

What Works to Reduce Reoffending: A Summary of the Evidence

Justice Analytical Services

Scottish Government

Dr. Maria Sapouna

Catherine Bisset

Anne-Marie Conlong

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This paper has been prepared to support the next stage in the development of the Reducing Reoffending Programme led by the Justice Directorate in the Scottish Government. Its aim is to review the evidence on the effectiveness of different approaches to reduce reoffending or, in other words, promote desistance from crime among young people and adults. The term “desistance” is used extensively in the paper and refers to an extended period of refraining from further offending. However, there is considerable disagreement among researchers about how long an offender must be crime-free before being considered a “desister”, with some researchers claiming that “true desistance” can be determined with certainty only after offenders die. In most evaluations, a two-year follow-up period is used to differentiate desisters from recidivists. The review did not consider studies that assessed the effectiveness of criminal justice interventions in achieving outcomes other than reduced reoffending such as increased public confidence in the criminal justice system and justice to victims. Where available, information on value for money of interventions is provided.

The timescales for completing this piece of work were very tight and precluded a comprehensive search of the literature. The review draws heavily upon some key sources of evidence from within Scotland, the rest of the UK and other countries that were easily accessible, mainly systematic reviews of “what works” to reduce reoffending and qualitative studies investigating offenders’ own perceptions of the desistance process and the factors that facilitated or hindered a sustained abstinence from offending. It is hoped, however, that this paper will remain a work in progress that will be updated as additional evidence becomes available. The paper was subject to peer review from analytical and policy officials in the Scottish Government, academics and other experts whose contributions greatly enhanced its quality.

This paper also includes a review of ‘what works’ with women offenders. Despite a wealth of studies of male offenders there is a paucity of research which can provide answers to ‘what works’ to reduce reoffending in women. Only three studies in a review by Harper and Chitty (2005) of ‘what works’ with offenders included women, while for their meta-analysis of interventions with female offenders, Dowden and Andrews (1999) were only able to identify 26 studies solely (16) or predominantly (10) involving women. Although there are very few robust outcome studies in the UK that disaggregated by gender, the search of the literature did find a small number of international studies which did measure differences in recidivism. The review also draws evidence from qualitative research which elicits the views of women offenders to gain insights into their perceptions of the offending and desistance pathway.

It is important to note that this review does not claim to provide a “gold-standard” solution to the problem of reoffending that can successfully fit all offenders as desistance from offending is a complex, subjective process and what may work for some may not work for others. However, it is hoped that the review will provide some direction to policy makers on the type of interventions that have, overall, proven more effective in reducing reoffending.

CHAPTER TWO: HOW DO INDIVIDUALS DESIST FROM OFFENDING?

Individual influences

The majority of offenders will have desisted from crime by the time they reach their mid 20s or early 30s. A highly consistent finding of longitudinal studies, both in the UK and internationally, is that offending begins in early adolescence, peaks during the late teens and tapers off in young adulthood. In the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development which followed a cohort of 411 men born in a working class neighbourhood in South London from ages 8 to 46, the majority of offenders had desisted from crime by the age of 28, with a peak decrease in offending shown at the age of 23. Findings from the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime¹ found that 14 was the peak age for offending, with a sharp decrease after that. At age 14, 52% of boys had engaged in four or more delinquent acts in the previous 12 months. By age 17, nearly half of these had stopped or sharply reduced their offending. Some longitudinal studies have documented that a small minority of offenders (about 5% of the offender population) continue to offend throughout adulthood and are responsible for a disproportionately large number of offences². The relationship between age and offending is interpreted as reflecting underlying changes in biology, social contexts, attitudes and life circumstances that influence offenders' motivation to desist from crime rather than a unitary maturation process³.

Quality social ties formed through employment, marriage or cohabitation and education promote conformity and desistance. It is a consistent finding in the literature that the occurrence of key life events such as obtaining and remaining in suitable employment, acquiring a stable partner and completing education degrees increase the likelihood of desistance from offending by adding structure to offenders' lives and acting as a source of informal monitoring and emotional support⁴. The same effect has been observed when offenders move away from criminal peers⁵. More recently, researchers have stressed that the perceived strength, stability and quality of social attachments matter more than the events per se⁶. Women, for example, are more likely to desist from offending once they develop attachments to a law-abiding husband and enter a good-quality marriage. There is

¹ <http://www.law.ed.ac.uk/cls/esytc/findings/digest12.pdf>

² Healy, D. (2010) *The Dynamics of Desistance: Charting Pathways through Change* Cullompton: Willan.

³ McNeil, F. and Weaver, B. (2010) *Giving Up Crime: Directions for Policy* Glasgow: SCCJR. <http://www.sccjr.ac.uk/documents/files/givingupmcneil.pdf>

⁴ Sampson, R.J. and Laub, J.H. (1993) *Crime in the Making: Pathways and Turning Points through Life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

⁵ Farrall, S. (1995) Why Do People Stop Offending, *The Scottish Journal of Criminal Justice Studies*, 1(1), 51-59.

⁶ Healy, D. (2010), *ibid*

also clear evidence that just having a job does not encourage desistance. A U.S. longitudinal study found that, among women, those who were homemakers and those who worked in the domestic sector had increased chances of desisting from offending⁷.

There are gender differences in the process of desistance from crime. The process of desistance may be similar in some respects for young men and women being driven by maturation, transitions, changed lifestyles and relationships⁸. However, some gender differences have been found in the rationales given for desisting from crime. Young women tend to offer moral as opposed to utilitarian rationales for stopping offending and were more likely to emphasise the importance of relational aspects of the process including parental attitudes, experiences of victimisation, the assumption of parental responsibilities and disassociation from offending peers⁹. Some young women link their decisions to desist to the assumption of parental responsibilities. In general, young men focus more on personal choice and agency. Amongst persisters, girls and young women were more often keen to be seen as desisters, perhaps reflecting societal disapproval of female offending¹⁰.

A study conducted in Scotland between 2000-2001, using the accounts of 20 young men and 20 young women, found that offenders made proactive decisions to stop, irrespective of whether they were employed, in a stable relationship or whether there were positive incentives. However, many of the women were encouraged in their decision to stop by the support of friends, family, children and loving relationships with law-abiding partners. This study concluded that in general terms women stopped offending as a result of actual commitments (to children, partners or parents) whereas men's desistance was more in preparation for potential commitments¹¹.

In their study to explore the routes into and out of offending for young people in Scotland, Jamieson *et al* (1999)¹² interviewed 75 young people (aged 14-25 years) categorised into desisters (those who had not offended with the last year), resisters (young people who had never offended) and persisters (young people who had recently offended and were going on to criminal careers). They concluded that whilst younger desisters (like resisters) are inclined to fear the consequences of crime and view offending as 'futile' and morally wrong, older desisters are more likely to associate their abstinence with becoming more mature and moving on with their lives such as pursuing training or education.

⁷ Broidy, L.M. and Cauffman, E.E. (2006) '*Understanding the Female Offender*' Report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/216615.pdf>

⁸ Giordano, P. C., Cernkovich, S.A. and Rudolph, J.L. (2002) 'Gender, crime, and desistance: Toward a Theory of Cognitive Transformation', *American Journal of Sociology*, 107, 990-1064.

⁹ Jamieson, J., Mclvor, G. and Murray, C. (1999) *Understanding Offending Among Young People*, Edinburgh: The Stationery Office.

¹⁰ Barry, M (2007) in Trotter, C.' Sheehan R and Mclvor (2007) *What Works with Women Offenders*: Willan Publishing pp 23.

¹¹ Jamieson et al. (1999), *ibid*

¹² Jamieson et al, 1999

Males were more likely to say that their abstinence was 'personal choice', whilst females were more inclined to explain their desistance in terms of 'relational aspects' such as having gained parental responsibilities, not wanting to let their families down or having become more aware of the consequences of crime on their victims. In contrast, young people who offend classed as persisters were found to be less committed to education and employment and were most likely to have family members or peers also involved in crime. Persistent offending was often linked to drug addiction (particularly the need to fund a drug addiction) and in the case of females, was usually linked to involvement in relationships with male partners also involved in crime. Female persisters however, were more likely than their male counterparts to say they were trying to desist from crime and were more likely than young men to have adopted avoidance techniques to facilitate desistance. The literature suggests that girls mature (physically and emotionally) at an earlier age than boys and therefore will "reach and pass through the turbulent period associated with offending at a younger age"¹³. Research around desistance from offending illustrates that for many young people abstinence from crime is linked to "conscious lifestyle changes related to the coming of age".¹⁴

Research evidence also points to differences in moral reasoning between the genders to explain why females have a stronger inclination than boys to desist from offending. Underpinning female moral-reasoning is a general ethic of care and responsibility to others. In their 1999 study exploring young people's pathways into and out of crime, Jamieson *et al*¹⁵ found that boys were much more likely than girls to have been the victims of physical assaults outside their own homes and as a result of their own experiences were more likely to adopt an individualistic approach to moral reasoning with a specific tendency towards 'victim blame'. Girls on the other hand were found to have a more 'relational' approach to moral reasoning, their accounts of offending were much more likely to "take account of the effects of actions on others".

Deterrence and incapacitation

This section examines the impact of different forms of punishment on reoffending. Deterrence is either general or specific in nature. General deterrence refers to the effects of punishment on the general public (i.e., potential offenders) whereas specific deterrence refers to the potential inhibiting effect of punishment on the individual made subject to it. As the focus of this paper is on reoffending, we only review the evidence on specific deterrence. Incapacitation refers to the act of making an individual incapable of committing further offences usually by restraining his or her physical movement.

Prison can represent value for money in the short-term when it is used for high-risk serious and/or certain types of prolific offenders. Prison prevents reoffending in the short term through incapacitation effects, however it can also negatively impact on long-term

¹³ Mclvor, 1998

¹⁴ Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1983, Smith and McAra, 2004, Mclvor, 1998

¹⁵ Jamieson et al, 1999

recidivism by weakening social bonds and decreasing job stability¹⁶. There is evidence that prison can deter some individuals from committing further offences¹⁷, especially those with stable jobs or relationships who have more to lose from imprisonment¹⁸. There is evidence that, when tangible and intangible costs of crime are included, imprisonment of high-risk serious and/or prolific offenders can represent value for money in the short-term, however costs are more likely to outweigh benefits when less serious, non-repeat offenders are imprisoned¹⁹. These analyses do not take account of possible negative long-term effects of prison on reoffending, and should, therefore, be interpreted with caution.

Community sentences are more effective in reducing reoffending than short-term prison sentences. Scottish and English data suggest that community sentences are more effective in reducing recidivism than short-term prison sentences (less than 12 months). In Scotland, we have not controlled for the difference in offender characteristics but we do find that reconviction rates are lower for those given community sentences compared to those released from short custodial sentences. Sixty two per cent of those released from custody in 2006-07 were reconvicted within the following two years and the reconviction rate for those given short custodial sentences (of 6 months or less) is as high as 72%. Whilst not directly comparable, 42% of those given community service orders in 2006-07, and 58% of those given probation orders in 2006-07, were reconvicted within the following two years. Among females, 55% of those discharged from custody in 2006/07, 27% of those given a community service order and 55% of those given a probation order were reconvicted within 2 years but the same caveat of non-comparability of groups applies. In England, the reoffending rate of offenders commencing probation supervision (either Community Order or Suspended Sentence Order) in 2007 was seven percentage points lower than for those who had served short-term custodial sentences after controlling for individual differences²⁰. Scottish and international evidence suggests this may be due to the fact that offenders on community sentences have more opportunities to access rehabilitation services compared to offenders on short-term prison sentences that have limited access to rehabilitation programmes in the short period of time they are in prison²¹. There is evidence from meta-analyses that the quality of the service that is provided within a sanction rather than the

¹⁶ Sampson, R.J. and Laub, J.H. (1993) *Crime in the Making: Pathways and Turning Points through Life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

¹⁷ von Hirsch, A., Bottoms, A.E., Burney, E. and Wikstrom, P.O (1999) *Criminal Deterrence and Sentence Severity: An Analysis of Recent Research*, Oxford: Hart Publishing.

¹⁸ McGuire, J. (2002), *ibid*

¹⁹ McDougall, C., Cohen, M.A., Swaray, R. And Perry, A. (2003) The Costs and Benefits of Sentencing: A Systematic Review, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 587:160-177.

²⁰ Ministry of Justice (2010), *ibid*

²¹ Armstrong, S and Weaver, B. (2010) *'What Do the Punished Think of their Punishment? The Comparative Experience of Short-term Prison Sentences and Community-based Punishments'* Glasgow: SCCJR.

sanction in itself can impact on recidivism²². In Scotland, Mclvor found that, in the context of drug courts, judicial review – and, in particular, continuity of sentencer review – was associated with increased compliance and reductions in recidivism²³.

Despite the increasing numbers of women given community sentences in the UK and in other jurisdictions in recent years, there has been little research into if they reduce women's reoffending rate or their experiences of these disposals. Women are proportionately more likely than men to be placed on a probation order; however the risk of breach for those with more chaotic lifestyles means that the intervention may ultimately result in a custodial sentence. While women are more likely to complete probation and community service orders than men, where breach proceedings are pursued, women are slightly more likely than men to have their orders breached as a result of non-compliance, while men's orders are more likely than women's to be revoked as a result of a further offence²⁴. Women are also more likely to breach a Drug Treatment and Testing Order (DTTO) than men²⁵. Interviews with women on probation in Scotland indicate that they are dealing with a wide range of social, financial and emotional issues which they raise with workers to seek help with dealing with them. This finding raises important questions about whether community disposals should take these contributory factors into account in the design and provision of community penalties²⁶. The study concluded that community disposals can provide opportunities to access practical and emotional help but that they are not being used to their full potential. If community disposals were designed to provide more structured help to women, this clearly has consequences for workers involved in supervising and supporting women – in terms of skills, focus of interventions, criteria for measuring 'success' and time as a resource²⁷.

There is limited cost-benefit analysis evidence comparing community-based sanctions with prison. Matrix Knowledge Group²⁸ found some evidence that surveillance using either an Intensive Supervision Programme or Home Detention Curfew (HDC) represents value for money compared to prison. However, they also found that there was no statistically significant difference in savings to society between community service and prison, or between community supervision with a cognitive behavioural element and prison. These

²² Andrews, D.A. and Bonta, J (2010) *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct* (5th ed.), Newark, NJ: Lexis/Nexis.

²³ Mclvor, G. (2010) Beyond supervision: Judicial involvement in offender management, in F. McNeill, P. Raynor and C. Trotter (eds.) *Offender Supervision: New Directions in Theory, Research and Practice*, Cullompton: Willan.; Mclvor, G. (2010) Drug Courts – lessons from the UK and beyond, in A. Hucklesby and E. Wincup (eds.) *Drug Interventions in Criminal Justice*, Open University Press.

²⁴ Scottish Government (2010a) *Criminal Proceedings in Scottish Courts*, 2008/09, Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

²⁵ Scottish Government (2010b) *Criminal Justice Social Work Statistics*, 2008/09, Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

²⁶ Malloch, M and Mclvor, G (2011) *'Women and Community Sentences'* Glasgow: SCCJR.

²⁷ Malloch and Mclvor, (2011), *ibid*

²⁸ Matrix Knowledge Group (2007) *The Economic Case For and Against Prison, Technical Appendix* <http://www.matrixknowledge.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/economic-case-for-and-against-prison.pdf>

results should be interpreted with caution as they were based on a small number of studies and did not take into account incapacitation effects.

According to a systematic review, longer prison sentences are associated with increases in recidivism. A systematic review of studies comparing offenders who spent more time (an average of 30 months) versus less time (an average of 12.9 months) in prison found that offenders on longer prison sentences were more likely to reoffend following release²⁹. These analyses controlled for offenders' level of risk. However, the results should be interpreted with caution as the studies did not control for other differences between groups, and the results were mainly based on US studies conducted during the 1970s.

The effectiveness of swift sentences in reducing reoffending has not been proven. As far as we are aware of, there are extremely few studies that have tested the effects of celerity (or swiftness) of punishment on reoffending. Although there is some recent evidence of weaker quality that increasing the celerity of punishment may contribute to reductions in high-risk driving behaviours³⁰, its effect on other types of crime is under-investigated, making the drawing of any useful conclusions impossible. In relation to **young people**, there is some argument that a swift response (not necessarily a punitive one) is important as it relates the response to the behaviour³¹.

Intensive supervision programmes are ineffective in reducing reoffending. Petersilia and Turner³² evaluated intensive supervision programmes in which parolees or probationers are placed in small caseloads, face regular and unannounced visits by supervising officers, and are threatened with revocation and incarceration if they misbehave. They found no reductions in recidivism and, in fact, the overall one-year recidivism rate for offenders in the ISPs was higher than for those in the probation-as-usual control groups (37% versus 33%).

Remand can prevent some individuals from reoffending in the short-term through incapacitation; however it is also associated with negative effects that may hinder longer-term desistance. Remand prevents reoffending in the short term through incapacitation effects. However, alongside this incapacitation effect, international and Scottish research has consistently documented the negative effects associated with remand including an increased risk of suicide and mental distress, disintegration of social supports

²⁹ Gendreau, P., Goggin, C. and Cullen, F.T. (1999) *'The Effects of Prison Sentences on Recidivism'* Report to the Corrections Research and Development and Aboriginal Policy Branch, Ottawa: Solicitor General of Canada.

³⁰ Bouffard, J. and Bouffard, L.A. (2009) *'Deterrence in the Real World: Certainty, Severity and Swiftness in a DUI Court Context'* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the ASC Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA.

³¹ McQueen, S. (forthcoming) Evaluation of the Dumfries and Galloway Council's youth justice 'diversion from prosecution' model.

³² Petersilia, J. and Turner, S. (1993) Intensive probation and parole in M. Tonry (ed.) *Crime and Justice: A Review of Research*, 17, 281-335. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

and family ties, and disruption to employment that increase the likelihood of reoffending upon release³³.

Deterrence-based interventions such as “Scared Straight” do not reduce reoffending. Deterrence-based programmes such as “Scared Straight” or boot camps are ineffective in reducing reoffending or, in the worst of cases, can even lead to increases in offending³⁴.

Early release schemes

Offenders released on electronic tagging are no more likely to engage in criminal behaviour when released from prison compared to those who are not eligible for early release. There is clear evidence from both Scotland and England that only a small proportion of offenders released on Home Detention Curfew (HDC) reoffend whilst on curfew. In England, 4.6% of offenders reoffended whilst on HDC in 2008/09³⁵. An evaluation of Home Detention Curfew by the Ministry of Justice found that offenders who receive Home Detention Curfew (HDC) under the current provision, are no more likely to engage in criminal behaviour when released from prison, when compared to offenders with similar characteristics, who are not eligible for HDC³⁶. Electronic tagging was also recently evaluated in Sweden using a quasi-experimental design. The evaluation found that offenders who participated in an early release programme that included electronic monitoring in the home, a job placement and a treatment programme were less likely to be reconvicted in the 3-year period following completion of their prison sentence compared to the control group³⁷. However, it was not possible to ascertain to what extent this positive effect on reoffending was a result of the electronic monitoring in the home or of the other elements included in the programme.

The majority of offenders released on parole successfully complete their licence period but evidence on the longer-term impact of parole on reoffending is lacking.. A Scottish study of release outcomes of prisoners sentenced to 4 years or more on or after 1 October 1993 and whose full sentence expired on or before 31 March 2001 found that 79% of those released on parole successfully completed their full licence period, and among

³³ Armstrong, S. (2009) ‘Fixing the Remand Problem in Scotland, in D. Hare and C. Lightowler (eds.) *Prisons and Sentencing Reform: Developing Policy in Scotland*, Scottish Policy Innovation Forum and Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research.

³⁴ Petrosino, A., Turpin-Petrosino, C. and Buehler, J. (2004) ‘*Scared Straight and Other Juvenile Awareness Programmes for Preventing Juvenile Delinquents*’ A Campbell Collaboration Systematic Review 2004:2; Wilson, D.B., MacKenzie, D.L., Mitchell, F.N. (2003) ‘*Effects of Correctional Boot Camps on Offending*’ A Campbell Collaboration Systematic Review 2003:1

³⁵ Ministry of Justice (2010), *ibid*

³⁶ Marie, O., Moreton, K. and Goncalver, M. (2011) *The effect of early release of prisoners on Home Detention Curfew (HDC) on recidivism*. Ministry of Justice.
<http://www.cjp.org.uk/EasySiteWeb/getresource.axd?AssetID=4962&type=full&servicetype=Attachment>

³⁷ Marklund, F. and Holmberg, S. (2009) Effects of early release from prison using electronic tagging in Sweden, *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, vol. 5: 41-61.

those, 82% did not attract any convictions while they were on licence³⁸. In the time available, we were not, however, able to find any studies that assessed how successful parole is in reducing recidivism in the period after completion of the licence period.

Diversion

In this section the term “diversion” refers to alternatives to court disposals including diversion to social work, direct measures and other forms of youth diversion.

Diverting young people away from the criminal justice system can be effective in reducing their reoffending. Findings from the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime indicate that the deeper a youth is carried into the formal processing system, the less likely he/ she is to stop offending. The authors argue that the most significant factor in reducing offending is minimal formal intervention and maximum diversion to programming that does not have the trappings of criminal processing³⁹.

A recent systematic review of 29 experiments found that young people with a prior criminal record who were diverted from the criminal justice system to social work were less likely to reoffend compared to those who went to court. Diversion to social work produced bigger reductions in reoffending compared to simple release that was not combined with some form of intervention⁴⁰. Positive effects on reoffending have also been reported in the process evaluation of the Triage initiative which is currently being piloted in England and Wales⁴¹. Triage diverts young people who have offended for the first time under police custody to support services provided by a youth worker and, where appropriate, restorative justice informed interventions.

Throughout the literature, there is the recurring concept that both ‘needs’ as well as ‘deeds’ are important to understanding youth offending and desistance from it. As Fraser at al. highlight, findings from the Edinburgh Study indicate a strong relationship between involvement in violent offending and a range of vulnerabilities, including self-harm. The literature argues that there are strong and consistent links between needs and deeds within the youth justice context; links which provide strong support for the Kilbrandon ethos underpinning the Children's Hearings System⁴². Up to age 17 years and 6 months Sheriff's can request the advice and disposal of a case at the Children's Hearing System. It is argued

³⁸ Hutton, L. and Levy, L. (2002) *Parole Board Decisions and Release Outcomes*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2002/05/14735/4417>

³⁹ McAra, L. and McVie, S. (2007) ‘Youth Justice?: The Impact of System Contact on Patterns of Desistance From Offending in *European Journal of Criminology*, 4(3), 315-345.

⁴⁰ Petrosino, A., Turpin-Petrosino, C. and Guckenberg, S. (2010) ‘*Formal System Processing of Juveniles: Effects on Delinquency*’ Campbell Systematic Review 2010:1 <http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/lib/download/761/>

⁴¹ Ministry of Justice (2010) ‘*Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders*’ Green Paper Evidence Report available at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/docs/green-paper-evidence-a.pdf>

⁴² Fraser, A; Burman, M; Batchelor, S; McVie, S; (2010) Youth Violence in Scotland: Literature Review, The Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research

that increasing the number of under 18s diverted to this childcare system, where their offence and criminogenic needs can be addressed together, reduces the risk of them reoffending and entering into the adult system.

There is less evidence on the effectiveness of diversion in reducing reoffending among adult offenders though some UK studies are currently underway. To the best of our knowledge, there is no systematic review of the effectiveness of diversion among adult offenders. There is some international evidence that diversion to drug or mental health treatment can reduce reoffending among offenders that experience such problems⁴³. In Scotland, an evaluation of diversion to social work schemes found that the majority of accused had completed their period on diversion successfully and the majority of the objectives set were recorded as having been fully or mostly achieved by the time diversion ended. For the 111 accused for whom information about further charges was available, ten (out of 46) on social work diversion programmes and 17 (out of 65) from mediation and reparation schemes had further charges or convictions recorded against them (57% of those referred)⁴⁴. In England and Wales, positive results have been reported in the process evaluation of the Intensive Alternatives to Custody (IAC) diversion programme that offers an intensive community order as an alternative to short-term custody. The programme is getting favourable feedback from offenders, however outcome information on reoffending is lacking to date⁴⁵. Diversion has also been traditionally used with female offenders. In England and Wales, women can be diverted to community-based centres that aim to provide support to tackle underlying causes of offending. The outcome evaluation of these centres is currently underway but initial feedback from service users has been positive⁴⁶.

Rehabilitation, community supervision and throughcare

This section examines evidence on the effect of rehabilitative programmes and supervision on reoffending.

Holistic interventions that address multiple criminogenic needs are more likely to be effective in reducing reoffending. The evidence suggests that offenders often experience multiple problems, many of which are considered “criminogenic” in the sense that they contribute directly towards offending. It has, therefore, been argued that multi-modal, holistic

⁴³ National Institute of Drug Abuse (2003) *Crossing the Bridge: An Evaluation of the Drug Treatment Alternative-to-Prison (DTAP) Programme*, <http://www.casacolumbia.org/download.aspx?path=/UploadedFiles/sy3s3hdz.pdf>

⁴⁴ Barry, M. and McIvor, G. (2000) *Diversion from Prosecution to Social Work and Other Service Agencies: Evaluation of the 100 per cent funding pilot programmes*, Edinburgh: The Stationery Office.

⁴⁵ Ministry of Justice (2010) *Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders* Green Paper Evidence Report available at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/docs/green-paper-evidence-a.pdf>

⁴⁶ Ministry of Justice (2010), *ibid*

interventions, which address a range of problems, are more likely to be effective in reducing reoffending⁴⁷. Scotland's Choice (2008) reported that:

- prisoners are 13 times more likely to have been in care as a child;
- 63% of young people have substance misuse issues on admission to prison;
- of all prisoners 80% have writing, 65% have numeracy; and 50% have reading skills of an 11 year old
- 25% of these young people have clinically significant communication impairment.

Data from 10,000 assessments of offenders' needs in England and Wales using the Offender Assessment System (OASys) show that over half of offenders had needs related to education, employment and thinking styles. Additionally, just over half of offenders in custody were assessed as having a need related to their lifestyle and associates. Drug problems were more common among offenders in custody (39% of those assessed) than in the community (27% of those assessed). Overall, offenders in custody were found to have a greater number of needs. Among adult reception prisoners that took part in the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) study conducted in England and Wales, 68% reported that having a job would help them desist from offending, followed by having a place to live (60%)⁴⁸.

These findings are congruent with desistance studies in which offenders report they value practical support more than any type of intervention⁴⁹ even though they are not necessarily accustomed to actively seeking help from outside agencies to solve their problems⁵⁰. This suggests offender managers might need to adopt a more proactive approach to solving offenders' practical needs while, at the same time, trying to enhance their problem-solving skills and empower them to search out suitable help when needed.

A holistic approach to addressing offenders' needs further means that ongoing support should be available as required. For example, there is strong evidence that provision of practical support in prison is unlikely to have a lasting impact on the risk of reoffending unless it continues upon release⁵¹. Aftercare should, therefore, form part of a comprehensive intervention package. It is also important that the services provided are appropriately sequenced: for example, employment, while critical in the longer term, is often not a realistic short-term goal until other issues and needs have been addressed.

Although the prevalence of victimisation, poverty, low self-esteem and low self-efficacy is higher in women offenders than males, analysis of data using the Level of Service/Case

⁴⁷ Ministry of Justice (2010) '*Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders*' Green Paper Evidence Report available at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/docs/green-paper-evidence-a.pdf>

⁴⁸ Ministry of Justice (2010), *ibid*

⁴⁹ Maruna, S. (2010) *Understanding Desistance from Crime*, NOMS: Ministry of Justice.

⁵⁰ Shapland, J., Bottoms, A., Farrall, S., McNeill, F., Priede, C. and Robinson, G. (2011) *The Quality of Probation Supervision – A Literature Review*, Unpublished research report.

⁵¹ Harper, G. and Chitty, C. (2005) *The Impact of Corrections on Reoffending: A Review of What Works*, Home Office Research Study 291, London: Home Office.

Management Inventory (LS/CMI) has also found that gender-neutral needs (housing, employment and education) are better predictors of reoffending in women than gender specific factors (parenting responsibility and stress, victimisation history, and self-harm)⁵². Taking the findings of several studies overall, findings showed no gender differences in the predictors of recidivism suggesting that the factors likely behave in a gender-neutral manner. Several authors have concluded that perhaps gender-specific concerns may be best viewed as specific responsivity factors in the delivery of mainstream interventions than as criminogenic needs.

Results from several studies conclude that while victimisation experiences possibly play a role in the onset of criminal offending, they are not associated with recidivism⁵³. A study in the US found that even women offenders who have experienced victimisation said they found services that offered 'long term tangible support' as more 'helpful' than therapeutic or support services – the most helpful service being welfare benefits⁵⁴. These accounts from women suggest that the sequencing of interventions in holistic approaches is important. Longer term and more complex needs such as dealing with stress and mental health might be better dealt with after basic, practical needs are addressed first.

Young people who offend require holistic interventions. The international research literature shows that the throughcare strategies with the most favourable results in relation to reoffending rates are 'holistic'; that is, focused on the whole range of an individuals' needs and integrated with support in the prison and in the community. This support is necessary not only in the early weeks of readjustment on release but also in the long term.⁵⁵ Indispensable processes for successful 'habilitation' or 'integration' include teaching basic skills, helping young people to develop the capacity to cope with their 'survival' needs in the outside world and establishing meaningful links whilst in prison with a range of community services that can offer continuing support⁵⁶.

Fraser et al. point to similar evidence based on systematic reviews of programmes and interventions in the US. In terms of the reintegration of young people who had offended, early intervention with those starting to offend and reducing reoffending through community programmes the following types of programmes had success or were found to be 'promising':

Preventing offending:

Education and health home visits and programmes for pre-school intervention;
capacity building in schools; awareness raising campaigns in schools with clear

⁵² Blanchette, K. and SL, Brown (2006) *The Assessment and Treatment of Female Offenders*. John Wiley & Sons.

⁵³ Blanchette and Brown (2006), *ibid*

⁵⁴ Severson, M. E. (2001). Women's mental health issues: Twentieth-century realities; Twenty-first century challenges. In K. J. Peterson & A. A. Lieberman (Eds.), *Building on Women's Strengths: A Social Work Agenda for the Twenty-First Century* (2nd ed., pp. 95-118). New York: Haworth Press.

⁵⁵ Peters, R.H. and Steinberg, M.L., 2000, 'Substance Abuse Treatment in US Prisons', in D. Shewan and J.

⁵⁶ Tombs, 1994, *Throughcare: A Process of Change*; CJSWDC Briefing

messages and pro-social norms; training in 'social competency' e.g. managing stress, self-control, problem solving, emotional intelligence.

Reducing re-offending:

The use of civil and criminal responses as situational management to reduce reoffending (e.g. responding quickly to breaches); specific rehabilitation programmes for juvenile (and adult) re-offenders 'using treatment appropriate to their risk factors'; intensive supervision and aftercare for more serious offenders; proactive arrests for carrying weapons.

'Promising' Strategies:

Proactive police strategies focusing on specific offences delivered in a respectful manner e.g. polite field interrogation of suspicious people; community based mentoring; after-school pro-social activities; residential employment focussed interventions for youths; thinking skills intervention for high risk youth; situational risk management e.g. metal detectors in schools; 'gang' monitoring by community workers, probation and police.

The following strategies were found **not** to work:

Short term non residential employment interventions, summer work programmes, diversion from court to job training for young people, arrest for minor offences, increased arrests on drug dealing locations, 'boot' camps or 'scared straight' programmes (taking young people who offend to adult prisons), 'shock' probation, parole or sentencing, home detention and electronic monitoring vague unstructured rehabilitation programmes⁵⁷.

A systematic review undertaken in 1998 of over 200 experimental or quasi-experimental studies of interventions with young people who offend (mainly males aged between 10 and 21 years) found that three intervention types showed the strongest and most consistent evidence of reducing re-offending. These were interpersonal skills training, individual structured counselling and behavioural programmes. The review found that these interventions reduced re-offending by about 40 percent.⁵⁸

Multi-systemic therapy which combines intensive family therapy and work with schools and communities has been found to be another example of a holistic intervention that has been found to work with chronic and violent juvenile offenders⁵⁹.

Interventions are more effective when they are based on a sound assessment of risk, need and responsivity. There is a strong research literature that speaks to the centrality of risk, needs and responsivity (RNR) assessment to effective interventions and improved

⁵⁷ Fraser, A; Burman, M; Batchelor, S; McVie, S; (2010) Youth Violence in Scotland: Literature Review, The Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research

⁵⁸ Fraser, A; Burman, M; Batchelor, S; McVie, S; (2010) Youth Violence in Scotland: Literature Review, The Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research

⁵⁹ McGuire, J. (2002) 'Integrating Findings from Research Reviews' in J. McGuire (ed.) *Offender Rehabilitation and Treatment: Effective Programmes and Policies to Reduce Reoffending*, West Sussex: Wiley.

outcomes in reduced reoffending⁶⁰. Recent Scottish developments such as the introduction of the LS/CMI and the development of a shared approach to risk practice are based on this evidence. In addition, the Multi Agency Protection Arrangements in Scotland and England provide an opportunity to test the impact of the collaborative approach to risk practice. More recently, there has been an interest in incorporating strengths and protective factors in assessment and instruments that support the structured assessment of risk with attention to protective factors are emerging⁶¹. The development, application and rigorous testing of such instruments will allow for greater understanding of the relative contribution of strengths and protective factors to risk assessment.

Great care must be taken in applying a risk assessment approach to young people who offend. Fraser *et al.* highlight that over the past 15 or so years, the risk factors and assessment approach to devising preventative strategies has become a dominant discourse in youth justice and that something of a consensus has been built around the precipitating factors of family conflict, truancy, drug use, lack of/ irresponsible parenting, low intelligence, delinquent peers and community organisation⁶². One of the dangers of looking at risk factors for offending is the potential to pre-emptively stigmatise young people based on assumptions about what they might do in the future, not what they have done, and may lead to “net-widening” of services. In addition, whilst many risk factors have been identified, less is known about how to robustly establish which risk factors are causes and which are merely correlations.

Interventions that are appropriately matched to the offenders’ level of motivation are more likely to be effective in reducing reoffending. It is a consistent finding in the desistance literature that only those offenders who are sufficiently motivated to change and are optimistic about the future will manage to desist from offending. Therefore, interventions are more likely to be successful if they target motivational factors and provide a sense of hope⁶³. Research suggests that only a minority of offenders are prepared for change at the start of an intervention⁶⁴, therefore, in most cases, some motivational work would be required to increase participation and retention in services. Motivation should, therefore, be seen not simply as a selection criterion but a treatment need. Especially for those at the start of the journey towards desistance providing a sense of hope for the future can help promote and sustain their motivation to change. Offenders who are contemplating change need to believe that an alternative future is possible and, therefore, it is worth changing to

⁶⁰ Andrews, D.A. and Bonta, J (2010) *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct* (5th ed.), Newark, NJ: Lexis/Nexis.

⁶¹ Serin, R.C., Lloyd, C.D. and Hanby, L.J. (2010) Enhancing Offender Re-entry: An Integrated Model for Enhancing Offender Re-entry, *European Journal of Probation*, 2(2), 53-75.

⁶² Fraser, A; Burman, M; Batchelor, S; McVie, S; (2010) Youth Violence in Scotland: Literature Review, The Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research

⁶³ Caverley, A. And Farrall, S. (2011) *The Sensual Dynamics of Processes of Personal Reform: Desistance from Crime and the Role of Emotions* in S. Karstedt, I. Loader & H. Strang (eds) *Emotions, Crime and Justice*. Oxford: Hart Publishing.

⁶⁴ McMurrin, M. (2002) *Motivating Offenders to Change: A Guide to Enhancing Engagement in Therapy*, Willey-Blackwell.

accomplish future goals⁶⁵. Strategies to increase motivation to change include setting realistic goals appropriately matched to the offenders' stage of readiness to change, reinforcing positive behaviours on a one-to-one basis and within a group and building helping relationships (e.g. buddy systems, self-help groups). It is also important that professionals help offenders recognise the positive changes that desistance from offending can bring to themselves and their environment. Offenders will be motivated to change only when the pros of changing outweigh the cons and change is more likely to be sustained if it is chosen freely rather than imposed⁶⁶. There is some evidence that motivational interviewing can help offenders recognise their problems as well as initiate and sustain motivation to change throughout treatment⁶⁷. Additionally, focusing on offenders' personal strengths rather than over-emphasising risks is advocated in the literature as an effective way to increase motivation⁶⁸. This strengths-based approach to treatment forms the basis of the Good Lives Model which has been used with some success with sex offenders⁶⁹.

A respectful, participatory and flexible relationship with a supervisor can trigger the motivation to change and promote desistance. Supervision should place adequate emphasis on helping offenders overcome practical obstacles to desistance such as unemployment and drug misuse. For both male and female offenders, qualitative research suggests that a good working relationship between the offender and his or her supervisor can act as a catalyst for change, especially when the offender has already taken the decision to give up crime, but it is unlikely to produce big reductions in reoffending on its own right⁷⁰. In England and Wales, Rex found that for some probationers simply being on probation served as a deterrent whereas for others getting help on to how to solve practical problems was more important⁷¹. Other research from Scotland and England confirms that offenders particularly value getting help from their supervisor on practical problems such as unemployment and lack of accommodation⁷². Another English study that followed-up a larger sample of 199 male and female probationers concluded that an individual's level of motivation to change and his or her social circumstances largely determined whether they

⁶⁵ Caverley, A. and Farrall, S. (2011), *ibid*

⁶⁶ McMurrin, M. (2002) *Motivating Offenders to Change: A Guide to Enhancing Engagement in Therapy*, Willey-Blackwell.

⁶⁷ McMurrin, M. (2002), *ibid*

⁶⁸ Maruna, S. (2010) *Understanding Desistance from Crime*, NOMS: Ministry of Justice.

⁶⁹ Ward, T., & Stewart, C. A. (2003). The treatment of sex offenders: Risk management and good lives. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 34, 353–360.

⁷⁰ Healy, D. (2010) '*The Dynamics of Desistance: Charting Pathways through Change*' Cullompton: Willan.; Leibrich, J. (1993) *Straight to the Point: Angles of Giving Up Crime*, Otago: New Zealand: University of Otago Press.

⁷¹ Rex, S. (1999) Desistance from Offending: Experiences of Probation, *The Howard Journal*, 38(4), 366-383.

⁷² Shapland, J., Bottoms, A., Farrall, S., McNeill, F., Priede, C. and Robinson, G. (2011) *The Quality of Probation Supervision – A Literature Review*, Unpublished research report.; McIvor, G. & Barry, M. (1998) *Social Work and Criminal Justice: Volume 6 - Probation*, Edinburgh, The Stationery Office .

would succeed in desisting from crime with probation exerting a smaller influence⁷³. However, when probationers were interviewed 4 years later they were more inclined to see the value of what they had taken from probation⁷⁴.

Overall, studies report more benefits in cases where the supervisor respects and fosters the offender's personal agency, focuses on strengths as well as criminogenic needs and risk and draws up an action plan in consultation with the offender⁷⁵. Keeping the same officer has also been associated with successful outcomes in probation⁷⁶. When interviewed about the quality of supervision, offenders often cite empathy, respect, flexibility, the ability to listen and professionalism as the defining characteristics of an effective working relationship with the supervisor that triggered change⁷⁷. The use of prosocial modelling (where the case manager acts as a positive role model and encourages prosocial actions) has also been associated with higher rates of compliance and lower rates of reoffending⁷⁸. Overall, research suggests that desistance is more likely to be achieved when a "working alliance" with the supervisor is developed⁷⁹. These findings point to the need to invest in interpersonal skills training for offender managers.

Finally, other important features of supervision include dealing with relapse (e.g. breach, reoffending) in a proportionate and fair manner, rewarding progress towards change and involving users in the design of interventions. Some studies have found that public recognition of offenders' progress towards desistance can help them develop a new, non-criminal identity and lead to improved self-esteem⁸⁰. This discovering of a new self is closely

⁷³ Farrall, S. (2002) *Rethinking What Works with Offenders*, Cullompton: Willan Publishing.

⁷⁴ Farrall, S. and Calverley, A. (2006) *Understanding Desistance from Crime*, Crime and Justice Series, London: Open University Press.

⁷⁵ McNeil, F. and Whyte, B. (2007) *Reducing Reoffending: Social Work and Community Justice in Scotland* Willan Publishing.

⁷⁶ Folkard, S., Lyon, K., Carver, M.M. and O'Leary, E. (1966) *Probation Research: A Preliminary Report*, Home Office Research Unit Report No. 7, London: HMSO.

⁷⁷ Mclvor, G. & Barry, M. (1998) *Social Work and Criminal Justice: Volume 6 - Probation*, Edinburgh, The Stationery Office; Mclvor, G. and Barry, M. (2000) *Social Work and Criminal Justice: Volume 8 - The Longer-term Effectiveness of Supervision*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive Central Research Unit.; Malloch, M. and Mclvor, G. (2011) 'Women and community sentences', *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 11(4), 325-344.

⁷⁸ Ministry of Justice (2010) '*Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders*' Green Paper Evidence Report available at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/docs/green-paper-evidence-a.pdf>

⁷⁹ Healy, D. (2010) '*The Dynamics of Desistance: Charting Pathways through Change*' Cullompton: Willan.

⁸⁰ Caverley, A. And Farrall, S. (2011) *The Sensual Dynamics of Processes of Personal Reform: Desistance from Crime and the Role of Emotions* in S. Karstedt, I. Loader & H. Strang (eds) *Emotions, Crime and Justice*. Oxford: Hart Publishing.

associated to sustained abstinence from offending⁸¹. As a consequence, researchers have recommended that the criminal justice system should find ways to formally mark and reward desistance markers such as for example the successful completion of a prison or community sentence⁸². Caverley and Farrall⁸³ report examples of offenders who felt particularly good about themselves when invited by local drug agencies to give a talk about their experiences of coming off drugs. Such opportunities provide ex-offenders with a sense of reward and achievement and remind them of the benefits of staying away from crime⁸⁴. Other ways to reward desistance might include sealing of criminal justice records earlier in the offenders' criminal career than usual, restoration of civil rights, awarding certificates or pardons and using a system of graduated rewards and sanctions to reward compliance and support motivation as implemented in the context of problem-solving courts⁸⁵.

It is also important to help offenders develop a sense of personal agency and higher levels of self-efficacy that will empower them to change. When asked about effective supervision, offenders often say they value being listened to and recognised as individuals⁸⁶. For these reasons, it has been argued that service users should be involved in co-designing the interventions that are meant to support them in desisting from crime⁸⁷. This suggestion is backed up by some evidence from evaluations of mentoring services that show mentoring is more likely to work when its goals are defined in agreement with the service user⁸⁸ and when the amount of contact is proportionate to the offenders' level of needs⁸⁹. However, more research is required to understand what might be the most effective ways of involving service users in the design of interventions and how effective such approaches would be in reducing reoffending.

Cognitive-behavioural programmes can lead to modest reductions in reoffending especially when they are rigorously implemented and combined with support in

⁸¹ Healy, D. (2010), *ibid*

⁸² Maruna, S. (2010) *Understanding Desistance from Crime*, NOMS: Ministry of Justice.

⁸³ Caverley, A. And Farrall, S. (2011), *ibid*

⁸⁴ Caverley, A. And Farrall, S. (2011), *ibid*

⁸⁵ Maruna, S. and Lebel, T.P. (2010) *The Desistance Paradigm in Correctional Practice: From Programmes to Lives in F. McNeill, P. Raynor and C. Trotter* *Offender Supervision: New Directions in Theory, Research and Practice*, Oxon: Willan Publishing.

⁸⁶ Shapland, J., Bottoms, A., Farrall, S., McNeill, F., Priede, C. and Robinson, G. (2011) *The Quality of Probation Supervision – A Literature Review*, Unpublished research report.

⁸⁷ McNeil, F. and Weaver, B. (2010) *Changing Lives: Desistance Research and Offender Management*, <http://www.sccjr.ac.uk/pubs/Changing-Lives-Desistance-Research-and-Offender-Management/255>

⁸⁸ Finnegan, L., Whitehurst, D. and Deaton, S. (2010) *Models of mentoring for inclusion and employment*. London: Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion.

⁸⁹ Maguire, M., Holloway, K., Liddle, M., Gordon, F., Gray, P., Smith, A. and Wright, S. (2010) *Evaluation of the Transitional Support Scheme. Final Report to Welsh Assembly Government*. <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/research/101109tssfinreporten.pdf>

solving practical problems. Antisocial attitudes are among the strongest predictors of reoffending⁹⁰. There is good evidence from experiments conducted in the United States that cognitive-behavioural programmes that aim to change offenders' thinking styles and attitudes can result in modest reductions in reoffending when rigorously implemented⁹¹. Evidence from the UK is more mixed, with some studies reporting modest reductions in reconviction rates and frequency of reoffending among programme participants (e.g. the evaluation of the Enhanced Thinking Skills programme) and others no significant effects⁹². However, differences in results of American and UK studies may reflect variations in the quality and rigour of programme implementation rather than genuine differences in effectiveness. Programmes may work better in the U.S. simply because they are implemented better, though differences in the characteristics of programme participants may also account for some of the variation in outcomes. In fact, process evaluations of cognitive-behavioural programmes delivered in England and Wales have reported a range of problems and shortfalls in implementation including high attrition rates, long waiting lists, lack of booster work prior to release and ineffective targeting⁹³. In Scotland, no outcome evaluations of accredited programmes have been conducted as yet but process evaluations have highlighted similar problems to those in England⁹⁴. A recent UK review of the quality of offender supervision highlighted that accredited programmes cannot operate effectively in isolation, without addressing the broader context in which offending takes place and the multiplicity of offenders' needs⁹⁵.

Significantly fewer women than men are assessed as having considerable attitude problems requiring intervention. Although prevalence rates are low, there is preliminary evidence to suggest that the evaluation of anti-social attitudes is an important part for assessment of risk for women⁹⁶. Results of prediction studies on US samples do show statistically significant relationships between particular anti-social attitudes and recidivism in female offenders⁹⁷. In

⁹⁰ Healy, D. (2010) *The Dynamics of Desistance: Charting Pathways through Change* Cullompton: Willan.

⁹¹ Lipsey, M.W. and Cullen, F.T. (2007) The Effectiveness of Correctional Rehabilitation: A Review of Systematic Reviews, *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 3, 297-320.

⁹² Harper, G. and Chitty, C. (2005) *The Impact of Corrections on Reoffending: A Review of What Works*, Home Office Research Study 291, London: Home Office.

⁹³ Harper, G. and Chitty, C. (2005), *ibid*

⁹⁴ Schinkel, M. and Whyte, B. (2009) *Formative Evaluation of the Constructs PSSO Groupwork Programme*, Edinburgh: Criminal Justice Social Work Development Centre; Hutton, L. (2009) *Implementation of the Community Sex Offender Groupwork Programme in Scotland: Process Evaluation*, Edinburgh: Criminal Justice Social Work Development Centre.

⁹⁵ Shapland, J., Bottoms, A., Farrall, S., McNeill, F., Priede, C. and Robinson, G. (2011) *The Quality of Probation Supervision – A Literature Review*, Unpublished research report.

⁹⁶ Boe, R., Nafekh, M, Vuong, B, Sinclair, R. & Cousineau, C (2003) *The changing profile of the federal inmate population: 1997 and 2002* (research report R-132) Ottawa: Correctional Service Canada.

⁹⁷ Andrews, D. A., & Bonta, J. (2003). *The psychology of criminal conduct* (3rd ed.). Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Publishing.

addressing anti-social attitudes, there is disagreement in the literature as to whether cognitive-behavioural approaches are as effective for women as they are for men. Some feminist theorists criticise CBT for not adopting a holistic approach. Other criticisms include that CBT programmes ignore contextual factors such as partner family and friends, ignore the 'woman's voice' in relying on quantitative data, do not focus on strengths and do not recognise women's pathway into crime⁹⁸. These criticisms are essentially theory-driven and there is little robust evidence on how effective cognitive-behavioural programmes are on women's offending behaviour.

There is, however, general agreement that positive outcomes for women may be enhanced if responsivity factors (such as rewarding strengths including pro-social thinking and ensuring empathic staff attitudes) are incorporated into CBT programmes. One study found that empathic probation officers who actively challenge criminal sentiments while simultaneously rewarding prosocial thinking can reduce recidivism by almost 80%⁹⁹. While some US evaluations have found positive results for women, in the UK, there is a paucity of reliable evidence on effectiveness of CBT programmes for women. One of the only UK evaluations to consider the impact of CBT on female prisoners was undertaken in 2006 but found no significant differences in the one- and two-year reconviction rates for male or female participants on the Enhanced Thinking Skills Programme¹⁰⁰. The ETS's replacement, the Thinking Skills Programme was introduced in 2009 and designed with the specific purpose of incorporating more gender-specific elements into cognitive skills programmes. Through interviews with women on the programme it identifies areas for improvement such as the use of mixed gender groups and relating the programme more explicitly to relationships outside prison. It has recently delivered some 'successful pilots for female specific delivery'. However, this review could not find the details of pilot results.

The time available for this review has not allowed an exploration of the relationship between cognitive- behavioural programmes targeted at young people who offend and the impact that these have on offending behaviour. It is suggested that this could be undertaken as a future, supplementary piece of work.

Limited work appears to have been undertaken on the value for money of cognitive-behavioural programmes. Matrix Knowledge Group¹⁰¹ found some evidence that prison with behavioural treatment represents value for money compared to 'standard' prison.

Interventions that help offenders develop prosocial social networks have significantly higher chances of success in reducing reoffending. Desistance studies have found that

98 Kendall, K. (2002) 'Time to Think Again about Cognitive-Behavioural Programmes', in P. Carlen (ed.) *Women and Punishment*, pp. 182–198. Cullompton, Devon: Willan.

99 Andrews, D.A. (2001). Principles of effective correctional programs. In L.L. Motiuk & R.C. Serin (Eds.). *Compendium 2000 on Effective Correctional Programming*, Volume 1. Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada, Ministry of Supply and Services.

100 Cann, J. (2006) *Cognitive skills programmes: impact on reducing reconviction among a sample of female prisoners*, Home Office Research Study 276. London: Home Office.

¹⁰¹ Matrix Knowledge Group (2007) *The Economic Case For and Against Prison, Technical Appendix* <http://www.matrixknowledge.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/economic-case-for-and-against-prison.pdf>

rebuilding ties with family, friends and the wider community and developing new prosocial relationships through work or marriage are important aspects of desisting from crime¹⁰². Furthermore, research suggests that offenders who feel a welcomed part of society are less likely to reoffend compared to those who feel stigmatised¹⁰³. It is therefore important that criminal justice professionals work not only with offenders but also with their family, friends and the wider community (e.g. employers, community groups, the voluntary sector) to ensure prosocial and positive relationships can be developed and sustained¹⁰⁴. This is particularly true for offenders who have spent long period of time in prison and may not have access to an active network of contacts. Interviews with women offenders raise the importance of successful reintegration and indicate that rehabilitation will depend on the active support provided by family and close friends. Positive support is likely to have a significant impact on their desistance from crime after release from custody¹⁰⁵.

Family-based interventions encompass programmes that focus on improving parenting skills and relationships within the family. Parenting interventions have, traditionally, been used to prevent the onset and continuation of offending among juvenile offenders as there is evidence that poor parenting skills are associated with an increased risk of offending among young people¹⁰⁶. Systematic reviews of parenting programmes have consistently found small but statistically significant effects on juvenile recidivism. The most effective programmes are reported to be multi-systemic therapy which involves work with the young person, his or her family and school staff, school-based child and parent training programmes, parent training plus day-care provision and home visiting¹⁰⁷. Positive results have also been reported for functional or behavioural family therapy, family empowerment and allied therapeutic approaches, especially when used with young people who have committed more serious offences¹⁰⁸.

However, despite these positive findings for some young people who offend, Fraser et al. caution that the research literature identifies that the family should not be the sole focus of any intervention work. Those young people with the highest level of need are often those

¹⁰² McNeil, F. and Weaver, B. (2010) *Changing Lives: Desistance Research and Offender Management*, <http://www.sccjr.ac.uk/pubs/Changing-Lives-Desistance-Research-and-Offender-Management/255>

¹⁰³ Maruna, S. (2010), *ibid*

¹⁰⁴ Shapland, J., Bottoms, A., Farrall, S., McNeill, F., Priede, C. and Robinson, G. (2011) *The Quality of Probation Supervision – A Literature Review*, Unpublished research report.

¹⁰⁵ Deakin, J. and Spencer, J. (2011) 'Who Cares?': Fostering networks and relationships in prison and beyond' in R. Sheehan, G. McIvor and C. Trotter (eds.) *Working with Women Offenders in the Community*, Cullompton: Willan Publishing.

¹⁰⁶ Harper, G. and Chitty, C. (2005), *ibid*

¹⁰⁷ Petrosino, A., Derzon, J. and Lavenberg, J. (2009) The Role of the Family in Crime and Delinquency, *Southwest Journal of Criminal Justice*, 6(2), 108-132.

¹⁰⁸ McGuire, J. (2002) 'Integrating Findings from Research Reviews' in J. McGuire (ed.) *Offender Rehabilitation and Treatment: Effective Programmes and Policies to Reduce Reoffending*, West Sussex: Wiley.

who are no longer part of any family unit and who, for various reasons, may not have any contact with parents. Furthermore, for those young people who remain with their families, it has been highlighted that there is a need to look beyond the family to the wider community context that influences and impacts on parents' ability to parent effectively. They highlight that there are a number of different programmes of support and intervention, appropriate to a range of need and age and stage of child/young person development, that have been demonstrated to have some degree of success in addressing risk factors within families¹⁰⁹. MacQueen et al. also caution that evidence around 'what works' in a Scottish or UK context is limited and much of the evaluative research had been based on American populations¹¹⁰.

Despite the success of family-based interventions with young people, their use with adults has not been evaluated. This is despite strong evidence that one of the most significant triggers of change and sustained abstinence from offending is the formation and strengthening of family relationships. For example, Healy in her comparative study of desisters and non-desisters in Ireland found that the desire to live up to family responsibilities and expectations was one of the biggest triggers of the decision to abstain from offending¹¹¹.

Family-based interventions might be particularly beneficial for women offenders as reviews suggest interpersonal needs related to the family is one of the strongest predictors of positive outcomes among this group. Some research provides an insight into what type of family interventions would be most effective with women offenders. Dowden and Andrews's meta-analysis of several family-based interventions¹¹² found that programmes treating family processes yielded strongest reductions in reoffending for samples of women. This finding has been confirmed by more recent studies that found that programmes targeting family relationships for female offenders yielded the greatest treatment effects. The meta-analysis also identified effective targets for family intervention (i.e. 'needs') in terms of which aspects of family interventions yielded the best results in terms of reduced re-offending, and which targets did not seem promising. The strongest positive association with reduced re-offending came from intervention programmes which focused on interpersonal criminogenic needs (family processes and anti-social associates), followed by those which focused on personal criminogenic needs (anti-social cognition and self-control). 'Family process' needs were defined as those around 'attachment', 'affection' and 'supervision'. Family interventions had a statistically significant association with reduced re-offending when they were clearly focused on these three family-related areas of need. Less focused forms of family intervention, or family interventions which had different targets (not specified in the paper),

¹⁰⁹Fraser, A; Burman, M; Batchelor, S; McVie, S; (2010) Youth Violence in Scotland: Literature Review, The Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research

¹¹⁰ MacQueen, S., Curran, J., Hutton, L. and Whyte, B. (2008) *Support and Services for Parents: A Review of the Literature on Engaging and Supporting Parents*, Scottish Government: www.scotland.gov.uk

¹¹¹ Healy, D. (2010), *ibid*

¹¹² Dowden, C. and Andrews, D. A. (1999) 'What works for female offenders: a meta-analytic review', *Crime and Delinquency*, 45 (4) 438-452.

were statistically significantly associated with higher rates of re-offending (1999: 446-447). Other studies have found that for women positive friendships and bonding with their children are protective factors¹¹³. In contrast desistance in men is more closely linked with the break-up of a pro criminal peer group, and establishing a stable intimate relationship¹¹⁴. Moreover, research suggests that the protective effect of intimate relationships in male offenders is age related¹¹⁵.

Relationships with anti-social associates has been described as 'one of the most potent predictors of reoffending' and is therefore recommended as a priority treatment target¹¹⁶. Meta-analytic research has confirmed that this area is an effective treatment target as there is a strong positive association between correctional programming in the area of 'associates' and reduced reoffending for studies with predominantly or entirely female samples. Other studies have found that a composite of anti-social peers/attitudes comprised the greatest risk factor for young girls. In a qualitative study of offending and desistance conducted in Scotland women often attributed their initiation into problematic drug use to their relationship with partners who were involved in drug use and associated offending¹¹⁷. The initiation of women into drug use was also identified as a pathway to women's offending by professionals (such as police officers and social workers) who observed that women often committed offences (such as shoplifting) or became involved in prostitution to supply both themselves and their partners with drugs. However, in some cases the influence of male partners on women's offending (and substance misuse) was believed by workers to be more diffuse through experiences of physical and emotional abuse and financial control or exploitation¹¹⁸. In sum, while there is some disagreement between research findings, the greater and more robust evidence suggests that family relationships and associate issues present a valuable treatment target for girls and women.

Interventions that aim to increase offenders' sense of agency, self-efficacy and good problem-solving skills are more likely to be effective in reducing reoffending. Offenders are more likely to eventually desist from offending if they manage to acquire a sense of agency and control over their lives and a more positive outlook on their future prospects. Therefore, interventions that aim to enhance perceived levels of self-efficacy and

113 Bender, 2005; Uggen and Kruttschnitt, 1998 cited in *The Thinking Skills Programme Submission Document* February 2010. Ministry of Justice.

114 Farrall, S. and Caverley, A. (2006), *ibid*

115 Ouimet, M. & Le Blanc, M. (1996). The role of life experiences in the continuation of the adult criminal career. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*, 6, 73-97.

116 Andrews, D. A., & Bonta, J. (2003). *The psychology of criminal conduct* (3rd ed.). Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Publishing.

117 Jamieson, J., McIvor, G. and Murray, C. (1999) *Understanding Offending Among Young People*, Edinburgh: The Stationery Office.

118 Malloch, M and McIvor, G (2011) '*Women and Community Sentences*' Glasgow: SCCJR.

problem-solving skills are more likely to be successful in reducing reoffending. This was also found by McIvor et al (2009) specifically in relation to women¹¹⁹.

There is mixed evidence, mainly from the U.S., on the effectiveness of employment programmes in reducing reoffending. There is strong evidence that offenders with stable and quality employment are less likely to reoffend¹²⁰. However, there is mixed evidence, mainly from the U.S., on the effectiveness of interventions designed to improve employment prospects of offenders. The first published U.S. systematic review of educational, vocational and employment programmes for adult offenders in prison and community settings found lower reconviction rates for participants compared to non-participants¹²¹. A more recent U.S. systematic review of community-based employment programmes reached different conclusions, finding no significant difference in the likelihood of re-arrest between participants and non-participants. This has led researchers to conclude that stand-alone employment programmes are unlikely to be effective unless they are combined with motivational, social, health and educational support services to help address other criminogenic needs of offenders that may act as barriers to finding employment such as, for example, learning difficulties, mental illness and substance abuse¹²².

Evidence from the UK is weaker and tends to come from process evaluations of probation-led programmes. These evaluations have showed that the most successful elements of effective employment programmes are: strong local partnership; training related to local employment needs and opportunities; long-term funding and generous lead-in times¹²³. In addition, the outcome evaluation of the probation-led ASSET programme, that offered employment-related advice, training and work placements to offenders aged 16-25 years, found that participants were slower to reoffend and had a lower one-year reconviction rate (43%) compared to those who were referred but did not attend (56%). However, the authors acknowledged the limitations of their research design noting that their positive results might be attributed to selection effects, that is, that participants did better because they were more motivated to change. The ASSET programme was less successful in terms of improving employment outcomes, with only 13% of participants managing to secure employment over

¹¹⁹ McIvor, G., Trotter, C. and Sheehan, R. (2009) 'Women, resettlement and desistance', *Probation Journal*, 56, 4, 347-61.

¹²⁰ Healy, D. (2010) '*The Dynamics of Desistance: Charting Pathways through Change*' Cullompton: Willan.

¹²¹ Wilson, D.B., Gallagher, C.A. and MacKenzie, D.L. (2000) 'A Meta-analysis of Corrections-based Education, Vocation and Work Programs for Adult Offenders', *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 37(4), 347-368.

¹²² Visher, C.A., Winterfield, L. And Coggeshall, M.B. (2006) *Systematic Review of Non-custodial Employment Programs: Impact on Recidivism Rates of Ex-offenders*, Campbell Systematic Reviews.

¹²³ Sarno, C., Hearnden, I. and Hedderman, C. (2001) *Working their way out of offending: an evaluation of two probation employment schemes*, Home Office Research Study No. 218, London: Home Office.

the lifetime of the project¹²⁴. Many factors may have contributed to the limited success of the programme in securing employment including unwillingness on behalf of companies to employ ex-offenders and lack of sufficient motivation from offenders to follow-up job opportunities. To sustain motivation, offenders should be instructed to view the attainment of a good job as the end result of a gradual process rather than as a single event¹²⁵. Further work by the Department of Work and Pensions suggests that sharing of information between agencies can aid offenders' employment prospects¹²⁶. Finally, research suggests that the most successful programmes for getting prisoners back into employment are those which coordinate work before and after release from prison¹²⁷.

There is evidence that Black British offenders are the least resourced to find suitable employment compared to other ethnic minority groups such as Indians or Bangladeshis who are more likely to receive some support from family members¹²⁸. Therefore, interventions directed at improving employment prospects would be particularly beneficial for those of Black British origin.

For women, offending has also been shown to be associated with a lack of education, accommodation and employment, although the level of need appears to be lower among female than male offenders¹²⁹. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of information on the outcomes for women who engage in employment programmes. One of the few evaluated employment programmes for women offenders seems to suggest that approaches should offer long term, holistic approach and that the effectiveness of the programme is moderated by the motivation of the offender to obtain employment¹³⁰. A frequently cited employment programme run in Victoria, Australia commenced in prisons (6 months prior to release) and offered links to employment services local to where the women lived. The programme also confronted the challenges of finding work and offered life-skills preparation, placement in employment and skills in retaining employment. Lawrence et al¹³¹ found that participation in prison based treatment programmes and community based treatment programmes was

¹²⁴ Sarno, C., Hearnden, I. and Hedderman, C. (2001), *ibid*

¹²⁵ Shapland, J., Bottoms, A., Farrall, S., McNeill, F., Priede, C. and Robinson, G. (2011) *The Quality of Probation Supervision – A Literature Review*, Unpublished research report.

¹²⁶ Pleace, N. and Breatherton, J. (2006) *Sharing and matching local and national data on adults of working age facing multiple barriers to employment: administrative datasets for measuring impacts on disadvantage*. Sheffield: Department of Work and Pensions.

¹²⁷ Shapland, J., Bottoms, A., Farrall, S., McNeill, F., Priede, C. and Robinson, G. (2011), *ibid*

¹²⁸ Farrall, S., Bottoms, A. and Shapland, J. (2010) Social Structures and Desistance from Crime, *European Journal of Criminology*, 7(6), 546-570.

¹²⁹ Blanchette 2002; Home Office

¹³⁰ Lart, R Pantazis, C. Pemberton, S Turner, W and Almeida, C (2008) *Interventions aimed at reducing re-offending in female offenders: a rapid evidence assessment (REA)* Ministry of Justice Research Series 8/08 May 2008.

¹³¹ Lawrence., Mears., D.D., Dubin G & Travis J (2002) *The practice and promise of prison programming*. Washington DC: USA Urban Institute Justice Policy Centre.

positive; it led to lower recidivism rates for women who had previously been in custody – in June 2005 there was a 41% reduction in return to custody by women in Victoria. Within the first 2 years of the CSEPP pilot programme there was a 27% reduction in reoffending rate by women registered with the programme. Interviews with female ex-prisoners affirmed that a critical element to success in reducing reoffending was the individual readiness to change¹³². It should be noted that the evaluation did not use a non-treatment comparison group and that the women in the programme were motivated to find employment so it is not known if the programme would have been as successful with a less motivated group of women.

Stand-alone education programmes are unlikely to reduce reoffending. There is evidence to suggest that the association between lack of basic skills education and reoffending is indirect, meaning that poor educational skills can increase the risk of reoffending only to the extent they impact negatively on other criminogenic needs such as employment prospects¹³³. McGuire¹³⁴ in his review of offender rehabilitation programmes concluded that vocational training activities without associated links to tangible employment prospects are unlikely to lead to reductions in reoffending. Another UK review of prison-based educational programmes found mixed evidence of effectiveness, with greater benefits reported among high-risk offenders¹³⁵. Matrix Knowledge Group¹³⁶ found some evidence that a prison sentence combined with vocational or educational interventions represents value for money compared to 'standard' prison.

An analysis of two US studies found that overall there is some evidence to support the view that general education has some beneficial effects for female offenders and could be a fruitful area for further work¹³⁷. Conversely, there is some evidence that prison-based work and apprenticeship schemes are not of use and may even be detrimental¹³⁸. However, these conclusions are based on just two studies, both from the US, and findings are complicated by the lack of detail on the differences between groups.

¹³² Solomon A.L., Gouvis & Waul (2001) *Summary of focus groups with ex-prisoners in the district: ingredients for successful integration*. Washington DC: Urban Institute Justice Policy Centre.

¹³³ Harper, G. and Chitty, C. (2005) *The Impact of Corrections on Reoffending: A Review of What Works*, Home Office Research Study 291, London: Home Office.

¹³⁴ McGuire, J. (2002) 'Integrating Findings from Research Reviews' in J. McGuire (ed.) *Offender Rehabilitation and Treatment: Effective Programmes and Policies to Reduce Reoffending*, West Sussex: Wiley.

¹³⁵ Hollin, C. and Palmer, E.J. (1995) *Education and Work Programmes in Prisons: Effect on Recidivism. Report for the Planning Group HM Prison Service*, London: HM Prison Service.

¹³⁶ Matrix Knowledge Group (2007) *The Economic Case For and Against Prison, Technical Appendix* <http://www.matrixknowledge.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/economic-case-for-and-against-prison.pdf>

¹³⁷ Lart, R Pantazis, C. Pemberton, S Turner, W and Almeida, C (2008) *Interventions aimed at reducing re-offending in female offenders: a rapid evidence assessment (REA)* Ministry of Justice Research Series 8/08 May 2008.

¹³⁸ Saylor, W. G. and Gaes, G. G. (1996) 'Effect of Prison Employment and Vocational/Apprenticeship Training on Long-Term Recidivism', *Forum on Corrections Research*, 8(1).

Drug treatment programmes have, on average, a positive impact on reoffending and offer value for money. Drug abuse is a risk factor of reoffending and a significant proportion of offenders are assessed as having this particular criminogenic need¹³⁹. A recent meta-analysis found that the most effective interventions to reduce drug-related offending are therapeutic communities and drug courts¹⁴⁰. The same review found that more intensive interventions that focus on the multiple problems of medium-to-high risk problem drug users are more likely to bring about reductions in reoffending than less intensive programmes, and that men benefit more compared to women and young people who offend compared to old¹⁴¹. Offenders that enter treatment quickly, stay in treatment for as long as required and are provided with wider support are more likely to desist from offending¹⁴². Another systematic review of drug treatment programmes for offenders found that programmes with a cognitive-behavioural component had a small but statistically significant positive effect on reducing drug use relapse when compared to standard correctional treatment¹⁴³. Positive results have also been reported in Scotland from evaluations of DTTO orders, drug court pilots, targeted intelligence-led arrest referral schemes, like the Persistent Offenders Project (POP) in Glasgow, and some prison-based drug-treatment programmes such as the Saughton Drug Reduction Programme¹⁴⁴. In England, prisoners who completed the 12-step Rehabilitation of Addicted Prisoners Trust (RAPt) programme achieved greater reductions in self-reported drug use and offending compared to dropouts and non-starters although it was not possible to separate out self-selection effects¹⁴⁵. There is strong evidence that prison-

¹³⁹ Harper, G. and Chitty, C. (2005) *The Impact of Corrections on Reoffending: A Review of What Works*, Home Office Research Study 291, London: Home Office.

¹⁴⁰ Holloway, K., Bennett, T. and Farrington, D. (2005) *The Effectiveness of Criminal Justice and Treatment Programmes in Reducing Drug-related Crime: A Systematic Review*, Home Office Online Report 26/05. London: Home Office.

¹⁴¹ Holloway, K., Bennett, T. and Farrington, D. (2005) *The Effectiveness of Criminal Justice and Treatment Programmes in Reducing Drug-related Crime: A Systematic Review*, Home Office Online Report 26/05. London: Home Office.

¹⁴² Lipton, D., Pearson, F.S., Cleland, C.M. and Yee, D. (2002) 'The Effectiveness of Cognitive-Behavioural Treatment Methods on Recidivism' in J. McGuire (ed.) *Offender Rehabilitation and Treatment: Effective Programmes and Policies to Reduce Reoffending*, West Sussex: Wiley.; Malloch, M. and Mclvor, G. (2011) Women, drugs and community intervention, R. Sheehan, G. Mclvor and C. Trotter (eds.) *Working with Women Offenders in the Community*, Cullompton: Willan Publishing.

¹⁴³ Lipton, D., Pearson, F.S., Cleland, C.M. and Yee, D. (2002), *ibid*

¹⁴⁴ Mclvor, G. (2004) *Reconviction Following Drug Treatment and Testing Orders*. Scottish Government; Mclvor, G., Barnsdale, L., Eley, S., Malloch, M., Yates, R. and Brown, A. (2006) *An Evaluation of the Glasgow and Fife Drug Courts and their Aim to Reduce Drug Use and Drug Related Offending* Scottish Government; Shewan, D., Marshall, L., Wilson, G., Vojt, G., Galloway, J. and Marley, C. (2006) *SPS Strategy on the Management of Drug Misuse, Pathways and Progression: An Evaluation of Referral, Assessment and Intervention* Scottish Prison Service. Perman, J. (2010) *Persistent Offender Project: An Analysis of the Costs and Benefits. Executive Summary* <http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/644E6678-CF24-48F9-87FD-081EE9801675/0/GASPersistentOffenderProjectAnalysisofcostsExecutiveSummary.pdf>

¹⁴⁵ Harper, G. and Chitty, C. (2005) *The Impact of Corrections on Reoffending: A Review of What Works*, Home Office Research Study 291, London: Home Office.

based treatment programmes are most effective when followed-up with community aftercare supports¹⁴⁶.

In Scotland, a significant number of women in prison are drug users, with a high proportion imprisoned for offences directly related to problem drug use¹⁴⁷. Whilst there is speculation about the characteristics likely to lead to effective services that meet the needs of female drug users there are very few studies that have tested the effectiveness of drug interventions (or of gender-specific responsivity factors) on reducing re-offending in women.

A recent Rapid Evidence Assessment undertaken by the Home Office in 2008 is encouraging about the efficacy for women of some forms of treatment¹⁴⁸. There was evidence that, in the short term at least, aftercare, in particular residential treatment provision, enhanced the effects of prison-based treatment. There was no evidence, however, that the positive effects persisted beyond two years post-release: one study that followed participants up for this long found that initially statistically significantly positive effects became non-significant at two years. Studies have also found that parental drug abuse has a more profoundly negative effect on females than males which is consistent with research findings cited in this paper that dysfunctional family dynamics influence recidivism for girls and women¹⁴⁹.

Research on women drug users suggests that not all drug use is criminogenic (recreational and occasional use are not strong predictors of reoffending)¹⁵⁰. This study also found that the type of classification used to define 'substance abuse' can affect prediction strength for reoffending – if drugs had been consumed prior to the commission of the original offence then substance abuse was predictive of reoffending but that the generic DSM-III diagnostic criteria was not a good predictor of reoffending. If the aim of drug interventions is to reduce reoffending, then this may suggest that intensive interventions should be targeted at only those with criminogenic, as opposed to recreational, drug use.

The 218 centre in Glasgow offered an entirely different approach to drug addiction. 218 is an innovative, women-only holistic service designed to divert vulnerable women away from custody. An evaluation of the 218 centre was published in 2006 but could not provide clear evidence on whether the intervention reduced reoffending, concluding that the effectiveness of a programme like 218 is often difficult to measure in quantifiable terms – the impact of the

¹⁴⁶ Harper, G. and Chitty, C. (2005), *ibid*

¹⁴⁷ HM Inspectorate for prisons (2009) *HM and YOI Corton Vale*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

¹⁴⁸ Lart, R Pantazis, C. Pemberton, S Turner, W and Almeida, C (2008) *Interventions aimed at reducing re-offending in female offenders: a rapid evidence assessment (REA)* Ministry of Justice Research Series 8/08 May 2008.

¹⁴⁹ Mosher, C and Phillips, D. (2002) *Program evaluation of the Pine Lodge Pre-Release Residential Therapeutic Community for Women Offenders in Washington State: Final Report to the US Department of Justice*, NCJRS.

¹⁵⁰ Blanchette, K (1996) *The relationship between criminal history, mental disorder, and recidivism among federally sentenced female offenders*. Unpublished Masters Thesis.

centre on reoffending and drug use could not be determined¹⁵¹. However the evaluation revealed that there are numerous perceived benefits associated with the range and level of services provided at 218 which are not offered over the course of short-term custodial sentences. The researchers comment that 'limiting measurements to quantifiable and immediate criminal justice outcomes misses the contribution 218 is likely to make to longer-term crime prevention'. The evaluation found that women who used the services available at 218 identified significant decreases in drug and/or alcohol use (83%), improvements in their health and well-being (67%), access to stable accommodation and referrals to longer-term support services. Other research suggests that the programmes and services offered by 218 will contribute to reductions in offending over the longer-term. In terms of the current research, most support for the effectiveness of 218 comes from 'testimonies' of clients, staff, and stakeholders. Although the quantifiable effects could not be demonstrated, the feedback on 218 was almost universally positive.

There is evidence that drug treatment represents value for money. A recent Home Office study (DTORS) estimated that for each £1 spent on structured drug treatment, on average society saves £2.50 in terms of reduced crime, costs to the criminal justice system and health and social care services¹⁵². Also, a recent Scottish review of interventions for drug-using offenders found that the costs of crime are reduced significantly for individuals in treatment (£1,536 costs per year for those in treatment for more than one year compared to £12,713 per year for individuals with no intervention in place)¹⁵³.

Young people, substance misuse and offending. There is a well-established link between substance misuse and offending behaviour. In their review of youth violence in Scotland, Fraser et al. highlight that research with young people in custody points to the significant role of substance misuse, especially excessive drinking, in the backgrounds of convicted violent offenders, both male and female. Some studies have reported that young people who have offended state that they have been under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs when committing offences and that violent offences are commonly perpetrated alongside offences with a financial motivation (e.g. shoplifting and robbery are often committed to finance a drug habit)¹⁵⁴. Similarly, The Edinburgh Study found that those young people who reported being multiple substance users reported higher levels of delinquency, both in volume and variety of offences than single substance users and non-users¹⁵⁵.

¹⁵¹ McIvor, Gill and Gelsthorpe, L. and Loucks, N. and Malloch, M. (2006) *Evaluation of the 218 Centre*. Scottish Executive Social Research.

¹⁵² Davies, L., Jones, A., Vamvakas, G., Dubourg, R. and Donmall, M. (2009) *Drug Treatment Outcomes Research Study (DTORS): Cost-effectiveness Analysis*. Home Office.
http://www.dtors.org.uk/reports/DTORS_CostEffect_Implications.pdf

¹⁵³ Malloch, M. (2010) *Review of Effectiveness of Interventions for Drug Users in the Criminal Justice System*, unpublished.

¹⁵⁴ Fraser, A; Burman, M; Batchelor, S; McVie, S; (2010) *Youth Violence in Scotland: Literature Review*, The Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research

¹⁵⁵ <http://www.law.ed.ac.uk/cls/esytc/findings/digest7.pdf>

The time available for this review has not allowed an exploration of the relationship between treatment programmes or interventions for substance misuse targeted at young people who offend and the impact that these have on offending behaviour. It is suggested that this could be undertaken as a future, supplementary piece of work.

There is emerging evidence that alcohol-brief interventions can reduce alcohol misuse, however their effect on reoffending has not been widely investigated. Alcohol misuse increases the risk of reoffending and there is evidence to suggest its prevalence among offenders is increasing¹⁵⁶. There is emerging evidence from the health literature that alcohol-brief interventions based on motivational interviewing techniques are effective in reducing low to moderate alcohol misuse¹⁵⁷; however more evidence is required to support their effectiveness in reducing reoffending. The Alcohol and Offenders Criminal Justice Research Programme is intending to fill this gap by evaluating the effectiveness of an alcohol-brief intervention with offenders in the community with results expected to be published in 2011. A recent review of interventions for the treatment of alcohol problems among the wider population found that cognitive behavioural and mutual support approaches such as 12-step were the most successful in reducing alcohol misuse¹⁵⁸.

There is increasing consensus that it is more effective to re-house ex-offenders into mainstream rather than hostel accommodation. Having stable accommodation is known to support desistance from offending as it increases the chances of finding employment¹⁵⁹. The study of transitional care in Scotland identified housing as one of the main problems encountered by short term prisoners with drug problems on release and made it more likely that they would resume drug misuse¹⁶⁰. However, there is relatively little evidence on the effectiveness of different forms of help in securing accommodation for offenders. There is mixed evidence on the effectiveness of hostel accommodation in reducing reoffending with some evaluations reporting cases where this type of accommodation fostered the development of networks between offenders, thus sustaining a criminal lifestyle. This has led researchers in both Europe and North America to conclude that it is more effective to re-house offenders into mainstream accommodation with security of tenure, rather than into

¹⁵⁶ Harper, G. and Chitty, C. (2005), *ibid*

¹⁵⁷ Parkes, T., MacAskill, S., Brooks, O., Jepson, R., Atherton, I., Doi, L., McGhee, S. and Eadie, D. (2010) *Prison Health Needs Assessment for Alcohol Problems*
<http://www.healthscotland.com/uploads/documents/15105-Prison%20Health%20Needs%20Assessment%20for%20Alcohol%20Problems.pdf>

¹⁵⁸ Raistrick, D., Heather, N. and Godfrey, C. (2006) *Review of the Effectiveness of Treatment for Alcohol Problems* National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse
http://www.nta.nhs.uk/uploads/nta_review_of_the_effectiveness_of_treatment_for_alcohol_problems_fullreport_2006_alcohol2.pdf

¹⁵⁹ Harper, G. and Chitty, C. (2005) *The Impact of Corrections on Reoffending: A Review of What Works*, Home Office Research Study 291, London: Home Office.

¹⁶⁰ MacRae, R., McIvor, G., Malloch, M., Barry, M. and Murray, L. (2006) *Evaluation of the Scottish Prison Service Transitional Care Initiative*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive Social Research.

hostel accommodation¹⁶¹. A recent review of the quality of probation supervision noted that offenders are not necessarily accustomed to seeking help from outside agencies to solve accommodation problems; therefore a more proactive approach to supervision is required¹⁶². To be able to sustain accommodation, offenders will also need advice in managing money and debt¹⁶³.

There is evidence that accommodation is a particular issue for female prisoners who are more likely than men to lose accommodation when in custody. For those young people who do not or cannot return home, or where their home situation breaks down, they are severely disadvantaged by the lack of appropriate supported accommodation which can lead to re-offending, being placed in risky situations or further trauma-related harm. This is especially the case for young people involved in offending who are leaving secure care or custody¹⁶⁴.

We were not able to find any evaluations of mental health interventions in prison and community justice settings. Mental health problems are disproportionately prevalent in the prison population, and especially among women prisoners¹⁶⁵. A large scale survey published in 1998 found that around three quarters of sentenced prisoners suffer from two or more mental disorders, compared to less than one-twentieth (4%) of the general population¹⁶⁶. The Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) survey of 1,435 adult reception prisoners in England and Wales found that more than a quarter (26 per cent) of women reported having been treated and/or counselled for a mental health and/or emotional problem in the year before custody, compared with 16 per cent of men. However, we were not able to find any evaluations of mental health interventions delivered in prison and community justice settings¹⁶⁷ and there are gaps in service provision for young people aged 16-18¹⁶⁸.

There is some promising evidence that holistic resettlement programmes can reduce reoffending though more studies are needed to reach a safe conclusion. Offenders often face a wide range of difficulties that increase the likelihood of reoffending including unemployment, poor coping skills and substance abuse. It is therefore widely recognised that the more areas of an offender's life which can be influenced by an intervention, the

¹⁶¹ Shapland, J., Bottoms, A., Farrall, S., McNeill, F., Priede, C. and Robinson, G. (2011) *The Quality of Probation Supervision – A Literature Review*, Unpublished research report.

¹⁶² Shapland, J. et al. (2011), *ibid*

¹⁶³ Shapland, J. et al. (2011), *ibid*

¹⁶⁴ The big step, 2006

¹⁶⁵ Ministry of Justice (2010) '*Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders*' Green Paper Evidence Report available at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/docs/green-paper-evidence-a.pdf>

¹⁶⁶ Ministry of Justice (2010), *ibid*

¹⁶⁷ Harper, G. and Chitty, C. (2005) *The Impact of Corrections on Reoffending: A Review of What Works*, Home Office Research Study 291, London: Home Office.

¹⁶⁸ Harper, G. and Chitty, C. (2005) *The Impact of Corrections on Reoffending: A Review of What Works*, Home Office Research Study 291, London: Home Office.

greater the likelihood of securing and maintaining change¹⁶⁹. Holistic interventions are arguably more resource intensive and this might explain their limited use with offenders. One of the few holistic resettlement interventions that have been evaluated in the UK is the Pathfinders resettlement programme for prisoners on short-term sentences. The evaluation of the programme found that the offenders who completed a cognitive skills and attitudes training programme in prison and maintained post-release contact with a mentor who provided emotional support and help with practical problems showed lower reconviction rates and were more likely to be employed post release. Furthermore, the vast majority (80%) of the 51 offenders who were interviewed as part of the second phase of the evaluation said that the programme had helped them to control their substance misuse problem to some extent¹⁷⁰.

The plethora of multiple and complex needs faced by women offenders also signal a need for holistic approach to services. One such holistic centre is the 218 service in Glasgow which is used to divert vulnerable women away from custody. Whilst the impact of the centre's multi-modal approach on offending behaviour is as yet unquantifiable, feedback from users and staff is almost 100% positive. The evaluation did uncover some potential challenges for an effective holistic model. The evaluation revealed a rather fragmented system which found difficulties co-ordinating housing with community-based prescriptions and addiction support. Structural problems such as the use of project workers rather than designated outreach staff or external case workers to make such links also hampered attempts to link clients with resources outside. The ability for 218 to find suitable resources for clients to move on to, especially in terms of housing, could arguably 'make or break' their successful recovery from addiction and offending.

There is some strong international evidence that discharge planning and aftercare could lower recidivism rates for women¹⁷¹. Studies have shown that holistic discharge planning with primary health care, peer support and social work input which started in prison and continued in the community can lower group risk of recidivism¹⁷².

There is some promising evidence that mentoring can have positive effects on reduced reoffending, employability and motivation to change though more studies are needed to reach a safe conclusion. Relatively few UK studies have evaluated the effectiveness of mentoring schemes in reducing reoffending and addressing criminogenic needs, none of which have used a robust design with appropriate control groups. In Scotland, the evaluation of the Routes out of Prison project found that contact with the life

¹⁶⁹ Harper, G. and Chitty, C. (2005) *The Impact of Corrections on Reoffending: A Review of What Works*, Home Office Research Study 291, London: Home Office.

¹⁷⁰ Clancy, A., Hudson, K., Maguire, M., Peake, R., Raynor, P. Vanstone, M. and Kynch, J. (2006) *Getting out and staying out: Results of the Prisoner Resettlement Pathfinders*. Bristol: Policy Press.

¹⁷¹ Vigilante, K. C., Flynn, M. M., Affleck, P. C., Stunkle, J. C., Merriman, N. A., Flanigan, T.P., Mitty, J. A. and Rich, J. D. (1999) 'Reduction in recidivism of incarcerated women through primary care, peer counseling, and discharge planning', *Journal of Women's Health*, 8 (3), 409-415.

¹⁷² Lart, R Pantazis, C. Pemberton, S Turner, W and Almeida, C (2008) *Interventions aimed at reducing re-offending in female offenders: a rapid evidence assessment (REA)* Ministry of Justice Research Series 8/08 May 2008.

coaches helped the majority of interviewed offenders to access services and increased their motivation to desist from offending¹⁷³. There is also an indication from studies in England and Wales that mentoring can lead to reduced reconviction rates among participants, increase chances of employability and contribute to positive changes in thinking styles when motivational interviewing techniques are used by mentors¹⁷⁴. Mentoring is especially likely to work with young people under 19 years of age who are still at risk¹⁷⁵. Mentoring is advocated in the literature as a potentially effective way of helping offenders build new social networks that can support the desistance process, and to the extent it can help extend social bonds, offer emotional support and encourage uptake of services is supported by desistance theory¹⁷⁶.

There are even fewer studies that can determine the impact of mentoring on female reoffending. A rapid assessment of 18 studies (which included mentoring and control groups) found that the research on impact on reoffending was limited but that overall mentoring reduced reoffending by four to eleven percent (although they point out that the more robust studies found no significant impact). They found that mentoring was more successful if the mentor and mentee met at least once per week and for considerable periods. The programmes were also more successful if they targeted medium-high risk offenders, adhered to 'best practice' principals and if they were one of a number of interventions – a finding consistent with other studies suggesting that multi-modal interventions are generally more effective¹⁷⁷. Other reviews of 'what works' have also found that transitional support programmes were generally effective in reducing recidivism¹⁷⁸.

There is little evidence on the impact of bail supervision on reoffending. It is not currently known whether bail supervision is more effective in reducing reoffending compared to standard bail. A Scottish qualitative study of the impacts of supervision on bailee's lives, including offending behaviour, is expected to be published later this year.

¹⁷³ Schinkel, M, Jardine, C. Curran, J. Whyte B (2009) *Routes out of Prison – evaluation report*. Edinburgh: CJSWDC.

¹⁷⁴ Armstrong, S., Christyakova, J., Mackenzie, S. and Malloch, M. (2008) *Circles of Support and Accountability: Consideration of the feasibility of pilots in Scotland*. Glasgow: Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice. <http://www.sccjr.ac.uk/documents/circles.pdf>; Maguire, M., Holloway, K., Liddle, M., Gordon, F., Gray, P., Smith, A. and Wright, S. (2010) *Evaluation of the Transitional Support Scheme. Final Report to Welsh Assembly Government*. <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/research/101109tssfinreporten.pdf>

¹⁷⁵ Finnegan, L., Whitehurst, D. and Deaton, S. (2010) *Models of mentoring for inclusion and employment*. London: Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion.

¹⁷⁶ Shapland, J., Bottoms, A., Farrall, S., McNeill, F., Priede, C. and Robinson, G. (2011) *The Quality of Probation Supervision – A Literature Review*, Unpublished research report.

¹⁷⁷ Andrews, D. A.; Bonta, (2006) J Rehabilitating criminal justice policy and practice *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, Vol 16(1), Feb 2010, 39-55.

¹⁷⁸ Trotter, C. (2011) 'Mentoring' in R. Sheehan, G. McIvor and C. Trotter (eds.) *Working with Women Offenders in the Community*, Cullompton: Willan Publishing.

Reparation and Restoration

This section will explore evidence on the impact of unpaid work and restorative justice on reoffending.

The effectiveness of unpaid work in reducing reoffending has not been widely investigated but some qualitative evidence suggests that generative activities involving contact with the beneficiaries are more likely to be effective than menial tasks. In the time available, we were not able to find any studies that have measured the effect of unpaid work in reducing reoffending using a robust control group design. In England and Wales, 25% of offenders subject to a stand-alone unpaid work requirement (community payback) were reconvicted¹⁷⁹; however it is possible that these lower reconviction rates reflect a lower risk of recidivism among offenders sentenced to unpaid work rather than a genuine positive effect. In Scotland, qualitative evidence from the evaluation of the Community Reparation Order scheme pilot showed that placements that provided opportunities for direct contact with the beneficiaries and led to the acquisition of new skills were more valued by offenders compared to placements involving menial tasks with no obvious benefit to others¹⁸⁰. Offenders also noted the positive effect that praise of their work had and those that were in more regular contact with a supervisor reported more positive experiences. It has been reported that unpaid work of a generative nature can trigger the motivation to change as it provides offenders with the opportunity to enjoy reciprocal relationships, gain trust and appreciation of other people and give something back to the community. There is some evidence that “making amends” can help offenders develop a prosocial identity that is conducive to change¹⁸¹. More evidence on the effect of unpaid work on reoffending is expected from the evaluation of the new Community Payback Order that was introduced in Scotland in February 2011. With regard to work in prison, there is some, less robust, evidence from the U.S. that it is associated with higher employment rates upon release though this effect could be attributed to factors that caused offenders to apply for work in prison rather than the experience itself¹⁸². As reported in previous sections, work in prison is more likely to be of benefit to offenders if it is linked to real prospects of employment outside of prison¹⁸³.

¹⁷⁹ Ministry of Justice (2010) *‘Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders’* Green Paper Evidence Report available at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/docs/green-paper-evidence-a.pdf>

¹⁸⁰ Curran, J, MacQueen, S., Whyte, B. and Boyle, J. (2007) *Forced to Make Amends: An Evaluation of the Community Reparation Order Pilots*. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/08/21134602/0>

¹⁸¹ McNeill, F. and Maruna, S. (2007) Giving Up and Giving Back: Desistance, Generativity and Social Work with Offenders in G. McIvor and P. Raynor (Eds.) *Developments in Social Work with Offenders*, London: Jessica Kingsley.

¹⁸² Ministry of Justice (2010) *‘Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders’* Green Paper Evidence Report available at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/docs/green-paper-evidence-a.pdf>

¹⁸³ McGuire, J. (2002) ‘Integrating Findings from Research Reviews’ in J. McGuire (ed.) *Offender Rehabilitation and Treatment: Effective Programmes and Policies to Reduce Reoffending*, West Sussex: Wiley.

There is mixed, though mostly positive, evidence on the effectiveness of restorative justice in reducing reoffending. By the term “restorative justice” we refer to practices that aim to increase offenders’ awareness of the material and psychological harm caused by their offending. Restorative justice relies upon the offender repairing the harm done and offering an apology that is accepted by the victim. Some of the most common forms of restorative justice used internationally and in Scotland include victim-offender mediation and restorative conferencing. There is mixed evidence on the effectiveness of restorative justice in reducing reoffending¹⁸⁴. A 2005 evaluation of the court-referred Restorative Justice Pilot in New Zealand found no statistically significant effect of restorative conferencing on reoffending rates although 92% of the victims reported satisfaction with the process¹⁸⁵. A meta-analysis of restorative justice in Canada found that programmes had, on average, a positive impact on reoffending rates¹⁸⁶. In the UK, a recent evaluation of three restorative schemes found a significant decrease in the frequency of reconviction within a two-year follow-up period (when all schemes were considered together)¹⁸⁷. This suggests that positive effects are more likely to be detected if more sophisticated measures of recidivism are used such as the frequency and severity of reoffending. A Cochrane Collaboration review of restorative justice conferencing is currently underway which will provide more evidence about the likely effectiveness of this form of intervention.

Critical assessment of the “what works” literature

Due to research limitations, in the vast majority of cases, it is not possible to know whether the effect of reduced reoffending was directly caused by a particular intervention. The above review of the evidence shows that some criminal justice interventions are associated with reductions in reoffending. This temporal association should not, however, be misinterpreted as causality: in the vast majority of cases, it is not possible to say whether the effect of reduced reoffending was directly caused by a particular intervention. The primary reason for this is that most evaluations of criminal justice interventions, especially in Europe, use, in the best of cases, vaguely defined or loosely comparable comparison groups, and in the worst, no comparison group at all. This lack of robust comparison group designs substantially weakens the internal validity of evaluation findings (i.e. the extent to which we can infer the effect was caused by the intervention), and raises the possibility that change is the product of selection effects: offenders participating in programmes are likely to differ in important ways from non-participants, for example they

¹⁸⁴ McIvor, G. (2004) Reparative and Restorative Approaches, in A.E. Bottoms, S. Rex and G. Robinson (Eds.) *Alternatives to Prison: Options for an Insecure Society*, Cullompton: Willan Publishing.

¹⁸⁵ Ministry of Justice (2010), *ibid*

¹⁸⁶ Ministry of Justice (2010), *ibid*

¹⁸⁷ Shapland, J. et al. (2008) *Does Restorative Justice Affect Reconviction? The Fourth Report from the Evaluation of Three Schemes*. London: Ministry of Justice.

might be more motivated to change, and these unique characteristics, rather than the intervention, may have made them less likely to reoffend in the first place¹⁸⁸.

It is difficult to generalise results from “gold-standard evaluations” such as randomised controlled trials to everyday criminal justice settings. But even studies that attempt to ameliorate this problem by employing randomly assigned comparison groups (i.e. randomised controlled trials), suffer from other problems, specifically low external validity which means that a generalisation of results to other settings is hard to make. This has led some researchers to conclude that gold-standard evaluations are often the least suitable for informing practice, mainly because they are usually conducted in quite unique conditions (for example delivered by intensively trained and highly motivated staff) that differ from those that operate in everyday criminal justice settings¹⁸⁹. This is sometimes known as the “efficacy” versus “effectiveness” debate. As McGuire¹⁹⁰ argues “Findings that an intervention works based on a well-designed clinical trial (efficacy) tell us little or nothing about whether it will do so when tested in more challenging locations” such as the overcrowded prison or hard-pressed social work office and with less resources available. Andrews and Bonta¹⁹¹ reported that the effectiveness of treatment delivered in the real world is about half of the effect of the experimental, demonstration program.

Researchers increasingly advise that evaluations focus not only on what works, but also on how and why it is expected to work. If even the most robust studies such as randomised controlled trials suffer from limitations that preclude safe conclusions about their effectiveness in everyday criminal justice settings, where does this leave us in terms of using evidence to inform practice development? Acknowledging the limitations of evaluation research designs, researchers are increasingly arguing that instead of overly focusing on outcome evaluations to assess “whether” an intervention works or not, it is equally, if not more, important to examine “how” and “why” it is expected to work and which aspects of it made a difference for offenders¹⁹². This would include assessing whether the intervention has a robust theory of change, is implemented to best practice standards and is effectively targeted at the right people.

Conclusion

From the evidence reviewed in this paper, it appears that, on average, criminal justice interventions can have a positive impact on reoffending. However, the mean effect taken

¹⁸⁸ McGuire, J. (2002) ‘Integrating Findings from Research Reviews’ in J. McGuire (ed.) *Offender Rehabilitation and Treatment: Effective Programmes and Policies to Reduce Reoffending*, West Sussex: Wiley.

¹⁸⁹ McGuire, J. (2002), *ibid*

¹⁹⁰ McGuire, J. (2002), *ibid*

¹⁹¹ Andrews, D. A., Bonta, J., & Wormith, S. J. (2006). The recent past and near future of risk and/or need assessment. *Crime and Delinquency*, 52, 7-27.

¹⁹² McNeil, F. and Weaver, B. (2010) *Changing Lives: Desistance Research and Offender Management*, <http://www.sccjr.ac.uk/pubs/Changing-Lives-Desistance-Research-and-Offender-Management/255>

across a broad spectrum of interventions is relatively modest, estimated by some researchers to be approximately 9 or 10 percentage points¹⁹³. Another interesting finding is that almost all of the reviewed studies have found substantial variability in outcomes depending on a range of factors, involving the person, the intervention, the quality of implementation and the research design¹⁹⁴. One principal implication of this is that there is no single solution to the problem of reoffending and how it can be reduced. Interventions that work well in one context may work less well in others. It is therefore important to consider a number of factors before deciding on an intervention approach for a given group of offenders, including level of motivation, needs and strengths, and diversity.

¹⁹³ McGuire, J. (2002) 'Integrating Findings from Research Reviews' in J. McGuire (ed.) *Offender Rehabilitation and Treatment: Effective Programmes and Policies to Reduce Reoffending*, West Sussex: Wiley.

¹⁹⁴ McGuire, J. (2002), *ibid*

CHAPTER THREE: MAPPING THE DESISTANCE JOURNEY FROM THE USER PERSPECTIVE

This chapter provides an overview of findings from studies that have followed-up offenders with the aim to investigate what makes some desist from crime (defined as “desisters”) and others not (defined as “persisters”). This research tends to be qualitative in nature and relies on offenders’ own accounts of the desistance journey to gain a better understanding of the factors that help or impede their efforts to give up crime.

According to some studies but not others, thinking styles are influential in determining whether offending continues or ceases. Desisters do not necessarily face fewer social problems than recidivists but there is evidence to suggest they are more psychologically resilient showing higher levels of self-efficacy and better coping skills. Healy¹⁹⁵ followed-up a sample of 73 adult male probationers in Ireland and investigated differences between those that had stopped offending within a 4-year follow-up period (“desisters”) and those that continued to offend (“persisters”). The study found that the two statistically significant predictors of desistance were age at the time of the interview and general attitudes to crime as measured by the CRIME-PICS scale. Desisters were older and less likely to endorse attitudes that were supportive of the criminal lifestyle. On the other hand, those who had offended in the past year were significantly more likely to have currently active thinking styles, for example more commonly endorsing the view that crime is worthwhile. An interesting finding was that both groups reported similar levels of victim empathy, indicating good awareness of the effects of their behaviour on victims. Surprisingly, social circumstances did not emerge as significant predictors of desistance with recidivists and desisters reporting a similar level of criminogenic needs. This finding has been replicated in some studies¹⁹⁶ but not in others¹⁹⁷. It has been suggested that what differentiates desisters from recidivists is not the amount of structural obstacles they encounter but the way they respond to them, with desisters showing higher levels of personal agency, better coping skills and a more positive perception of their lives and future prospects¹⁹⁸. Maruna compared the life history narratives of 65 English men and women with extensive criminal histories of committing drug and property offences. The desisters in this study were more likely to express the belief that they could control their own futures, whereas the accounts of persisters revealed a fatalistic outlook to life. The study also found that desisters were more likely to avoid taking responsibility for their criminal past and see

¹⁹⁵ Healy, D. (2010) *The Dynamics of Desistance: Charting Pathways through Change* Cullompton: Willan.

¹⁹⁶ Maruna, S. (2001) *Making Good: How Ex-Convicts Reform and Rebuild their Lives*, Washington DC: American Psychological Association Books.

¹⁹⁷ Farrall, S. (2002) *Rethinking What Works with Offenders: Probation, Social Context and Desistance from Crime*, Cullompton, UK: Willan Publishing.

¹⁹⁸ Healy, D. (2010) *The Dynamics of Desistance: Charting Pathways through Change* Cullompton: Willan.

themselves as “good” people. This enabled them to maintain a positive self-image and supported the shift from a criminal to a prosocial identity¹⁹⁹.

The most common triggers of change include the formation of strong social bonds, a developing awareness of the negative consequences associated with crime including the prospect of a lengthy prison sentence, and, in fewer cases, the development of a good relationship with a supervisor and attendance at a rehabilitative programme. The most frequently cited reason for change in Healy’s study was the formation of strong social bonds with parents, partners and children. Similarly, in Scotland, Jamieson et al.²⁰⁰ found that many women offenders were encouraged in their decision to stop by the support of friends, family, children and loving relationships with law-abiding partners. In Liebrich’s follow-up study of probationers in New Zealand, responding to new family commitments was frequently cited as reason for wishing to desist²⁰¹. Strong attachments trigger the motivation to change because they provide emotional support, the prospect of new social roles and models of prosocial behaviour. For example, having children made some participants adopt a new positive perspective and instigated a desire to live up to family responsibilities that was conducive to change. However, it is important to note that having children does not automatically lead to desistance and some studies have found that for some offenders the positive impact of having a child is delayed until children grow older and become more aware of their parents’ criminal lifestyles. The second most commonly reported trigger for change in Healy’s study was developing an awareness of the costs of crime including the likelihood of a lengthy prison sentence as a result of repeated contact with the criminal justice system. Many among those who expressed the desire to desist from crime were getting concerned about spending large portions of their life in prison and were beginning to realise that their current life path was “going nowhere”. Finally, in fewer cases what seemed to trigger change was some form of external intervention, for example attending a rehabilitative programme or developing a good relationship with a supervisor. Studies have found that ex-offenders feel empowered when they receive assistance from an outside force who believes in them. By contrast, when offenders are categorised as “high-risk” they often lose faith in their ability to change and develop a fatalistic outlook that is not conducive to change²⁰².

Factors associated with sustained abstinence from offending include strengthening social relationships, developing new social networks, finding suitable employment and improved emotional well-being. As the quality of offenders’ relationships with the important people in their immediate social circles improves, they are more likely to want to live up to others’ expectations and sustain a crime-free lifestyle. Strong family bonds can

¹⁹⁹ Maruna, S. (2001) *Making Good: How Ex-Convicts Reform and Rebuild their Lives*, Washington DC: American Psychological Association Books.

²⁰⁰ Jamieson, J., Mclvor, G. and Murray, C. (1999) *Understanding Offending Among Young People*, Edinburgh: The Stationery Office.

²⁰¹ Liebrich, J. (1993) *Straight to the Point: Angles on Giving Up Crime*, Otago, New Zealand: University of Otago Press.

²⁰² Farrall, S., Bottoms, A. and Shapland, J. (2010) Social Structures and Desistance from Crime, *European Journal of Criminology*, 7(6), 546-570.

encourage desistance by providing structure to offenders' lives and by acting as sources of informal monitoring and support. Also, when offenders develop strong emotional ties with members of their wider network they are more likely to take into consideration feelings of 'others' when deliberating about reverting back to crime or not. Being trusted by significant others and the wider social network has proven to be a strong motivating factor for sustained desistance from crime²⁰³. Taking up new employment and recreational opportunities can also encourage desistance by providing access to more prosocial social networks. As McNeill and Whyte note "without access to social capital, it may be very difficult indeed to embark upon and sustain a pathway towards desistance". Farrall²⁰⁴ investigated the effect of probation supervision on subsequent offending among a sample of 199 male and female probationers aged 17-35 that were spread across six English probation services. In this study, probationers attributed their desistance primarily to finding suitable employment and/or a stable partner rather than any help they got from their probation officer. This suggests that offender supervisors should proactively try to assist offenders with finding employment and improving family relationships if they are to increase their chances of desisting from crime. By securing a job or a stable relationship, offenders start to realise that they have a future and are accepted and trusted by others which leads to increases in self-esteem and positive identity change²⁰⁵. In Burnett's follow-up study of 130 property offenders released from custody in England and Wales, desisters were also more likely to have secured stable employment and accommodation and rate their personal relationships as good compared to recidivists²⁰⁶. Changes in social circumstances are often accompanied by improvements in emotional well-being that have been positively linked to desistance²⁰⁷.

Desistance attempts fail when external circumstances such as financial problems make offenders feel trapped in a criminal lifestyle, when there is a change in social circumstances, for example a failed relationship, and, finally, when offenders are insufficiently committed to change or feel ill-equipped to solve the problems they encounter. It is important to recognise that the journey to desistance follows a zigzag rather than a linear pathway and many will continue to drift between conformity and offending for some time. The majority of participants in Healy's study attributed their ongoing offending to external circumstances such as financial problems and addiction, which they felt unable to overcome. Other studies have also found that persistent offenders are characterised by low levels of self-efficacy and a failure to recognise alternatives to crime. A number of offenders spoke of how a change in social circumstances, such as for example the loss of a job or a failed relationship, led them back to crime. Lack of commitment to change and a perceived

²⁰³ Caverley, A. And Farrall, S. (2011) *The Sensual Dynamics of Processes of Personal Reform: Desistance from Crime and the Role of Emotions* in S. Karstedt, I. Loader & H. Strang (eds) *Emotions, Crime and Justice*. Oxford: Hart Publishing.

²⁰⁴ Farrall, S. (2002) *Rethinking What Works with Offenders: Probation, Social Context and Desistance from Crime*, Cullumpton, UK: Willan Publishing.

²⁰⁵ Farrall, S. (2005) On the Existential Aspects of Desistance from Crime, *Symbolic Interaction*, 28(3).

²⁰⁶ Burnett, R. (1992) *The Dynamics of Recidivism*, Oxford, UK: Centre for Criminological Research, University of Oxford.

²⁰⁷ Caverley, A. and Farrall, S. (2011), *ibid*

inability to cope with difficult life circumstances also featured in offenders' stories of relapse. Financial problems and a measure of personal misfortune have been shown to predict reoffending among low-risk/low-need women. Financial problems have also been cited by other studies as a major criminogenic need for women with many women prisoners being financially dependent on their families after release²⁰⁸.

Contact with the criminal justice system can induce positive changes for some but engender reoffending for others which illustrates the subjectivity of the desistance process. In Healy's study some participants claimed that contact with the criminal justice system induced change whereas others thought it engendered reoffending. This illustrates that it is the offender's interpretation of the event that matters in bringing about change more than the event itself.

Conclusion

The above review of qualitative studies suggests that the onset and maintenance of desistance depends, to a large extent and for a significant proportion of offenders, upon them developing prosocial thinking styles, higher levels of self-efficacy and prosocial bonds. Interventions that target these areas are, therefore, more likely to be successful in reducing reoffending.

²⁰⁸ Sorbello, L., Ecclestone, L., Ward, T. and Jones, R. (2002) 'Treatment needs of female offenders: a review', *Australian Psychologist*, 37 (3), 198-205.

CHAPTER FOUR: FUTURE RESEARCH

Evaluations should incorporate more high quality user feedback on why an intervention worked or not. One of the key messages coming out from the above review of the literature is that desistance from offending is a highly individualised process and offenders can reach this outcome through a number of different paths. To improve our understanding of how offenders change and, therefore, how criminal justice practitioners can best support and accelerate the desistance process, it is important to incorporate more high quality user feedback into research designs and get offenders' views on what helped or hindered them in giving up crime.

More studies investigating the process of desistance are needed in Scotland. There would also be merit in replicating desistance studies like the ones reviewed in Chapter 3 in Scotland. This would ideally involve following up cohorts of offenders to gather evidence on triggers, facilitators and obstacles for the transition away from crime. This type of research would need to take into account that desistance pathways are likely to differ among sub-populations of offenders (e.g. females, young people) that should, therefore, be examined separately²⁰⁹. In particular, there is lack of research into female desistance from crime.

²⁰⁹ McNeil, F. and Weaver, B. (2010) *Changing Lives: Desistance Research and Offender Management*, <http://www.sccjr.ac.uk/pubs/Changing-Lives-Desistance-Research-and-Offender-Management/255>

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUDING REMARKS

The key messages that emerge from the above review of the literature on how offenders desist from offending are:

- Key events in offenders' lives such as parenthood and re-integration in the local community impact on their motivation to stop reoffending.
- Desistance is a highly individualised process and one-size-fits-all interventions do not work.
- Compared to recidivists, desisters show higher levels of self-efficacy and commitment to change, and have stronger social support networks.
- Offenders value getting support to solve practical problems, being listened to and believed in. Supervision is unhelpful when it amounts to simply reporting at social work offices.
- Interventions that help offenders find employment, develop prosocial networks, enhance family bonds and increase levels of self-efficacy and motivation to change are those more likely to have the strongest positive impact on the risk of reoffending.
- Rehabilitative interventions with the strongest evidence base are cognitive-behavioural programmes and supportive and interpersonally skilled supervision.
- Intensive supervision that is not accompanied by some form of support in addressing criminogenic needs is unlikely to lead to reductions in reoffending.

Effective Interventions for Women

In seeking to address issues of diversity, there is a paucity of evaluations of accredited offending behaviour programmes designed specifically for women. However, a number of writers have attempted to determine the common characteristics of effective interventions. Reviewing the literature on community-based programmes for young female offenders, for example, Batchelor and Burman²¹⁰ identify the following elements:

- a comprehensive and holistic approach aimed at addressing young women's multiple needs in a continuum of care;
- gender-specific programme models and services that address the specialised needs of young women who offend (paying particular attention to, for example, abuse issues, relationship skills, self-esteem and self-efficacy, self-harm and substance misuse);

²¹⁰ Batchelor, S. and Burman, M. (2005) *21st Century Social Work: Reducing Reoffending: Key Practice Skills*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

- resources that utilise the skills and experiences of young women themselves; and positive relationships between young women and staff.

The attributes of *sustainable* projects for female offenders include:

- a resistance to the erosion of gender-specificity; an evolutionary and flexible organisation;
- a holistic approach to service delivery;
- a democratic model of policy-formation to enhance staff morale and project success; and
- a principled approach to probity in human relationships.

This evidence echoes Raynor's comments about the significance of practitioners using interpersonal skills and being able to exercise discretion; practitioners need the ability to be flexible and innovative in response to complex and varied needs.