined support for effective inter-agency working and does suggest a positive basis for further work in this area.

### **Coordination of SPS and CJSW response to offender needs**

4.13 This support for the principle of joined up working also suggests a potentially solid foundation for delivering the medium-term CRP outcome of 'coordination of SPS and CJSW response to offender needs'. In practice, however, the evaluation found a mixed picture in terms of staff views and experiences.

4.14 Interviewees from different organisations were asked about their experiences of everyday working relationships and, in particular, whether there was sufficient communication and coordination between different partners to facilitate the CRP process and respond to offender needs. The section looks in turn at links between SPS and CJSW, SPS and support agencies, and CJSW and support agencies.

### Links between CJSW and prisons

4.15 As described in Chapter 2, there were two broad models of working arrangements between CJSW teams and relevant prisons.

- The arrangement in place between HMP Perth and Dundee CJSW team (male offenders) could be described as an embedded approach: the CJSW team had use of office space in the Link Centre and visited on a regular weekly basis (one or two days each week) to carry out CRP-related meetings; CJSW staff also had access to PR2 and took a role in updating PR2 records following the pre-release meeting.
- Elsewhere CJSW staff dealing with women offenders operated on a more arms-length basis, visiting individual prisons on an 'as required' basis in order to carry out meetings, and relying on the prisons to share relevant information.

4.16 The evaluation found the model adopted influenced working relationships but did not in itself determine successful communication and coordination. The section below looks at arrangements in place for facilitating the work of CJSW at a general level, before looking at coordinated working on a case-specific basis.

4.17 Across all sites, regardless of the arrangements in place, CJSW staff generally described their day-to-day working relationships with SPS in positive terms, and there was a consensus that prisons were working to facilitate the work of CJSW staff during the pre-release stage. This was particularly apparent at HMP Perth with its embedded CJSW team where a CJSW support worker described the working relationship with the Link Centre as "excellent – I can't speak highly enough of the prison estate...they have welcomed us in" (CJSW5).

4.18 Where there was more of an 'arms-length' relationship, CJSW staff also reported good links, although these often seemed to be based on relationships which had developed with specific individuals – for instance, in relation to arranging visits to carry out meetings with offenders – and there was some suggestion that these

could be disrupted by staff movement. The approach at Cornton Vale where an administrative worker was involved received positive comment and was noted as being well-organised. There were also some reported teething problems. For example, Lanarkshire CJSW staff reported that, at one prison in particular, there had been some initial problems around late notification of CRP cases which had limited their opportunities to work with offenders pre-release. In addition, original arrangements for visiting clients in the agents' room (the designated area in the prison for offenders to meet with their legal representatives) had not proved satisfactory; segregation rules within the prison meant that female offenders could not use the room at the same time as male offenders and this had restricted the time the room was available for CJSW meetings with female CRP participants. These issues were successfully addressed during the course of the project but highlight the importance of establishing clear protocols and channels of communication between agencies in order to facilitate effective working relationships.

- 4.19 In relation to information sharing, Dundee CJSW staff had access via PR2 (during prison visits) to CRP reports and referrals made on behalf of participants. However, with the greater volume of CRP clients in this area, the team was keen to explore how information sharing might be enhanced further – possibly through direct access to PR2 from the local authority office. The CJSW support workers explained that prison visits usually involved a series of scheduled meetings and they did not always have the time to consult PR2 before meeting an offender. Increasing the amount of time in prison or arranging access to PR2 outwith the prison itself would be beneficial in allowing them to prepare for individual meetings. Staff also talked about the duplication of work in updating two systems, PR2 and the local authority's own recording system, following meetings.
- 4.20 At Perth, information recorded on PR2 was described as providing useful background to the CJSW team, but there was no clear indication of the extent to which prison's CRP reports were used by CJSW in case management activities.
- 4.21 Neither the Lanarkshire CJSW team nor the women's Dundee CJSW team had access to PR2 in the establishments they visited, although interviewees nevertheless commented positively on the extent to which prisons shared information with them. This took the form of print-offs of PR2 narratives at one prison and copies of CIPs prepared by SPS staff (and which form a routine part of release planning for all offenders) at other prisons.
- 4.22 Despite the generally positive accounts of working relationships, a number of situations were highlighted where it was felt that communication and information sharing could be improved. These included:
- Notification of original referrals: There was some inconsistency in the point at which referrals were passed to CJSW reducing the time available to work with offenders – this was highlighted as an issue even at Perth, with their system of regular notifications.
  - Notification of release on Home Detention Curfew (HDC): CJSW staff reported that prisons providing late notice – or no notice – of impending release on HDC meant it was not always possible to arrange pre-release meetings. However, liaison with other CJSW colleagues involved in preparing reports for HDC

hearings provided an alternative way of getting notice that a CRP participant was being considered for HDC.

4.23 Two less common issues were:

- Offender transfers: There were reported instances of CJSW staff travelling to attend pre-arranged meetings having not been alerted to the fact that the offender they were going to meet had been transferred to another establishment.
- Arrangements for liberation: Arrangements for gate pick-ups had on occasion fallen through when offenders were released earlier than anticipated.

4.24 While the incidence of all these problems varied, they usefully highlight points at which there is particular scope for breakdown in communication. In doing so they emphasise the importance of ensuring that good liaison and communication arrangements are in place, and that there is routine consideration of the impact of decisions about offender transfer and release on throughcare planning.

4.25 Regardless of the model adopted, and despite reports of generally good working relationships, the focus of CJSW liaison was with managerial, administrative and Link Centre staff and there was little reported contact in relation to individual cases between frontline SPS officers and CJSW staff other than at pre-release meetings (discussed in Chapter 3). For the most part, then, prison and community services appeared to operate independently in responding to offender needs. Offenders followed the prison-based CRP process with their PO and attended meetings with CJSW; but these were largely separate pathways, and there was little reported ongoing liaison between prison and CJSW staff on a case-by-case basis. The fact that CJSW started their work with each new client following a referral by carrying out their own needs assessment was seen by one SPS officer as an indicator of this separate approach.

4.26 On the whole POs did not appear to have an expectation that they would deal directly with CJSW staff, or express any concern about the current situation. However, some did see this as a missed opportunity to develop a more coordinated approach, with one PO commenting:

“It would have been nice had they come here and said we will be the people on the other end of the phone please feel free to call me and ask me any sort of questions. It would be nice if their name was in a book for us all to access and we could say well can I refer this person to you, have a discussion about the person, what you believe there needs to be and see if you come up with the same thing.” SPS9

4.27 Here it is also worth noting that the CRP process does not include a mechanism for feeding back CJSW case management information to prison staff (e.g. via updating PR2).

4.28 CJSW staff also thought that greater contact with POs on a case-by-case basis outwith the pre-release meeting would be helpful in improving understanding of an offender’s circumstances. It was not felt there were any fundamental obstacles to this happening, and one CJSW worker noted that although contact with POs was not routine, they thought it would be facilitated by the prison if requested on a case-

by-case basis. The issues noted elsewhere in relation to the impact of shift patterns and working duties (see Chapter 6) would, of course, need to be addressed if this were to happen on a more regular basis.

- 4.29 The involvement of more specialised prison staff, however, appeared to be a factor in effective coordinated working. For example, there was direct liaison about individual cases between CJSW and the Vulnerable Prisoner Officer at one prison and with the TSOs at another. Similarly, the designated PO at HMP Edinburgh with responsibility for the CRP liaised directly with CJSW about meetings and was positive about the opportunity to build these links.
- 4.30 Prison logistics also played a part here in facilitating contact between CJSW and prison staff, and there seemed to be both advantages and disadvantages associated with different approaches. In some prisons, for example, meetings between offenders and CJSW took place in the hall, providing an opportunity for CJSW contact with residential staff; in others, meetings took place in the Link Centre, supporting CJSW communication with staff and other agencies operating there; and (as noted elsewhere) in one prison CJSW meetings took place in the agents' room at the prison gate, inhibiting contact with prison staff.
- 4.31 While there was limited evidence of substantive coordination in responding to offender needs in individual cases, there was nevertheless evidence that prisons were working to facilitate the input of CJSW. Link Centre staff were seen as key at one prison in facilitating the attendance of offenders at meetings; at other prisons CJSW staff described how it was helpful to have a named point of contact for arranging meetings.
- 4.32 It was suggested – implicitly and explicitly – that the embedded model offered advantages of greater familiarity, ease of information sharing and an increased profile of CJSW within prisons; indeed, one CJSW team leader offered this as a key lesson from the project. The evidence, perhaps, suggests a less clear cut picture. There do appear to be advantages in terms of developing links with Link Centre staff in particular and sharing information, but the model does not, on its own, ensure seamless communication or working links between frontline staff on a case-specific basis; here, the practice of CJSW staff holding meetings in residential areas of the prison may offer advantages. Rather than one specific model offering the solution here, the key lessons appear to relate to ways of increasing familiarity and contact between CJSW and residential staff, the importance of clear lines of communication and points of contact, and looking at the particular contribution that staff with specific roles can make to maximising the effectiveness of joined up working.

#### Links between prisons and external agencies

- 4.33 In addition to CJSW, prisons had links with a range of other external agencies – most notably with housing agencies, addiction services, employment and benefit services (JobCentre Plus) and different mentoring schemes (e.g. Shine and New Routes). At a strategic level, SPS staff were keen to develop these links further as part of a move towards becoming a more outward-focused organisation. As one officer said of the emerging culture: “Our doors are now open, the walls are coming down in prisons” (SPS11).

4.34 While the need for more joined up working with external agencies was clearly recognised at a strategic level, communication and coordination between frontline SPS staff and external agencies appeared to be limited. For POs, the main contact was with Link Centre staff who then dealt with agencies, although some reported occasional direct contact with some agencies operating within the prison. In general, though, POs appeared to have limited familiarity with the range and focus of services and agencies operating both in the prison and the community, as explained by two officers:

“If a prisoner said to me, “What help am I going get outside and who is going to give me that help? I’ve got no answer for them...I don’t know what agencies they are using...I honestly think there is a lack of training for staff for this totally.” SPS1

“[We need a] a proper idea of the whole cycle rather than just our bit. I think it's just knowledge and understanding of like who people are, what they do, how prisoners and ex-offenders can get in contact with them. And just what happens outside 'cause you, you don't know, you know, no-one comes and tells us.” SPS12

4.35 Such comments perhaps indicate a need to address staff awareness in this area to ensure they are equipped to advise offenders. This might, for example, include raising awareness of – and ensuring easy access to – the SPS directory of community agencies developed as a resource to support staff in this type of work.

4.36 While some POs gave accounts of direct dealings with agencies (e.g. pursuing an appointment on behalf of an offender), most had what could be described as a ‘hands off’ approach once a referral was made. For some SPS staff, though, there was an element of frustration about the lack of communication and feedback following a referral. In particular, it was suggested that POs’ ability to give advice to offenders would be enhanced by feedback on outcomes and by an awareness of work being done by other agencies:

“But you don't really know what's being discussed, what the outcomes are, if there even is an outcome. But I suppose if I'm honest I'd look at the risk, if we're looking in terms of doing this to reduce the risk of them reoffending then it would be, it would be handy to know if the counselling and stuff like that that they're getting, if that's related to their offence. If it is it would be nice to know that, because then we could see if the risk has then been reduced at least.” SPS6

“If someone you have worked with is getting intervention from an outside agency or other area it would be beneficial to the whole process if we knew about it.” SPS9

4.37 Although some agencies had access to PR2, this varied, as did the extent to which they recorded progress on to the system.

4.38 Overall, the steps being taken to develop strategic links between SPS and different support agencies at an organisational level can be seen as positive steps which could be further pursued. Across the piece, the picture is one of commitment to improved joined up working with other agencies at a managerial level, but limited communication and coordination on the ground. This has direct consequences in

terms of familiarity with and knowledge of services, and how individual staff perceived the PO role in relation to working with offenders. There is, therefore, a need to review expectations about the extent of routine communication and coordination, how frontline interaction might be enhanced, and any additional support which SPS staff require to allow this to happen.

#### Links between CJSW and support agencies in the community

- 4.39 The monitoring data demonstrated the extent to which CJSW were making referrals to community-based organisations, particularly in relation to housing, addictions and benefits. Alongside this, the interview data provide evidence of strong links and regular communication between CJSW staff and other external agencies.
- 4.40 CJSW staff and agencies described a range of formal and informal arrangements which allowed them to enhance the support they provided to individual offenders following release from prison. While there were examples of intensive multi-agency working to support particularly vulnerable offenders leaving prison – particularly in relation to women offenders – a lot of valuable cross-agency cooperation was ad hoc and low level in nature. There were, for example, instances of agencies arranging joint or back-to-back appointments; of agencies being able to follow up non-attendance at community appointments; cross-referrals between agencies; and of agencies being able to check details and confirm the circumstances of individuals to allow appropriate support to be provided. All these activities can be seen as helping ensure a flexible service that responds to the needs of its client group.
- 4.41 Those support agencies based within local authorities described the organisational advantages of being able to check the involvement of CJSW support and contacting the appropriate CJSW workers to discuss a case. There was, however, a call to go further with the development of more comprehensive information sharing across agencies (with appropriate data protection protocols in place) and a 'single shared assessment' approach to dealing with the needs of offenders. Such an approach would mean all agencies having formal access to a single needs assessment for each offender, along with appropriate background information to allow agencies to work together in an efficient and coordinated way to respond to the needs of the individual.
- 4.42 While most experiences of joint working were positive, a number of CJSW interviewees noted that they did not always know which other agencies were involved in supporting someone or the nature of the support which was being provided, and that this could lead to confusion. The value of effective coordination was highlighted by a case in which an offender's housing needs had apparently been missed: two agencies had been involved in supporting this offender but responsibility for responding to his housing needs had not been clear. More generally, it was felt that there was a proliferation of agencies working in the area and that a more strategic view was needed in order to reduce duplication and make better use of the resources available. As one interviewee said, "there might be five agencies providing the same thing, but there's still unmet need" (CJSW3).
- 4.43 While the research found evidence of good joint working involving external agencies, there was limited awareness among interviewees in such settings of the CRP *per se* - most had not heard of the CRP as a specific initiative and said they would be unaware that a referral had originated through the project. While most were aware of CJSW throughcare services and the work they did with offenders,

they were not necessarily aware that any of this work was part of a wider project. There were a small number of exceptions to this – for example, where two interviewees from the same agency were broadly aware of the CRP. In this case, existing professional links appeared to be important: the CRP was referred to as ‘X’s project’, and the individual CJSW worker (X) was seen as key to the progress of a case:

“X is very good at keeping in touch with us regarding people he knows that are either going inside or coming out, and providing that vital link, and that vital communication...when somebody is coming out he’ll be there to assist us, to provide throughcare at the side of it.” A4

- 4.44 The value of personal links was also noted by CJSW staff who reported that face-to-face contact with other agencies in the Link Centre (for those with a presence there) or in other workplaces (e.g. local authority offices) could be helpful to joint working between agencies, and ensuring the needs of offenders were met.
- 4.45 There was, then, good evidence of coordination and communication in the community, bringing added value to the services provided to offenders. While there was a degree of reliance on personal links and only limited awareness of services operating as part of a coordinated CRP response, there was also a wish to see greater coordination and strategic direction brought to community efforts in responding to offender needs.

#### Overview of partnership working

- 4.46 Across the three strands of partnership working, then, there was evidence of varying degrees of communication and coordination between different agencies. At the custody stage, this manifested itself in terms of good arrangements for facilitating the work of CJSW in prisons, and in terms of ongoing work to develop links at an organisational level. Out in the community good links were bringing added value to dealing with the needs of offenders, with a view that this would be enhanced by a more strategic approach. Greater communication and coordination on a case-specific basis prior to liberation may, however, be an aspect of partnership working which could be further enhanced through appropriate encouragement and support to frontline SPS staff, and increased sharing of information via PR2. A number of interviewees suggested a stronger and more explicit role for either SPS or CJSW (or indeed another appropriate agency) in acting as a central point in overseeing the coordination of support for individual offenders.

#### **Improved prison awareness of offender needs**

- 4.47 Identifying and responding to offender needs is central to the purpose of the CRP. The views and experiences of both staff and offenders are relevant here in providing a picture of role the CRP plays in making staff aware of offender needs. This section looks at staff views, while the offender perspective is presented in Chapter 5.
- 4.48 Staff had mixed views about whether the CRP had *improved* awareness of offender needs. There was certainly a common view that the role of a PO had *always* involved identifying and responding to offender needs and prison staff did not always believe, therefore, that the CRP had led to significant ‘added value’.

However, there was also a clear view that the CRP's structured and staged process helped to identify needs more systematically than might otherwise have been the case. Staff across all establishments described how they had found this helpful in underpinning and potentially enhancing interactions with offenders:

"...the questions with the project made us kind of delve a wee bit deeper...it provided prompts for questions...[the Comprehensive Screen process] kind of spurred us on to go in and delve a wee bit deeper which I found beneficial." SPS12

"I think the process is good for many reasons. One reason is you've got a communication between the person and that you can build up a bit of an offender-prison officer relationship. You get to know them better and you basically are solving their problems basically, and it does work in that sense..." SPS7

"I think it's effective at picking things up earlier and I think it's effective on the basis we've now got a process to be able to...I think we're doing things...there was no organisation to it. We didn't get any early warning of it. I think it's effective on that." SPS15

- 4.49 These views suggest that the CRP process with its set stages can add value by ensuring a level of consistency in terms of identifying and responding to offender needs. In this context, several prison officers – including some of those indicating scepticism about the added value of the CRP – acknowledged that otherwise the system relied on 'good' members of staff and risked overlooking the needs of less demanding, more reserved offenders. As such, the structured CRP process was seen as potentially reducing reliance on especially proactive members of staff and reducing the danger that staff time would be taken up with particularly forthcoming or vocal offenders:

"You get some girls who have a lot of needs, and they don't present their self...and if you don't know the girls, you're not aware that they have this need. And you get other girls [who] never stop. Sometimes the consuming ones who ... aren't actually the ones that are really needy, and they distract you... And the ones that really need the help are left behind...are ... not 'ignored', but missed..." SPS3

- 4.50 It was also suggested by a small number of interviewees that the CRP approach to offender management, with its more comprehensive recording of information, offered advantages in responding effectively to the needs of those subsequently returning to custody again, allowing continuity and early intervention in such cases. The flexible approach described by one prison in offering offenders the opportunity to rejoin the CRP scheme on a return to custody, even if they did not meet the minimum six month sentence requirement is also notable here.
- 4.51 There was also comment on particular aspects of the process. As noted earlier (see Chapter 3), the Stage 3 Comprehensive Screen and the Stage 4 Standard Reviews were both highlighted by different interviewees as being helpful in assessing need. In the latter case this was seen as providing the opportunity to identify and respond to needs which might emerge as an individual progressed through the system and/or when the offender was ready. On a similar note, another officer suggested that addiction issues may, initially, mask other issues; the staged CRP process

provided the structure for ensuring that issues would be addressed when they did subsequently emerge.

- 4.52 The CJSW report, in particular, was seen as a particularly useful tool in identifying offender needs. As previously discussed in Chapter 3, interviewees, with few exceptions, were of the view that this provided useful background information on the offender and their offence, and offered the basis to probe or to challenge the version of events provided by offenders themselves.
- 4.53 Thus, the message emerging from the evaluation is that the CRP process provides a sound basis for assessing offender needs in prison, and that the use of the CJSW report and the structured and staged process are key elements of that.

### **Increased interaction with offenders about reintegration before release**

- 4.54 The CRP monitoring data provide a starting point in exploring whether the CRP process has had an impact on interaction with offenders about reintegration prior to release. At a very basic level the data demonstrate that around 255 offenders participated in a Stage 3 meeting, implying potential referral to CJSW. The fact that such referrals are being made while the offender is in custody means that there is scope for CJSW interaction prior to release and scope to establish continuity of support.
- 4.55 CJSW staff indicated that they would try to see offenders at least twice (as envisaged in the CRP guidance) and up to around six times in custody prior to the pre-release meeting but that this varied depending on the point at which they received the referral, the needs of the individual and the length of the sentence. However, non-attendance of offenders at individual meetings was also relatively common (see Chapter 2).
- 4.56 There were also questions about the quality of the interaction. CJSW staff reported that offenders were not always aware of the purpose of the meeting or did not always appear to have made a positive decision to engage with CJSW and that this impacted on what could be achieved in terms of planning for community reintegration. The more proactive approach taken at one prison to engage offenders in the CRP process was described by one interviewee as a 'double-edged sword': while it got people to the initial meeting with CJSW, they were not always motivated to engage positively.
- 4.57 On the prison side, the monitoring data indicate that prison staff are interacting with offenders at various stages in the CRP process (see Chapter 2), albeit with attrition apparent at each stage, and are undertaking Summary Reviews and attending pre-release meetings with an explicit focus on reintegration in a proportion of cases.
- 4.58 Overall the monitoring data indicate interaction taking place in relation to reintegration and, when considered alongside the interview data, it is fair to conclude that some of this interaction, particularly with CJSW, would not have taken place without the CRP process. However, the rate of attrition indicated in the monitoring data suggests there is potential for further interaction to take place, as well as for the quality of that interaction to be enhanced. This issue is explored further in Chapter 5, which looks at working with offenders.

## Summary

- 4.59 There was clear support for the principle of joint working across staff from SPS, CJSW and SCS, although this was sometimes tempered by the need to avoid duplication and clearly demonstrate added value. A number of different interviewees indicated that they saw senior management as having an important role in creating the conditions (and providing the resources) necessary for effective joint working.
- 4.60 This broad commitment to joint working is likely to have pre-dated the CRP rather than be an outcome of the project; nevertheless, it does suggest a positive basis for further work in this area and indicate that an important pre-condition for success may be in place.
- 4.61 The nature of the links between prison staff and CJSW influenced the way in which the CRP was delivered, with some evidence that the 'embedded' rather than 'arms-length' model offered potential advantages in terms of familiarity between SPS and CJSW staff, ease of information sharing and an increased profile for CJSW within prisons.
- 4.62 But the embedded model, in itself, did not ensure working links between frontline staff on a case-specific basis. The key lessons here appear to relate to ways of increasing familiarity and contact between CJSW and residential staff, establishing clear lines of communication and points of contact, and looking at the particular contribution that staff with specific roles can make to maximising the effectiveness of joined up working.
- 4.63 The need for more joined up working between SPS and external agencies was clearly recognised at a strategic level but, on the ground, communication and coordination with external agencies again appeared to be limited. Some POs gave accounts of direct dealings with external agencies, but most had what could be described as a 'hands off' approach once a referral was made.
- 4.64 In general, there was evidence of strong links and regular communication between CJSW and other external agencies, though there were also examples of duplication or lack of coordination in service delivery. However, awareness of the CRP itself was low and agency staff were often unaware that a referral had originated with the project.
- 4.65 Although the identification of offender needs was seen as a core part of the PO's role (now and in the past), there was also a clear view that the CRP's structured and staged process helped to identify needs more systematically than might otherwise have been the case. In particular, it was felt that the system might otherwise rely on proactive members of staff and risked overlooking the needs of less demanding, more reserved offenders.
- 4.66 The CJSW report, in particular, was seen as a particularly useful tool in identifying offender needs.
- 4.67 Although there is little doubt that the CRP has resulted in an increase in the level of interaction with offenders pre-release, interviews with staff (and the monitoring data presented in Chapter 2) both suggest that there is a significant problem of attrition across the various Stages of the project. Where meetings do occur, there are also

questions about the *quality* of interaction with offenders not always aware of the purpose of the meeting or having made a positive decision to engage with CJSW.

- 4.68 Overall the evaluation suggests the CRP is facilitating progress towards the expected short and medium-term outcomes for organisations and staff, but that the practice of joint working could be further improved and that more effective motivation and engagement of offenders would improve needs assessment further and increase interaction relating to reintegration. This is considered further in more detail in Chapter 5.

## 5 EVIDENCE OF OFFENDER OUTCOMES

5.1 In this chapter, we look at the five short and medium-term outcomes identified in the logic model that relate specifically to offenders. These were:

- Increased offender trust (short-term)
- Increased offender motivation to engage (short-term)
- Increased offender awareness of needs and services (short-term)
- Increased offender engagement with planning and services (medium-term)
- Increased addressing of criminogenic needs (medium-term)

5.2 Taken together, these outcomes rely to a great extent on the work that SPS and CJSW staff do with offenders, and the quality and effectiveness of the staff-offender relationship. In particular the input of SPS staff is key, given their involvement with offenders in the custody period and their integral role in promoting the CRP to offenders. As such, the chapter begins by exploring the PO role in relation to the CRP which can be seen as laying the foundations for subsequent engagement, before considering evidence in relation to each of the specific outcomes listed above.

5.3 In considering the outcomes, we argue that the CRP process relies heavily on the role of the PO and that understanding this role is key to understanding offender engagement in CRP. However, we also see the approach taken by CJSW as critical to engagement (in line with the importance attached to early engagement, continuity and quality of relationships in existing evidence in this area – see Chapter 1) in the post-release period and consider the lessons which can be learnt from practice to date. We suggest there is evidence of progress towards short and medium-term outcomes and a plausibility around the achievement of longer-term outcomes albeit that the availability and organisation of community resources will be crucial here.

### The role of the PO in encouraging engagement

5.4 The interviews with SPS staff provided a wealth of information about officer-offender interaction and engagement in general (see Chapter 6) – and indeed, this was clearly seen by POs as a central part of their job:

“I’m a residential officer, working in the residential halls, so therefore have very close contact with the prisoners on a daily basis.” SPS14

“That’s the role [of a PO], identifying these needs and responding to them, setting small goals, allowing somebody to understand...that even though they’re in prison they still have choices, you still have power...you still can decide for yourself how you want to be...its enlightening, it’s about observation and allowing somebody to know that when they are good at something, picking on that strength, building it up and moving it forward....” SPS9

5.5 The CRP process clearly builds on this type of approach, and the related paperwork and documentation highlights the importance of offender motivation and

engagement to the success of the process, and the role of SPS officers and CJSW staff in encouraging this. Several of the SPS interviewees explained how officers could take an active role in encouraging offenders to engage in the process by explaining the process and emphasising the benefits to the individual:

“... I do emphasise ... 'It's for your benefit, if you have any needs. Even if you have none now,' I says, 'in a couple of weeks' time... it's just a case of putting a referral in”. SPS8

“You could kind of encourage them and bring them along with it, explain the benefits of it.” SPS12

5.6 The experiences of offenders who had participated in the CRP process also provided evidence of the important role that prison staff had played in encouraging them to get involved in the process. One offender remembered her PO as being instrumental in the referral to CJSW; another reported that “At the beginning [my PO] encouraged me to go for it, to see what it would be like...and so I jumped at it basically” (OP10).

5.7 But not all prison staff were as clear about the importance of actively promoting CRP to offenders, or felt properly briefed or equipped to undertake this role:

“Yeah, it was voluntary if they wanted to do it and that was basically it's not really pushed, I don't think so, it's not pushed.” SPS1

“...a manager will come and say ‘This person has been selected to do CRP. Can you go and speak to them and see if they want to do it?’ That's all we get. We just get it handed to us with a name on it, go and speak to that person and that's it.” SPS16

“It would be a doddle to promote if you knew they were going to get support...They had a format they wanted us to follow which we already did, and they gave us no contacts, they gave us no reference, they gave us no help and no support! We tried to do it...we made great efforts every time...we had no phone number ...we couldn't...it was very difficult to persuade prisoners that the criminal justice authority within that area was going to help them.” SPS9

5.8 The lack of awareness of community services (CJSW and other) noted by this SPS officer was also raised as a barrier to promoting CRP by a number of other interviewees.

5.9 There was, then, considerable variation in the nature and extent of the effort that went into promoting CRP to offenders; and a perception amongst interviewees that the level of encouragement offered to offenders depended very much on the attitude of individual members of staff. One PO gave his version of how he thought some staff presented the scheme to offenders in a less than whole-hearted way:

“Now, it's very easy for staff to go ... ‘Right. There's this thing. You want to get involved with it?’ ‘What does it mean?’ ‘Och, not very much.’... ‘You don't have to if you don't want to. There's a disengagement form if you want...’” SPS14

- 5.10 Ensuring offenders were properly informed about the services and support available via CRP was identified as a factor in encouraging engagement. Linked to this, the importance of the quality of the initial contact with offenders was recognised by those in managerial or supervisory roles. They acknowledged the need to ensure that officers were suitably equipped to carry out the role:

“And this is where the downfall is in the residential staff’s understanding of CRP...because they don’t have the knowledge, then they’re not able to *sell* the ...you know... the incentive to the prisoner... Where we’re allocating cases to officers, I suppose maybe we should be saying to them, ‘What’s your understanding? How are you going to encourage the prisoner to become involved in this? Is there anything you need to know?’ – so that they can go away feeling confident, or *more* confident, about what they’re actually doing...”

SPS4

- 5.11 One establishment in particular had taken steps to address this. As well as moving the Stage 2b interview to the Link Centre to help ensure a more consistent approach to the initial offer of CRP involvement, they had also introduced a process whereby subsequent disengagement was routinely followed up and challenged by a residential manager.
- 5.12 These issues to do with the quality of the initial explanation of the CRP to offenders by prison staff were also highlighted by some CJSW staff who felt that offenders referred on to them often showed little awareness of the reason for their referral or little motivation to engage:

“I have to say most women that I’ve been up to see, when I speak to them [at a first meeting] about the referral that’s been made, they’ve got no idea what it’s about.” CJSW8

“...you’re getting guys coming across and... the first question I’ll always ask in any interview, ‘Do you know why you’re here?’ And I would say 90% of the guys that I see’ll say, ‘No’. ‘Has the CRP been explained to you?’, and the biggest answer you’ll get is either ‘No’ or ‘I’ve heard something about it, but, you know, I dinnae have any ...’ So we’re then a wee bitty on the back foot at that point. We’re having to sort o’ *sell* it if you like at that point”. CJSW5

- 5.13 However, while recognising the need to improve rates of engagement and attrition (and the fact that the prisons were actively trying to do this), CJSW staff also regarded this as something of a double-edged sword. The advantage of prisons adopting a more proactive approach was that it led to engagement from some offenders who might otherwise have slipped through the net or have dropped out of the project; however, CJSW staff also indicated that working with unmotivated people presented challenges for them, and that formal disengagement might sometimes be a preferred option.
- 5.14 Although staff showed commitment to working with offenders in general and motivating them to engage in CRP in particular, they were also clear that there were particular groups of offenders who would always be difficult to engage in a scheme such as CRP. These included:

- Long-term, repeat offenders: This was a type of offender whom it was felt did not wish to change, would not respond to staff encouragement, and was regarded as a “tough nut to crack”.
- Offenders who regarded prison as a ‘positive’ option: Some were reported as keen to stay or return as prison provided a safe and secure environment, and was perceived as preferable to the alternatives available to them.
- Those on very short sentences: In these cases there may not be an opportunity to build up a relationship or offer any sort of interventions to address behavioural issues. It was also suggested that longer sentences could sometimes offer the opportunity of a period of stability and a cleaner break from a lifestyle linked to offending, and allow the time to reflect and make positive choices.
- Those with antipathy toward social work and social workers as a result of previous experience. It was noted that many offenders had long records of involvement with social work in relation to their own histories or those of their children and that previous negative experiences made them unwilling to engage with CJSW as part of the CRP process. A similar antipathy towards engagement with SPS staff was also noted.

5.15 It was also noted that some offenders were returning to stable environment in the community, e.g. returning to a former address and employment, and so had no real need for CRP support. Such offenders would account for some of the observed non-engagement and attrition.

5.16 More generally, there may be scope for improving the quality of the initial interaction with offenders. Interviews with offenders suggested that they had low levels of awareness and understanding of the CRP as a specific initiative. While this may not be inherently important – awareness was also low amongst those who remained engaged in the post-release phase – it may help explain the pattern of attrition if offenders are not fully informed and persuaded of the benefits of the process from the outset.

5.17 Overall, then, the staff-offender interface and the initial approach to engaging offenders in the CRP emerged as an important theme in the evaluation, and appears fundamental to the success of the reintegration process. This, therefore, provides a key theme in addressing the specific CRP outcomes in the following sections.

### **Increased offender awareness of needs and services**

5.18 An increased awareness of their own needs and of available services among offenders would appear to be a logical pre-requisite for increased engagement. The interviews with offenders provide some evidence of offender awareness and a tentative suggestion that this may have *increased* as a result of the CRP process

5.19 Many of the offenders who had been through the CRP process showed awareness of their own needs, particularly in relation to addiction issues, and most were receiving support or awaiting referrals from a range of agencies. Typically, offenders had been referred to housing and benefit services within prison, with support to tackle addiction another common feature. Among women offenders, in

particular, identification of family and relationship issues was also common, with related referrals to relevant services.

- 5.20 The evaluation cannot provide definitive evidence that such referrals resulted directly from engagement with the CRP or that they would not have occurred without such engagement. Often, the offenders themselves were unclear how referrals had come about; in other cases, a range of pathways was evident e.g. offenders made self-referrals, or were referred on to other services via the TSO scheme at one prison or via drugs workers or mentoring services such as Shine.
- 5.21 However, a number of offenders provided accounts of how interactions with staff as part of the CRP process had made them aware of their own needs:

“You know, I was in there and I thought ‘I don’t really need help’...I’m thinking it’s only like alcoholics or drug abusers that need [help] but you do need it [help] once you’ve been in there ...” OC3

“Maybe at the start you think, oh, I don't need help, I don't need to go and speak to agencies. But when you, when you actually go and speak to them, like - trying to think how you'd put it. Like for me, I find it hard to open up to people and that's including workers as well; like I just find it hard. But it's put me into a better place where, come on, I'm gonna tell them and then I've told them sometimes what it is and we've worked on stuff...” OP22

- 5.22 Another offender described specifically how the experience of discussing her CJSW report as part of the Comprehensive Screen process had made her take stock of the issues affecting her life and how those had contributed to her offending behaviour:

“...basically it gave me a kind of...wake up call if you know what I mean, seeing that down on paper.” OP10

- 5.23 In relation to awareness of services, offenders involved in the CRP process cited examples of POs organising referrals for them. However, it was also apparent that offenders in custody got a lot of information about services and support from other inmates or were already aware of available services in prison as a result of previous sentences, and the extent to which the CRP itself led to increased awareness of available services was not clear. Awareness of services with a practical focus (e.g. around housing or addiction) was particularly high, as was awareness of those with an established ‘profile’ within the prison, such as Shine, Phoenix Futures or New Routes. The implications of this for a new project or service, like the CRP, are returned to in Chapter 7.
- 5.24 There was, though, some evidence of increased awareness of community services, particularly in relation to the CJSW service itself. One offender nearing release said: “I know [now] there is help available” (OP22); another said “I mean I never even knew there was throughcare in [town]” (OP7). The research also identified instances of offenders re-engaging with throughcare following release – something that was only possible because they had been made aware of the service while in custody and knew how to make contact.

## Increased offender trust

- 5.25 It was apparent from the interviews that trust was considered critical to offender-practitioner relationships, regardless of whether those involved prison officers, CJSW workers or representatives of other support agencies and services. This was a particularly strong theme in the interviews with women offenders and staff working with this group. While this was considered relevant to all relationships, not just those linked to the CRP, staff (both CJSW and SPS) felt that the regular meetings which formed part of the CRP process supported the development of a trusting relationship:

“[It’s] just that they feel more supported and stuff and, you know, they’ll obviously get to know me a lot better and be able to kind of confide in me about things and then they’ll find it easier to get some of the problems sorted. I think, you know, they’ll find me approachable and just, just things like that, you know. They can be a lot more open about things and get their issues sorted for release.” SPS5

“The more you go up and visit them, the more they start to open up.” CJSW8

- 5.26 Being seen to take action was also a factor in developing trust. One of the offenders interviewed emphasised that this sense of follow through was integral to the relationship with individual staff members:

“I like [officer]. He gets things done; when you ask him to do it and he gets things done. He does it, same as [officer]...” OP22

- 5.27 In contrast, another offender recounted the negative experience that she had had: “You go to an officer and say, 'Officer, I want to see someone', 'Yes, we'll do it', and then they don't do it for you. I think that's terrible” (OP21). It is, thus, possible to see how carrying out a proactive PO role in relation to the CRP could lead to the development of a relationship based on trust and, conversely, how shortcomings in the way the role is discharged could undermine the development of a positive relationship built on trust.

- 5.28 In relation to developing this sort of trusting relationship with CJSW staff, there was also evidence of how the CRP process may have assisted this by facilitating interaction with offenders prior to release:

“...she'd come up and visited me twice. She was up to see me before that... she was a good support. She was alright. It was good to know that I was going out to somebody.” OP2

“If you meet them a couple of times [before release] you just feel you can be honest.” OP7

- 5.29 CJSW workers also concurred, explaining from their perspective the benefits to be gained from early referral and the opportunity to develop a positive relationship:

“I think just maybe the timeframe as well, getting the referrals early. I think that is kind of quite a key for them - I mean, it might not make them engage, but I think getting them early - and it's not just you've

met them once in custody and 'I'll see you when you come out.' I think if you've met them a few times, then you are going up there and you're travelling and meeting them, and they can see, 'Oh, there's - that girl's back again,' or - it's the same person as well. And again, if they've maybe asked you to look into something, that you're going up and saying, 'Well, I've done this,' or, 'Let's fill in this form,' or, 'Let's do this.' I think they feel that you are there to support them." CJSW11

- 5.30 Much of the evidence in this area relates to work with women offenders who seemed to more readily respond to the opportunity to work with CJSW following release. Nevertheless there were also male offenders who spoke positively of the support they had received from CJSW and their continuing engagement following release:

"I wasn't too sure about it [to start with]. I just thought, oh, it's another thing. But since I've come out X has done a lot for me. She's keeping in contact with me. I'm keeping in contact with her, so I would say to people it's a good thing to do." OC4

- 5.31 This offender spoke in terms of the practical support he had received from his CJSW worker, but it can be seen how this might lead to the development of a positive and trusting relationship providing the potential for more holistic support.

### **Increased offender motivation to engage**

- 5.32 Offender motivation was a key theme across all groups of interviewees, both in a general sense and specifically in relation to the CRP. It was clear that a range of factors contributed to the motivation to engage with services and address needs. While many offenders indicated that their motivations were of a personal or external nature, there were also indications that working with staff – POs, CJSW workers, TSOs and other agency workers – could help to reinforce this motivation.

- 5.33 It was recognised by many staff, and by offenders, that the opportunity to address practical needs – especially housing – often provided the initial motivation to engage with services:

"...but housing and benefits is about the only [needs] you can guarantee they'll ask for help on, but the rest of them [needs] you might need to push them into!" SPS3

- 5.34 Certainly, it was apparent that accommodation was a key concern for interviewees. However, a number of staff noted that there were risks associated with this if offender expectations were raised and then not met. One officer recognised the importance of ensuring that offenders were not misled as to what the accommodations options might be:

"There's probably a general issue, is it realistic for my staff to maybe say to prisoners 'Well, this is about throughcare and if you've got housing issues let us know, and we can sort them out for you before you go out'? In the prisoner's mind, they're thinking 'They're going to get me a house'. They aren't..." SPS16

- 5.35 Another officer suggested that some offenders had turned down the opportunity to engage with the CRP on a subsequent prison sentence because of disappointment at the outcome of previous involvement with the project. It was also suggested that this could be demotivating for staff as well as offenders:

“Ultimately we have no control over where [Housing] decides to put somebody and if they are only going to give them a hostel place, they are only going to give them a hostel place. So the guy’s maybe went in there with all the hopes that he can get something better than that and he gets nothing out of it. The officer sits there thinking, they just put him there anyway. What benefit was that?” SPS15

- 5.36 In this context, several staff expressed a wish to hear how people had fared following release so they could learn of the value of the scheme, and so they could use positive stories to promote the CRP to offenders.

- 5.37 While addressing practical needs was seen as a key motivator in engaging with the CRP and related services, there were also some who were motivated by a more fundamental desire to change their lifestyle and behaviour and were positive about the opportunities available to do so. There were a range of examples from the offender interviews of personal circumstances acting as a trigger to engage with services and make changes in their lives: relationships, children, and the death of a partner were all mentioned as factors in people’s motivation to engage; others talked in a more general sense about the importance of life circumstances, and age in particular, as triggering a desire to change:

“I’m 34...I’m only living for my bairn and my kids, ken, and that’s what I’m wanting, to bring my kids up as normal as possible.” OP14

“I don’t want to keep offending. I’m 43 years of age. I’m getting a wee bit sick of it.” OP18

“I’m only 21. I don’t want to be in here the rest of my life... The jail is great. Like seriously [other prisoners] need to wake up, do you know what I mean? Like change it, go and change your life.” OP22

- 5.38 Staff recognised the importance of harnessing such personal motivation in addressing the needs of individuals and, equally, the difficulty of making progress in its absence. As one officer put it: “...they have to want to change. We can throw all the things on, all the courses, all the pilots, all the process but if they don’t want to change...” (SPS6).

- 5.39 While the importance of offender self-motivation and individual desire to change was noted by several interviewees, the role of staff – both prison and CJSW – in developing and supporting such motivation was also apparent. Two CRP participants spoke of their experience of CJSW input, with one highlighting the importance of the emotional support provided by her CJSW worker, and another explaining how the practical support provided had kept her focused:

“... they're always there, you know? I'm still needing help even [after] all this time... It's made a difference to me because the way ... the way I was feeling when I came out of there, I don't even know if I'd be here the now” (OC3).

“[CJSW worker], like she can do a lot for you, you know what I mean? Like if you didn't really know how to go around things and how to - like if you've got something to do and you want to do it, but you don't really ken how to go about it, she'll sit down and she'll speak to you, 'This is, this is a plan of action'. She gives you a wee plan. Do you know what I mean? She says, 'Right, well, we'll speak to them' and she just sort of helps you, gets you back to outside really.” OP22

5.40 Staff themselves also acknowledged their role in motivating people to engage or to stay engaged. One SPS officer said:

“... the point of doing the interview [Stage 4] in my opinion is to actually keep them motivated to keep involved even if there isn't a change, but there are always small changes.” SPS15

5.41 A CJSW worker offered thoughts along similar lines:

“...but a lot of it's motivational as well. You know? I think .. well, I like to think that the good bit ... the best part of it *is* motivational...if we have to see guys six times during the course of a sentence, that's *fine* by me, you know? If I've got a guy saying, 'Right. When are you coming back? I really want to see you pretty soon.', I'll *do* that, and I know [colleague] will as well, because if that's keeping them going, or if that's actually giving them a bit of belief, and keeping them engaged with services and whatnot, it's small fry to us.” CJSW5

5.42 The experience of staff and offenders, thus, suggests that the motivation to engage with services is complex, but that SPS and CJSW staff have an important role to play in encouraging and maintaining motivation, and that the CRP process can be seen as providing a potential mechanism for tapping into and supporting offender motivation.

### **Increased offender engagement with reintegration planning and services in prison and in the community**

5.43 The CRP monitoring data indicate a level of offender engagement in the reintegration planning process through attendance at reviews and meetings (see Chapter 2), although their commitment to active engagement was reported by CJSW interviewees to be limited in some cases. The meetings with CJSW, in particular, can be seen as representing increased engagement.

5.44 Whether the CRP process is leading to increased engagement with services is less clear. While the evaluation picked up on significant engagement with services, it is not possible to say if there was any increased level of engagement as a result of CRP involvement. However, there was a view, supported by the experience of offenders, that engagement with services (and CJSW in particular) at the pre-release stage increased the likelihood of engagement in the post-release stage. While continuing engagement in the community was not common for male offenders, it appeared to be a more significant feature of working with women offenders, and the experience of those who had maintained contact with CJSW supported the theory that building up a relationship prior to release was key to the success. As one CJSW client said: “... if I'd just come out and met her I'd have been a bit shy with her sort of and now she knows my situation, she know

everything I'm going through now" (OC2). The value of continuity of contact was apparent, not just in relation to CJSW, but also in relation to other agencies (e.g. mentoring services) offering pre and post-release services.

- 5.45 Community-based agencies also offered a view that putting arrangements in place prior to release increased the chances of continuing engagement in services. For them, CJSW throughcare offered the opportunity for more successful engagement through joint working. For example, CJSW presence at meetings and appointments was commented on positively, as was the possibility of following up non-attendance at appointments.
- 5.46 Those with experience of successful engagement in the post-release phase with women offenders suggested a number of factors which could contribute to this. While the development of a relationship at the custody stage was seen as key, workers also indicated the importance of multi-agency input and practical assistance such as gate pick-ups – both of these factors were seen as instrumental in maintaining contact. However, staff also described a persistent approach to tackling apparent disengagement in the community, with phone calls and text reminders being used to maintain contact between appointments and to follow up non-appearance at appointments.
- 5.47 Maintaining the engagement of male offenders on release was, however, recognised as an issue which needed to be addressed. CJSW and support agency interviewees offered a range of possible explanations for this, suggesting that offenders disengaged once practical needs were met, once they were out of the prison environment and no longer felt obliged to engage, and as a result of quickly falling back in with old acquaintances and into their old way of life. CJSW staff also noted that they did not currently have the capacity to follow up disengagement in the community in a proactive way.
- 5.48 The evaluation offered some pointers as to how this might be addressed:
- The Link Centre-based model undoubtedly allowed for regular pre-release meetings between CJSW support workers and the male offenders accommodated at Perth. However, it is possible that the system of individual CJSW visits necessarily used at the prisons accommodating female offenders was perceived as providing a more personal approach which may have been a factor in the quality of the relationship which developed between CJSW workers and female offenders.
  - Some CJSW staff suggested that a more intensive approach, involving multi-agency pre-release meetings, gate pick-ups and mentoring support, might be needed to facilitate ongoing engagement. This sort of approach appeared to be a more common feature in CRP work with women offenders, and the workers there identified such activities as important to continuing engagement and there may be lessons to learn there. While CJSW staff working with male offenders were keen to develop this type of work as they thought it would help with engagement, it was also recognised that this would have resource implications. Such an approach was, however, already being explored with the extension of the Tayside Intensive Support Scheme (TISS) to the Dundee area. This scheme was a partnership between CJSW, the Police and a number of third sector agencies targeting very persistent male offenders at the point of arrest. TISS will run alongside the CRP, and may provide further pointers for success in this

area. The work of other projects such as that running at HMP Addiewell may also offer lessons.

- The Dundee CJSW team were keen to raise their profile with both offenders and other services, and were considering the production of leaflets advertising the service.
- Another option being considered by the Dundee CJSW team was that of developing their role in the form of a signposting service, passing offenders on to other agencies who would be able to do the more intensive work with offenders.
- Flexibility and ease of access were also identified as possible factors in facilitating engagement for male offenders. A health worker, for example, indicated that offenders who were reluctant to engage with CJSW may nevertheless engage with health services, which then opened up the opportunity for cross-referrals to other support services. It was, therefore, important that services operated in a flexible way, offering a holistic approach in response to the needs of this client group, and making appropriate judgments about the need to involve other services in the light of client preferences. A central 'hub' with an addiction focus was also currently being explored – this would provide 'one-stop' access to services and, again, the option for referrals to other agencies.

5.49 There is much here that can be seen to be consistent with the messages emerging from international evidence on features of throughcare associated with successful outcomes (e.g. early engagement, continuity of services, multi-agency working, support in the immediate period following release - see Chapter 1). And, while these points are presented as options for increasing community engagement with male offenders, they may also be relevant to optimising the service for female offenders.

### **Increased addressing of criminogenic needs**

5.50 Criminogenic needs are those related to risk factors associated with criminal behaviour and include issues such as family circumstances (past and present), addictions (drug and alcohol), mental health, homelessness, education, employment and income. Meeting needs in these areas is clearly integral to the aims of the CRP, and the evaluation provides a range of evidence – qualitative and quantitative – in this area about related activity.

5.51 Referrals to services provide one proxy indicator that needs are potentially being met and the monitoring data show referrals to a range of different services in the community. The bulk of such referrals related to housing, addictions and benefits, with a small number related to health and education. Interviews with staff (SPS and CJSW) reinforced this picture, indicating that housing, addictions and benefits were the most frequently identified offender needs, and this was also apparent in the accounts of offenders themselves. Although quantitative data were not available on referrals to prison-based service, the interviews with staff again indicated that such referrals were common: there were frequent references to Link Centre appointments to discuss housing needs and to instigate benefit claims and referrals to prison-based addictions services.

- 5.52 Staff (SPS, CJSW and those working in community agencies) appeared to have a clear understanding of the factors leading to offending and the need to address these. Addictions, in particular, were highlighted as being linked to criminal activity and repeat prison sentences. However, staff in a range of agencies also saw dealing with issues such as housing and benefits prior to release as a priority. These key issues of housing, benefits and addictions are each discussed briefly below, before looking at the addressing of other needs.
- 5.53 Housing: Arranging appropriate accommodation was seen as preventing someone having to present as homeless on release which would almost inevitably result in hostel accommodation and likely exposure to a drug and alcohol culture. The relationship between homelessness and offending in particular was seen as central to repeat offending; as one agency worker put it: “Does homelessness cause offending or does offending cause homelessness?”
- 5.54 Offenders themselves were aware of the criminogenic risks presented by certain accommodation options and were keen to secure housing that would help them avoid criminal behaviour. One offender in the community talked about her concern about being placed in accommodation in an area with a known drug problem; another offender in custody talked of his current aspirations and previous experience saying, “it’s just setting you up for a fall, I think, putting you in a hostel” (OP16). Uncertainty about the type of accommodation they might be offered was clearly a source of anxiety for offenders in custody who were keen to know that they would not be instructed to present at the local housing office as homeless on release without knowing where they would be allocated.
- 5.55 There were accounts of inter-agency efforts to prevent homelessness on release (or to pursue a strategy of ‘managed homelessness’) and to secure appropriate accommodation for vulnerable offenders, and to support them in that accommodation. These included established working relationships and information sharing between prisons and local authority housing departments in some areas. Alongside this, though, interviewees across a range of organisations expressed concern about the lack of suitable accommodation in the community and the implications this had for successful reintegration. There was also some frustration at the rules and procedures which contributed to the problems in this area (e.g. rules that restricted payment of housing benefit while someone was in prison; the limited time period before a local authority reclaimed an empty property, and the process for the disposal of possessions from empty properties). For a range of interviewees, housing was seen as a key resource issue in looking ahead to the future of throughcare services.
- 5.56 Benefits: Many interviewees stressed the importance of ensuring benefits were in place prior to release in order to prevent an immediate return to criminal behaviour such as shoplifting and other low level theft. The picture from the interviews was that in most cases benefit applications were successfully started in prison and that this was a positive step. CJSW workers were also involved in assisting offenders with benefit claim interviews and applications following release, and of helping secure food parcels and crisis payments when problems with benefit claims were encountered. CJSW and agency workers also reported offenders facing difficulties when rules and processes did not fit well with their circumstances. These included problems of getting a doctor’s line to progress a benefit claim when a prison sentence resulted in an offender being removed from a GP’s patient list, and

administrative systems relating to community care grants issuing letters of award too late to reach offenders before they were released from prison.

- 5.57 Addictions: Both drug and alcohol addictions were identified as key factors linked to offending behaviour, and as important needs for many short-term offenders. CJSW and SPS staff interviewees talked about the importance of tackling addictions and the opportunity offered by a period in custody, with referrals made to Phoenix Futures, the SPS addiction services and local authority led Throughcare Addictions Services in order to do so. Several offenders commented positively on the opportunity to tackle their addictions, although there were others who were unhappy with the treatment on offer (e.g. the availability of addiction-blocking medication and the presumption in favour of methadone programmes). Transition to the community could be challenging for those with a history of addictions and the evaluation identified continuity of support as a factor which might help maintain involvement in services. The research identified instances of such continuity of support being provided by drugs workers, mentoring schemes or by CJSW workers who might attend appointments with clients. CJSW and other community support agency workers, however, identified the need for addictions services to be designed in a client-focused way (e.g. the 'one-stop shop' or hub approach discussed elsewhere) and the need for mentoring-type input between formal appointments to support offender motivation in this area.
- 5.58 Families and relationships: Those providing support to women offenders in particular reported that responding to family and relationship issues were common in their work. Here referrals were made to organisations such as Circle which worked with families of those with addictions. Their work in supporting offenders and their families could involve individual mentoring, practical hands-on support (including gate pick-ups) and included children and grandparents as well as offenders themselves. Work of this type was seen as a potential gap in relation to responding to the needs of male offenders – one SPS interviewee suggested that parenting skills would be a useful addition to the programmes on offer in prison.
- 5.59 Mental health: A number of staff (CJSW and prison) interviewees noted the prevalence of mental health problems amongst offenders, and particularly amongst women offenders – self harm was a particular issue here. A number of offenders also mentioned referrals to mental health professionals, although there were several reports of dissatisfaction with the service received in terms of the waiting time for appointments or the type of treatment offered.
- 5.60 Education, training and employment: Needs in relation to education, employment and training featured less prominently in discussion with staff and offenders, although they were touched on by some interviewees. Although staff interviewees, particularly CJSW staff, acknowledged the importance of tackling these issues, they often saw them as secondary to other issues. The priority was to deal with issues such as housing and addictions, and achieve a period of stability for an offender, which might then allow other issues such as employment and training to be tackled. This view was also apparent amongst offenders, some of whom talked positively about addressing this in the future once they were more settled. However, there were also instances of offenders undertaking training while in prison, applying for and successfully moving on to college courses, and exploring opportunities to do voluntary work. The wider challenge for offenders finding employment in a period of relatively high unemployment was noted by some. It was also suggested that

greater use of the Open Estate at Castle Huntly, with its emphasis on reintegration back into the community and employment placements, may also be helpful here.

- 5.61 In relation to other behavioural needs, some offenders in the evaluation had had the opportunity to attend programmes while in custody to address offending behaviours or improve their life skills (e.g. anger management or personal development programmes teaching coping strategies and building self-esteem). However, a number of SPS staff commented on this, noting that the resources were not available for these types of programmes in prison for those serving short-term sentences, and – for women offenders – that programmes were not available in all prisons. There was also a view that very short prison sentences did not generally allow sufficient time to address such needs. CJSW staff also commented on this. One interviewee believed that this was a gap in current service provision in the community for short-term offenders, and another indicated that increased demand for such services would be a problem given the need to prioritise those on statutory throughcare arrangements.
- 5.62 The inference from the evaluation is that a CRP-type process can play a part in linking people to services in order to meet their needs. Valuable work was being done in all these areas, in particularly in relation to housing, addictions and benefits, although it is not possible to determine the extent to which this was as a result of involvement in CRP. There are also complexities and inter-linkages in dealing with these needs (e.g. the availability of appropriate housing options will impact on the effective response to addictions). It was also clear that CRP was operating within a wider service and community context which will have an impact on the extent to which needs are effectively met.

### **Comment on long-term outcomes for offenders**

- 5.63 The logic model articulated two long-term aims for the CRP as follows:
- Increased reintegration
  - Reduced reoffending
- 5.64 The evaluation did not set out to consider the achievement of the CRP's long-term outcomes. Nevertheless, it is possible at this stage to offer some comment based on the perception of interviewees.
- 5.65 There was general agreement amongst interviewees that addressing people's needs while in prison was important to reintegration. Alongside this was a number of more specific points indicating where staff thought the CRP – or the provision of support to offenders more generally – was helping with reintegration. For example, a reduction in homeless presentations by offenders leaving prison was attributed by one housing agency interviewee to the work of the CJSW team in addressing housing needs prior to release. In relation to housing again, there was a suggestion that the involvement of a CJSW support worker increased the likelihood of offenders keeping appointments with housing officers immediately following release. More generally, external agencies were positive about the impact of CJSW involvement on offender engagement with services, e.g. in helping people stay involved in addiction services, or assisting them in securing welfare grants.

5.66 In terms of reducing reoffending, several interviewees believed that the project was beginning to show benefits in this area – they suggested that the rates of returning to prison showed some signs of slowing down:

“Well obviously you’ll get your usual customers coming round and round and round, but we’re seeing different names. So to me if we’re not seeing guys that have been in prison maybe once or twice again, that’s a result for me.” CJSW5

“...you can generally say that a lot of the short-termers come through the revolving door on a regular basis, but the ones that have been on the CRP ... I don't think we've had very *many* of them back through the door.” SPS4

5.67 The views and experiences of some offenders also added weight to this view, with one saying that the help she had received via the CRP on a previous sentence had enabled her to stay out of prison for an extended period; another respondent reflected that if she had had more support during a previous prison sentence, this might have prevented her current return to custody. Several CRP participants expressed an intention not to reoffend in the future – although the offenders themselves did not necessarily attribute this to support they had received in prison.

5.68 Staff in various settings also offered a more reflective view on longer-term outcomes. There was a sense that not enough time had yet elapsed to judge the success of the scheme, or that not enough data were available to allow outcomes to be assessed; additionally it was suggested that it would be difficult to identify clear ‘cause and effect’ in relation to outcomes. Some were also keen to reflect on the definition of ‘success’; interviewees were very much of the view that keeping individual repeat offenders out of prison for longer (rather than necessarily stopping them offending altogether) constituted a successful outcome.

5.69 Some also reflected on the complex nature of offending behaviour and the reality of helping those with ‘chaotic lives’ (i.e. lives characterised by lack of structure (social and familial), and multiple problems, and with a high likelihood of substance misuse). There was a strongly expressed view that offending behaviour could not be addressed unless the lifestyles and personal circumstances of offenders were fully taken into account and tackled in a holistic way.

5.70 Interviewees gave a range of examples of the challenges which needed to be addressed in working with this client group, given their lifestyles and personal circumstances:

- An offender might not present at pre-arranged accommodation following release because of an immediate return to drug or alcohol-related behaviour;
- Many offenders returned to accommodation or neighbourhoods which would bring them into contact with previous networks and acquaintances;
- Offenders were often ill-equipped to deal with officialdom (e.g. in relation to housing, benefits or health related issues); this may be as a result of social skills, literacy skills or the lack of a permanent address or contact number;

- Offenders might find it challenging to negotiate a series of appointments on release, or may simply be deterred from attending by travel costs.

- 5.71 Interviewees also made the point that the work done with offenders took place within a wider social and welfare context which was not designed with the needs and circumstances of offenders leaving prison specifically in mind. Here, interviewees highlighted issues noted above relating to availability of suitable housing, and rules and procedures relating to benefits.
- 5.72 These sorts of issues all created challenges and contributed to the ‘revolving door’ identified by so many interviewees and suggest the need for a more holistic, system-wide approach to working with this group.. Clearly these issues are outwith the scope of the CRP as a discrete process, but do need to be taken into account in considering how to maximise progress towards the stated long-term aims.

## Summary

- 5.73 In general, the CRP process appears to support POs in their interaction with individual offenders and their role in promoting engagement with relevant services.
- 5.74 But some prison staff were not clear about the importance of actively promoting the CRP to offenders or felt poorly equipped to do so. As a result, the quality of staff-offender interaction around the project varied, with the result that some offenders – when presenting to CJSW – showed little awareness of the reason for their referral or motivation to engage.
- 5.75 Some prisons were taking positive steps to promote the project more actively and consistently. CJSW staff pointed out that this could be a mixed blessing, as increased numbers of referrals might also lead to dealing with an increase in individuals lacking any real motivation to engage.
- 5.76 Many of the offenders who had taken part in the CRP appeared to have a good awareness of their own needs. Although it is not possible to show that the associated referrals were a direct result of the CRP and would not have happened anyway, there were some specific accounts from offenders of how interactions around the CRP had helped them to understand or address their needs.
- 5.77 Trust was considered fundamental to the development of productive offender-practitioner relationships and, again, there were aspects of the CRP process (in particular the regular review meetings) which appear to have supported this.
- 5.78 In this context, staff and offenders emphasised the importance of staff being able to deliver real practical benefits; and, equally, the dangers of failing to do so. The opportunity to address pressing needs (such as housing) was also a key driver of offender *motivation* to engage and staff were conscious of the impact of being unable to deliver on this because of external resource constraints.
- 5.79 The CRP process was also seen as providing a helpful mechanism for identifying, tapping into and supporting wider offender motivations to change – whether triggered by significant life events, circumstances or simply life stage.
- 5.80 It is clear that involvement in the CRP led to increased engagement with reintegration planning – a number of offenders were attending reviews and pre-release meetings during the course of their sentence that would not otherwise have

happened. However, the rates of engagement and attrition apparent from the monitoring data suggest that there is scope to increase this level of engagement further.

- 5.81 It is less clear whether the CRP led to increased post-release engagement with services, although both offenders and staff felt that contact pre-release made such engagement more likely once offenders returned to the community.
- 5.82 The challenges of sustaining service involvement beyond the prison gate appear greatest in relation to male offenders, and the evaluation identified a number of ways in which this might be addressed.
- 5.83 Across all the offender outcomes – whether short, medium or long-term – the evidence is limited and does not allow for causal attribution. However, the indication of positive impacts is in line with existing evidence on addressing recidivism<sup>17</sup>. There is, perhaps, enough evidence of good practice and good experiences to suggest that there are features of the CRP which have proved helpful and that support the plausibility of the model in increasing reintegration and reducing reoffending, albeit that this may only be fully possible if services are appropriately organised and adequately resourced to address the complex needs of offenders.

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<sup>17</sup> Malloch, M.S., McIvor, G., Schinkel, M. and Armstrong, S. (2013), *The Elements of Effective Through-Care Part 1: International Review*. SCCJR Report No. 03/2014

## **6 KEY CONTEXTUAL FACTORS SHAPING THE IMPLEMENTATION, OPERATION AND OUTCOMES OF THE CRP**

- 6.1 In the discussion so far, we have identified a number of features of the CRP process itself that affected its implementation, operation and early outcomes. In this chapter, we set those in the context of three wider factors that shaped the project during its period of operation and which would need to be taken account of in any future roll-out). Indeed, while it would be possible to address many of the specific issues identified with the current CRP process (e.g. the design of the forms), it will be just as important to consider how any refined process will operate within its given context if throughcare for short-term offenders is to be optimised. These factors are:
- the ‘crowded landscape’ of existing interventions and practices aimed at offender reintegration and rehabilitation;
  - the evolving organisational context of SPS and the role of the PO within that; and
  - the constraints of implementing a multi-agency project within a prison setting.
- 6.2 We argue that these contextual factors are key to understanding the experience of the CRP to date and provide important pointers in terms of how the existing CRP process might be optimised and the wider lessons for the future of voluntary throughcare more generally (dual themes which provide the focus of Chapter 7).

### **The ‘crowded landscape’ of service provision**

- 6.3 Although, as noted in Chapter 1, the logic model presents the CRP as a discrete intervention, in practice it sits alongside a host of related interventions, initiatives and routine practices. Specific initiatives in the prisons and CJSW areas involved in the CRP, for example, included the following:
- The Shine mentoring programme for women
  - New Routes mentoring programme for young male offenders (under 26)
  - Routes out of Prison
  - The Throughcare Support Officer (TSO) pilot at HMP Greenock
  - The Tayside Intensive Support Service, recently extended to Dundee
  - SPAN (a joint Shelter/SACRO initiative) in HMP Perth
- 6.4 In many cases, offenders eligible for the CRP would also be eligible for support from one or more of these other programmes or services, dependent on their geographical location, age, gender, etc. All of these programmes have the same overarching aim of reducing reoffending by tackling the needs of individuals, but all also have their own specific focus (e.g. geographic area, age, gender) and/or approach (e.g. the Greenock TSO pilot offers support for six weeks pre- and post-release). And, although there is scope for them to work effectively together – and evidence of them doing so – there was some concern that, in the context of limited resourcing, they are also sometimes effectively competing with each other for users. There was also concern that new initiatives and short-term funding arrangements often resulted in a changing landscape of organisations making it difficult for existing staff to keep abreast of current providers.

- 6.5 In addition, of course, much of the overarching framework of standard sentence/case management within SPS (such as the Core Screen, ICM, and the CIP) is also geared towards rehabilitative and reintegrative ends. The CRP effectively operates alongside these existing systems and, as such, was both facilitated and constrained by them.
- 6.6 Although the practicalities of how the CRP sat alongside these existing initiatives and practices are important, equally significant are the consequences of this 'crowded landscape' for the identity, profile and understanding of the project among both offenders and staff.
- 6.7 It was apparent from the interviews that offenders, in particular, had only limited awareness of the CRP – they were largely unfamiliar with the name and, while conscious of having had referrals or meetings with SPS and CJSW staff, did not generally see these as being part of a coherent 'process'. The extent to which this matters may be arguable, but the interviews suggested that word of mouth is a key form of awareness-raising within prisons about service use, with offenders often seeking out or taking up offers of services on the recommendation of their peers, or in response to benefits they saw others gaining. For example, one offender had heard of the possibility of getting picked up at the gate on release in this way; another was pursuing a referral to Circle (a family support project working with those with addictions) on the same basis. As another put it: "You never really know what is going on; it's just through other prisoners that you find things out" (OP23).
- 6.8 This lack of a clear identity for the CRP was also an issue for SPS staff, not only in terms of their own understanding but also their willingness and ability to promote the CRP and the link to CJSW throughcare effectively. They contrasted this with other services, such as Shine, which had a higher profile within the prison (this was also apparent in the interviews with offenders who referred to such services by name). Although, in the following extract, the prison officer attributes this to the presence that Shine has in the prison, it is also likely to reflect the fact that Shine has been operating for longer and has a generally clearer identity among staff and offenders.
- "...but the one good thing with Shine is they come into the establishment maybe twice a week. So if I was in trying to deliver something and the prisoner asked me something I couldn't give them an answer for, I could, if I knew that Shine would be coming in this week, I could phone over and ask them, which CRP lacks, 'cause there's nothing coming into the jail." SPS1
- 6.9 Although not directly observed by the evaluation, the Link Centre presence at HMP Perth may offer the potential to build a profile in the same way. However, there were also reports of external agencies giving presentations at prisons and this sort of activity may also contribute to awareness amongst staff, and may be something that CJSW teams could consider.
- 6.10 The ongoing TSO initiative at Greenock also had a clear profile and attracted a high level of positive comment from interviewees. By contrast, there was some confusion within the same prison about whether the CRP was in fact still a 'live' process, with some staff apparently not realising that the pilot period had been extended beyond the initial one year period. Other SPS staff and offenders did not differentiate between CRP and TSO input and talked about them as interchangeable initiatives.

- 6.11 In such a context – and particularly in HMP Edinburgh and Greenock where the numbers of offenders associated with the project were very low – the CRP clearly struggled to establish a clear or distinctive identity. This situation was probably exacerbated by a lack of feedback, to both staff and offenders, about successful outcomes for individuals. Several interviewees suggested that this would be the real catalyst to raising the profile of the project, differentiating it from other initiatives and increasing uptake:

“I think if people are getting a good service and getting the support and the help...and there’s no coercion and no pressure on them...it’ll be fed back.” CJSW3

“I would be interested to know exactly what difference this process makes to a prisoner regarding throughcare as opposed to somebody who’s not on the project because if we know what the difference is, that’s something we can emphasise with prisoners...” SPS16

- 6.12 However, the key issue here remains the potential for confusion or conflation of different services and the difficulty of establishing the CRP as a visible and central part of the throughcare landscape. We return to the question of how this might be done in the following chapter.

### **SPS in transition: organisational strategy, culture change and the role of the PO**

- 6.13 Not all wider contextual factors should be seen as potential barriers or difficulties for the CRP. Indeed, perhaps the most significant enabler has been the clear shift in strategic focus and culture within the SPS as a whole towards highly proactive engagement with offenders and partner organisations and an explicit recognition of the role and responsibilities of the service ‘beyond the prison gate’. The CRP can be seen as clearly aligned to this vision, along with a range of other initiatives being pursued in this area, and as forming part of this wider commitment to the reducing reoffending agenda. Many SPS interviewees agreed with the officer who described this type of work as “absolutely what we should be doing” (SPS16). Within this broad shift in culture and focus, the role of the PO is being positioned as critical and, again, is consistent with many of the key features of the CRP.

- 6.14 The CRP is, then, clearly in tune with the direction of travel within SPS as a whole, with the priorities of local managers and the aspirations and motivations of many staff. Offenders certainly offered a range of positive accounts of interaction and engagement with prison officers, although the extent to which these were associated directly with the CRP is not clear:

“She would like come over and talk to you and that when she was working...she’d come like that, eh, do you want to speak about anything, is everything ok, and she’d always be there...she was really good...” OC2

“If I was needing to speak to anybody or that, my personal officer’s brilliant, to be honest with you.” OP14

“...there is one thing I can say about my PO...I’ve opened up quite a lot and...before that he would come into my cell every week, is there anything I can do for you? Do I need to contact mental health? Do I

need to do this, or is there anybody that's not contacted you back...he was always asking ... and going look has this happened? No! I'll get on the phone, he went out of his way and that's my opinion of mine, my PO...he pushed for things to get done for us." OP20

- 6.15 However, as with any significant organisational change, the redefinition (or restatement, as some suggested) of the role of the PO was not universally welcomed, and the challenge of achieving the sort of cultural change required to underpin CRP was recognised by SPS interviewees:

"The biggest challenge is getting staff attitudes changed, but we have done that, we have done that before [with the introduction of ICM]."  
SPS14

"What we, as an organisation, have to work on is changing the culture where every professional prisoner officer sees their core role as being at the centre of the prisoner's journey through custody and thereafter. That's something that's gonna take a bit of time because there's been an element of deskilling the workforce." SPS16

- 6.16 Although the traditional role of the prison officer was felt to involve a high degree of contact and interaction with individual offenders – and a corresponding focus on needs both within the prison and upon release – it was also suggested that this had been eroded in recent decades by the emergence of more specialist roles. As a result, it was felt by some (as indicated by the officer above) that there had been a degree of deskilling resulting in the emergence of a cohort of residential staff not used to regarding such work as a core part of their role.

- 6.17 The time taken to achieve the sort of cultural change sought will inevitably lead to variable practice on the ground, and the experience of offenders bore this out with examples amongst the interviewees of people not knowing who if they had a PO, or who their PO was, or having what might be described as a more distant relationship:

"Personal officers in here change all the time; I think I've had about five or six since I've been in ["]Q: *And the one that you've got just now*]  
"Well, she's lovely. She does everything for you; if you ask her she, she does it." OP11

"I don't know who he is *this* time. Last time, I knew who he was, but not this time." OP17

"To be truthful with you, it doesn't help anyone. I've never had anything, nothing's changed through getting a PO to work with." OP23

- 6.18 More generally, there were examples of offenders not knowing how referrals had come about: "It just sort of happened" (OP11), or saying they "[didn't] know who to ask" (OP21) in relation to getting support for issues they perceived themselves, suggesting personal officers are not always taking a proactive role in dealing with the offenders they have responsibility for.

- 6.19 Nevertheless, while there are challenges as a result of a service in transition, there are also indications that the process could capitalise on the resources in the current staffing body.

### **Effective multi-agency work with individual offenders within the constraints of the prison environment**

- 6.20 A third powerful contextual factor relates to the challenge of multi-agency working within a local and highly varied prison environment. We have seen that effective engagement between SPS and CJSW of the kind envisaged by the CRP requires a number of elements, including the development of strong and consistent relationships; regular face-to-face contact; clarity of roles and responsibilities; the right 'cast list' at key moments (e.g. at pre-release meetings); and good communication and information flows. It also requires offenders to acquire a degree of familiarity and ease with community-based social work staff, and awareness and knowledge of the service.
- 6.21 The prison environment itself presents a number of significant challenges in these respects, including the physical environment; offender movement within and between prisons; sentencing and custodial arrangements; and staffing arrangements.

#### The physical environment

- 6.22 Staff highlighted that the physical layout of prisons often impacted on the opportunities for interaction with individual offenders, as a result of the design of different blocks, units and landings - staff may be allocated to one area, while their allocated offenders were housed in another area. Other staff, however, did not feel this was insurmountable, indicating that it was usually possible to move between areas or to speak to offenders during meal and other communal periods. This was discussed alongside the issue of staff ratios: staff explained that it was not easy for a single officer responsible for a landing or other area to carry out one-to-one meetings or related CRP administrative tasks.
- 6.23 The availability and accessibility of appropriate spaces to hold meetings was also a concern. In particular, prison staff indicated a lack of private space in residential halls for carrying out CRP meetings and reviews. Although the Link Centre generally offered space for meetings involving external agencies, this meant that offenders had to leave the residential area and this was seen by some as a factor which deterred attendance.
- 6.24 The option of carrying out meetings in residential areas, where space allowed, was seen as having both advantages and disadvantages. Hall meetings allowed for increased familiarity and informal engagement between prison staff and external agencies (including CJSW), and between external agencies and offenders. They also allowed for some fluidity, with examples of offenders who had been persuaded to return to meetings being held in the hall – something that would have been less likely on an escorted visit to the Link Centre once the offender had returned to the hall. One prison was exploring the possibility of using an interview suite within the residential hall area for CJSW meetings. It was noted, however, that this arrangement would potentially reduce contact between CJSW staff and other agencies operating from the Link Centre, something which they found beneficial in facilitating wider communication and coordination.

## Offender movement

- 6.25 Transfers between prisons and between different halls and blocks within prisons both posed challenges for the CRP, in terms of continuity of the PO-offender relationship and maintaining involvement in the project more generally.
- 6.26 For SPS staff, there was some uncertainty about how to respond to offenders being transferred in from other establishments: the practice generally seemed to be to start the CRP process again, although with a somewhat condensed timescale (as they would not be dealing with all of the issues that would have arisen for a new arrival settling in to the prison environment). In this context, it was felt that a process for flagging up existing CRP involvement on transfer would be helpful.
- 6.27 Offender transfers had also caused some problems for CJSW in dealing with women offenders: on occasion, CJSW staff had arrived for a pre-arranged appointment to find that the individual involved had been moved to another prison.

## Staff arrangements

- 6.28 Working patterns and staff movement also impacted on the CRP process in a number of ways. Shift patterns meant that POs were not always available to attend pre-release meetings, which was felt to impact on the effectiveness of this part of the process. In such situations, meetings were often attended by another member of staff – a practice that was queried by CJSW colleagues who felt that the quality of SPS input suffered as a result. However, there were also reports of staff taking ownership of the process and, for example, arranging meetings to fit around shift patterns and making arrangements to come in during off-duty periods to attend meetings. It was noted that the fixed CJSW prison days at Perth was another factor which could inhibit the availability of SPS staff for meetings.
- 6.29 Staff turnover also impacted on the CRP, with promotions and transfer of duties affecting not only the continuity of involvement in individual cases but the extent to which knowledge and experience of the CRP process as a whole had built up within a prison. As noted elsewhere, such impacts tended to be exacerbated by the limited scale of the pilot within most of the participating institutions.

## **Summary**

- 6.30 We have argued that three broad contextual factors have shaped the implementation, outcomes and operation of the CRP. While these are not simple ‘barriers’ or ‘enablers’ that can be easily addressed, they need to be factored in to thinking about *why* the project has operated in the way that it has and how it might be developed in the future.
- 6.31 Perhaps the most significant is the challenge of carving out a distinctive role and identity for the project within a ‘crowded landscape’ of overlapping and sometimes competing service provision. The current lack of profile makes it difficult to explain CRP to SPS staff and other practitioners, and also – even more importantly – to offenders, for whom word of mouth is a critical means of learning and making decisions about service use.
- 6.32 An important enabling factor has been the general direction of travel within SPS, which has led to a renewed emphasis on constructive work with offenders, a recognition of the importance of partnership working ‘beyond the prison gate’ and a

restatement of the importance of the PO role. While there may be pockets of resistance to aspects of this shift in organisational priorities and culture, it is also clear that there is a strong base of support – at various levels – for many of the underlying principles (and overarching objectives) of the CRP.

- 6.33 A further set of important contextual factors relate to the character of the local prison environments within which the CRP was implemented. The highly diverse built environment within the participating establishments greatly shaped the nature and extent of inter-agency contact – and also the opportunities for offenders and staff (from SPS and other agencies) to interact in informal and productive ways. The inevitable flux associated with offender movement, staff changes and flexible working patterns also posed significant challenges in terms of maintaining individual relationships and awareness and understanding of the project more generally.

## 7 KEY LESSONS AND IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Building on earlier conclusions about the specifics of the CRP process and evidence of outcomes to date, and on the account in Chapter 6 of the wider contextual factors that have shaped the operation of the project as a whole, in this chapter we discuss a number of key lessons and implications for the future. This discussion has four main strands:

- We consider how the existing CRP process might be optimised or improved, optimisation with a view to continuation of the project or roll-out across a wider geographic area;
- We examine the potential resource implications of such a development;
- We identify a number of broader implications for the potential ethos and approach of throughcare for short-term offenders;
- We revisit the contextual factors identified in Chapter 6 and ask how voluntary throughcare for short-term offenders might be developed more effectively with these in mind.

7.2 In doing so, the chapter draws both on practitioner views about what should now happen in relation to the CRP, and also on our own reflections – as external evaluators – on the implications of the evidence presented in the earlier chapters.

### Optimising the CRP

7.3 Most of the practitioners we spoke to were in favour of extending CRP, or some version of it – albeit with a range of caveats. This was in line with the ‘in principle’ support for throughcare documented elsewhere in the report, and a consensus that addressing the needs of short-term offenders is crucial to reducing reoffending. However, there were also practical arguments for putting a national scheme put in place, which could be seen as a response to the limitations of operating in ‘pilot mode’.

7.4 For those working in prisons, and women’s prisons in particular, the postcode basis of the project (and small number of eligible offenders that resulted) made it difficult to embed processes and build up staff knowledge and expertise. This undoubtedly compounded some of the issues identified in the evaluation – e.g. lack of familiarity with the process (amongst staff and offenders); issues with inter-agency communication; and the extent to which staff were able to ‘sell’ the project to offenders effectively. National roll-out the CRP (or a similar scheme) would clearly help to address this problem. Staff also commented on the apparently anomalous situation of some offenders getting access to support which was not available to others within the same prison – another issue that would be addressed through a national scheme.

7.5 Beyond this ‘in principle’ support, interviewees also identified priorities for ensuring any development of the existing project was fit for purpose and operated effectively. Not surprisingly, these mesh closely with our own conclusions about the limitations of the project as implemented to date, and can also be seen to tie in with existing evidence on ‘what works’ in relation to developing effective throughcare services, as outlined in Chapter 1. Building on the discussion about specific aspects of the

process in Chapter 3, these can be grouped under five broad themes of information and training, management and supervision, paperwork and information recording, coordination and partnership working, and working with offenders - as discussed below.

### Improving staff training and awareness

- 7.6 This is partly a question of ensuring familiarity with the technical aspects of the process (e.g. expectations in relation to completing the CRP forms and generating monitoring data, using PR2 to make referrals), but also ensuring that staff properly understand the process as a whole, its objectives and their role within it, and how different agencies contribute to the process. This was seen as fundamental by SPS staff, in particular, if POs are to fully buy in to the process and be properly equipped to motivate offenders to engage.
- 7.7 Ad hoc local initiatives to provide awareness sessions and offer support were identified by the research and appear to represent good practice. However, it is evident that training needs to be planned for and provided on an ongoing basis, in order to take account of staff shift patterns, non-availability for other reasons and changes over time. There are also implications for the wider recruitment and training of SPS staff insofar as the effective identification of individual offender needs and promotion of voluntary throughcare arrangements would need to be a core part of the PO role – a role that will require a combination of skills, aptitude and outlook that may not be present throughout the existing staff cohort.
- 7.8 It is also clear that while formal courses are important, a flexible approach involving on-the-job training and easily accessible guidance – including, for example, a checklist or chart to help staff navigate the process – would help to overcome some of the limitations of the existing project. While the main training need appears to be within SPS, training resources should also be made available to other agencies.

### Management and supervision

- 7.9 It is clear that managers and supervisors at different levels need to take an active role in promoting the project, monitoring frontline activity, and ensuring that resources and processes are in place to allow the project to operate effectively. Current local mechanisms – such as using administrative staff to oversee CRP activity at different stages, or giving hall managers clear responsibilities in relation to compliance and quality of engagement – provide useful lessons which might be developed more widely. There is also scope to make greater use of (improved) monitoring data to track and encourage progress within particular establishments.

### Paperwork and information recording

- 7.10 We saw earlier that there was significant dissatisfaction with the CRP paperwork and recording systems and evidence that this had impacted on staff support for – and hence the success of – the project as a whole. This issue would need to be addressed for the scheme to become successfully embedded in the work of the prison service. The move away from using the CRP forms at Greenock usefully highlights the limitations of the existing CRP forms. However, it is difficult to see how an embedded and recognisable national process can be achieved without consistent paperwork and information recording processes which are adhered to at all sites. It will, therefore, be important to listen to staff feedback in this area, and to

develop processes which are easy for staff to complete, are more closely aligned with existing SPS systems (such as PR2 and ICM) *and* more clearly support individuals' work as POs. In relation to this last point, it seems that staff would value richer, narrative-based information that could give greater insight into the needs of individual offenders.

- 7.11 However, it is also important that any process be supported by the collection of appropriate information for monitoring purposes. As far as possible this should be derived from operational information and the collection of specific data for monitoring purposes should be kept to a minimum – as a basic rule, it is better to collect a few key measures accurately and comprehensively than to maintain a much more complex and demanding system (which is likely to result in less useable data). Only with such a dataset in place will it be possible to monitor throughput and attrition effectively and to produce a clearer picture than has been possible to date of the difference that a project like the CRP makes to the work of agencies and the lives of offenders.
- 7.12 In relation to both operational and monitoring data, it is also clear that effective integration with a fully-featured management information system would make a huge difference in terms of the demands on staff, the scope for information sharing across agencies and to access and use relevant information at key stages in the process. While the current PR2 system may have limitations, arrangements for monitoring and managing voluntary throughcare should clearly form part of any review of information management requirements within SPS more generally. Ideally, individual involvement with the CRP would be flagged on a centralised and widely accessible information system. This would not only facilitate better case management; it would also potentially allow for cohort-based analysis of rates of reconviction and readmission to prison.

#### Communication/links/partnership working

- 7.13 The experience of both SPS staff and their CJSW counterparts highlights the importance of establishing good working relationships and clear protocols and channels of communication; and ensuring staff are fully informed about the work of other agencies. Specific suggestions from practitioners here included revision of the protocols for ensuring that CJSW reports are available; taking steps to ensure that pre-release meetings are arranged; ensuring that the most appropriate mix of staff are invited and can attend cross-agency meetings; and establishing effective protocols for communication and coordination between external agencies.
- 7.14 There did not appear to be a great deal of ongoing case-level communication or sharing of information, and this was commented on by interviewees in a number of contexts. The potential for increasing this may be worth exploring further. It is worth noting that the CRP process does not involve the recording of CJSW case management information on PR2 or sharing of CJSW information in any other way. A formal process for recording CJSW activity and progress as part of the CRP recording process might be something that would enhance the approach to needs assessment and contribute to a greater sense of joined-up working.

#### Engaging and motivating offenders

- 7.15 The scope to increase offender engagement is clear from both the monitoring data and the interviews with practitioners and offenders themselves. A key element in

this is undoubtedly a further strengthening of the PO role in encouraging initial and ongoing engagement, and ensuring that that this is further enhanced through training and appropriate management support. It is also critical that those working in the community have sufficient opportunities at the pre-release stage to engage directly with offenders. This would facilitate ongoing engagement following release, as would evidence of being able to provide the necessary level of practical support – e.g. through gate pick-ups, accompaniment to meetings in the community, etc.

- 7.16 The evaluation identified a different pattern of engagement among male and female offenders. While initial engagement was apparently higher among men, so too was the level of subsequent attrition, and CJSW experience indicated a higher level of post-release engagement for female offenders. The more hands-on proactive approach currently provided by the women's CJSW teams may provide lessons here, but would come with resource implications if this model were to be replicated for male offenders.

### **Resource implications of the extension of CRP**

- 7.17 Although the evaluation did not collect detailed quantitative information about the current resource involved in carrying out CRP-related work, interviews with staff (SPS, CJSW and SCS) did address this issue, gathering information about the types of staff involved, the time demands of CRP, and the impact that CRP duties had on their job. In this context, practitioners also offered views about the likely resource implications of extending the CRP.

#### Resource implications for SPS

- 7.18 In reflecting on the possibility of a national CRP scheme involving all short-term offenders, staff within SPS offered opposing views: some felt that the frontline activities would simply be absorbed into the existing work of SPS and the work of POs in particular; others felt that a roll-out of the scheme would present challenges, not just in terms of staff time, but at a more practical level in terms of accessing computers to update PR2, and the limited availability of suitable meeting spaces to meet with offenders.
- 7.19 Prison staff also pointed out the potential implications of providing accommodation for CJSW meetings and/or office space for CJSW teams if dealing with multiple local authority areas. In addition to the perceived impact within prisons, there was also some scepticism among SPS staff about the ability of local authorities to deliver voluntary throughcare on a national basis within existing resource constraints.

#### Resource implications for CJSW

- 7.20 CJSW staff foresaw potential resource implications associated with any uptake of the service among client groups already participating in the project, an extension to male offenders (in the case of Lanarkshire), and a potential increase in the demand for intensive, hands-on support and behavioural/therapeutic services in the community. There was also a sense of the potential 'problems of success': in other words, that any increased emphasis on intensive support might create increased demand for the service if offenders were to identify it as a positive outcome and talk positively about it with their peers.

- 7.21 While some from the men's CJSW team were keen to do more hands-on work if resources allowed, an alternative option discussed in this context was for CJSW to take on more of a coordinating or signposting role – this is explored further below.
- 7.22 Staff in the two CJSW areas were positive about the level of importance attached to voluntary throughcare by their local authorities, but also indicated that a national scheme might demand something of a change of priority in other parts of the country - in particular, in terms of the relative priority given to statutory as opposed to voluntary cases.

### Resource implications for SCS

- 7.23 The third partner in the CRP process, SCS, has a limited role in forwarding the CJSW report to the prison for eligible offenders on sentence. While there were undoubtedly teething problems with the process (see Chapter 3), the current impact on SCS staff resources in absolute terms was felt to be limited. In Dundee, the focus on male offenders meant a far higher number of relevant cases coming through, but even here the task was described as 'now part and parcel of daily court life'.

### Resources in the community

- 7.24 To date there was little indication that the project had generated any significant resource implications or increase in demand for external services, and most practitioners in such settings were confident that they would be able to respond and adapt to any increase in demand.
- 7.25 However, the most significant resource issue identified across all sectors was the availability of suitable accommodation for offenders leaving prison – an issue seen as critical to the reintegration of offenders and the drive to reduce reoffending, and something that would have to be addressed if a scheme such as the CRP were to achieve its long-term outcomes.

"Housing is a huge thing. Unfortunately it's something we've got very little control over and there isn't enough suitable hostel, homeless accommodation, I think that's the big issue. There's not enough suitable homeless accommodation. If somebody is serious about trying to move away from their previous chaotic lifestyle and they're going into hostels and they're having to associate with other residents there who are still using. I mean if you're paying 90% of your benefits to stay there, which includes your meals, and you're not gonna get fed unless you go down to eat at meal times which means you're sitting in the communal dining area or you're sitting in the communal lounge area, you're shared bathrooms, the chances of you moving away from your previous life style is really, really hard." CJSW7

- 7.26 Staff also recognised that housing ex-offenders would not always be seen as a priority, given the other pressures on social housing. This was also something that SPS highlighted as being outwith their control; as one SPS manager said, "things outside need to change obviously, not just in here", and where the importance of cross-sector working was highlighted. However, one offender outcome manager talked about the option of SPS investing in suitable resettlement accommodation as a possible response to this problem.

7.27 Apart from housing, CJSW interviewees identified resource implications associated with any increase in demand for behavioural or therapeutic services in the community in order to tackle offender behaviour or provide ongoing support to those dealing with addictions – all of which would be necessary if criminogenic needs were to be fully addressed.

### **Wider considerations in developing the approach to throughcare**

7.28 Alongside the discussion of how CRP might be optimised it is worth noting a number of other issues which were raised by interviewees. These do not necessarily have direct implications for the development of the core CRP process, but do have potential implications for the overall character and ethos of the service that might be delivered.

### Alternative approaches to CJSW case management

7.29 CJSW case management currently takes various forms, including providing hands-on intensive support, working alongside others providing such support, taking the lead in co-coordinating the input from other agencies, and arms-length involvement where other agencies take the lead. While the hands-on approach seems to be a more prominent feature of working with women offenders, there appears to be an appetite among the Dundee CJSW support workers to develop their work with male offenders in this area.

7.30 An alternative approach would be to position the CJSW team as a coordinating and signposting service, linking offenders to other agencies who would then provide direct services and support, including gate pick-ups and mentoring. The CJSW team would be the key link in the prison and community for all clients and services, maintaining oversight by reviewing needs and coordinating services on an ongoing basis in any multi-agency response. In terms of advantages, such an approach would give the team capacity to deal with an increased caseload; help address issues of inter-agency coordination and communication; facilitate cross-referrals between agencies and allow flexibility to tailor packages to the needs of the individual. It may, for example, provide a structure in which people could work with agencies other than social work. In terms of disadvantages, it might reduce the scope for CJSW staff themselves to build relationships with individual offenders, something identified elsewhere (Chapter 5) as important to outcomes.

7.31 The value of – and need for – a strong coordinating function was picked up by a number of interviewees. While reflecting the same principles, there was an alternative suggestion that such a function might be provided by SPS. The key aspiration appears to be for a well-coordinated service that ensures the needs of offenders are met in an effective way.

### An opt in or opt out service?

7.32 The status of the CRP/throughcare for short-term offenders as a voluntary service has both advantages and disadvantages. There was some concern amongst CJSW staff that offenders were 'over-encouraged' to engage with the process, creating difficulties for staff in dealing with unwilling participants. This is not only potentially self-defeating, but might change the nature of the service.

- 7.33 That said, such an approach might also lead to some offenders getting help who would otherwise have been missed. Consequently, some staff were willing to cautiously consider a greater degree of compulsion or incentivisation indicating that this might be justified if it allowed people to better benefit from the service.
- 7.34 One potential compromise here would be to move from what is essentially an opt-in model to one that requires offenders to opt out. This would maintain the essentially voluntary character of the service, but almost certainly result in higher levels of initial engagement.

#### Responding to behavioural as well as practical needs

- 7.35 The evaluation also raises important questions about the appropriate balance between responding to practical and more behavioural needs. There was a general consensus that the current emphasis on responding to practical needs, while important, is insufficient to address offending behaviour. This was a potential issue in prisons and the community where behavioural programmes were not always designed with the needs of short-term offenders in mind, or where capacity may not be available to cater for increased demand. Further, for women offenders, only Cornton Vale offered a full range of programmes. It was also suggested that the nature of very short sentences did not allow the time to address offending behaviour in any significant way. Those working in the community suggested that there was a gap in what they were able to offer offenders. On both the community and prison sides, this was something that interviewees felt needs to be addressed within the wider framework of and planning for throughcare for this group.

#### Working with or for offenders?

- 7.36 Many of the practitioners interviewed recognised the risk of creating a dependency culture and the importance of an approach which emphasises work with offenders to develop their skills and support them to act on their own behalf – even if this involves intensive initial practical support. There were suggestions as to how such an approach could be promoted with a greater emphasis on a two-way process which emphasised roles and responsibilities for both parties (offenders and agencies): one CJSW interviewee, for example, proposed that the outcome of the pre-release meeting should be positioned as a contract between both parties to reinforce the responsibilities of the offender in adhering to the plan.

#### An integrated approach

- 7.37 A number of interviewees argued for a process which worked in concert with other aspects of the judicial and custodial system. One CJSW staff member suggested that currently some offenders may be deterred from participating in CRP because they were concerned that admitting to needs might harm their chances of qualifying for HDC. Others discussed how CRP and HDC might be aligned, either by making participation in CRP a condition of HDC, or by creating a system whereby CRP participation could be taken into account in assessing applications for HDC. This chimed with the approach being taken by the newly established TISS team in Dundee where they hoped to use participation in the TISS initiative to argue for non-custodial sentences which would allow ongoing support in the community.
- 7.38 There was also interest in exploring how greater use of the Open Estate regime in conjunction with CRP throughcare might address the needs of short-term offenders

in making the transition back to the community in a managed way. At the other end of the spectrum there were calls to look at how support might be offered to those on very short sentences (less than three months) or those on remand. It was acknowledged that there were circumstances whereby people could spend a significant amount of time in prison while never actually meeting the CRP condition of a minimum six month *convicted* sentence, and that a flexible approach - as already operated in one locality - might be helpful here.

### **Developing support for short-term offenders in the wider context**

7.39 Chapter 6 identified three external factors which provide the context for any prison-based intervention: the organisational and cultural changes underway in SPS; the existing range of individual programmes and initiatives in relation to responding to the needs of offenders; the prison environment. In the remainder of this chapter, we consider how any expansion of the CRP, or of throughcare for short-term offenders more generally, might adapt to or operate more effectively within this context.

#### Bringing coherence to the crowded landscape

7.40 The evaluation highlighted the existence of a range of overlapping and sometimes competing initiatives in this area, and the need to take a more strategic approach to streamlining service provision in this area was raised by a range of interviewees across different organisations and sectors. Alongside this, we found that CRP as currently operating had failed to establish a clear identity for itself amongst staff or offenders. In this context, there is perhaps scope for the CRP to be developed as an overarching framework which could bring greater coherence to this landscape by channelling various different types of activities and services.

7.41 Achieving such coherence would require not only an overarching framework but a clear identity. This would mean that SPS staff would have a clearer understanding of the purpose of the project and how it is related to other activities and initiatives, allowing them to promote it more effectively to offenders. It is clear that the identity and narratives around particular programmes (what might be thought of as a brand in other contexts) play a very important role in mobilising interest and engagement among offenders. To some extent, this might be driven by targeted information and awareness campaigns within the prison system. However, engagement is likely to be driven at least as much by informal narratives of success – in other words, offenders hearing directly from others about how throughcare has helped them or others. By capturing and publicising some of those stories, it might be possible to connect the formal and informal ways in which the profile of such a service might be built.

#### Building on organisational and cultural change underway in SPS

7.42 The evaluation found strong support for the principle of enhanced voluntary throughcare for short-term offenders. Amongst SPS staff, this was seen as consistent not only with prison officers' aspirations and understanding of their role, but also with the direction of travel within the organisation more generally, as evident in the publication of the recent SPS strategy document, *Unlocking Potential, Transforming Lives*. In this sense, then, it appears that there are strong foundations in place to further develop the role of SPS and prison officers in supporting offenders and helping them access throughcare service. In moving forward it will be important that responding to the needs of offenders and working with other

agencies in supporting the reintegration process is developed as integral to the role of the PO, and that time and resources are provided to allow this work to be undertaken.

### Dealing with the constraints of the prison environment

- 7.43 In reality, whatever approach is adopted has to take account of and work within the prison environment. This means recognising the impact of shift patterns, staff movements and operational issues such as offender transfers and ensuring that any system is robust enough to accommodate such issues through embedded processes, established protocols and good information recording.
- 7.44 It also means working creatively in considering how each prison can accommodate CJSW and other agency staff on an ad hoc or ongoing basis with a view to promoting visibility and familiarity between different staff groups as well as with offenders. While there appears to be much to recommend the 'embedded' model, for a variety of reasons – including differences in physical facilities and regimes – it will not be the most appropriate approach in all settings. Nevertheless, individual establishments may find it helpful to be given examples of different arrangements and to have the potential advantages and disadvantages highlighted in advance.

### **Summary**

- 7.45 From accounts of what worked well and less well about CRP – and by asking practitioners to reflect directly on the question of what should happen next – we identified a number of specific lessons for potential roll-out of the process and some wider considerations about the future of voluntary throughcare more generally.
- 7.46 The most obvious is that a pilot intervention of this kind will always struggle to generate the critical mass necessary to establish familiarity and understanding among both staff and offenders, and effective working relationships with external partners.
- 7.47 Training needs to be more compelling and comprehensive than has been the case to date, particularly for staff in prisons. It needs to provide details not only of the process but also of the underlying objectives of the project and roles of key stakeholders within it. And it needs to be ongoing, so that knowledge and awareness are not disrupted by staff turnover or absence.
- 7.48 While much of the attrition across the various stages of the CRP process will be a result of offender disengagement, it is also likely that there are failures to monitor and progress meetings and referrals from the staff side. More effective mechanisms – and clearer responsibilities – for doing this would help to maximise engagement at each stage.
- 7.49 The paperwork associated with the project needs to be streamlined and integrated with existing systems, so that it is not seen as burdensome by staff. At the same time, there should be greater scope to include narrative information that is likely to help POs and others to work effectively with individual offenders.
- 7.50 The CRP is built around the principle of partnership working and yet it is clear that inter-agency relationships are often still under-developed and over-reliant on personal links between individual staff. This should be addressed through the development of clearer statements of respective roles and responsibilities, greater

attention to attendance at cross-agency meetings, and improved communication channels more generally.

- 7.51 The resource implications of expanding provision for voluntary throughcare – although not insignificant within SPS and SCS – appear to be greatest in relation to CJSW, where there was concern, in particular, about the ability to meet increased demand for intensive support. More generally, and across practitioner groups, there was concern about the availability of suitable accommodation for offenders leaving prison and the critical role that this plays in the resettlement process.
- 7.52 Wider considerations raised by the evaluation in relation to the overall character and ethos of an expanded voluntary throughcare service include: the question of whether CJSW should be delivering services directly or primarily signposting and coordinating; the issue of whether throughcare for short-term offenders should operate on an opt-in or opt-out basis; and the need for greater integration with other aspects of the custodial system (such as HDC).
- 7.53 In terms of key contextual factors, there is a need to bring greater coherence to the service landscape in this area and to build a distinctive ‘brand’ identity for voluntary throughcare. Recent strategic and cultural shifts within SPS mean the organisational context is potentially conducive to such a development. However, a genuinely multi-agency approach will require creative responses to the physical and administrative constraints of the prison environment.

## 8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The CRP formed part of a much wider response to the problem of reoffending in Scotland and focused specifically on a long-neglected issue – namely, the resettlement needs of short-term offenders. By means of a structured process of engagement with such offenders in custody and a conscious attempt to link them to community-based CJSW and external services, it was hoped to improve service use, reduce offending and increase their chances of reintegration.
- 8.2 The overall aim of the evaluation was to assess how the CRP was working in practice, to consider progress to date regarding (short and medium term) outcomes, and to identify lessons for future policy development. Broadly speaking, those themes structure our concluding comments.

### Was the CRP implemented as intended?

- 8.3 The evaluation has shown that the CRP process was implemented broadly as intended across the four prisons and two social work areas involved in the project. In that sense, it could be said that it achieved a reasonably high degree of fidelity in relation to the activities and mechanisms outlined in the logic model. That said, within the broad parameters of the model, there was considerable scope for variation in exactly how the CRP was implemented and the process itself evolved significantly in response to on the ground experience, local circumstances and needs. In that sense, it was less a single model than a broadly consistent process implemented in a variety of different ways.
- 8.4 It should also be pointed out that the *level* of activity was lower than might perhaps have been expected, especially in the women's prisons where the very limited scale of the project made it difficult to establish a clear presence and identity in the eyes of both staff and offenders. In relation to both male and female offenders, this was compounded by attrition across the various stages, meaning that only a small minority of eligible offenders were still engaged with the project at the point of release.
- 8.5 Insofar as it was possible to examine the characteristics of service users, it appears that overall engagement with the project was slightly higher among female than male offenders. Otherwise, the absence of comprehensive and accurate monitoring data means that it has been impossible to determine whether particular types of offenders were especially likely to engage with the project (let alone benefit from it).

### Did the CRP achieve its intended outcomes?

- 8.6 For the reasons explained in Chapter 1, the evaluation was not intended (or able) to provide definitive evidence of whether CRP achieved its ultimate, long-term goals of a reduction in reoffending and increase in offender reintegration. It was, however, able to generate some – largely qualitative – evidence of whether the CRP was delivering its intended short and medium-term outcomes.
- 8.7 While there have clearly been issues in the way that CRP has been implemented, and contextual factors that may have limited its effectiveness in specific settings, overall, the evaluation also found plenty of evidence that a structured and staged approach to offender engagement, coupled with the strengthening of links between SPS, CJSW and external agencies has the potential to lead to improvements in pre-

release planning and a higher level of contact with services in the community. In that sense, the underlying theory of change – which explains why the particular activities associated with the CRP might be expected to lead to a reduction in reoffending and an increase in reintegration – remains broadly plausible and intact. For it to achieve such impacts on any significant scale, however, throughput would need to be increased and attrition reduced; and adequately resourced, evidence-based services would need to be available within community settings.

### **What does the experience of the CRP suggest about the future of throughcare for short-term offenders in Scotland?**

- 8.8 Throughout the fieldwork for this project – and across different settings – we found strong support for the principle of improving support for short-term offenders and enhancing provision of and access to throughcare. The research found evidence of good practice across the CRP sites, amongst SPS and CJSW staff. There were a range of examples of how staff both on the frontline and in more strategic positions were working hard to deliver support to short term offenders. This provides a strong basis for moving forward.
- 8.9 Ultimately, the challenge is to establish a clear process for linking offenders to voluntary throughcare as a coherent and established part of the prison environment, which is both familiar and available to all offenders as a background resource that can help them to make a successful transition back into the community. How might that be achieved?
- 8.10 Given the conclusions above, a roll-out of a suitably modified and improved CRP is one possibility, and Chapter 7 presented a number of lessons from experience to date about how the specific processes might be optimised. In our view, however, there is more to be gained by incorporating those lessons into the development of a system-wide, coherent and consistent approach to voluntary throughcare and related support services. Such an approach would require a high-level strategic commitment from across different partner agencies and government, and a willingness and ability to bring greater coherence to the plethora of related services operating both inside and outside prisons. In other words, it would require the ambition to start to act back upon one of the key contextual factors within which it operates, rather than simply be shaped or constrained by it.
- 8.11 In terms of resources, the experience of CRP suggests that a more systematic approach to voluntary throughcare for short-term offenders would not necessarily result in hugely increased demands on SPS staff time. Although there were clearly issues to do with the ability of staff to attend all meetings or complete the necessary paperwork, and some concern at how staff would cope with the increase in numbers of CRP participants, it was also recognised that the activities associated with CRP were broadly consistent with the work of prison staff in general. There are, however, important considerations in relation to other types of resources, such as the availability of appropriate spaces within halls or elsewhere for offenders to meet with their PO, CJSW or staff from other agencies.
- 8.12 The direct resource implications of CRP (or a similar model) are undoubtedly greater in the community – not only in terms of CJSW staffing in the face of an increased caseload and if providing services such as gate pick-ups and ongoing/intensive support in the community – but also the provision of services that are known to be key to successful reintegration (such as drug and alcohol

counselling and, especially, housing). Looking ahead, this prompts questions – posed by CJSW staff themselves – about how the service might be developed in such circumstances, with the option of focusing on ‘signposting’ clients to other services rather than providing hands-on support themselves.

- 8.13 Whatever approach is adopted to local service provision upon release, enhanced voluntary throughcare for short-term offenders will require additional expenditure; and, indeed, will fail if such services are not provided as offenders are likely to disengage if they feel their needs are not being met upon release. This signals the need for this issue to be seen as not belonging simply to SPS or CJSW but as being integral to the wider preventative spend agenda and debate around public service reform. It is perhaps in that context – rather than as simply a small-scale ‘pilot’ project – that the potential of the CRP should be understood.

## **ANNEX A: RESEARCH METHODS**

- 1 This was a mixed-method evaluation, with an emphasis on qualitative data collection. The general approach adopted was based on the importance of understanding how the CRP process was working in practice, in order to consider the implications for the development of throughcare for short-term offenders.
- 2 The evaluation involved an analysis of available monitoring data and interviews with different groups involved in the CRP process. The project also included a validation event allowing stakeholders to reflect on the project findings prior to the drafting of the report. Further details of the evaluation methods are presented below.

### **Monitoring data**

- 3 A data collection system was established by SPS as part of the original CRP pilot process. The system involved recording progress through the system for each eligible offender on an Excel spreadsheet. Information gathered included the following:
  - Initial engagement/disengagement with the process; and subsequent disengagement at later stages of the process.
  - Completion of key milestones in the process (e.g., Comprehensive Screen, Standard Reviews, pre-release meeting).
- 4 Information was gathered by SPS from each participating site and made available to the evaluation team.
- 5 There were, though, a number of issues which needed to be addressed with the data initially gathered by SPS. Completion of the spreadsheet by individual establishments was patchy and there were inconsistencies in the way the information was recorded at different establishments (variation in fields and information entered), and SPS liaised with the individual establishments to improve the data quality over the last six months of the pilot period. The research team worked with SPS to clean the data and achieve a more reliable, consistent data set for each prison before merging the data into a single spreadsheet containing key information for analysis purposes. Basic descriptive analysis of the data allowed an overview of the operation of the pilot to be presented, with a particular focus on the period October 2013 to March 2014.
- 6 As well as the prison based-data, SPS also collected information from participating sheriff courts on the transfer of CJSW reports, again with a focus on the period October 2013 to March 2014. This information was also made available to the research team.

### **Qualitative interviews**

- 7 The main focus of the research was qualitative interviews undertaken with different groups involved in the CRP process. This approach was adopted as it represented the best method for exploring the range of views and experiences of those with an interest in the process from a range of different perspectives. A total of 69 interviews was carried out (including one group interview involving five interviewees and two joint interviews) over the course of the project, as summarised in Table A.1

below.<sup>18</sup> The approach taken in relation to each group of interviewees is outlined below.

#### Prison staff

8 A total of 20 face-to-face interviews was carried out across the four participating prisons. Interviewees were nominated by a key CRP contact at each establishment who was asked to identify around four individuals who were involved in different aspects of delivering the CRP process. Interviewees included residential staff and managers (14), non-residential staff (Link Centre, offender outcomes etc) (5), and administrative staff (1). Interviews lasted around an hour. In addition a single interview was carried out with a member of staff at Castle Huntly given that there was the potential for CRP participants from Perth to be transferred to the Open Estate during the course of their sentence.<sup>19</sup>

#### Criminal justice social work staff

9 Face-to-face interviews (including one joint interview) were carried out with 11 staff members in criminal justice social work teams in the two relevant local authority areas. The lead social worker dealing with CRP in each area was invited to nominate appropriate members of staff, again with a view to covering all CRP-related activities, both during the custody stages and following the return of offenders back to the community. Interviewees included social workers (4), social work support staff (6) and administrative workers (2). Interviews ranged from around 20 minutes for administrative staff to around an hour and a half for those involved in the day-to-day work of dealing with CRP clients.

#### Court staff

10 The sheriff clerk and/or the appropriate sheriff clerk depute were interviewed at each of the participating sheriff courts. In all six court staff contributed to the evaluation via one individual interview and one group interview. These interviews focused on the role of the courts in transmitting electronic copies of the CJSW report to the appropriate prison for CRP-eligible offenders.

#### Community-based agencies

11 Interviews were carried out with representatives of eight community-based agencies. In all, nine interviews were carried out involving 10 members of staff – separate interviews were carried out with two different members of one organisation giving the benefit of a frontline and strategic view, while one interview at another agency involved two members of staff both of whom were involved in frontline service delivery). All but one of the interviews was carried out in person; the remaining interview was carried out by phone. The interviewees were selected on the basis of recommendations from the local CJSW teams with a view to reflecting the key offender issues of housing, addictions and benefits and, in the case of women offenders, family relationships, and sought information on the experience of providing services and support to CRP participants. In many cases specific knowledge and awareness of the CRP process was limited and interviews often represented a more general exploration of dealing with the needs of offenders following release from prison.

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<sup>18</sup> This does not include four orientation interviews undertaken during the project inception phase.

<sup>19</sup> In the event, it transpired that only one CRP participant had been through the Open Estate during the course of the pilot, and only for a very short period.

### CRP participants

- 12 Twenty-two interviews were carried out with CRP participants in custody: eight male offenders and 14 female offenders. Assistance was sought from a key CRP contact at each prison in identifying and recruiting appropriate CRP participants to take part in the study. The key contact was provided with criteria to use in selecting potential interviewees, with a view to covering a range of characteristics including age, sentence length, number of times in prison, and stage reached in the CRP process.
- 13 Five interviews were undertaken with participants in the community: three women and two men. Similar to the process adopted in the prison setting, CJSW staff were asked to identify and recruit potential interviewees. For women offenders, appointments were set up by the CJSW team; for male offenders the research team were given contact details to allow interviews to be arranged once consent was obtained from the individual – these were then carried out by phone.
- 14 Securing interviews with CRP participants in the community proved challenging, and the original target of eight interviews was not reached. This was always anticipated to be a difficult client group to involve in the research; however, the fact that CRP participants – men in particular – disengage from the process very quickly following their return to the community increased the challenge for the research. Elsewhere, however, the research reached – and exceeded – its target number of interviews.

**Table A.1: Summary of achieved fieldwork interviews**

	Per prison (x4)	Open Estate (x1)	Per LA area (X 2)	Per court (x4)	Total
SPS staff at pilot prisons (including personal officers, residential managers, Link Centre staff and others)	Perth: 4 CV: 6 E: 4 G'nck: 6				<b>20</b> <i>Target 16</i>
SPS staff (manager) at OE		1			<b>1</b>
LA CJSW staff (including support workers, social workers and admin staff)			Lanarkshire 4 Dundee 7		<b>11</b> (including one joint interview) <i>Target 8</i>
SCS staff (Sheriff Clerk or nominee)				Dundee 1 Lanarkshire courts (3) 1	<b>2</b> (one individual / one group interview) <i>Target 4</i>
Offenders pre-release	Perth: 8 CV: 6 E: 3 G'nck: 5				<b>22</b> <i>Target 17*</i>
Offenders post-release			Lanarkshire 3 Dundee 2		<b>5</b> <i>Target 8</i>
Other practitioner groups in community-based agencies			Lanarkshire 4 Dundee 5		<b>9</b> (including one joint interview) <i>Target 6</i>
<b>TOTAL (Target 58)</b>					<b>70</b>

\*The overall target number of interviews for offenders in custody was 17 based on achieving three interviews in each prison running the CRP for female offenders (CV, Edinburgh and Greenock) and eight in Perth, running the CRP for male offenders.

- 15 The rationale behind the approach to sampling and recruitment of CRP participants – i.e., enlisting the help of prison and community staff to recruit in line with a set of agreed criteria – is worth commenting on. Although the potential for bias was recognised, the number of potential interviewees and the tight timescale for the project made this approach an efficient option. For women in custody the available numbers of offenders eligible for the CRP process in each establishment was small, and reaching the target number of interviews was likely to involve close to 100% of those eligible and so there was limited scope for bias. For men in custody, this approach offered flexibility, limiting the scope for non-availability of interviewees on the day of the fieldwork visit. For CRP participants in the community, the approach was informed by advice from CJSW staff who indicated that in a high proportion of cases people disengaged from the process fairly quickly following release from prison. There was, thus, only a small number of ‘live’ cases at any one time. CJSW teams were, however, asked to consider if there were disengaged ex-clients who they felt could be usefully approached, and the research included one such interview.
- 16 Interviews with CRP participants sought to explore views and experiences of the CRP process and the impact of the process on the individual. However, it should be noted that explicit awareness of the process amongst participants was limited. Individual interviewees were often unable to recall specific CRP stages or were unable to distinguish CRP activities from other prison interactions and activities. The information gained from these interviews provided valuable insight into the general experience of needs assessment and receiving support in custody but did not in all cases provide feedback on identifiable aspects of the CRP process specifically.
- 17 Interviews with CRP participants in custody lasted around 30 to 40 minutes. Interviews with participants in the community were somewhat longer, reflecting the fact that the participant had reached a later stage in the throughcare process.

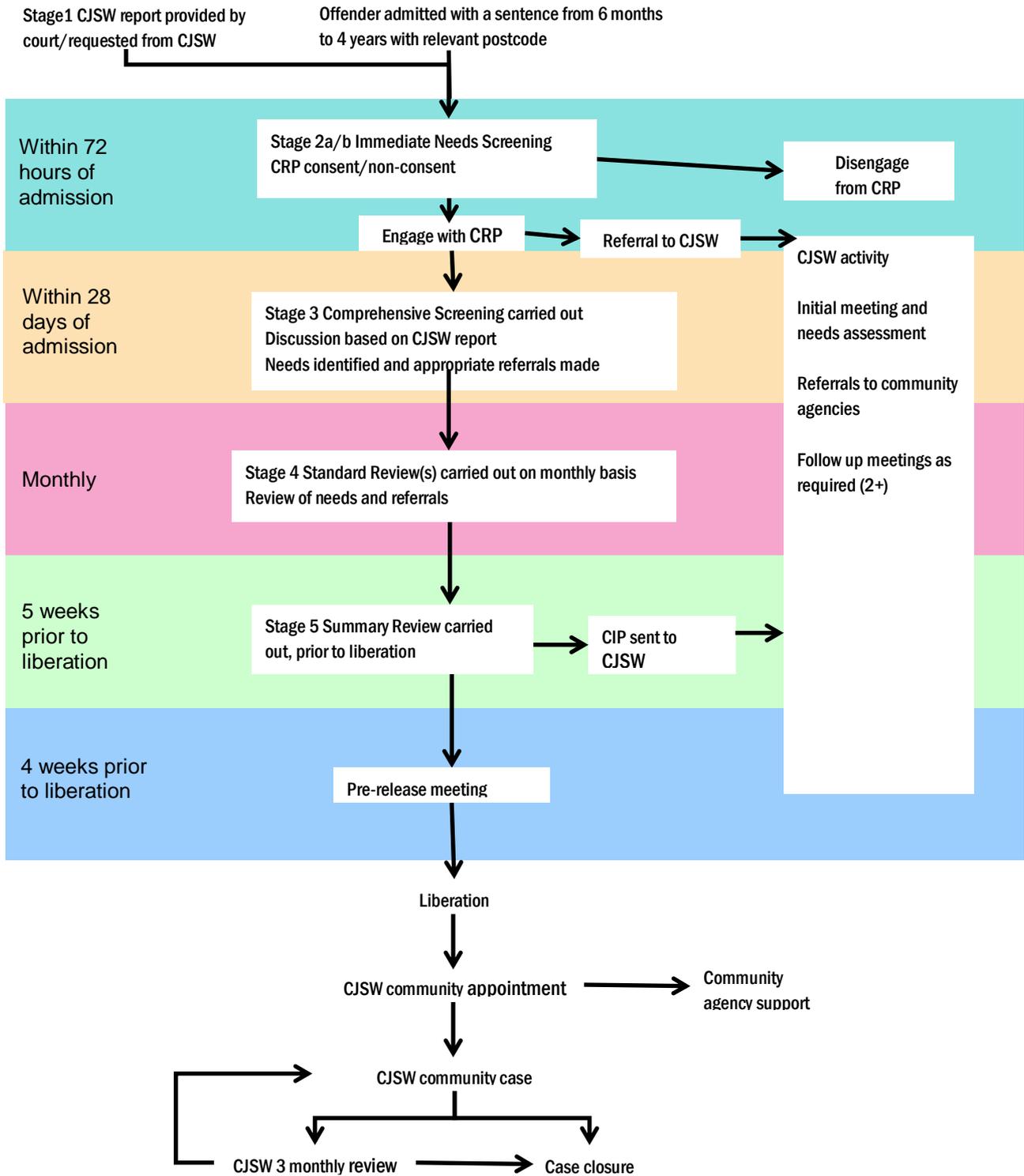
### **Validation event**

- 18 A research validation event was held during the early stages of the analysis and attended by representatives of key stakeholder groups (i.e., SG, SPS, individual prisons and local authority CJSW teams, SCS and third sector groups). This provided valuable input to help ensure that the findings and conclusions of the evaluation resonated with both policy makers and practitioners, were well attuned to the realities of the policy and practice environment, and could fully support policy development work in this area.

### **The analysis**

- 19 Analysis of the monitoring data was carried out using SPSS to provide basic information about the operation of the CRP in relation to the numbers and characteristics of participants and activity at different stages of the process. The interviews carried out across the various groups gathered a great deal of qualitative information about the working of the CRP process. All the interviews were transcribed with thematic analysis then undertaken, allowing the research team to see the range of views offered on each theme. The results of both the quantitative and qualitative are drawn on in addressing the research questions as presented in the remaining chapters of this report.

# ANNEX B: THE CRP PROCESS



## **ANNEX C: GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS**

**CIP (Community Integration Plan):** The Community Integration Plan (CIP) is the SPS document that contains important information about the offender, their progress during the custodial sentence and their plans for release into the community.

**CJSW report:** A criminal justice social work report can be requested by a sheriff to provide background information about an individual and their offence prior to sentencing.

**Criminogenic need:** A criminogenic need is a need related to risk factors known to be linked to offending behaviour. These might include family circumstances, addictions, housing, education and employment.

**HDC (Home Detention Curfew):** HDC involves the release of an offender from prison to serve out the remainder of a custodial sentence in the community with curfew arrangements in place and monitoring by way of an electronic tag.

**ICM (Integrated Case Management):** ICM is the multi-agency approach used within the prison setting, which aims to reduce reoffending by ensuring that risks are identified and appropriate plans put in place for offenders.

**Link Centre:** Link centres provide a location within prisons where offenders can access a number of services. These services offer a range of information, advice and/or support: e.g. in relation to housing, employment, addiction, benefit entitlement and family relationships.

**Personal Officer:** A Personal Officer (PO) is an SPS officer who offers direct support to offenders during their custodial sentence and ensures that all service providers meet the agreed outcomes identified in the CIP.

**PR2:** PR2 is the SPS computerised record system.

**Throughcare Support Officer (TSO):** An SPS officer providing transitional support to offenders for a period pre- and post-release.

**TISS (Tayside Intensive Support Service):** The Tayside Intensive Support Service is a Police/CJSW/voluntary sector partnership providing intensive support to address the needs of persistent offenders. Offenders meeting the scheme's criteria are approached following arrest and offered the opportunity to work with the TISS team in addressing their needs.

**Voluntary throughcare:** Councils have a statutory responsibility to provide advice, support and assistance to offenders who request such a service within 12 months of release from custody.

**Social Research series**  
ISSN 0950-2254  
ISBN 978-1-78412-643-8

**web only publication**  
[www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch)

Produced for the Scottish Government by APS Group  
Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA  
DPPAS33083 (07/14)

