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Action Research Project

AIDING EX-OFFENDERS INTO EMPLOYMENT: A  
REVIEW OF POLICY AND PRACTICE IN  
SCOTLAND, WITH REFERENCE TO BARLINNIE  
AND PERTH

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **Purpose, Methods and Scope of Research**

The cost to society of keeping a prisoner incarcerated have been well documented, as has the 'revolving door' syndrome which sees a high proportion being released to unemployment, re-offending and ending up back inside. This project is a qualitative review and evaluation of provisions made to aid ex-offenders into employment from the perspective of various stakeholders in the process. This enables us to examine the issues surrounding this topic from various angles, and may give some insight into what works, and help us draw conclusions as to what might be done to improve practice with this client group. The project is based on the work being done by various agencies in two of Scotland's prisons: Perth and Barlinnie.

#### Groups interviewed

- Careers Scotland
- SPS staff at Perth
- APEX
- Govan Initiative (an LDC)
- GCVS (voluntary agency)
- Prisoners at Perth

#### Topics Discussed

- Funding Issues
- Sources of Referral
- Overall Effectiveness
- Methods of Evaluation
- Links with employers and external agencies

### **Results**

The most striking aspect of the findings were the variations in approach between the prisons, and in turn between the various agencies offering support to prisoners before and after release. Different means of funding both influenced and restricted delivery of guidance and the clients selected to benefit from it, and the effects varied between the different agencies. Referral processes were effective in helping to tackle specific barriers, and clients were generally directed to the appropriate support bodies, although many clients did not choose to engage with these on their release. There was evidence of much good practice across all the agencies, although there was a lack of formal evaluation of this work. There were good working partnerships with external bodies, particularly at Barlinnie.

## **Conclusions**

While there is much good work within the prison, the critical time for offenders is the period immediately following release, and effective intervention at this stage may have the most impact. Where there is continuity of support, with contact made prior to release and then maintained, there is a much more solid base for success. All offenders should have access to support on release, as is the case in England, and this should be actively promoted. There are moves being made to address this issue, with the establishment of the Resettlement Service, and it is hoped that through partnership with Careers Scotland and other agencies more effective support can be established during this period. It would also be fairer if a more consistent level of provision could be established. Local Development Agencies provide an excellent service, but access to these is restricted by postcodes, and many of those most in need cannot access them. Better communication between the government, the SPS, Careers Scotland and other agencies would help to facilitate this process.

## PREFACE

The initial interest in this subject originated from events following the broadcast of a television documentary called 'Chancers' (Channel4, 2004). This charted the progress of a small group of Scotland's worst young offenders, who had been offered a place on an initiative which aimed to challenge their offending behaviour through a programme of education, outward bound activities and visits to local employers. This was called the 'Airborne Initiative' and was offered as an alternative to a custodial sentence. Although initial results had been positive, bearing in mind the challenging nature of the client group, the programme highlighted drug taking amongst clients, absconding and abusive behaviour. This was driven by what the programme makers deemed to be 'good television', and the previous successes of this project were largely ignored.

Following the broadcast of this documentary, the Scottish Executive announced in February 2004 that the project was to be axed, and the £600,000 funding to be withdrawn. This decision appeared to be a knee jerk reaction to the political embarrassment caused by the broadcast, with no attention paid to research indicating the success of the scheme. In 2003 some 39 inmates graduated from Airborne - the second-highest number in the ten years it has been running (*Scotsman, 25<sup>th</sup> Feb 04*). As it costs £29,389 to keep a prisoner in a Scottish jail for a year, (*Scottish Executive Justice department, 2004*) and with Scotland's prison population at an all time high of 6,523, it seemed astonishing that such a short sighted view could be taken. The closure also put 11 of Scotland's most dangerous young criminals back on the streets. A previous batch of 21 youths on the nine-week course had 250 convictions and 80 years in jail between them. Surely any initiative which may turn round the lives of even a proportion of these young people would justify a budget of £600,000, a small investment compared to the cost of running our bulging prisons. The total SPS budget for 2003/04 was £229m (*Scottish Executive 2004*). This action by the government calls into question their commitment to addressing the issues of re-offending.

It has long been recognised that employment is the single most important factor in resettlement and the prevention of re-offending (*Fletcher et al, 1998*). The aim of this project is to examine the measures being taken to

challenge the 'revolving door' syndrome which sees so many prisoners re-offending, with particular reference to initiatives aimed at aiding them into employment. The financial case based on the cost of reoffending is a compelling one, and would suggest this issue should be at the heart of government policy in terms of the way ex-offenders are treated. The additional costs to society in terms of the spread of fear of robbery and violence, the cost of insurance premiums in the face of rising crime rates and the perpetuation of the life of crime as a career choice for successive generations add weight to this case.

Of course there are other pressures acting on governments. Society demands that our prisoners are seen to be paying the penalty for their misdemeanours, and there is a tendency for any policy which is seen to devote resources to helping those who have wronged society to be interpreted as being 'soft on crime'. It is the perception of many prisoners that they are tarnished for life, and this is reflected in the attitudes of both society and many employers. Politicians are quick to play on this, and this has become a political football in recent times, particularly when elections are in the offing. The axing of the Airborne Initiative was a prime example of this. It would seem that it was deemed preferable to consign these offenders back to the streets and the peer group which played such a part in the perpetuation of their offending behaviour rather than risk any political fall out from what was shown to be a positive and effective initiative.

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## INTRODUCTION

The initial intention of this project was to circulate a questionnaire to a cross-section of prisoners to assess their perceptions of the support available to them to help them into employment before and after release, and to use this as a quantitative measure of the impact of careers guidance within the prison. As further research was done, it became apparent that there were far more complex issues at work, and that a quantitative project of this scale would be of little value. Due to the lack of any consistent policy or definition of prisoners' entitlement to careers guidance, combined with large variations in provision between different areas, it was decided to adopt a qualitative approach that would reflect the diversity of initiatives that try to tackle the issues and barriers prisoners face in trying to gain employment. The aim of the project is to review and critically evaluate the provisions that exist for prisoners released into the community, both to bring them to a state of readiness for work and to place them into suitable employment.

I have tried to seek information and critical opinion from a range of stakeholders in this process, specifically Careers Scotland, prison officers working in transitional care sections, local development companies, Apex and the prisoners themselves. As this is a small scale piece of work, a comprehensive review of provision would not have been feasible, so the focus has been concentrated on Barlinnie and Perth. Due to the different socio-economic status of Glasgow and Perth, and consequent access to sources of funding, the comparison is an interesting one.

There has been much quantitative research into the effectiveness of employment projects in terms of impact on re-offending rates (see literature review). The aim of this study is not to statistically evaluate the success of provisions, but to examine the issues faced by the stakeholders in the process, to identify examples of good (and bad) practice, and gain insight through their perceptions into why they succeed or fail, and to suggest ways in which this provision could be improved.



Evaluation was further hampered by the reluctance of certain agencies to provide detailed information regarding quality measurement in terms of the proportion of successful outcomes. This was mainly due to concern about forthcoming applications for funding, particularly for pilot projects, and there was a general reluctance to be exposed to what they perceived as scrutiny on the part of the researcher. There was also great variation in what was perceived as a successful outcome. These included clients:

- not re-offending within a certain time period
- being 'job ready'
- sustaining employment for a defined period
- turning up for an appointment
- meeting soft indicators, such as stabilising drug habits

This further validates the decision to shift to a qualitative focus in this research, as this gives greater scope to reflect on the diversity of approach between providers of career based guidance to this group, and reflect the issues they face from their own perspective.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Ex-offenders face many difficulties when seeking employment including poor reading, writing and numeracy skills; behavioural and health problems; debt and homelessness; as well as discrimination from employers. Unemployment among offenders is very high. A study of over one thousand offenders under probation supervision found that only 21 per cent were in employment compared to around 60 per cent of the general population. (*Webster et al, 2001*). Research has shown that unemployment is related to reoffending, even if its relationship to the onset of offending is unclear. Of more than 7,000 offenders given community sentences in 1993, unemployed offenders were significantly more likely to be reconvicted within two years than those whose records showed them to be in employment.

There has been a sizeable body of research into the effectiveness of interventions aimed at aiding prisoners into employment. Although much of this has been conducted in England and Wales, the cultural and economic similarities between the countries make the comparison with Scotland a valid one. One notable difference between England and Scotland is that, theoretically, prisoners in England and Wales serving sentences of one year or more are entitled to statutory aftercare, although in practice this support is sometimes limited (*Webster et al, 2001*). Employment interventions are unlikely to succeed if prisoners on release are faced with other issues such those listed below. There is no such statutory entitlement in Scotland, although this report will attempt to review some of the ways this issue is being approached with reference to the selected areas. Other barriers to employment faced by prisoners include the following:

- employer attitudes
- criminal records and offenders' concerns about disclosure
- low self-esteem, confidence and motivation
- behavioural problems
- poor health or lack of accommodation
- lack of qualifications, including lack of core skills
- lack of recent work experience
- social networks and peer groups, often involved in criminal activity
- poverty, debt or insecure housing

A Home Office review of research has focused on 5 types of intervention aimed at the integration of prisoners into the community (*Elliot-Marshall et al 2005*). These concern employment, education, accommodation, drugs, and mental health. It also acknowledges that whilst a prison sentence can in itself add to the complexities of reintegration, it also has the potential to address the offending behaviour and introduce the prisoner to interventions that may reduce the risk of re-offending. Employment is often seen as playing a vital part in social integration, and thus in reducing re-offending. Lipsey's (1995) meta-analysis of 400 control or comparison group studies from 1950 to 1990 found the single most effective factor in reducing reoffending rates was employment, with an effect size of 37% (*Webster et al, 2001*).

Although there are employment schemes and prison workshops, the impact of these are limited by the small numbers able to access them. This is borne out in the Scottish system, where overcrowded jails and financial pressures have meant inadequate resources to make these available to all. This raises another issue that may hamper any realistic evaluation of employment programmes, in that often those inmates perceived as most likely to succeed in employment on release are those selected for participation. It is natural to assume that the likelihood of a positive outcome for this group is already greater than for those facing many of the barriers listed above who are unlikely to be selected for participation. Webster et al (2001) found that "help is rarely targeted at those at higher risk of offending, although there is some evidence to suggest that, as with other interventions, these are the ones who would benefit most." There are factors that exacerbate this problem. The HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland has acknowledged that "addressing offending behaviour is perhaps the greatest casualty of prison overcrowding". (*Scottish Executive Justice Department, 2004*) This gives greater weight to the argument for a more coherent and coordinated approach to employment programmes that can make a major contribution to reducing the vicious circle of reoffending and the rising prison population.

In a 2004 consultation paper, Cathy Jamieson MSP proclaimed the goal of the Scottish Executive as to create a criminal justice system which will "effectively and efficiently manage sentenced offenders so they are less

likely to reoffend, and which will deliver the safer communities which the people of Scotland deserve" (*Scottish Executive 2004*). The paper highlights some depressing statistics for Scotland: 60% of offenders released in 1999 were reconvicted of another offence within 2 years. In 2003, Scotland had the highest rate of imprisonment in the European Union, with 129 people per 100,000 incarcerated. As a comparison, the rate for Sweden is around 40 per 100,000. At the time of the consultation paper's publication, the annual budget for the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) stood at £229m. Cathy Jamieson goes on to state "The current position is untenable. We must take action to address reoffending and rising prison populations. We must improve how we manage offenders throughout their sentence to their reintegration into a law-abiding lifestyle." It is significant that this statement restricts itself to management of offenders "throughout the sentence". This study will highlight the need for management through release and beyond to ensure continuity and effectiveness of interventions. The paper also acknowledges that on release ex-prisoners may "find it difficult to get a job, or stable housing, or other forms of support" and that "these factors make it more likely that an offender will return to crime". The work of the Scottish Welfare to Work Advisory Task Force in linking employers with the SPS is cited as a successful example of partnership working, providing meaningful training linked to job opportunities. An example of this will be studied in this report.

The paper is critical of the lack of a consistent and coordinated approach between the agencies involved in the rehabilitation of offenders, local authorities and the SPS, which has resulted in the repetition of work in designing and implementing programmes, and the difficulty faced by prisoners moving to other parts of the country being unable to complete programmes they may have started because of geographical variations in approach. This study will attempt to review the progress towards the integrated service envisaged by the Scottish Executive. While reference will be made to training within the prison, the main focus of this project is what happens to prisoners on release and the perspectives of those agencies that engage with them. This is focused largely on the Glasgow area due to the range of agencies accessible. It will also consider what steps might be appropriate to improve the coordination and effectiveness of provision for offenders to aid them into employment.

## METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

There is an extensive array of qualitative research in the criminological field, and this has value for many reasons. It can lead to an appreciation of the social world from the point of view of the offender, it can complement quantitative research, and it can help inform the development of policies. (*Wincup et al 2004*). The approach in this study was to design specific questions that would illuminate this complex and at times disjointed area of prisoner rehabilitation with reference to employment, and encourage interviewees to give their own critical analysis while remaining focused on the key themes of this project, that is review and evaluation. Whilst all the questions were asked, not all were answered. Some were answered in oblique ways and out of the planned sequence.

Different agencies have different agendas, and deviation from the structured questions was not discouraged. Where answers were short, the reasons were frequently developed and new information emerged. This was facilitated by a flexible approach to questioning which remained open to emerging themes, and encouraged these to evolve and be explored. The narrative accounts of these interviews may thus deviate at times from the set questions, and no apology is made for this. The data obtained contributes to the debate and enhances our understanding of where policy and practice meet, and how and why this may be interpreted as effective or otherwise.

As previously discussed, the emphasis of this project changed in the preliminary stages. It was initially intended to attempt a quantitative assessment of the perceived effectiveness of careers guidance work in Perth prison from inmates' perspective. A questionnaire was designed for this purpose, and assistance was offered in its completion. A total of 8 prisoners were interviewed and asked to complete the questionnaire. The results have not been included, as they are of little statistical significance. It would be an extensive and time consuming process to produce any valid evaluation based on this method, and this was beyond the scope of this project.

The following agencies were interviewed in the course of this study:

- Lynn Bell of Careers Scotland in Perth (6 interviews with prisoners were also observed)
- 3 prison officers based at the LINK centre in HMP Perth
- 1 prison officer from the drugs unit at HMP Perth, who joined the above discussion
- Lesley McCracken of Careers Scotland, based at HMP Barlinnie
- 10 prisoners on the Pathways to Construction Project at HMP Barlinnie
- Emma Dodds of APEX, Gordon Street, Glasgow
- Maureen Boyle and John Daly of the Govan Initiative
- Helen Reilly of the Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Services

The questions put to each were structured with the following aims in mind:

- to obtain a broad overview of the work of each agency
- to ascertain in what ways performance or outcomes were measured
- to find out how each was funded, and what issues this presented
- to assess links with employers, training providers, and other agencies
- to identify common barriers faced by ex offenders
- to identify means of referral and criteria for accessing services
- to find out what steps were taken to place clients in jobs

It had been intended to conduct 1:1 interviews with the prisoners at Barlinnie on the Pathways to Construction Project. Due to organisational problems the whole group of 10 presented themselves, and this became an impromptu group discussion. Although this restricted the intended line of questioning, a brief account of the results is included.

Subsequent to the completion of this report calls were made to Lynn Bell of Careers Scotland and Barry Burns of the Drugs unit at HMP Perth to follow up issues regarding new proposals for the Prisoner Resettlement Service and a review of staffing levels at Perth Prison. I have included the outcome of these in the Discussions and Analysis section of the report.

## **RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

This section brings together the information obtained from each party interviewed, and highlights the different organisational strategies, priorities, barriers faced and ways of working with each. It also illustrates the links between certain of the agencies. Each interviewee was invited to give their own account of the difficulties they faced working in this area, and what they might like to see changed, and these insights are included where relevant. Provision will be analysed under the following headings:

- **Source of funding and allocation of resources**
- **Referral and selection of clients**
- **Delivery and effectiveness of guidance interventions**
- **Methods of evaluation and definition of outcomes**
- **Links with employers and external support agencies**

Comprehensive accounts of each interview can be seen in appendices 1-7 of this report.

### **Section (a) Source of Funding and Allocation of Resources**

Careers Scotland is funded through Scottish Enterprise. There was no apparent policy with regard to prisoners, other than that they were not identified as a priority group, due to the fact that they are not available for work. As ex-offenders after release they are no more a priority than any other adult, despite the obvious barriers they face. Careers Scotland involvement with this group is thus defined by policy within each individual prison. Barlinnie had opted to pay Careers Scotland to retain a full time careers adviser, under an annual agreement, while Perth had been unwilling to commit funds for this service, despite previous recommendations from within their own management that this would be desirable. The careers adviser in Perth was thus limited in the service she was able to offer in the one afternoon per week she was present. In both Perth and Barlinnie there was no policy of referring prisoners to Careers Scotland on release, as this had been tried with little success.

The LINK centre at Perth was funded and staffed through the prisons central budget. There was concern at staffing levels in relation to demand, particularly with the advent of a private jail in Scotland (Kilmarnock) and the appointment of a new prison governor committed to cutting costs. There was a feeling that SPS was disadvantaged as a public sector body, in that its accounting had to be transparent, whereas the private prison had more scope to 'massage' its figures. Overcrowding was placing additional pressure on prison staff, and the inability to run work sheds, particularly in Barlinnie, was having a negative impact on prisoners' preparedness for employment on release.

Local Development Companies (LDCs) are advantaged in that they have access to funding from a variety of sources, notably the European Social Fund and the New Opportunities fund. Application for this funding is assessed under criteria relating to the social inclusion agenda, and aiding ex-offenders into employment is seen as one of the higher priorities of the funding bodies and an essential element of the regeneration of communities. There are 10 LDCs in the Glasgow area. The Govan Initiative is funded through the Better Off Project, application for funds being made in partnership with two other Glasgow community regeneration projects. While Govan Initiative will only see people with a G51 postcode, the Better Off Project has a wider remit through the city. The Better Off Project is in turn funded by the New Opportunities Fund, which is allocated money through the National Lottery. This funding is guaranteed for 3 years.

The Pathways to Construction Project, run by APEX, was funded through Scottish Enterprise. It is interesting to note that of all the agencies they seemed the least confident of securing continued funding (through Scottish Enterprise), despite the apparent success of the project. This is evidenced by their reluctance to release details of the numbers of ex-offenders sustaining employment from phases 1 and 2 of the pilot scheme.

The Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Services (GCVS) are funded mainly through Job Centre Plus on the basis of clients sustaining employment. (GCVS are paid £200 for each client sustaining employment for 13 weeks or more). They obtain additional funding from the European Social fund,



and this is used to finance a bonus scheme for clients to encourage them to remain in work (£50 for lasting 1 week, £150 for 13 weeks)

It is notable that Barlinnie has access to more funding than Perth, as it has areas of social deprivation that qualify it for assistance from Social Inclusion Partnerships. While the prisoners at Perth come from all parts of Scotland, the jail itself is in a relatively affluent area, and does not qualify for the same level of funding. This was perceived as placing the prison in a disadvantaged position

### **Section (b) Referral and Selection of Clients**

Referral for interview with the Careers Adviser at Perth was through request via the Core Screen document. These were filtered by the LINK centre staff, and not all requests resulted in referral. This was seen as an effective way of making the best use of the limited time available with the careers adviser, and there was a general perception that certain inmates would apply to see as many support agencies as possible. This is due in part to the positive implications of this in the process of parole applications, and partly due to the desire to get out of their cells by whatever means possible.

In Barlinnie, much of the work of the careers adviser is in the delivery of group work, where prisoners can attend on a voluntary basis, and referral to local development companies (LDCs), for example the Govan Initiative. In this case, referral of clients is by postcode to their relevant LDC. This creates problems where prisoners become homeless on their release and have no postcode. There are also a large number of prisoners who are not from the Glasgow area, and they are disadvantaged by the lack of contact the careers adviser may have with providers in their own region.

The selection of prisoners to participate in the Pathways to construction programme involved assessment by both SPS staff, representatives of APEX, and the careers adviser at Barlinnie. Prisoners with drug addiction issues were not considered. In the words of the prisoners themselves, they were "hand picked" for this project.

The Govan Initiative takes clients through self-referral, or through appointment set up by either the careers adviser at Barlinnie, or via the Steps to Excellence course, which is voluntary. Advisers from the Govan Initiative will attempt to meet and arrange appointments for all prisoners being released into their postcode area, and it is estimated that 50% will turn up.

The careers adviser at Barlinnie will refer clients with addiction issues to the GCVS. GCVS also takes referrals from other agencies, including Job Centres, social workers, addiction services or family support groups. There are also two-way referrals with MAP (the Methadone Activity Programme). She will visit Barlinnie and speak to prisoners on a 1:1 basis. The main selection criterion is succinctly put by the adviser interviewed: "they don't have to be clean, but be keen to be clean"

### **Section (c) Delivery and Effectiveness of Guidance Interventions**

In Perth Prison, the main work was the guidance interview, of which 6 were observed in the course of this project. There was also assistance with application forms and CVs, advice on disclosure and job-searching techniques. The majority of clients interviewed were given an action plan. The geographical diversity of the client group was one of the main problems faced. Few prisoners in Perth actually reside in the town itself, so access to information on local labour markets and training providers is restricted. Group work had historically not worked well in the prison, with disruptive behaviour commonplace. It was felt that it would be advantageous to meet prisoners on admission to raise the profile of the service within the prison. It was not possible to assess the effectiveness of these interventions due to lack of follow up of prisoners on release. I was shown a letter from the Regimes Unit Manager at Perth Prison describing the work of Careers Scotland in the prison as "extremely successful", and suggesting extending the relationship with careers Scotland to allow more client contact. (This letter is not appended for confidentiality reasons)

At Barlinnie activities were much more diverse, and mainly centred on group work. This is in the process of being evaluated, and the Worknet programme in particular seems to be getting favourable results. It was interesting to note the views of prisoners who were asked how useful they felt the programme had been. After the predictably cynical response that immediately followed the question, one prisoner suggested that it had actually been quite educational. That a prison inmate could make such a statement in front of 9 of his peers without fear of 'losing face' adds extra weight to this assessment. This is further reinforced by the fact that other prisoners in the group then endorsed this viewpoint, in that it had explained goals and how they could be reached. The active learning style of this programme was highlighted by the careers adviser as a key element in its success.

The APEX programme is best judged by its own success. There had been very few problems with prisoners once in work, and these had mainly been resolved. It is not enough to guarantee prisoners jobs on release; the skills must be put in place to ensure that these are sustained. A particular element of the group work delivered by APEX is that the materials are adapted to meet the specific need of the group, i.e. issues regarding employment such as employee rights and grievance procedures, and this would appear to have been successful. In addition, the continuity of contact is crucial to good practice. The same adviser who delivers the groupwork in Barlinnie will accompany them to the bank to setup their bank account, and will be on the other end of a phone if there are any problems

With the Govan Initiative and GCVS the emphasis is much more on practical assistance and dealing with issues such as accommodation, clothing and stable lifestyle. There is a lot of advocacy work through these agencies, and this is particularly effective. There is a strong focus on employability and emotional support with both agencies, with counselling techniques seen as key skills in the advisers' armoury. Building a positive attitude and maintaining self esteem are the primary aims in helping clients through the first weeks of freedom, where many just need someone to show some faith in them. One notable feature of the work of GCVS is that one adviser will take the client from the final stages of incarceration to a place on a training scheme or in employment. She will

also undertake advocacy work, provide clothing, financial and moral support, assist with addiction problems and ensure that they are as prepared for work as possible.

#### **Section (d) Methods of Evaluation and Definition of Outcomes**

It was noted as a flaw by both SPS staff at Perth and the Careers Advisers at both prisons that there was a lack of follow up of prisoners on release. The only outcomes available for assessment were soft indicators, or instances of practical help that had been put in place during sentence. The careers adviser at Barlinnie sends letters to each client 3 months after release, but response rate is minimal. This may be due in part to the chaotic lifestyles led by many prisoners, and also by a desire to put their prison experience behind them. There is good feedback from local training providers, and this is generally positive. There is also regular communication with APEX regarding the progress of the Pathways to Construction programme.

Govan Initiative work to an exclusively guidance based remit, and a successful outcome is defined as when a client can be classed as "job ready". They do not get involved with job placements, as this is handled by the recruitment section of the Govan Initiative, or by other local agencies. They do place clients on training courses, however, and will track their progress on a discretionary basis, offering support where required.

GCVS define a successful outcome as employment sustained for 13 weeks. This is critical as it is this measurement that determines their income from Job Centre Plus. The Pathways to Construction project also use this criterion. A current evaluation of this scheme is currently underway, and will be presented to Scottish Enterprise to make the case for its continuation

#### **Section (e) Links With Employers And External Support Agencies**

The careers adviser at Perth links closely with the adviser from Job Centre Plus, who will refer prisoners to training programmes under New Deal. LINK centre staff have close contact with a range of local support agencies including:

- NHS addictions team
- Cranstoun Drug Services
- Shelter Scotland
- Family Contact Development Officer
- Apex in Fife, who deal mainly with addiction and accommodation issues
- Prison Education Department
- Chaplaincy

The work of the centre is seen as a vital safety net for prisoners about to be released, and they can remove many of the physical barriers to employment that they may otherwise be left to deal with on their own.

The careers adviser at Barlinnie has links with the Govan Initiative, GCVS and APEX, which effectively work as partnerships, with each assisting and informing the other. This avoids repetition, and ensures effective targeting of each intervention. APEX have built up a good relationship with local construction companies, and made significant progress in breaking down the prejudices of employers against this client group. This is evidenced by the fact that demand is currently greater than the supply of prisoners to fill the jobs.

In turn, both GCVS and the Govan Initiative have links with community organisations that can provide support with addiction problems, housing or benefits. There is greater continuity with GCVS in that the same adviser is responsible not only for contacting relevant support agencies, but in tracking the client through the early stages of employment. This is echoed in the suggestion of the throughcare worker at Perth that LINK Centre staff could play an important role in post-release support, building on the trust that had been built up through their involvement with the prisoner throughout his sentence.

## **DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

This section will consider the contributions and organisational strategies of each agency in relation to the whole process, rather than attempt to compare or evaluate one against the other. They each occupy different places in the journey from transitional care through to employment, and operate under different pressures and priorities. It is hoped to gain a clearer picture of the linkages between these agencies, to examine strengths and weaknesses and to highlight gaps in the process that may hinder good practice. Findings will be considered under the same headings as used in the previous section.

### **Source of Funding and Allocation of Resources**

Although this study has considered only two prisons, and can provide little information regarding the rest of Scotland's jails, it is disappointing to note Careers Scotland's lack of any policy regarding work with offenders, either in prison or after release. Careers Scotland states one of its aims as becoming the 'leading national advocate for the guidance and employability sector'. It is hard to imagine a group of society more in need of guidance and support towards employability than Scotland's growing population of prisoners and ex-prisoners, yet they are not judged to be a priority.

The Careers Scotland presence in Barlinnie has been a positive one, as evidenced by the decision of the SPS to retain this service. The work of the careers adviser in Perth was of a high standard, and provided a valuable service within the constraints under which she was operating. It could be argued that the targeting of clients in the NEET group can make a major contribution to preventing offending behaviour by guiding young people into employment and training, and this case bears some weight. In the wider context of the cost to society of reoffending, and the potential impact on this of skilled guidance interventions, there is a strong argument for a clear strategy to address the needs of this group, and this should be funded by the Scottish Executive to facilitate a longer-term approach.

There has been acknowledgement of these issues by the Scottish Executive. Cathy Jamieson has described the current situation as untenable (Scottish executive, 2004), and has stated as a goal "an integrated system where all offenders are managed consistently and appropriately through their sentence to their reintegration into a law abiding lifestyle". It would be hoped that Careers Scotland will have a role in this process, as they have much to offer both in practical terms and in their closer relationship with government.

It would appear from this study that a large amount of the work required with this client group is left to the LDCs, such as the Govan Initiative, or charitable organisations such as APEX or GCVS. Although there is excellent work being done at these agencies, they are dependent on funding which is renegotiated on a year-to-year basis, hardly an ideal framework for long term planning. There is the additional uncertainty regarding the European Social Fund that with poorer countries such as Poland, the Czech Republic and Estonia having now joined the competition for funds, Scotland may no longer be entitled to the same degree of funds from the Social Inclusion pot. The loss of any one of these agencies would leave a gaping hole in the support available for ex-offenders. The situation of GCVS may be slightly more stable, although a funding system which allocates payment by numbers of clients in sustained employment risks an overly target driven approach. It is to the credit of the staff in all these agencies that they appear to have retained a client focused approach.

The financial situation within the SPS presents a gloomy picture. The Scottish Prison Service budget rose from £122m in 1991-92 to £229m in 2002-03. Staffing costs represent the 80% of expenditure, and overcrowding has put pressure on this. The LINK centre at Perth prison has just learned that their staffing level is being cut from 3 to 1, and that the total number of staff working on prisoner support programmes is to be cut from 11 to 6. Prison officers had raised concerns about prisons having to compete with the private jail at Kilmarnock, and driving staff costs down was one way of achieving this. This would appear to be at odds with the stated goals of the Scottish Executive, and one wonders

how these staffing levels will be able to provide the “robust assessment processes” it has called for on its 2004 consultation paper.

### **Referral and Selection of Clients**

There are pressures on all the agencies involved in the re-integration process to achieve results, regardless of how outcomes are defined, and to make the best use of what resources they have. In Perth prison, more inmates apply to see the careers adviser than actually get an interview. Prison staff exercise their discretion to weed out potential 'time-wasters' While this may be effective in targeting the limited resources available, it places too much emphasis on the discretion of the prison staff, and lacks any structured method of assessment of need. This is no reflection on the skills of any of the staff involved, but reflects the lack of time and resources available to both the careers adviser and prison staff.

There is an element of self-selection regarding prisoners coming forward to attend group work or individual interviews in Barlinnie, and it may be assumed that any prisoner with the motivation to participate in careers guidance activities has already taken a big step towards employment, and may be more likely to be successful in obtaining employment on release. The concern should perhaps be with those who are unwilling to engage in the process, and can see no future beyond the cycle of reoffending and reconviction - prison's own version of the NEET group. There was no evidence of any efforts being made to target these groups, although we cannot conclude that these do not exist. There are certainly intensive programmes supporting prisoners in managing drug and alcohol problems, and transitional support for issues of housing, benefits and family contacts are effective at Perth, although proposed staffing cuts would jeopardise this.

The selection of prisoners for the Pathways to Construction project was stringent. The absence of drug issues would place these prisoners in the minority 20% who do not have to overcome that major barrier to employment. The drive for this project to succeed, driven by the requirement to secure prolonged funding, appears to have weighted the balance in favour of prisoners who would be assessed as most likely to



sustain their jobs following release. To speculate that these may have been the ten prisoners at Barlinnie most likely to obtain employment independently of any guidance intervention does nothing to take away from the excellent work done by APEX and others involved in facilitating this project. It is hoped that this can be extended to the advantage of some of the harder to help clients within the prison system.

### **Delivery and Effectiveness of Guidance Interventions**

What evidence can be obtained shows that interventions at various stages can have significant impact on prisoners' prospects of employment. Lack of follow up procedures at Perth makes it impossible to make any concrete assessment of the success of interventions, but delivery was of a high standard. Prisoners observed responded positively in interview, and seemed ready to engage in the process. A member of the throughcare staff at Perth raised an important issue, in that many prisoners while inside have positive ideas about what they will do on release, and their cocooned existence within the confines of the prison allows these ideas to flourish. The careers adviser at Barlinnie similarly described many of her clients as "living in a vacuum". The emotional impact of the sudden re-introduction to society with all its influences, temptations and prejudices causes these positive ideas to quickly unravel and the cycle of unemployment and reoffending to begin again. It is at this key stage that intervention is critical if the client is to maintain their focus on gaining employment, and this is missing in the Scottish system.

There are currently moves to address this issue. There are to be Resettlement Services set up throughout the country under the responsibility of local authorities. Advisers will work with prisoners serving sentences of 4 years and under who have completed their sentence, and are not under any parole or licence order. Every prisoner in this category is entitled to this service, which can last up to one year from release. Letters will be sent to every prisoner within two months of their release offering this service. They will work intensively with clients, offering help and assistance with any part of their life, and if necessary will advocate on their behalf. As they will not be specialists,

they will work with outside agencies and refer as appropriate. Links have already been established with the Careers Scotland adviser in Perth, and the early impressions are that this is a positive step and a good potential source of referral. This moves towards the English system, under which all offenders maintain contact through a probation officer following their release. (This information is from a meeting between Careers Scotland and the Resettlement Service, which took place 2 days prior to the deadline for this report. Careers Scotland kindly emailed a summary of this meeting for inclusion in this project)

The impact of the Worknet programme can be seen in the success of the project, and the positive comments of those at Barlinnie who participated. This has been supplemented by those sessions conducted by APEX within the prison, and the tailoring of materials to the needs of the group makes sound common sense.

The work of the GCVS adviser provides perhaps the best example of a holistic approach to guidance, and one which would seem to be most effective with this group through the build up of trust and the continuity of contact. By becoming involved with the client during the final stages of their sentence, there is an opportunity to establish expectations and to make these realistic. The same adviser will then assist the client on release by:

- supporting them through drug reduction programmes
- providing funding for training, work clothes, or in one case a bicycle to enable one client to get to work.
- Accompanying client to interviews, doctors, housing agencies or other support groups and advocating on their behalf
- Liaising with employers and training providers to obtain placement for the client
- Track the client's progress and provide support where required.

The continuity of support provided in this model is critical in its success. This is particularly true of former addicts, who are among the most alienated and vulnerable in this group. The range of skills needed to provide these services are considerable, and would combine elements of

the roles of keyworker, careers adviser, social worker and placement officer

### **Methods of Evaluation and Definition of Outcomes**

There can be seen a range of definitions in this regard. The importance of some measure by which the success of any provision can be evaluated cannot be understated. This can help to establish what best practice and make the case for funding to be allocated accordingly. The multitude of steps required and barriers to be overcome by this client group makes definition problematic, however. If we consider the broader picture, the definition of the Govan Initiative that if a client appearing for interview is a positive outcome is a valid one. The engagement of the client is fundamental to the process, and the attendance rates reflect the success of the work done with the client prior to their release. To simply define a positive outcome as simply placing a client in employment or training misses the point. If that client does not re-offend, then a successful outcome has been achieved for all concerned, and society in particular. Soft indicators are probably the main measure of successful progress in this group.

For the GCVS definition of success is very clear, in a set period employment being sustained. The link between outcome and funding is particularly direct in this case, but unlikely to contribute to a client centred approach.

### **Links with Employers and Outside Agencies**

For APEX, the success in getting employers engaged in the process of employing ex-offenders should be taken into account as much as the ability of the clients to sustain employment. Employers' negative perception towards this group has been cited as a major barrier towards the re-integration of prisoners into society. GCVS have also made significant progress in this regard, with an extensive network of employers willing to work with ex-offenders (see appendix 7). The Govan Initiative have separated the guidance and placement elements of their

work, which may place them at a disadvantage in terms of continuity with the client and the potential to influence the employer, although it does allow them to focus on employability and training.

Despite the disadvantages of the postcode system by which clients can access support through LDCs, there is a key strength in their access to a network of local employers, training providers and support agencies. Both Careers Scotland and the LINK centre in Perth are hampered by the geographical diversity of the prison population, and transitional support and guidance are sometimes limited by a lack of the appropriate local knowledge.

## CONCLUSIONS

The most striking impression of this research has been the diversity of approaches and provisions available to ex-offenders in aiding them into employment. The level of this assistance and access to it varies between the two prisons examined, and is often determined by random factors such as postcode or the discretion of prison staff. Although the work of throughcare staff and careers advisers within prisons is of a high standard, there is a gap between their work and that of community agencies on the outside, a gap through which many prisoners fall due to lack of support at the critical time when they are at their most vulnerable.

Cathy Jamieson has noted that there is a lack of coordination both in objectives and delivery, and called for clearer communication links between agencies (Scottish Executive 2004). The establishment of the Resettlement Service may provide a valuable link in this process, and aid communication between the various stakeholders. The establishment of more formal partnerships between the prisons and community support agencies would also be desirable in meeting this objective. A means of financing that would enable long term stability for existing projects which have proven to be successful would also strengthen provision.

A single agency approach has been adopted in Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland which brings prisons and community offender services together into one organisation. It should not be assumed centralisation would be a panacea for the problems of offender management in this country. There is a danger of creating a lumbering and ineffective quango which would be insensitive to local issue and needs. It is notable from this research that the best and most effective practice seemed to exist within small scale agencies such as GCVS, or specific local projects such as the Pathways to Construction. A forum which could bring these agencies together to share best practice and inform policy decision making would be of far more value. Because provision is diverse does not necessarily mean it is poor. Centralisation may lead to the loss of the individually tailored approach that can best serve this diverse client group. Where the problem occurs is in the lack of a defined entitlement, which leaves many prisoners cut adrift. Again it is hoped that the

Resettlement Service can help to plug this gap and ensure that a more consistent level of support is available to released offenders.

In terms of guidance provision, the involvement of the GCVS adviser in the entire process was the best practice observed. While few practitioners may possess all the skills needed to fulfil this role with the same degree of success, an expansion of the role of prison staff to include follow up support to inmates in the post-release period would be worth consideration. The trust and confidence built up between the prisoner and throughcare staff is a valuable asset, and on that is currently lost every time the door closes behind a prisoner released.

The scope of this research project has been limited, and perhaps has tried to address too many issues. A work on this scale can only scratch the surface and there is vast scope for deeper probing into this complex area. Research into the work of the LDCs alone would make an interesting contribution to the debate. The disparate nature of the players in this field may give the impression of a disjointed and ineffective approach, but there is much innovation and good practice throughout the system, which is perhaps facilitated by there being a large number of smaller and more autonomous agencies. More sharing of this good practice would enhance provision across the board, and it is hoped that future research will contribute to this process.

It has been estimated that ex-offenders constitute up to one third of the working population (Fletcher et al, 1998), and that these are substantially more likely to remain unemployed in the long term, and the longer this term progresses the higher becomes the risk of re-offending. If we are to become a truly inclusive society we must adopt a bold and innovative approach to tackle these issues at every stage in the process. There are those working in this field who hold parts of the answer and are making effective contributions to aiding ex-offenders into employment. If we can get these component parts of the process to talk to each other, and get government to listen, then we may truly begin to address the problem.

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## APPENDIX 1

### Interview with Lynn Bell, Careers Scotland, Perth Prison LINK Centre November 2004.

Makes weekly visits to Perth Prison to offer careers guidance to prisoners.

#### Questions

- What is the background to Careers Scotland's relationship with Perth Prison, and is this a formal partnership?
- What is the policy of Careers Scotland with relation to prisoners?
- How are prisoners referred for a meeting with the careers adviser?
- What different types of guidance are provided?
- What support exists to help them into employment before and after release?
- What measures exist to track prisoners' progress after release?

Lynn's involvement with Perth Prison began with the NETWORK for Adult Guidance, which was then part of Tayside Careers, offering their services to the prison. The original remit with NETWORK was not centre based. They were doing outreach work with adults who couldn't reach the centre, and the prison work grew out of this. There is a review of the work in Perth prison from 2002 appended to this report (see appendix 12). These services were offered free, in contrast to APEX who were providing the service at that time for a fee. In 2002 the APEX contract was terminated, and Careers Scotland are now the only source of Careers Advice in the prison. Lynn goes into Perth Prison every Friday afternoon and conducts mainly 1:1 interviews, and issues action plans where appropriate.

The work was initially part of the pre-release programme. This consisted of group work with prisoners 6 weeks prior to release, covering CVs, interview skills and opportunity awareness, and then offer 1:1 interviews on a self-referral basis, although in practice the prison staff would make the referrals. This continued until January 2003, when the pre-release programme was scrapped. Although prisoners were coming forward to take part in the group work, they were not buying into the content. In



the long term, they were hoping their participation would help them with their application for parole, and in the short term it was getting them out of their cell for a cup of tea. In January 2003 the LINK Centre opened, and referrals for interview now come from the LINK centre staff. Lynn will see each client 2 or 3 times before their release, although this is not critical on their release date, and she can see them any time during their sentence. She felt it would be beneficial to meet all prisoners shortly after admission to raise her profile within the prison, and to establish contact before peer group pressure had had a chance to exert its influence.

In addition to the Perth work, there were group sessions at Friarton (a newly built prison on the outskirts of Perth), which is a semi open prison. This is seen as a first step on the road to open conditions, and draws prisoners from all over Scotland. The group sessions didn't work. There was a lot of disruptive behaviour, although some would come back in groups of 1 or 2 towards the end of the programme. The prison culture is a big problem with group work. Prisoners do not want to be seen as buying in to these programmes as this does not give them a good image with their peers.

There is a full time adviser from Job Centre Plus based at the LINK Centre who provides advice and support on issues prisoners have with obtaining benefit on their release. She can also refer prisoners to training under the New Deal initiative. Prisoners can obtain instant access to New Deal courses

As far as Careers Scotland goes, prisoners are not seen as a target group because they are unavailable for work. In terms of Insight recording and performance management, there is no performance indicator for work done with prisoners. As far as Lynn was aware there is no current evaluation going on regarding Careers Scotland and their policy towards prison work, although there is a brief audit of Careers Scotland's activity within Scottish prisons appended to this report (unfortunately this report is not dated). There is no formal tracking of prisoners on release, and so it is not possible to define any outcomes or keep any destination statistics. Lynn had attempted to encourage prisoners to attend their

local Careers Scotland office upon their release, and had arranged appointments for them, but few turned up for these.

The main barriers faced by Lynn in the course of her work were logistical ones. A lot of her time was spent waiting for clients, due to the time taken to have them escorted from their cells, this being exacerbated by overcrowding and lack of staff resources. Although many clients were keen to get involved in job searching activities, there were only limited facilities available for this. Prisoners did not have any access to computers, nor could they make telephone calls. Outgoing mail would bear the stamp "HMP Perth", and this was seen as suitable for sending correspondence to potential employers.

Lynn felt her work was limited by the time she had available in the prison, and that Careers Scotland did not consider prison work a priority. Prison management felt the work done was successful, and was keen to extend the adviser's role to allow interviews with all prisoners on admission and liberation. To date there have been no steps taken by Careers Scotland to consider this.

## APPENDIX 2

### Interview with LINK Centre Staff, Perth Prison, November 2004.

This discussion was conducted in the LINK centre in November 2004 with three of the four staff who run this centre, and one from the prisons drug programme. All prisoners are seen at induction and 10 days prior to release. The LINK Centre will also meet prisoners on a needs basis, providing support with accommodation, addictions, and referrals to support agencies.

#### Questions

- What assessment tools are used to determine needs of prisoners?
- What do you perceive as main barriers to prisoners obtaining employment on release?
- What follow-up work is done with prisoners after release?
- What links do you have with outside agencies?
- What is SPS policy with regard to aiding prisoners into employment, and how does this work in practice?
- What do you think could be done to improve the employment prospects for prisoners on release?

The LINK centre opened in 2002 and is now an integral part of the prison programme aimed at providing throughcare and transitional support on release. All prisoners receive an induction talk within 72 hours of admission, and within 96 hours will attend the LINK centre where they will complete an assessment form called the Core Screen. Information from this form is fed into a large database, which produces statistics related to performance indicators. Section C of this document records a summary of needs, and from this it is determined whether an interview with the careers adviser will be required. Also there is the Short Term Offender Needs Assessment and Community Integration Plan, which is completed by the prisoner. They can request help in looking for a job through this form, and it is also used to record their plans for obtaining employment on release.

In practice more prisoners request referral to the careers adviser than actually get referred. The LINK centre staff will exercise their discretion. There are a lot of time-wasters who will try and see as many people as they can just to get out of their cells. There are no statistics available, but the staff estimated that 10 % of prisoners will have had a referral to the careers adviser during their time inside. Many prisoners have very positive ideas about employment while they are inside, but once released succumb to the influence of their peer group and return to their old ways. There is no follow up on prisoners' progress once they are released, although some categories of prisoners will be referred to social workers - these would be sex offenders or prisoners having served sentence of four years or more. There is a prison-based social worker who deals with the needs of prisoners while they are inside, and LINK centre staff also have contact with social workers who are dealing with offenders post-release.

The main barriers perceived by the LINK centre staff were the criminal record itself, drugs, peer group influence, employability skills, literacy/numeracy and accommodation. There were some barriers to assessment of these needs - many prisoners will not admit to having literacy problems, so it is hard to target the support where it is needed.

LINK centre staff will liaise with the following:

- NHS addictions team
- Cranstoun Drug Services
- Shelter Scotland
- Family Contact Development Officer
- Apex in Fife, who deal mainly with addiction and accommodation issues
- Prison Education Department
- Chaplaincy

In addition there is an adviser from Job Centre Plus who is in the LINK Centre every day to assist in sorting out benefit problems for prisoners approaching release.

The main problems are with staffing. Kilmarnock (Scotland's first privately run jail) can keep a prisoner for a year at a cost of about £19,000. The SPS cost is £29,000. It should be borne in mind that as a public body SPS budget figures have to be completely transparent, and this is not the case with the privately run jail. The SPS management feel that they have to compete with the private sector, and Perth has just appointed a new governor who is cutting costs to the bone. Perth has an annual budget of £16m of which £11m is staff costs. Prison officers who are retiring are not being replaced, despite the problem of overcrowding. This means that fewer prisoners can access our services. SPS are great at producing glossy documents (a reference to the Making a Difference document produced by the SPS in January 2003) which talk about many programmes and initiatives and positive strategies, but the actions don't seem to back this up.

The lack of follow up on release is also a problem. We spend years building up a rapport and level of trust with many inmates, and yet on release we lose that contact. It would make sense for officers from the throughcare centres to maintain contact, and continued to support prisoners on release. This might have a better impact in terms of reducing the chances of them re-offending.

### APPENDIX 3

#### Interview with Lesley McCracken, Careers Scotland, HMP Barlinnie, Glasgow, April 2005

Lesley is permanently based at Barlinnie, and delivers groupwork, 1:1 interviews and liaises with various external agencies to support prisoners into employment.

#### Questions

- Describe the background to Careers Scotland involvement with Barlinnie
- How do prisoners access your service?
- Does Careers Scotland have any policy in relation to ex offenders?
- What procedures exist for tracking your clients on release?
- Are there particular issues facing prisoners on release from Barlinnie?
- Tell me about work aimed at getting prisoners 'work ready'
- How does your work link with external agencies?
- Are there any procedures to evaluate your work here
- In what ways do you think the service to prisoners could be improved?
- Can you tell me more about the Worknet programme in relation to the Pathways to Construction project?
- What access do prisoners have to job searching facilities?
- What changes in policy and practice have you seen in your two years at Barlinnie?
- How effective are partnerships working in this field?

Careers guidance in Barlinnie predates the creation of Careers Scotland. The Glasgow Careers Service ran a 9 week course under the New Deal programme providing "short sharp qualifications", for example industrial cleaning, food hygiene, first aid and core skills. This contract was renewed under Careers Scotland, and is renegotiated on an annual basis. Barlinnie pays to have a Careers Scotland presence in the prison. Prisoners are not normally a priority group for Careers Scotland. There was a policy of blanket interviews for every prisoner, although this is no longer the case. There are optional group sessions on employability for those approaching release, covering job-seeking skills and the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, although numbers attending are few.

The problems with this are time - a two week course merely skims the surface in terms of the addressing the barriers many clients have. Some are simply not ready for job seeking skills.

In the future, these sessions are to be replaced with a Worknet programme, which focuses more on Lifeskills and employability. A pilot scheme is already underway to test the feasibility of this. Perceptions so far are that this programme is more effective, as it involves active learning techniques. An evaluation of this programme is still awaited.

There is a procedure for the follow up of clients on release. All are sent a letter after 3 months, but the response rate is minimal. There are occasional success stories, however. There are many reasons for the low response. Many have chaotic lifestyles, and could have changed address many times in those 3 months. Others do not wish to look back on their experience in prison. Some are unwilling to act on the advice of the careers adviser, not through lack of will, but through their own perceived barriers to employment. We do get some feedback from some training providers, however, and this has been generally positive. There are good links with local training providers, the main ones being GCVS (Glasgow Council for the Voluntary services), The Govan Initiative, and Apex, who run the Pathways to Construction Programme in conjunction with the prison careers adviser. Lesley does not refer prisoners to Careers Scotland, as there is little likelihood of them turning up. Referral to Local Development Companies (LDCs) is far more effective, as they have access to training programmes and funding. The Govan Initiative, for example, contracts a private consultant who runs a course called "Steps for Excellence" in the prison. This is aimed at instilling positive thinking and a "can do" attitude in prisoners approaching release. LDCs can also put practical support in place, for example forklift driving certificates, or equipment for setting up as a barber.

There are many ways in which the work of the adviser could be improved. There was frustration at the lack of interest shown by Careers Scotland. They were happy for Barlinnie to be paying for their services, but had no interest in prisoners when they were released. Resources were targeted heavily towards young people and the NEET group, at the expense of

adult clients. In England, all prisoners were allocated a probation officer on release, and they were offered help in addressing offending behaviour. Although many high profile agencies were looking at the tracking of prisoners, there was a lack of resources given to providing actual support. There is a need to provide a complete package of support that is centrally co-ordinated. The LDCs will only deal with clients who have addresses in their postcode area. This poses a problem for many prisoners who become homeless on their release. Many end up in homeless projects, which become another form of prison for them. Geographical diversity is also a problem. As Barlinnie draws its population from all over Scotland, the local knowledge of the careers adviser is only of value to those released into the Glasgow area. There is a need for the prison careers service to expand its knowledge of LDCs and other training providers from the rest of Scotland, but resources do not allow for this. Prisoners from other areas of Scotland are currently referred to their local job centres.

There is a current review of training within the prison, which is being carried out by an external consultant. Theoretically each prisoner is entitled to work for one half day every day. There are work sheds providing training in joinery, hairdressing, and painting and decorating, but these cannot meet the demand, largely due to understaffing and overcrowding. The reality is that many prisoners are still confined to their cells for up to 23 hours a day while the work sheds lie empty.

There seems to be a missing link in the tracking of offenders. 90 % of inmates have a history of drug and alcohol problems, and many are referred to Cranstoun drug services on their release. Many do not turn up. More should be doing done in the vital few weeks following release to help prisoners make the difficult adjustment to life outside an institution, and ensure they do not become disengaged. The careers service should also be involved at this stage, and outreach work may be far more effective than work in the prisons. Prison is a false environment, and many become overly optimistic about how they will change when they are back on the outside. The reality of release is a very different prospect, and there is a lack of support in place to prevent them relapsing into offending behaviour.



On the positive side things are changing, if slowly. There is a lot more emphasis on rehabilitation now, although resources are still inadequate. There has been a change in perception on the part of prisoners. When Lesley began working in Barlinnie, prisoners would scoff at the very idea of a careers interview. Now it is seen as part and parcel of prison life.

## APPENDIX 4

### Group Discussion with Prisoners on the Pathways to Construction Programme      HMP Barlinnie April 2005

10 prisoners on the Pathways to construction course were interviewed as a group. Celia Barclay, a fellow student from the University of Strathclyde was also present at this interview and asked questions relating to education. As this was unscheduled (it had been intended to conduct 1:1 interviews) there was not time to develop questions for a detailed focus group, and the session was brief. Prisoners were asked about their previous work experience, their opinions of the training schemes they had been on, whether they thought the Worknet training had been of value, whether they were interested in further training on release and their perceptions of their prospects on release.

This was intended to have been 1:1 interviews, but ended up being a discussion group with all 10 of the participants in this programme. This may have restricted the amount of information given by the inmates, as they may have been self conscious in front of their peers. All were currently training to SVQ2 level as general Construction Operatives, and have been guaranteed jobs in construction on their release. They had just completed a programme of Worknet, which had been facilitated by the careers adviser at the prison. They had been "hand picked" for participation. This is a brief account of what was discussed.

Most of the prisoners had had some experience of manual or construction work. Initial comments regarding the Worknet programme were brief, negative and unprintable. After a short silence, one prisoner commented that it had actually been quite educational. Others then echoed this, particularly in that it made them aware of their aims and goals. Most of the prisoners had some experience of construction-based work prior to their incarceration. Some of the younger members of the group expressed an interest in further training or education on their release. None of the group admitted to any drug or alcohol issues, and indicated that this had been a prerequisite of their participation. All prisoners were very positive about the initiative, and all indicated that they had no intention of returning to prison.

## APPENDIX 5

### Interview with Emma Dodds, APEX Glasgow, Gordon st office, April 2005

Emma manages the Pathways to Construction project for APEX.

#### Questions

- How are prisoners selected for participation in training schemes?
- What are the priorities for APEX in Glasgow in comparison to the rest of the country?
- How do you measure performance and what would you define as a positive outcome?
- Tell me about group work are you doing with these clients
- What links do you have with employers and other support agencies?
- How is APEX funded in this area?
- What steps are taken to track the progress of clients once they have been placed in jobs?
- What do you think could improve your service?

Clients are referred to APEX via the SPS. It is generally a condition that they have to have a Glasgow postcode, although this is not set in stone. If they are referred with no known address, the APEX will assist them in obtaining temporary accommodation. This is arranged through the housing section in Barlinnie. If they have drug issues they will be referred to a Cranstoun transitional care worker. In terms of security, clients must be assessed as low to medium risk. There is a one week selection process to assess clients' suitability while they are in prison, which involves the careers adviser in Barlinnie and SPS staff.

APEX have a Service Level Agreement with Barlinnie only. They do work closely with other agencies, however. An example is the A4E group (Action for Employment) who are subcontracted by Job Centre Plus. This would provide funding for those not eligible under the New Deal programme, and allows them to buy things such as clothing or work boots. APEX will also liaise with local employers. For the Pathways project these have included local construction companies.

Clients on the Pathways programme will come to APEX having completed an SVQ2 as General Work Operative over a 6 month period. APEX will then set them up with an employer in the construction industry. Emma will be in regular contact with them on commencement of employment. This will initially be twice a week. This will reduce at her discretion as the placement progresses, although all clients have her mobile number should they require support. She will also communicate regularly with the employers and review the progress of each client.

In addition, Emma goes into Barlinnie to deliver Lifeskills training to inmates via interactive group sessions. Although APEX have their own module, Emma has identified where these do not meet client needs and has adapted them to be more employment focused. These include issues like employee rights, holiday pay and sick pay, repercussions of misconduct and grievance procedures. Emma also provides ongoing support to clients after their release, and will go as far as helping them to set up bank accounts for their wages to go into.

The project is now on its third group of 10, and is working with different employers in the construction industry. Although there are no performance targets, as this project is still in the pilot stage, Emma will record soft indicators of progress. APEX are in the process of compiling a case for continued funding from the dept of Education and Lifelong Learning, and were unwilling to provide figures of how many of its clients to date had sustained employment.

Although APEX would not provide detailed figures, the indications are that this project has been a considerable success. In the first phase of this scheme, one employer took on all 10 clients. In the second phase there were more employers offering posts than there were clients to fill them. This is an indicator not only of the success of the training within Barlinnie, but of the engagement of employers in the process. Employers have been understanding of the needs of the client group, and have been prepared to offer a second chance where there have been problems. There was great satisfaction with the results of this project, and the feeling was that it could be extended to include wider groups of clients from within the prison system.

## APPENDIX 6

### Interview with Maureen Boyle & John Daly, Careers Advisers with the Govan Initiative. Govan, April 2005

The Govan Initiative is a Local Development Company. It contracts an independent company to go into Barlinnie and deliver the Steps to Excellence programme to prisoners from the Govan area. This is a 24-hour course, usually run over 12 weeks. Key themes addressed within the course include the importance of positive thinking, examining self-confidence and self-esteem, communicating effectively and goal setting. The course depends heavily on facilitator-lead discussion, based on customised materials provided. Feedback from prisoners having attended this course is very positive. It was commented that when the advisers met inmates during the final stages of their release, part of the process was to "bring them back down to earth" and ensure that any expectations were realistic.

The careers advisers will interview prisoners from the course in the week prior to their release to explain what assistance and training will be available on release. They will also make an appointment for each prisoner to meet them at the Govan Office as soon as possible after their release. It was estimated that about 50% of prisoners turn up for this appointment. The initiative can offer funding for courses such as:

- Health and Safety in the Workplace
- Forklift Driving certificate
- Certificate of Safety on Construction Sites
- Dumper truck driving certificate
- Provisional Driving Licence
- Employability Training

The Govan Initiative is funded through the Better Off Project, application for funds being made in partnership with two other Glasgow community regeneration projects. While Govan Initiative will only see people with a G51 postcode, the Better Off Project has a wider remit through the city. The Better Off Project is in turn funded by the New Opportunities Fund, which is allocated money through the National Lottery. This funding is guaranteed for 3 years. The remit of the

careers advisers is exclusively a guidance one, the objective being to bring clients to a point of readiness for work. They will then refer them to the Action for Jobs section, which is also under the umbrella of the Govan Initiative.

Clients will stay on the advisers' caseload until there is a positive outcome, which is loosely defined as being no longer in need of their services. The focus of their work is very much on positives - a client turning up for an appointment is seen as a positive outcome, as is a sustained period of not re-offending. The advisers were able to describe some case studies to give an idea of the work they do.

One ex-offender was placed on a forklift training course, and obtained his certificate with ease. It was then discovered that he had been a heroin addict, and was on a methadone programme, which virtually ruled out any chance of him obtaining employment as a forklift driver. Govan Initiative eventually got him a labouring job with a local construction company, and this employment had sustained. The confusion had arisen through the clients own description of himself as "clean", normally interpreted as being completely drug free. To the injecting heroin user, or indeed a drugs support worker, "clean" would mean no longer injecting, and stable on a methadone programme with a dose not exceeding 35mg per day.

Another ex offender obtained a grant from the Business Gateway to set up a car valeting business. The advisers had noted his entrepreneurial skills, and pointed him in the right direction for support. Another client had been a lift engineer prior to his conviction, and became homeless following the breakdown of his marriage subsequent to his release. The Govan Initiative offered him support in arranging accommodation, and then obtained a place on a data cabling course at a local training centre. He is currently on a work placement. He needed someone to have faith in him, and this was provided at the crucial time.

The main frustration highlighted by the interviewees was the lack of joined up services within the prison, and a lack of liaison with outside agencies. They were surprised at the number of prisoners being released having had no support in finding accommodation prior to their release.

## APPENDIX 7

### Interview with Helen Reilly, Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector, Glasgow 2005

Helen specialises in clients with addictions problems, 80% of whom are ex-offenders

#### Questions

- How are clients referred to your agency?
- What types of training are offered to help clients into employment?
- What links do you have with other support agencies?
- Do you have any involvement with ex-offenders' families?
- How do you link with the New Deal programme?
- Where does your funding come from?
- What are the main barriers to employment faced by your clients?
- What links do you have with local employers?
- What do you think could improve your service?

Referrals are taken from many agencies, including Careers Scotland's adviser in Barlinnie, Job Centres, social workers, addiction services or family support groups. There are also two-way referrals with MAP (the Methadone Activity Programme). She will visit Barlinnie and speak to prisoners on a 1:1 basis. These clients have been recommended to speak to Helen by the careers adviser in Barlinnie, but their attendance is voluntary. Her motto for these clients is that they "don't have to be clean, but be keen to be clean". The aims of these interviews are:

- Find out about client's work history
- Talk about their ambitions and ensure that these are realistic
- Tell them about local job opportunities
- Establish their needs in terms of health, housing and debt. GCVS will advocate on clients behalf and accompany to various support agencies
- Explain that GCVS will maintain contact while the client is in early stages of employment.

A follow up interview is then arranged at the GCVS office shortly after their release. It was estimated that 60% of clients did turn up for post-release interview.

GCVS obtain most of their funding through Job Centre Plus, as part of the Progress to Work programme. They will pay them £200 for each client who sustains employment for 13 weeks or more. There is additional funding from the European Social Fund through the Progress to Work scheme. This money is used to pay for clients travel and a bonus scheme which offers financial rewards for sustaining employment (£50 for lasting one week; £150 for lasting 13 weeks).

Helen has contacts with a wide array of employers and support agencies who have assisted ex offenders into employment or moved them towards readiness for work. These include:

- Construction Glasgow
- Building Glasgow's People construction courses through Cardonald College
- Lang O'Rourke, a private construction co.
- Back on the Road - a project to renovate old buses, funded by Scotland Against Drugs
- Train'd Up - courses run by Scottish Rail Industry
- The Wyse group - run courses in hospital work
- @Work Scotland - run training courses in confidence building, assertiveness and highway maintenance

Despite this impressive network, Helen felt frustrated at times by employers' lack of understanding with regard to past offences, and more specifically drug use. She cited the case of a client who had obtained employment with a local firm as a van driver. Attendance was exemplary, and there had been positive reports from the employer. This ended when the client had to ask his employer if he could leave 30 minutes early one evening so he could go to the chemist and collect his methadone prescription. The client was dismissed, despite having been stable on the methadone for a long period. In Helen's opinion, as a prescribed drug taken in a controlled dose, a former addict on a table dose of methadone would suffer no impairment of faculties or visual signs of drug use.