

A joint thematic review by HM Inspectorate of Prisons,
HM Inspectorate of Probation and Ofsted

Resettlement provision for adult offenders: Accommodation and education, training and employment

September 2014



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Acknowledgements

This thematic was conducted by:

Hayley Cripps

Research Officer, HM Inspectorate of Prisons

Samantha Galisteo

Senior Research Officer, HM Inspectorate of Prisons

Julia Horsman

Inspector, Ofsted

Stephen Hunt

Support Services Officer, HMI Probation

Keith McInnis

Inspector, HM Inspectorate of Prisons

Alice Reid

Research Officer, HM Inspectorate of Prisons

Nigel Scarff

Inspector, HM Inspectorate of Probation

Andy Smith

Assistant Chief Inspector, HM Inspectorate of Probation

Jen Walters

Inspector, Ofsted

Sheila Willis

Inspector, Ofsted

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Introduction

In April 2015 far reaching changes will be introduced to 'transform' the way that offenders are rehabilitated and to reduce the risk they reoffend. Offenders serving sentences of less than one year will be subject to statutory supervision. Support and supervision of low- and medium-risk offenders will pass from the probation service to voluntary and private sector providers commissioned through regional Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC). Higher-risk offenders will be supervised by a new national probation service. Offenders serving short sentences and those with less than three months to serve should be held in 'resettlement prisons', in or linked to the area in which they will be released. Resettlement services should be organised on a 'through the gate' basis, making greater use of mentors than at present and with providers paid in part according to the outcomes they achieve in reducing reoffending.

The primary aim of this report is to inform the development of these new services by examining the effectiveness of existing arrangements to help offenders obtain suitable and sustainable accommodation and education, training and employment (ETE) on release as part of wider resettlement provision. The report follows a cohort of 80 offenders from prison through the gate into the community and identifies their accommodation and occupation status shortly before release, on release and one and six months later.

The offenders in this study were chosen because they were already subject to statutory supervision on release as they were serving sentences of one year or more. We are confident that in the key areas there is a direct parallel with provision for offenders serving shorter sentences, although care should be taken in interpreting the results. It is important to recognise where there are differences, not least to ensure that the requirements of offenders serving longer sentences do not get overlooked in the pressure to establish the new arrangements.

Many previous studies have highlighted the importance of accommodation and ETE to reducing reoffending. The Social Exclusion Report of 2002 identified them as two of the critical resettlement pathways that have been the focus for much effort since, and the 'Surveying Prisoners Crime Reduction' survey a decade later unsurprisingly came to similar conclusions. Offenders themselves consistently tell us during inspections how important having somewhere secure and stable to live, and something constructive to do, is to staying out of trouble after they are released.

The findings of this report are striking.

Most importantly, it absolutely confirms the central importance of an offender's family and friends to their successful rehabilitation. Of course, sometimes an offender's family may be the victims of their crime and sometimes they may be a negative influence that contributes to their offending behaviour – we found a small number of examples of this in this inspection. However, overwhelmingly, this inspection confirmed our view that an offender's family are the most effective resettlement agency. More than half the offenders in our cohort returned home or moved in with family and friends on release, even if this was only a temporary measure. The few who had a job on release had mainly arranged this with the help of previous employers, family or friends.

Helping offenders maintain or restore relationships with their family and friends, where this is appropriate, should be central to the resettlement effort. But too often, these relationships are seen simply as a matter of visits which may be increased or reduced according to an offender's behaviour. We found no evidence that families were involved in sentence planning for instance, even when an offender said they were relying on them for support after release. Too little account was taken of whether initial arrangements were sustainable and what continuing support might be needed. Of the 48 offenders who moved into their own home or with family and friends on release, a fifth had needed to move in with different family/friends when we checked on them after six months. What should happen, where possible, is resettlement work which helps the offender and his or her family to maintain or rebuild relationships; an assessment of any offer of support; and, where appropriate,

involvement of the family in plans for release. We are concerned that work on family relationships that will continue to be provided, if at all, directly by the prison will not be integrated with work done by resettlement service providers.

In contrast to the support provided by offenders' family and friends, our findings in this report reinforce the criticism we have previously made about formal offender management arrangements in prisons¹. We found that contact between offenders and offender supervisors or managers varied considerably and even where there was good contact, this had little impact on accommodation and ETE outcomes at the point of release, although contacts were more effective post-release. Sentence planning and oversight were weak and resettlement work in prisons was insufficiently informed either by an individual assessment of the offender concerned or a strategic assessment of what opportunities would be available to offenders on release, with input from relevant organisations and employers. Information sharing across prison departments was poor overall but better in open prisons and those preparing long-term offenders for release. It will be important that those prisons designated as 'resettlement prisons' in the new arrangements urgently begin to create the 'whole prison' approach to resettlement that is too often lacking at present. It would certainly help address these problems if prisons had a better understanding of current accommodation and ETE outcomes. At present they rely heavily on self-reported information from offenders at the point of release with no follow-up on longer-term accommodation and ETE outcomes, which as our findings demonstrate, is an ineffective way of judging the effectiveness of resettlement services.

Offenders who posed a high risk of harm were placed in approved premises where their risk could be appropriately managed. Offenders expressed concerns to us about the adverse influence of other residents of approved premises, and two of the nine offenders who went to approved premises on release were subsequently recalled, but others had progressed six months later.

Shortages of affordable rented accommodation, references, a lack of resources to pay deposits and rent in advance, and the practical problems of arranging accommodation from inside prison, meant that rented accommodation in the private or social housing sectors was not an option for any of the offenders we followed. Often offenders were able to move in with family/friends on release, even if just as a temporary measure, but the three in our sample who did not have this option were forced to rely on emergency shelter immediately after release. Access to affordable rented accommodation will be a significant challenge for new providers and it is likely that there will need to be an expansion of rent deposit and guarantee schemes and other provision if it is to be met. Some offenders in our cohort such as young adults who had been in care as 'looked after children' and women offenders who took over the sole care of their children after release had entitlements to housing that needed to be identified and met.

Of course, finding and sustaining accommodation is not simply a question of paying the rent but also of having the skills necessary to live independently. For those who might struggle to live independently because of their age and lack of maturity, such as young adults, or older offenders who had become institutionalised by long sentences, some form of supported accommodation was necessary if they were not placed in approved premises.

For offenders serving longer sentences, these findings provide clear evidence of the value of the opportunities provided by open prisons and well-managed release on temporary licence (ROTL) both to maintain relationships with family and other support in the community, and to get real work experience. As one offender said to us:

'Community work, it puts you back in a situation of dealing with people; strange at first, not just dealing with other offenders. Other times I've been released, I've been scared, anxious and overwhelmed being back in the community – when you first go out on community work, someone comes with you for the first few days, takes you through how to get there, etc. Gives you confidence for paid work.'

¹ HMI Probation and HMI Prisons (2013) *Third Aggregate Report on Offender Management in Prisons*

Having somewhere sustainable to live was an essential prerequisite to getting and holding down a job. Without a secure place to live, it was very difficult to get a job; without a job, it was difficult to afford a place to live. Assessment of ETE needs in prison was not sufficiently linked to sentence plans and offender supervisors relied on offenders' accounts of their progress and needs, rather than a more objective assessment. None of the offenders in our cohort ended up using the vocational skills or training they had received in prison in employment after release. What was much more important was the employability skills they gained and this also reflects what employers have told us. Reliability, trustworthiness, the ability to work on their own initiative and good customer service are essential to an offender's employment prospects, and can be developed or discouraged in many aspects of an offender's experience – not just what happens in workshops or classrooms. It is a further reason why it is so important that an offender's ETE assessment feeds into and is, in turn supported by, a wider sentence plan. This does not happen sufficiently at present. The report also identifies the frustration of offenders who had higher levels of existing skills and experience and were not able to develop or use these appropriately.

The findings of this report provide evidence of what common sense suggests should be the case, and demonstrate that the recommendations from previous reports on this topic have still to be achieved.

They support the broad thrust of many of the transforming rehabilitation reforms. They may provide a focus on outcomes that is missing at present. The creation of resettlement prisons should help to create a whole prison focus on resettlement that is often lacking now, as well as better contacts with the community agencies and family support that are essential to success. Through the gate services and mentors should help to provide continuity of support, particularly for those who do not have families they can rely on, which was missing for many of the offenders we followed for this report. The findings also underline the importance of open prisons and well managed ROTL for those serving longer sentences.

However, the findings also identify significant learning points.

1. Far too little attention has been given by prisons to the roles of families in the resettlement process. A determined strategic effort and national guidance are required to address this.
2. This report confirms the criticisms we have previously made of offender management arrangements in prisons. The recommendations we have made in the report about fundamental change to the offender management model need to be addressed with urgency.
3. The report makes clear how the key themes it addresses – offender management, work with families, accommodation and ETE – are inter-related and need to be addressed as part of a whole prison approach to resettlement. The risk is that they are all provided under different management and organisational arrangements and evaluated in different ways. The prison governor has overall responsibility for the safety and security of the prison and for family services. The new national probation service will provide critical offender management arrangements both in prison and in the community for high-risk offenders. ETE providers are contacted under a regional Offenders' Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) contract. Accommodation services will be organised through Community Rehabilitation Companies who may deliver accommodation services directly or may organise another resettlement provider to provide them. In our view there should be much clearer accountability and authority for prison governors to ensure these different elements are combined in an effective overall strategy that meet the needs of their prison population.
4. The report identifies a range of groups that have specific needs such as young adults, care leavers, women and parents. It is important that funding arrangements are not a disincentive to meeting the needs of these groups, or others, that may differ from the majority of offenders.

5. However effective the new arrangements are, they will be undermined if offenders cannot access stable accommodation when they leave prison. The Ministry of Justice, the Department of Work and Pensions and CRCs should ensure offenders do not face unnecessary obstacles in accessing the up-front resources they need to obtain private rented accommodation, and have appropriate advice to enable them to do so.
6. The OLASS contract specification should be reviewed, in consultation with employers, to ensure that it is sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of individual prisons, that it caters for a wider range of attainment levels, and that it places a greater emphasis on whole prison activities to develop employability skills.

The introduction of the new resettlement arrangements which will be brought in as part of the 'Transforming Rehabilitation' process on the 1 April 2015 should be seen as just the first stage of a process rather than its completion. We hope this report will help identify what needs to be developed at a national level to continue the process and that its findings will be helpful to providers as they develop their new services.

Nick Hardwick
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

Paul McDowell
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

Sir Michael Wilshaw
HM Chief Inspector, Ofsted

September 2014

Section 1. Executive summary and recommendations

Aim of this report

- 1.1** ‘Resettlement’ is a major focus of all prison inspections. HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMI Prisons) inspects prisons against independent criteria known as Expectations. Inspections are conducted with other partner Inspectorates, including Ofsted and HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMI Probation). In HMI Prisons’ Expectations, resettlement is one of four healthy prison tests and is defined as:

‘Prisoners are prepared for their release back into the community and effectively helped to reduce their likelihood of reoffending.’

- 1.2** The Ministry of Justice’s *Transforming Rehabilitation* strategy sets out plans to reduce reoffending from April 2015 by extending community supervision to prisoners sentenced to less than 12 months imprisonment and by making radical changes to how resettlement services will be provided to all sentenced prisoners. This thematic report focuses on offenders already subject to offender management arrangements and probation supervision on release, in order to identify the provision that currently works well and the challenges in delivering effective resettlement services in prisons and through the gate, into the community, on release. In line with what many previous studies and offenders themselves have reported as the most important areas for supporting their successful reintegration on release, we focused on the areas of accommodation and education, training and employment (ETE)² – although we would expect these to be addressed within a coordinated approach, alongside other resettlement work. This report makes a small number of recommendations; our primary intention is that the learning from this report will be considered and built into the development and delivery of the *Transforming Rehabilitation* agenda at both national and local levels.

Background

- 1.3** The reoffending rate for those released from custody between April 2011 and March 2012 was 45.8% and varied by age and gender, with a higher rate for men and young people³. Research has identified a range of social factors that are linked to offending and reoffending. These include accommodation and ETE needs, and prisoners in the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) survey said addressing these were two key factors in helping them to not reoffend⁴. In the SPCR survey, those who had been homeless prior to custody and those who reported needing help to find accommodation were more likely to be reconvicted. Many prisoners have a poor educational and/or employment background, and those who had not been in employment prior to custody, had been receiving benefits or did not have any qualifications were more likely to reoffend.

² Ministry of Justice (2012) Research Summary 3/12. *Accommodation, homelessness and reoffending of prisoners: Results from the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) survey*, and Ministry of Justice (2012) *The pre-custody employment, training and education status of newly sentenced prisoner. Results from the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) longitudinal cohort study of prisoners.*

³ Ministry of Justice (2014) Proven Re-offending Statistics Quarterly Bulletin. April 2011 to March 2012, England and Wales

⁴ Ministry of Justice (2012) Research Summary 3/12. *Accommodation, homelessness and reoffending of prisoners: Results from the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) survey*, and Ministry of Justice (2012) *The pre-custody employment, training and education status of newly sentenced prisoner. Results from the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) longitudinal cohort study of prisoners.*

- I.4** Thirteen years ago, HMI Prisons and HMI Probation published a thematic report on resettlement, *Through the prison gate*⁵, which highlighted a range of issues, including the insufficient priority given to resettlement work and the need for better coordination across services providing resettlement support. Despite a range of changes aimed to reduce reoffending, many of the problems highlighted in the report remain.
- I.5** There are currently a range of changes in progress, including the drive to develop ‘working prisons’ with prisoners working a full week, and separate reviews on how better to meet the distinct needs of women and young adults⁶. In addition, the Ministry of Justice’s *Transforming Rehabilitation: A strategy for reform*⁷ sets out an ambitious programme of change in how resettlement work is delivered. Statutory rehabilitation will be extended to include offenders sentenced to less than 12 months imprisonment. Twenty-one Community Rehabilitation Companies will be formed to support a ‘through the gate’ resettlement service from 2015. These companies will be determined via competition and paid by their results. The new National Probation Service will be responsible solely for offenders who pose a high risk of harm to the public.

Methodology

- I.6** This thematic looked solely at resettlement work conducted with adult offenders who had received a determinate custodial sentence of more than 12 months and were therefore subject to probation supervision on release. Fieldwork looked at the identification of accommodation and education, training and employment (ETE) needs, and work in custody and in the community to address them. Offender management and resettlement services, the processes through which all resettlement pathway work should be managed and coordinated, were also examined.
- I.7** Fieldwork took place at eight prisons – five training prisons, two open prisons and one resettlement prison⁸. These included two women’s prisons and a young offender institution holding sentenced young adults aged 18–21. In addition to interviewing managers with responsibility for providing resettlement and ETE services, we selected a sample of 80 offenders (10 at each prison) to interview who were all due to be released within the next month, or as soon as possible thereafter. We also spoke to their offender supervisors and reviewed their offender management case files. On their day of release, we asked the offender supervisors to complete a short questionnaire with information on the accommodation and ETE that the offenders had in place on release. We then conducted follow-up interviews with offenders and their offender managers one month and then six months after their release. Response rates are detailed in the table below. As we were able to speak to either the offender or their offender manager in all cases, we had information on all 80 offenders who were still in the community at both follow-up stages. We also visited four probation trusts, selected according to where the largest proportion of offenders in our sample had been released, and spoke to managers with oversight of relevant services.

⁵ HMI Prisons and HMI Probation (2001) *Through the Prison Gate. A Joint Report by HM Inspectorates of Prisons and Probation*

⁶ The response to the young adult consultation is on hold pending the outcome of an independent review into the self-inflicted deaths of young adults in custody.

⁷ Ministry of Justice (2013) *Transforming Rehabilitation: A Strategy for Reform*

⁸ The resettlement prison visited had a similar function to an open prison but with a focus on resettling long-term prisoners. This is a separate classification to the prisons that have been designated as ‘resettlement prisons’ in line with the *Transforming Rehabilitation* strategy.

Prison fieldwork	Offender	Offender supervisor
One month before release	78 (98%)	73 (91%)
Day of release	/	60 (75%)
Community fieldwork	Offender	Offender manager
One month after release	63 (79%)	77 (96%)
Six months after release	57 (71%)	74 (93%)

Offender management and resettlement services

- 1.8** The joint aggregate Prison Offender Management Inspection (POMI) report⁹ published in December 2013 highlighted a range of issues around how the offender management model was delivered in prisons. This included the need to clarify an offender supervisor's role and better training and supervision for offender supervisors. The report recommended a review of the offender management model, particularly in light of the proposed changes set out in *Transforming Rehabilitation*¹⁰, and made other recommendations for action in the interim. Findings from the present thematic report further support the recommendations made, which have all been accepted or partially accepted by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).
- 1.9** Contact and the quality of relationships between offenders and their offender managers and offender supervisors varied. There were examples of offenders who told us that they had had no contact with their offender manager since being in custody, and others who had had no contact with their offender supervisor since their initial sentence plan meeting. This appeared to have had a limited impact on accommodation and ETE outcomes on the day of release, although offender managers were more involved in addressing accommodation and ETE needs post- than pre-release and offenders found their support important.
- 1.10** Oversight of progress against their sentence plan was often limited to annual reviews and many offenders said that they had just been left to 'get on with it', with little or no oversight from their offender supervisor. This meant that progress was reliant on offenders applying for services; although, for some, this was a positive step in terms of taking responsibility, it failed to take into account the fact that some offenders would have lacked the motivation or ability to do this without support. The needs of other offenders were picked up during routine assessments carried out by other departments or agencies, but this meant that the work was carried out in isolation from other departments rather than as part of a coordinated and sequenced approach and this meant offenders could be missed. Arrangements for pre-release boards varied and pre-release courses often started too late in an offender's sentence to be effective.
- 1.11** Although all prisons had resettlement strategies to drive their resettlement work, these needed to be more focused on the needs of their specific population and to make better use of the knowledge and experience of external agencies, including probation services.
- 1.12** Information sharing across departments and organisations working with an offender were poor and undermined a 'whole prison' approach to resettlement work and the quality and coordination of work undertaken with each offender. This was better at open and existing resettlement prisons, where resettlement was more often viewed as the focus for their work by all staff, and where we found examples of good practice in resettlement surgeries/services. Outcomes were better for those released from open prisons, with all 30 offenders in our sample living with family/friends or in their own place, and two-thirds having a job or participating in education/training six months after release.

⁹ HMI Probation and HMI Prisons (2013) *Third Aggregate Report on Offender Management in Prisons*

¹⁰ Ministry of Justice (2013) *Transforming Rehabilitation: A Strategy for Reform*

- I.13** Measurement of outcomes on release was limited and often crude. There was no follow-up with probation trusts on longer-term outcomes following release to inform service provision. At present, prisons cannot be confident that the services they offer are effective in addressing the actual needs of their population and improving outcomes. This should include addressing the distinct needs of subgroups within their population such as young adults, who in our sample had less positive outcomes. Overall, on the day of release, only 16% of our sample had both a place to live and a known education/training placement or job arranged. Six months after release, all those who were still in the community continued to have accommodation – although it was not always permanent or suitable – and half had a job or education/training in place. Six had been recalled and one rearrested – five of these were young adults aged 18–25, including a young adult woman.
- I.14** Other than at open and resettlement prisons, release on temporary licence (ROTL) was underused as a resettlement tool. Those in our sample who had undergone ROTL were positive about it and were more likely to be in ETE six months after their release than those who had not. However, when ROTL was granted, it needed to be more structured and better linked to resettlement needs and supporting plans for release.
- I.15** Offender managers did not always receive all relevant information from the prison on an offender's release, and they felt that this adversely impacted their ability to manage the offender in the community. Not all offenders had an initial sentence plan for their licence period one month after their release and, where they did exist, there were some cases where these had not been updated from the offender's prison sentence plan and contained targets that were prison specific.
- I.16** Offenders found changes in their offender manager disruptive as it meant they had to build a relationship with a new person. Eleven offenders had had a change of offender manager at the point of release – which seemed the worst time for this to be done. Although, for some, this was mitigated by an effective handover by probation staff and the new offender manager proactively and quickly building a relationship with the offender, this was not always the case. When the change on release was due to the offender relocating, this should have been foreseen and better managed to reduce the disruption.

Accommodation

- I.17** Despite accommodation needs being assessed on an offender's arrival in custody, little was done until close to their release. At the time of our prison fieldwork (about one month before their release), one-fifth told us that they did not know where they would be living. As well as being stressful, this impacted on other resettlement plans, and two offenders had been unable to get early release as they did not have an address arranged.
- I.18** Support to find accommodation was provided in prisons via prison resettlement workers, probation trusts or third-sector organisations. In our sample, three had been released homeless, including a young adult with 'leaving care' status (he had been recalled to custody by the one-month follow-up stage). Although all three had been given help to organise a roof over their head on release with the support of their offender managers, this was only temporary, emergency accommodation. Other than the nine individuals who had gone out to approved premises – which was required because of their level of risk rather than as a source of accommodation – and the one who had gone out to supported accommodation, all other offenders told us that they had arranged their accommodation themselves.
- I.19** The largest proportion of our sample had moved in with family or friends on release, even though several of them had wanted their own place. This arrangement was not always suitable – for example, some offenders were living in overcrowded accommodation and one was living

with criminal associates – but there was a lack of alternatives. Some of those who wanted to find their own place had been advised to live with family initially until they found somewhere else. This was because of the range of barriers they faced in accessing social or affordable housing on release, due both to general shortages and being an ex-offender.

- I.20** Although, prior to release, all offenders planning to live with family or friends were positive about this, following release many reported feeling that they were a burden, either financially or in terms of causing the accommodation to be overcrowded. A fifth of the sample had been able to return to their own place as family/partners/friends had maintained payment of their mortgages/rent while they had been in custody. This group seemed to be among the most settled and reintegrated in our sample at the six-month stage – 10 of the 18 who had their own place on release were women.
- I.21** Prisons had carried out limited work with offenders and their family/partners/friends to maintain these relationships or support families. We found no examples of family members or friends attending sentence planning reviews, even in cases where the offender was planning to live with them. There was a reliance on the offender maintaining contact via telephone calls, mail and visits, although some had also received ROTL for home leave (mainly from open prisons). However, offenders reported barriers to maintaining contact, such as the expense of telephone calls or being held at a prison too far from home to receive visits. In addition, little structured family work took place, even when family problems were noted in offender assessment system (OASys) assessments. We found several examples of relationships breaking down either while the offender was in custody or following release, and this had led to needing to find alternative accommodation. This highlights the importance of community links – particularly relationships with family and friends – to successful reintegration.
- I.22** In addition, not enough consideration was given to offenders who had children, particularly for those who were primary carers, and how this would impact on their accommodation needs.
- I.23** Jobcentre Plus workers provided offenders with a good level of support to apply for the benefits to which they were entitled, but there were delays on release in receiving these payments, even when they had been applied for in advance.
- I.24** Monitoring data of accommodation outcomes on release were misleading as they only recorded whether the offender had a known place to stay on their first night of release, with no detail on suitability, sustainability or who had arranged it. At the six-month stage, 42 of our sample were living with family or friends, although several still wanted to find their own place. Twenty-four were in their own place, two were in shared houses, three were in supported accommodation, six had been recalled and one had been rearrested. Almost half had moved since their release; for a third of these this was due to a breakdown of arrangements or continuing ad hoc, temporary arrangements.

Education, training and employment

- I.25** At the time of our fieldwork, ETE provision in custody was in the process of being revised under the Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) 4 contracting arrangements, and most heads of learning and skills had ambitious plans. There were some impressive examples of nationwide employer engagement which benefitted some offenders. However, more needed to be done to tailor ETE provision in prisons to labour market needs, to create tangible employment opportunities for offenders on release. In some prisons, too much provision was at a basic level, which often did not meet employers' minimum standards, and there was little ETE available for those who had already gained high levels of qualifications.

- I.26** Offenders' ETE needs were assessed on arrival in custody, and allocation to ETE took these assessments into account. All offenders in our sample had been involved in ETE during their sentence and many had obtained qualifications. However, only three-fifths felt that this would help them on release, and this was often in terms of general skills, such as punctuality and team working, rather than being directly linked to what they wanted to do on release. Despite the limited relevance of some of the ETE delivered to those in our sample, offenders recognised that these general skills were important in improving their employability and we felt that they should be better recognised and promoted by those working with offenders.
- I.27** There were poor links between prison ETE providers and offender management units. This meant that work to address an offender's ETE needs was not coordinated within an offender's sentence plan. Even though offenders underwent an education assessment on arrival, the ETE section in OASys assessments was often based solely on information provided by the offender, as were updates on their progress for their sentence plan reviews. Continuity of ETE while in custody was also an issue, with little thought given to the progression of qualifications or continuity if an offender was transferred to another prison – transfers were often linked to population management rather than addressing resettlement needs. As such, offenders were sometimes transferred mid-course or to a prison that did not offer the courses they wanted to do. Systems such as the Learner Record Service were not well used to record achievements and meant that on transfer and on release there was, again, an over-reliance on the offender to report on what they had accomplished.
- I.28** Careers advice was provided by the National Careers Service. National Careers Service staff saw most offenders on arrival at the prison but any further support was given only at the request of the offender, so less motivated or less capable offenders, who needed the support most, were less likely to access the service. The quality of the careers advice and guidance provided was variable and needed to be better tailored to the individual needs of offenders rather than limited to the three interventions in 12 months specified in the National Careers Service contract at the time of our fieldwork – the contract has since been revised to allow more flexibility in contact according to offender needs. Although most prisons had a 'virtual campus' on site for use as a learning resource or to search for jobs, few offenders were able to use the facility, mostly because the prison's IT infrastructure did not support it or due to a lack of staff to supervise it. This hindered offenders' ability to find or apply for jobs, training or education courses themselves prior to release.
- I.29** At the time of our prison fieldwork, most offenders told us that they wanted to work on release, and almost half wanted to undertake further education or training. About a quarter of our sample said that they had arranged work for their release through family/friends or previous employers – although some of this had fallen through prior to their release – and only two had a confirmed place on a training course. By the time of release, many had an appointment in place with ETE services – usually Jobcentre Plus or probation trust ETE workers. Some providers felt that offenders needed to prioritise addressing other issues such as substance misuse, whereas others felt that having ETE in place on release reduced offenders' risk of reoffending. This needed to be determined according to individual needs; however, the reality was that barriers to finding ETE resulted in only a small proportion – 16% – of our sample having a known job or training place arranged on the day of their release. Four offenders had been able to continue working for an employer they had worked with on ROTL before release. No offenders, even at the six-month stage, were working in the trade they had been learning in prison, although some had/were undertaking related training in the community to build on their qualification levels.
- I.30** Six months after release, half of those in our sample still in the community did not have ETE in place. For some, this was linked to the instability of their accommodation, in that either the offender was prioritising finding a permanent place to live or changes in address had made it difficult to apply for ETE. Those who had ETE in place were more likely to have known what

they wanted to do before release, have had ETE arranged on release and to have had ROTL while in prison.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To Ministers

1. Ministers in the Ministry of Justice and Department of Work and Pensions should initiate a review of policy to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to offenders obtaining private rented accommodation that undermine the *Transforming Rehabilitation* strategy, and that offenders can obtain the necessary advice and support to do this.

To the CEO of NOMS

2. A national strategy should be developed to better help offenders maintain and repair relationships with their families and, where appropriate, involve the family and friends of offenders in the rehabilitation process.
3. The main recommendation we made in our Third Aggregate Report of Offender Management in Prisons published in December 2013 should be implemented in full:

A major policy review should be conducted by the Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service, examining the execution and functioning of the Offender Management Model in prisons, to ensure a better match between the requirements of the model and the resources and skills available in prisons to deliver it.

4. Work should be undertaken in consultation with employers, Ofsted and other interested parties to review the OLASS specification, to ensure future contracts give greater emphasis to a whole prison approach to the development of employability skills, and to provide for a greater range of attainment levels.

To prison governors and directors, community rehabilitation companies and other resettlement services providers

5. The key lessons from this thematic report which should be considered by all the agencies involved in the rehabilitation process at the local level and that will in due course be reflected in HMI Prisons' inspection criteria or expectations include:
 - The central role of positive family relationships in the rehabilitation process
 - the need to co-ordinate work with offender's families, resettlement provision provided by CRCs, ETE provided under the OLASS contract and by the prison directly, and the other activities of the prison as part of a whole prison approach to resettlement
 - robust information sharing arrangements are required between departments within prisons, between prisons, and between prisons and community services
 - the importance of the effective management of transfers between prisons to ensure continuity in the delivery of sentence plans
 - the need for effective monitoring of sustainable accommodation and ETE outcomes to evaluate and develop service provision
 - where appropriate, the value of effective arrangements to ensure that offenders use the opportunities provided by open conditions and well-managed ROTL to develop experience, and relationships, in accordance with their sentence plan.

- prison resettlement strategies should address the specific needs of women, parents, offenders who have been looked after children, and other groups with needs or entitlements that differ from the majority.

Section 2. Background to the report

Aim of this report

- 2.1** ‘Resettlement’ is a major focus of all prison inspections. HMI Prisons inspects prisons against independent criteria known as Expectations¹¹, which are encompassed within four healthy prison tests: safety, respect, purposeful activity and resettlement. Prison inspections are conducted with other partner inspectorates, including Ofsted and HMI Probation. In HMI Prisons’ Expectations, resettlement is defined as follows:

‘Prisoners are prepared for their release back into the community and effectively helped to reduce their likelihood of reoffending’.

- 2.2** The Ministry of Justice’s *Transforming Rehabilitation* strategy sets out plans to reduce reoffending from April 2015 by extending community supervision to prisoners sentenced to less than 12 months imprisonment and by making radical changes to how resettlement services will be provided to all sentenced prisoners. This thematic report focuses on offenders already subject to offender management arrangements and probation supervision on release, in order to identify the provision that currently works well and the challenges in delivering effective resettlement services in prisons and through the gate into the community on release. In line with what many previous studies and offenders themselves have reported as the most important areas for supporting their successful reintegration on release, we focused on the areas of accommodation and education, training and employment (ETE)¹² – although we would expect these to be addressed within a coordinated approach, alongside other resettlement work. We hope that the learning from this report will be considered and built in to the delivery of the *Transforming Rehabilitation* agenda.

Resettlement needs

- 2.3** The proven reoffending rate for offenders remains high – for those released from custody between April 2011 and March 2012 this was 45.8%¹³. Reoffending rates varied by age and gender, with a higher rate for men than for women, and peaked among young people/young adults, reducing as the age of the offender increased. These rates were also higher for those who had served sentences of less than 12 months than those who had served a determinate sentence of more than 12 months – 57.7% compared with 34.4%¹⁴.
- 2.4** In addition to these static factors (those which are fixed or historical, such as gender or sentence length), there are a range of dynamic factors (those that change, such as level of education or attitude to offending) that research has shown are linked to offending and reoffending. In 2002, the Social Exclusion Unit published a comprehensive report¹⁵ which set out the key areas of social exclusion and needs frequently found in the prisoner population that were linked to reoffending. These were developed into seven ‘resettlement pathways’¹⁶, key

¹¹ HMI Prisons (2012) *Expectations: Criteria for Assessing the Treatment of Prisoners and Conditions in Prisons*

¹² Ministry of Justice (2012) Research Summary 3/12. *Accommodation, homelessness and reoffending of prisoners: Results from the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) survey*, and Ministry of Justice (2012) *The pre-custody employment, training and education status of newly sentenced prisoner. Results from the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) longitudinal cohort study of prisoners.*

¹³ Ministry of Justice (2014) *Proven Re-offending Statistics Quarterly Bulletin*. April 2011 to March 2012, England and Wales

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Social Exclusion Unit (2002) *Reducing Re-offending by Ex-prisoners*

¹⁶ Home Office (2004) *Reducing Re-offending National Action Plan*.

areas of need that should be addressed to help reduce reoffending – these are listed below with key findings from more recent research.

1. Accommodation

Findings from the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) survey found that 15% of prisoners reported being homeless prior to custody and almost two-fifths needed help with finding accommodation: these prisoners were more likely to be reconvicted¹⁷. Three-fifths of prisoners in the SPCR survey said that having a stable place to live would help them to not reoffend. Although accommodation may not in itself reduce reoffending, it has been described as ‘a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for the reduction of reoffending’¹⁸.

2. Education, training and employment (ETE)

Prisoners often have a poor educational background – 59% of prisoners in the SPCR survey said they regularly played truant at school and two-fifths said that they had been permanently excluded or expelled¹⁹. In the SPCR survey only a third of prisoners said that they had been employed in the four weeks before entering custody and this was lower for women than men, with women also earning less in their last job²⁰. Almost half (47%) did not have any qualifications and 13% of SPCR prisoners said they had never had a job. Not being employed prior to custody, receiving benefits and not having a qualification was linked to a higher level of reoffending. Prisoners appreciated this, with 68% agreeing that having a job would help them to stop reoffending²¹. However, almost half said they needed help to find a job and two-fifths said they needed help with education and improving work skills.

3. Mental and physical health

Findings from the SPCR prisoner survey were used to estimate the proportion of prisoners who had a disability, including mental health: 36% were considered to have a disability²². This rose to 55% if anxiety and depression were included. Those suffering from anxiety or depression were more likely to be reconvicted in the year following their release, but there was no difference in reconviction rates by the two-year stage.

4. Drugs and alcohol

A high level of prisoners report a problem with substance misuse. In the SPCR survey 64% reported using drugs and 22% said they drank alcohol every day in the month prior to custody: both these groups had a higher reconviction rate²³. Those with substance misuse issues have also been found to be more likely to have accommodation needs²⁴.

5. Finance, benefit and debt

In a study by the Prison Reform Trust and Unlock, half the prisoners interviewed reported debt issues, and of these a third said they owed money for housing – a

¹⁷ Ministry of Justice (2012) Research Summary 3/12. *Accommodation, homelessness and reoffending of prisoners: Results from the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) survey.*

¹⁸ Maguire & Nolan (2007) *Accommodation and related services for ex-prisoners*, as cited in Ministry of Justice (2013) *Transforming Rehabilitation: a summary of evidence on reducing reoffending*, pg. 18.

¹⁹ Ministry of Justice (2012) *Prisoners' childhood and family backgrounds: Results from the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) longitudinal cohort study of prisoners.*

²⁰ Ministry of Justice (2012) *The pre-custody employment, training and education status of newly sentenced prisoner. Results from the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) longitudinal cohort study of prisoners.*

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ministry of Justice (2012) *Estimating the prevalence of disability amongst prisoners: results from the Surveying Prisoners Crime Reduction (SPCR) survey.*

²³ Ministry of Justice (2010) *Compendium of reoffending statistics and analysis: MoJ Statistical Bulletin and accompanying tables.*

²⁴ Ministry of Justice (2012) Research Summary 3/12. *Accommodation, homelessness and reoffending of prisoners: Results from the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) survey.*

particular issue as it would impact on them being able to secure accommodation on release²⁵. Over half of the 29 families of people with convictions interviewed said they had needed to borrow money since their family member had been convicted.

6. Children and families of offenders

Many prisoners come from a troubled family background. For example, in the SPCR survey a quarter of prisoners said that they had spent time in care, two-fifths had observed violence in the home as a child and the same proportion said they had a relative convicted for a non-motoring offence²⁶.

Just over half of prisoners reported having a child under the age of 18²⁷. A high proportion (88%) of SPCR prisoners said they wanted their family to be a part of their life, with two-fifths feeling family support would help them to stop offending. Other research has found that those who received visits in prison were less likely to reoffend and more likely to have accommodation and ETE in place on release²⁸.

7. Attitudes, thinking and behaviour

Pro-criminal attitudes have been linked to reoffending, whereas offenders who are motivated and have someone who believes in them and their ability to change supports desistance from offending²⁹. In the SPCR survey two-thirds of prisoners said they were hoping to get help with their offending behaviour while in prison³⁰.

Resettlement services in prison

2.5 In 2001, HMI Prisons and HMI Probation published a thematic report on the area of resettlement, entitled *Through the prison gate*³¹. This highlighted a range of issues in the provision of resettlement services, including:

- resettlement work and outcomes being given insufficient priority by prisons and probation services;
- the need for better liaison between different prisons when a prisoner is transferred and between prisons and probation services to prevent work being duplicated or not carried out;
- the need to make better use of community and third-sector organisations to deliver interventions;
- the lack of resettlement work being conducted with short-term prisoners, despite these prisoners having a greater level of need and higher reoffending rate.

2.6 Since the publication of the thematic report, a range of changes has been implemented, aimed at reducing reoffending rates and improving integrated working between prison and probation staff. This has included the formation of a National Offender Management Service (NOMS) that incorporated the Prison Service and Probation Service, and the introduction of the offender management model. These changes were aimed at facilitating the end-to-end case management of offenders throughout their sentence, whether in prison or in the community. However, the

²⁵ Prison Reform Trust & Unlock (2010) *Time is Money: financial responsibility after prison*.

²⁶ Ministry of Justice (2012) *Prisoners' childhood and family backgrounds: Results from the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) longitudinal cohort study of prisoners*.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ministry of Justice (2008) *Research Summary 5. Factors linked to reoffending: a one-year follow-up of prisoners who took part in the Resettlement Surveys 2001, 2003 and 2004*.

²⁹ As cited in Ministry of Justice (2013) *Transforming Rehabilitation: a summary of evidence on reducing reoffending*.

³⁰ Ministry of Justice (2010) *Compendium of reoffending statistics and analysis: MoJ Statistical Bulletin and accompanying tables*.

³¹ HMI Prisons and HMI Probation (2001) *Through the Prison Gate. A Joint Report by HM Inspectorates of Prisons and Probation*

offender management model has never been rolled out to include all offenders as initially planned. HMI Prisons' 2012–13 annual report summarised inspection findings on resettlement under the chapter title 'Resettlement outcomes need to improve'³². Despite increased involvement of third-sector and community organisations and changes to how resettlement work is being delivered, many of the problems highlighted in the *Through the Prison Gate* thematic report, published 13 years ago, remain. A thematic by HMI Prisons also highlighted the need to identify and address the resettlement needs of remand prisoners, who make up about 15% of the prison population at any one time.³³

Current changes in progress

2.7 The *Breaking the Cycle*³⁴ (2010) Green Paper set out a commitment to introduce 'working prisons', with plans to extend ETE provision so that prisoners work a full working week. As part of this, in May 2012 the One3One Solutions enterprise was launched to increase the level of work available in prisons³⁵. In addition, the contract under which prison education is provided was reviewed and access to the National Careers Service was introduced to prisons; and a 'Day One' mandation to the Government's Work Programme for all those leaving prison and claiming Jobseeker's Allowance was introduced in March 2012.

2.8 The Green Paper also presaged the introduction of payment by results initiatives, with a financial incentive for service providers to meet the reducing reoffending objectives set in their contract. The first pilot took place at HMP Peterborough; our inspection of this establishment in 2011 found that the pilot, which was in its early stages, looked promising and provided an impressive range of services for men serving less than 12 months, and included ongoing support in the community following release³⁶. However, the initiative had not been integrated into the prison's everyday work, which meant that the prison was not taking full advantage of the benefits that the pilot could provide, and little was being done with the men who were not included in this project. Interim evaluation findings published by the Ministry of Justice also supported the pilot and showed a fall in the frequency of reconviction events among the men included in it³⁷.

2.9 In early 2013, the Ministry of Justice consulted on further proposals to reform resettlement services for offenders leaving custody³⁸. The strategy to take this forward was published in May 2013. The following reforms are set out in the report³⁹:

- 'For the first time in recent history, new statutory rehabilitation extended to all 50,000 of the most prolific group – offenders sentenced to less than 12 months in custody;
- A fundamental change to the way we organise the prison estate, in order to put in place an unprecedented nationwide "through the gate" resettlement service, meaning most offenders are given continuous support by one provider from custody into the community;
- Opening up the market to a diverse range of new rehabilitation providers, so that we get the best out of the public, voluntary and private sectors, at the local as well as national level;
- New payment incentives for market providers to focus relentlessly on reforming offenders, giving providers flexibility to do what works and freedom from bureaucracy, but only paying them in full for real reductions in reoffending;

³² HMI Prisons (2013) *HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales Annual Report 2012–13*

³³ HMI Prisons (2012) *Remand Prisoners: A Thematic Review*

³⁴ Ministry of Justice (2010) *Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders*

³⁵ <http://www.justice.gov.uk/about/noms/working-prisons>

³⁶ HMI Prisons (2011) *Report on an Announced Inspection of HMP Peterborough (Men) 4–8 April 2011*

³⁷ Ministry of Justice (2013) *Transforming Rehabilitation: A Strategy for Reform*. Annex F

³⁸ Ministry of Justice (2013) *Transforming Rehabilitation: A Revolution in the Way we Manage Offenders*

³⁹ Ministry of Justice (2013) *Transforming Rehabilitation: A Strategy for Reform*

- A new national public sector probation service, working to protect the public and building upon the expertise and professionalism which are already in place’.
- 2.10** As part of this, the Ministry of Justice has designated 89 prisons as ‘resettlement prisons’, so that most offenders can be released from a prison in their local area and work with the providers in the community who supported them in custody. The new National Probation Service will continue to be responsible for statutory court activity but will solely supervise offenders who pose a high risk of harm to the public. For all other offenders, regional Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) will commission voluntary and private sector providers to offer ‘through the gate’ support. These CRCs have been in place since June 2014 and are likely to be required to have services fully operational by April 2015.
- 2.11** On arrival to custody, all offenders will have a basic custody screening tool completed to determine their resettlement needs, which will then be used to develop a resettlement plan setting out how these needs will be met. Most short-sentenced offenders will remain in resettlement prisons in their area until their release; most of those serving longer sentences will spend at least the three months before release at a resettlement prison. It is estimated that between 60% and 80% of all prisoners will complete their sentences in a resettlement prison linked to the Contract Package Area into which they will be released⁴⁰.
- 2.12** The government has also set out a strategy of changes aimed at better meeting the distinct needs of women offenders, who make up a small proportion of those in contact with the Criminal Justice System and represent 5% of the prison population⁴¹. This has included the development of an Advisory Board on Female Offenders with cross-government and key stakeholder membership, which has linked into the *Transforming Rehabilitation* programme and aims to ensure that female prisoners’ needs are considered within these reforms.
- 2.13** In addition, at the end of 2013 the government consulted on custody arrangements for young adults aged 18–21, both in terms of where they are held and how they should be managed and their needs met⁴². The Ministry of Justice has put on hold its response to the consultation until the outcome of an independent review into the self-inflicted deaths of young adults in custody has been completed.
- 2.14** Overall, this sets out an ambitious programme of change and is no small task. On 28 March 2014, the prison population stood at 84,443⁴³. Between October 2012 and September 2013, 80,813 prisoners were released from prison, having served a determinate prison sentence⁴⁴. Almost half (48%) had been serving more than 12 months, with the rest (52%) serving less than 12 months. Within this period, 8% (6,658) of determinate-sentence discharges were female prisoners, with only a third having been sentenced to more than 12 months⁴⁵.

⁴⁰ Ministry of Justice (2013) Target Operating Model Rehabilitation programme p.29

⁴¹ Ministry of Justice (2014) Population Bulletin – Weekly 28th March 2014

⁴² Ministry of Justice (2013) *Transforming management of young adults in custody*.

⁴³ Ministry of Justice (2014) Population Bulletin – Weekly 28th March 2014

⁴⁴ Ministry of Justice (2014) Offender Management Statistics Quarterly - July – September 2013 (and supporting tables)

⁴⁵ Ibid

Section 3. Methodology

- 3.1** This report focused solely on adult offenders who had received a determinate custodial sentence of more than 12 months as they were all subject to probation supervision on release from custody. Fieldwork focused on the identification of accommodation and education, training and employment (ETE) needs and work in custody and in the community to address them. Offender management and resettlement services were also examined as the processes through which all resettlement pathway work is meant to be managed.
- 3.2** The findings in this report come from fieldwork conducted in prisons and probation trusts in England, as detailed below.

Phase 1

- 3.3** Fieldwork was conducted at eight prisons holding sentenced adult offenders in January and February 2013. Prisons were selected to include a range of the different functional types of establishment that most often held offenders sentenced to more than 12 months. Fieldwork was conducted at:
- five training prisons⁴⁶
 - two open prisons⁴⁷
 - one resettlement prison⁴⁸.
- 3.4** These included two women's prisons (a training and an open prison) and one young offender institution (YOI) holding sentenced young adults aged 18–21. They were clustered within four areas – the East Midlands, South-East, South-West and North-East – to ensure the number of probation trusts included in the community fieldwork was more manageable.
- 3.5** Prison fieldwork included:

Strategic information for each fieldwork site

- An interview with the head of resettlement (or equivalent). This looked at the strategic management and provision for the accommodation and ETE resettlement pathways, as well as the use of release on temporary licence (ROTL) and links with probation trusts and community agencies.
- An interview with the head of learning and skills and review of ETE provision. This focused on the overall provision for ETE within prisons, and how needs were assessed and met during custody and on release.

⁴⁶ Training prisons are closed prisons that hold medium- to long-term sentenced prisoners with an emphasis on providing workshops and training.

⁴⁷ Open prisons hold category D prisoners near the end of their sentence to support their reintegration to the community. Some prisoners will 'work out' in the community, returning to the prison afterwards.

⁴⁸ The resettlement prison visited had a similar function to an open prison but with a focus on resettling long-term prisoners. This is a separate classification to the prisons that have been designated as 'resettlement prisons' in line with the *Transforming Rehabilitation* strategy.

Offender case sample

We selected a sample of 80 adult offenders who were sentenced to determinate sentences of more than 12 months and were due to be released within a month of the fieldwork (or, if there were not enough offenders being released this imminently, as close to this timeframe as possible). Ten offenders were selected at each fieldwork site. We then aimed to conduct the following.

- Interviews with each offender to look at: the level of contact and support received from offender managers and supervisors; the support from education and resettlement services for arranging accommodation and ETE on release; how involved these prisoners and their families (where relevant and appropriate) had been in making arrangements for accommodation and ETE; their knowledge of the plans in place in these resettlement areas on release, and their views on them; and their knowledge of ROTL, including eligibility, and experiences of applying for or receiving it.
- Documentary analysis of the offender management case files for the 80 offenders in our interview sample. This looked at the plans that had been made for accommodation and ETE; the work that was being conducted in prison to support this, and any use of, or decisions concerning, ROTL; and involvement of probation trusts.
- Interviews with the offender supervisor/case workers of the offenders in our sample. This included collecting information on the individual cases in our interview sample and on their general experiences of accommodation, ETE and ROTL provision, and working with community probation trusts.
- Asking offender supervisors to complete a short questionnaire at the end of our fieldwork, to inform us of the accommodation and ETE that each of the 80 offenders had gone out to on the day of their release.

The 80 offenders in our sample had the following characteristics.

- Sixty (75%) offenders were male and 20 (25%) were female.
- The average age was 33, ranging from 18 to 69. Thirteen (16%) were young adults (aged 18–21). The 10 young adult men were at a dedicated YOI at the time of our fieldwork, and the three young adult women were integrated within an adult prison.
- Fifty-eight (73%) said that they were white (British, Irish or other), 11 (14%) that they were black, seven (9%) that they were of mixed heritage and four (5%) that they were Asian.
- Eight (10%) said they were a foreign national.
- Eight (10%) considered themselves to have a disability.
- Twenty-four (30%) were 'in-scope' for offender management and 56 (70%) were 'out of scope'. Due to their sentence length, all came under offender management arrangements.
- The average length of time in their current establishment was just under a year, ranging from 44 days to just over four years.
- The average time from our interview until their release was 31 days, ranging from two days to two months.

In total, 78 offenders and 73 offender supervisors were interviewed during the prison fieldwork. Two offenders refused to be interviewed. Seven offender supervisors were unavailable for interview at the time of the fieldwork. Case files were reviewed for all 80 offenders in our sample.

We received 60 day-of-release questionnaires from offender supervisors, a response rate of 75%.

As the 80 offenders in our sample were released to 23 different probation trusts, it was not possible to visit all of them. Fieldwork took place at four probation trusts and these were selected according to where the largest proportion of offenders in our sample had been released. The following was conducted at each trust:

- interviews with strategic and operational managers with responsibility for accommodation and ETE services
- a review of relevant documentation, including policies and service level agreements.

Phase 2

3.6 The second phase of this thematic work aimed to follow up on the 80 offenders we spoke to during our prison fieldwork. We aimed to conduct the following:

Follow-up interviews for the offender case sample

- Interviews with the offender manager and offender a month after release, using a questionnaire focusing on key questions in relation to accommodation, ETE and ROTL. We also asked the offender manager general questions about accommodation and ETE services and ROTL. Where possible, these interviews were conducted in person for those released to the four probation trusts we visited; all others were conducted by telephone.
- Telephone interviews with the offender manager and offender six months after release, again focusing on key questions in relation to accommodation, ETE and ROTL.

One-month interviews

During the one-month follow-up interviews, we spoke to 63 offenders and 77 offender managers, a response rate of 79% and 96%, respectively. Seven offenders were unavailable to be interviewed, two refused, three had been detained in custody for immigration reasons so had not been released, four had been recalled to prison by this point, and one had been rearrested and detained. The offender managers we were unable to speak to managed an immigration case, a recall case and the case of an offender who had been rearrested.

Six month interviews

During the six-month follow-up interviews, we spoke to 57 offenders and 74 offender managers, a response rate of 71% and 93%, respectively. At this stage, 10 offenders were unavailable to be interviewed (including two whose licence period had expired), four refused, six had been recalled to prison, one had been rearrested and two continued to be held in custody for immigration reasons. The offender managers we were unable to speak to managed three of the recall cases, two immigration cases and the offender who had been rearrested.

Table 1: Interview response rates for Phase 1 and Phase 2

Prison fieldwork	Offender	Offender supervisor
One month before release	78 (98%)	73 (91%)
Day of release	/	60 (75%)
Community fieldwork	Offender	Offender manager
One month after release	63 (79%)	77 (96%)
Six months after release	57 (71%)	74 (93%)

We were able to collect information from either the offender or offender manager for all individuals in our sample who were still in the community at the one-month and six-month stages.

Section 4. Offender management and resettlement services

Expected outcomes

Resettlement underpins the work of the whole prison, supported by strategic partnerships in the community and informed by assessment of offender risk and need. Planning for an offender's release starts on their arrival at the prison. All offenders have a sentence plan based on an individual assessment of risk and need, which is regularly reviewed and implemented throughout their time in custody. Offenders, together with all relevant staff, are involved in drawing up and reviewing plans. The level of contact with offenders in custody is sufficient to contribute to the post-release planning and case management to ensure a seamless transition into the community. A timely and informed sentence plan is completed and implemented on release from custody on licence.

Context

- 4.1** This chapter looks generally at offender management and how resettlement pathway work was overseen and monitored in custody and on release. Work to assess and meet the accommodation and education, training and employment (ETE) needs should be incorporated within offender management processes.
- 4.2** The offender management model (OMM) was introduced by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and aimed to ensure an 'end-to-end' approach to managing offenders, with an individual offender manager overseeing the case management for an offender's full sentence, whether served in the community or in custody, and including any licence period. The OMM was rolled out gradually and was first applied to offenders in custody sentenced to more than 12 months and assessed to be of high or very high risk of harm to the public; prolific and other priority offenders; and those serving an indeterminate sentence for public protection in phases 2 and 3. These offenders were described as being 'in-scope' for the OMM, which meant that a community-based offender manager should be responsible for their assessment and sentence management, with a custody-based offender supervisor undertaking the day-to-day delivery of the sentence plan in custody.
- 4.3** Prison Service Instruction 14/2012: 'Manage the Sentence; Pre- and Post-Release from Custody' introduced transitional arrangements and extended offender management to all adult offenders sentenced to more than 12 months and all young adults (aged 18–21 years) with more than four weeks left to serve in custody from October 2012. For offenders who do not meet the criteria to be 'in-scope' for phases 2 or 3 of the OMM (so are 'out-of-scope'), assessment and sentence planning is the responsibility of the custody-based offender supervisor. However, all of these offenders should still have an offender manager assigned to them at the start of the sentence who, at a minimum, should be actively involved in their pre-release activity and plans in preparation for taking on the responsibility for sentence planning during the offender's licence period.
- 4.4** For offenders who come under the OMM (which was the case for all offenders in our sample), the offender assessment system (OASys) is used to assess their individual needs and risk of harm to the public. The assessment is based on static (historical or fixed factors such as age and offending history) and dynamic (those that can be changed, such as attitudes to offending, or gaining qualifications) factors. It should be used to develop the sentence plan, which should

identify targets and coordinate the work that the offender should complete during their sentence to address their offending behaviour and support successful reintegration into the community on release. This therefore incorporates resettlement pathway work, including the identification and addressing of accommodation and ETE needs, which are the focus of this report.

- 4.5** Release on temporary licence (ROTL) should also be considered within this process. Prison Service Order (PSO) 6300 describes ROTL as ‘the mechanism that enables prisoners to participate in necessary activities, outside of the prison establishment, that directly contribute to their resettlement into the community and their development of a purposeful, law-abiding life’. This includes paid or voluntary work, town visits and home visits to maintain family links. Our review of ROTL failures⁴⁹ supported its use as an important resettlement tool, but made several recommendations required to improve the appropriate risk assessment and management of ROTL.

Our findings

- 4.6** In our sample, there were 24 (30%) offenders who were in scope for phases 2 or 3 of the OMM and 56 (70%) who were out of scope but were included under the transitional OMM arrangements outlined in PSI 14/2012. As set out in the context to this section, whether an offender is in/out of scope should determine who is responsible for their sentence management. In practice, we found little distinction being made between whether an offender was in/out of scope for phases 2 or 3 of the OMM, and some offender supervisors and offender managers were confused about this differentiation. As our findings applied equally to those in/out of scope, we have not separated out responses for these two groups.

Joint aggregate Prison Offender Management Inspections (POMI) report

- 4.7** In December 2013, HMI Probation and HMI Prisons published their third joint report on offender management in prisons⁵⁰. This covered findings from inspections conducted between April 2012 and March 2013. Key points relevant to this thematic report are detailed below and were further supported by the findings from this thematic.

Offender management

- Resettlement was often seen as a separate function rather than being incorporated into offender management.
- Training in the offender supervisor role was inadequate, which led to a lack of understanding and/or clarification of what this role comprised.
- Both seconded probation staff and prison officers were allocated as offender supervisors; however, there was a two-tier approach to the management and supervision of offender supervisors that failed to assist most of the prison officers in improving their performance.
- The quality and effectiveness of engagement with offenders varied considerably.
- Face-to-face work with offenders was not viewed as a priority and, when it took place, it rarely involved structured work. However, there was evidence that probation offender supervisors were generally more proactive in their engagement with offenders.

⁴⁹ HMI Prisons (forthcoming) *Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) Failures: A Review by HM Inspectorate of Prisons*

⁵⁰ HMI Probation and HMI Prisons (2013) *Third Aggregate Report on Offender Management in Prisons*

Sentence planning in prisons

- At several establishments there was a backlog of uncompleted OASys assessments which are used to assess offenders' needs and level of risk.
- Sentence planning reviews were usually attended only by the offender manager, offender supervisor and offender, with little or no input from other internal or external agencies working with an offender.
- Offender management and resettlement work was not coordinated across agencies working with an offender and there was poor information sharing, including limited use of P-Nomis (electronic case notes) to record contact with offenders. Offender supervisors were often reliant on an offender for an update on their progress.
- Targets were often too general or vague rather than specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound (SMART).
- Targets were often based on what was available at the prison rather than the OASys assessment.
- Offenders did not receive a written copy of their sentence plan, so often could not recall all of the targets they were meant to be working towards.

4.8 The recommendations made in the aggregate POMI report included a recommendation that the Chief Executive of NOMS should review the OMM in prisons, particularly in light of the *Transforming Rehabilitation* agenda. Recommendations for action in the interim were also made. NOMS has accepted or partially accepted all of the recommendations made.

4.9 Findings for the offender sample for this thematic report were similar. Although case files showed that all those in our sample had had an initial sentence plan (ISP) meeting to discuss and agree targets for their sentence plan, 22 (28%) offenders had had no formal contact (or, at least, recorded contact) since their initial sentence planning meeting. Even for those who had, formal contact was often limited to sentence plan reviews, often held annually, with few offenders reporting seeing their offender supervisors regularly (once a month or more).

4.10 Likewise, contact with their offender manager varied: some offenders reported contact as being infrequent and several told us that they had been in regular contact with their offender manager before entering custody, but had heard little or nothing from them since. Others reported regular contact, in person or by conference call, and four said that they had also met their offender managers in the community while on ROTL for home leave. One offender commented:

'[We] talked about what I want to do. We looked on the internet for jobs, education to work with. Brilliant. [I'm] just back from home leave; they sorted out my train to fit in with my daughter's schedule.'

4.11 In terms of working towards sentence plan targets, several offenders said they were just told to 'get on with it' and were offered little help or support by their offender manager, offender supervisor or other staff. There were some exceptions; some offenders described individual members of staff (including offender supervisors, personal officers and wing officers) who had helped them to apply for and secure places on courses. However, in general, the expectation was one of the following.

- The offender would put in the applications to the relevant agencies they needed to see/courses they needed to do. For some, this was a positive step as it gave them personal responsibility. However, this approach was heavily dependent on an offender's ability to do this for themselves, in terms of their life skills, motivation and capacity (for example, those who need help with reading and writing). In addition, when interviewed only four-fifths said that they had a sentence plan and many offenders could not recall all of their targets.
- Their needs would be picked up and addressed by assessments conducted by other agencies/departments working in the prison; this meant that work would not be

coordinated within their sentence plan or alongside their other targets or an offender could be missed out all together.

Either way, this effectively meant that there was little oversight of an offender's sentence, to motivate them and ensure that the work they were doing was coordinated and appropriate to their assessed needs.

Offender manager/supervisor relationships and impact on outcomes

Offenders in our sample felt that the level of support they received was important. For those who reported a positive relationship with their offender manager or offender supervisor, this was linked to having regular contact or knowing they could contact them if required; having a rapport and feeling able to talk about personal situations with them; and feeling that they received practical help when required. For example, one offender, after initially struggling to find somewhere to live as a result of his offences, had secured his accommodation after his offender manager had written a letter of support to the housing providers.

However, much of the practical support to secure stable accommodation (where required) and actual ETE was conducted post-release. In terms of actual accommodation and ETE outcomes on the day of release, the reported quality of the relationship and/or level of contact with their offender supervisor or offender manager made no difference to those in our sample. Other than where approved premises were required, the reliance was very much on family/friends to provide accommodation. Likewise the 13 who left custody with an actual job or education place were either continuing working for the company they had been working for in custody or had arranged this through family or previous employers.

Prison-based resettlement services

4.12 All prison fieldwork sites had their own resettlement or reducing reoffending strategic plan that set out how the prison would manage and coordinate resettlement pathway work, including for the accommodation and ETE pathways. The quality of need analyses used to inform resettlement strategies were often inadequate. They were not always recent enough to be meaningful; information was not consistently drawn from OASys data, which was a missed opportunity; and they did not differentiate between different groups in the prison, such as young adults, older or long-term sentenced offenders, to ensure that the distinct needs of these groups were known and met. This meant that prisons could not be confident that the services being provided met the needs of their population.

4.13 Resettlement strategies incorporated the role of external organisations in providing resettlement pathway provision. The services being provided in each prison varied in line with the drive towards local commissioning. They were managed through service level agreements and included provision such as mentoring services, drug and alcohol support, housing advice and support, and provision under the finance, benefit and debt pathway. However, there was limited use of these services to advise or give guidance on the development of resettlement strategies, and no consultation with external probation trusts on the development of offender management work in the prison. This meant that prisons were not taking advantage of these providers' considerable knowledge and expertise in improving and developing resettlement work.

4.14 Resettlement or reducing reoffending strategic meetings to review and monitor resettlement strategies were held at all sites, although they did not always include external agencies. Despite these meetings, there was a need for a far more robust approach to ensuring integration and effective delivery across departments and services, including in their work with individual offenders. This lack of integration in service provision undermined a 'whole prison' approach

to resettlement and meant that there was rarely a coordinated approach across departments and/or agencies working with individual offenders. This meant that there was a risk of duplication of work and/or issues or needs being missed, and was confusing to offenders.

- 4.15** The open and resettlement prisons we visited tended to be far more orientated to resettlement and release planning than closed prisons, and this was reflected in the work of both the OMUs and staff more generally across the prisons. These prisons therefore took a more ‘whole prison’ approach to resettlement. However, even at open prisons, there was too often a lack of integration between different departments working with an offender.

Outcomes of those released from open prisons

Open prisons hold category D prisoners near the end of their sentence to support their reintegration to the community. As such, these findings will reflect the type of prisoner held at open prisons and their level of motivation.

Thirty offenders from our case sample were released from open prisons. Three-quarters of them went out to live in their own homes (10 offenders) or with family/friends (12 offenders), although a further five for whom day-of-release information was missing seemed also to have gone to live with family. One went out to supported accommodation and one to approved premises owing to their level of risk. One was released to emergency accommodation. Seven had education or work in place on their release. This meant that half of the 13 offenders in our offender sample who had ETE in place on release were released from an open prison.

At the six-month stage, they were all living in their own place or with family/friends, including the person released to emergency accommodation, and 20 (66%) were engaged in education or work; one was retired and the other nine were either still engaging with ETE services or were unable to work for health reasons. These outcomes were better than those in our sample released from training prisons.

- 4.16** Pre-release arrangements across all prisons were variable. There was no consistent model of pre-release boards, and in the few establishments that did have such a model, its implementation was inconsistent. Again, resources were targeted according to risk, which, while understandable, meant that a number of low- and medium-risk offenders had only minimal contact before discharge.

- 4.17** The use and impact of resettlement courses were mixed. At one prison, an effective pathways course started the process of preparing for release at the start of the sentence. However, this was the exception, and most pre-release courses started too late in the offender’s sentence to be of real benefit. In one prison, only offenders who opted to participate in an employability course engaged in pre-release activities, and the needs of the majority were missed.

Good practice

At HMP Leyhill an evening resettlement surgery, staffed by resettlement officers, was held three times a week to support offenders preparing for release with any issues or problems they had. The offenders found these meetings very useful.

At HMP Kirkclevington Grange all resettlement workers were located in the same building and worked very effectively together to meet offenders’ resettlement needs, reducing unnecessary duplication in work.

- 4.18** All prisons had a variety of resettlement-related key performance targets, which were reviewed at strategic meetings. However, such targets were invariably focused on output data rather than outcome data – for example, monitoring the number of completed OASys documents and the number of offenders accessing services in the prison. Performance assessment rarely went beyond these fairly crude measures – for example, to discuss the quality of OASys assessments and sentence planning.
- 4.19** The monitoring of outcomes for prisoners on release – including data used to monitor contracts with service providers – was underdeveloped and mainly came from self-reported information from offenders at the point of release. It was also surprising that, even though all offenders in our cohort were subject to some level of post-release supervision by probation trusts, none of the prisons in our study undertook post-release follow-up with probation trusts to establish what worked well and any improvements that could be made. More detail on the monitoring of outcomes for accommodation and ETE is provided in sections 5 and 6, respectively.

Overall outcomes for our offender sample

Overall, only 16% of our sample was released with both accommodation and known education, training or a job arranged. Six months after release, all those still in the community continued to have accommodation – although, as mentioned in section 1, accommodation was not always permanent or suitable – but only half had a job or education/training in place.

Recalled offenders

Six offenders in our sample had been recalled to custody by the end of our fieldwork, six months after their release. Two were adult males and four were young adults aged 18–25, including one young woman. The one offender in our sample to be rearrested within the six-month period following release was also a young adult. Half of those recalled to custody had been released to approved premises: one had gone to supported (drug recovery) accommodation; one had had to report as homeless on release and the other had gone to live with their parents (although relationships were strained by the one-month stage). Only one had had ETE arranged on release, although ETE appointments were in place or planned for the other five.

Use of release on temporary licence (ROTL)

- 4.20** Each prison that provided ROTL had a discrete policy. To recognise its role in supporting resettlement work, ROTL was usually also included in the overarching resettlement or reducing reoffending policy. However, the strategic approach to ROTL varied considerably across fieldwork sites, as did the number of offenders released on ROTL. In theory, any offender could receive ROTL when their level of risk was assessed as suitable; however, at one prison there was an unofficial policy that only those categorised to D could receive it. This undermined its use to support resettlement work and also suggests a misunderstanding of the specific risk assessment process. Unsurprisingly, use of ROTL was highest at the open and resettlement prisons we visited.
- 4.21** ROTL should be considered within the sentence planning process, so that it forms a structured and coordinated part of the offender's resettlement planning. However, when ROTL was mentioned in plans, the target was often simply 'to achieve ROTL' rather than specifying its purpose. In our sample, 38 offenders had been assessed for eligibility and 33 had been granted it at their current establishment, most often for family contact, general reintegration into the community or outside employment (see the sections 5 and 6, respectively, for more detail). All but five of these offenders were at an open prison, the others being in category C training

prisons. ROTL was underused to start sustainable work with employers aimed at continuity of employment on release.

Outcomes for those who had been on ROTL

Offenders have to apply for ROTL and decisions to grant ROTL are based on a risk assessment. As such, these findings will reflect the type of prisoner receiving ROTL and their level of motivation.

One month after release, around half of the 33 offenders who had been granted ROTL in prison were engaged in work or education in the community – including four who continued with the jobs they had obtained and started while in prison and one who was continuing the Open University course they had started while in prison.

By the six-month stage, two-thirds were in ETE and the others were still actively seeking ETE. Of those who had not received ROTL, by the six-month stage seven were back in custody (six recalled) and only a third had ETE in place.

Probation trust specifications

- 4.22** At the time of fieldwork, rehabilitation work with offenders on licence was set out under a number of specifications issued by NOMS that probation trusts were obliged to implement. To some extent, specifications had replaced previous national strategies. In line with Prison Service Instructions, these specifications aimed to set out a minimum level of service that must be delivered by probation trusts while leaving flexibility in how individual trusts deliver this locally.
- 4.23** The freedom for trusts to deliver services flexibly reflects our findings: each probation trust had different arrangements for delivering rehabilitation work. Community fieldwork found that there was no overarching national strategy for offender accommodation or housing within probation trusts. Existing accommodation or offender housing strategies were out of date and described structures and arrangements that did not reflect the current emphasis on localism, which allows more discretion for local authorities in choosing who they will help with accommodation. Due to the impending implementation of *Transforming Rehabilitation*, policies and strategies had not been reviewed or renewed, which was understandable. More detail on what was actually being delivered to find/support accommodation and ETE is described in sections 5 and 6, respectively.

Sentence planning on licence

- 4.24** Individual offender managers managed licence cases according to National Standards for the Management of Offenders 2011 and the associated Practice Framework. This places an emphasis on continuity of contact with the same offender manager, which we did not always find in practice.

Change of offender manager on release

There were a number of offender managers (11) who had taken over cases at the point of release and so had had very little or no contact with the offender before release. This seemed to be the worst point for a change in offender manager, as it meant that an offender would have to report on release to someone they had never met.

Reasons for the change in offender manager were not always clear but a number had occurred because the offender was relocating on release to a new probation area. However, this could have been foreseen. Management of the transfer of the case from one offender manager to the next varied – some of the new offender managers had received all relevant information, but others said that they had received very little and were unfamiliar with the details of the offender.

At the six-month stage, they all had accommodation – most were living with their family but only four were engaged in ETE, and this had all been arranged by the offender through family/friends. Although these outcomes were similar to those of offenders who had continued with the same offender manager, as many outcomes were heavily reliant on family/friends, offenders told us that changes to their offender manager affected how supported they felt by the latter.

- 4.25** Information at the point of release was not consistently collated by all involved departments, shared with the offender supervisor and then passed on to the offender manager, who would be responsible for post-release assessment and supervision. In effect, an offender being released with drug and alcohol support, and training or education provision may not have had all that information passed on to their offender manager unless they disclosed it themselves. Offender managers told us that this adversely impacted their ability to risk assess and plan for an offender on release.
- 4.26** Each of the offenders in our sample should have had an Initial Sentence Plan (ISP) as part of the start-of-licence OASys assessment. In most cases, the ISP is a new plan which refers to the offender's achievements in prison and how they can be taken forward in the community. However, in a small number of cases in our sample, the ISP at the time of the one-month follow-up had changed little from the prison sentence plan, and, worryingly, some even contained references to prison-specific targets such as achieving enhanced status.
- 4.27** Half of the offenders in our sample said that they had an ISP, although some were still in the process of being created at the time of our one-month follow-up interview. This did not meet our expectation of a timely ISP on release and meant that one month after their release these offenders still did not know what would be included in their plan. Similarly to the situation in custody, several offenders were not aware that they had an ISP, although this number was lower in the community than in custody. However, as found with custodial sentence plans, targets were often vague – for example, 'gain stable accommodation' or 'to obtain suitable employment'.
- 4.28** Of those offenders who said that they had an ISP in the community, a large proportion (79%) told us that they felt involved in the process and were confident that this would help them to resettle in to the community. One offender said:

'I felt far more involved this time than previously – in the past I have always felt that the offender manager was just telling me what to do; this time it felt much more empowering.'

Section 5. Accommodation

Expected outcomes

Planning for an offender's release starts on their arrival at the prison. Offenders' accommodation needs are addressed prior to release. An effective multi-agency response is used to meet the specific needs of each individual offender in order to maximise the likelihood of successful reintegration into the community.

Context

- 5.1** As set out in section 1 of this report, having stable accommodation was one of the key factors offenders felt would help them to stop offending⁵¹. However, almost two-fifths of prisoners in the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) survey reported needing help with finding accommodation and 15% were homeless prior to custody.
- 5.2** Potential accommodation options include the following, and any arrangement needs to be approved by an offender manager.
- For offenders who pose a high level of risk of harm, there are approved premises. These are residential units that house offenders where their risk can be appropriately managed by staff. Placements in approved premises are based on risk rather than to address accommodation needs. A place in approved premises will only be arranged close to an offender's release in order to avoid vacancies.
 - Staying with family/friends. This may reflect a permanent or temporary arrangement until the offender is able to find their own accommodation or somewhere else to stay. Maintaining relationships with family/friends while in custody and on release is key in supporting this arrangement.
 - Staying in their own home, either bought or renting. If living in their own home prior to custody, offenders may be able to maintain this until they are released if they or family/friends are able to cover the costs. Alternatively, offenders should be helped to sell their home or close down tenancies to prevent debt accrual. Finding a place to live on release is difficult for offenders to arrange themselves for a range of reasons including: no access to the internet; needing a deposit; needing references; not having a job or benefits arranged for the point of release; or landlords being unwilling to accommodate them due to their offending history. Offenders may also lack the independent living skills to maintain their own home. Likewise, social housing for those with a priority need and eligibility is difficult to access prior to release, as there are long waiting lists and offenders are often not considered homeless until the point of their release.
 - Emergency accommodation for the homeless.

⁵¹ Ministry of Justice (2012) Research Summary 3/12. Accommodation, homelessness and reoffending of prisoners: Results from the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) survey.

Our findings

Accommodation services

5.3 The ways in which help to find accommodation for offenders on release was organised varied across prisons. In some cases, support was provided by prison staff, often as part of a wider resettlement team; this was usually limited to signposting or making referrals to accommodation services. Probation trusts mainly employed their own dedicated housing staff to deliver accommodation services, which were often limited to particular types of offender (for example, those assessed as a high risk of serious harm). The accommodation needs of those assessed as a low or medium risk of serious harm were dealt with by offender managers. Offender managers could ask housing workers in their office for advice and send off the necessary referral forms to a number of hostels or accommodation providers. In one area we looked at for this report, offender managers had access to an accommodation page on their intranet which listed providers. However, this was often done post-release, rather than in preparation for an offender's release, because of the barriers to finding accommodation outlined above.

Good practice

London Probation Trust

Housing Assessment/Advice Workers (known as HAWKS) were working in almost every office. Housing advisers in prisons serving London were supplied with the current list of their equivalents based in probation offices in the community. Prison staff and offender managers outside London would have difficulty in understanding the complexity of the different types of accommodation provision in each of the 32 London boroughs; therefore, offender managers would refer to their local HAWK, who was able to simplify the patchwork of accommodation provision in a local area. This also meant that offender managers could focus on addressing offender behaviour and managing risk rather than searching for accommodation.

Avon and Somerset Probation Trust

The area accommodation officer (who only dealt with high risk of serious harm cases and multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) levels 2 and 3) had built up effective working relationships with a number of private landlords. By using deposits from a budget held by this officer, when an ex-offender left a property, landlords would offer the accommodation back to the officer for use by another offender. In total, the accommodation worker had approximately 60 deposits in the private sector. The trust also had some provision for rent arrears and damage.

5.4 The other focus for trusts was the management and use of approved premises, which are mainly used for offenders with a high risk of serious harm. Approved premises tended to be full, and in one area we visited the gap in accommodation places for cases assessed by probation staff as requiring greater supervision was being financed by the probation trust.

5.5 There were relatively few links with third-sector provision, although some prisons had contracts with partner agencies such as Shelter and Nacro. In these cases, the range of provision appeared more extensive as their staff were often more experienced and better trained than prison staff and had a greater network of support to draw on. One of the probation trusts we visited had contracted accommodation services from Shelter, which provided services both for local prisons and the community. This arrangement assisted communication between prison and community accommodation workers to some extent but this was limited by the different case management recording systems used in prisons and in the community.

Accommodation arrangements before release

- 5.6** Offender assessment system (OASys) information received by offender supervisors on an offender's arrival at their current establishment suggested that 34 (43%) of the offenders in our sample would have problems with accommodation on release. However, only 25 of these offenders told us that someone had discussed accommodation with them by the time of our interview and eight did not know where they would be living on release. Offenders' accommodation needs will vary but need to take into account any distinct needs such as any disability or health needs, and if they are a parent or primary carer.
- 5.7** When offenders were deemed to have accommodation in place – usually with family/friends or their own place – no further action seemed to be taken, other than the offender manager confirming whether this was a suitable arrangement. However, as all those in our sample were serving sentences of more than 12 months, more consideration should have been given to how these plans could be maintained. In fact, some of these initial arrangements had broken down while the offender had been in custody.
- 5.8** For offenders who required accommodation, these arrangements were usually left until the last couple of months before release, which would then have an impact on other plans for release, such as education, training and employment (ETE). We also found two cases where an offender had been unable to obtain their early release because they did not have accommodation in place in time. This meant that they had been held in custody for a further month simply due to poor pre-release planning.

Missing early release

Case study A

One offender had originally been assessed by his offender manager as medium risk of harm, and accommodation found. The offender had later been reassessed as high risk, which meant that the original hostel place was not suitable; without accommodation arranged, he did not receive his early release. This change in the level of risk seemed to have been linked to his impending release, rather than a change of behaviour; this could have been taken into account when initially arranging accommodation or applying for early release.

Case study B

Another offender missed his early release because he wanted to live with his sister but had previously committed an offence at her property, which had led to social services preventing him from going there; as alternative accommodation could not be arranged in time, his release was delayed by five months. On release, he went to live with his grandmother, with whom he had previously lived.

- 5.9** Accommodation planned for on release for those in our sample had been arranged in the following ways:
- By the offender, via family, partners or friends. The offender manager had then assessed whether the arrangements were 'suitable' in terms of the offender's offending history and level of risk of harm. At the time of our prison based-interviews, 42 (54%) offenders told us that they had arranged accommodation themselves through family or friends, and they all felt that this would work on release.

- By the offender manager or using probation trust housing workers. Sixteen (21%) offenders told us that accommodation had been arranged for them by their offender manager.
- By prison-based services, where available. Five (6%) offenders told us that their accommodation had been arranged by prison-based providers, including Nacro, drug service providers (when an offender was going to a drugs recovery hostel) and a prison advice centre.
- Fifteen (19%) offenders did not know for certain where they would be living on release.

5.10 When there were prison-based services and these were required, the offender could apply to them or be referred by a member of staff, such as their offender supervisor. In most cases, there was little liaison between offender supervisors and housing providers to keep up to date on progress or to coordinate this with other plans being made for the offender's release. In some instances, offender supervisors were not aware that an offender was in contact with prison-based housing providers as the offender had applied on their own initiative. This was linked to the poor information sharing we found across departments and providers, and the low levels of face-to-face contact between offender supervisors and offenders.

5.11 When probation trusts arranged accommodation, offenders were not always fully informed about, or kept up to date with, these plans. Again, this linked to the often low levels of contact between offender managers or offender supervisors with offenders (see section 4).

5.12 Unsurprisingly, many of the offenders who were not sure where they would be living on release were anxious about their impending release and viewed finding a place to stay as the first step towards their successful resettlement. Aside from not wanting to be homeless, it was difficult to organise anything else, such as ETE or a GP, without an address. One said:

'Housing is the main issue. When I get out they want me to find somewhere to stay myself for a week. I have been in prison for two years; they could have done something before now!'

5.13 One month before their release, offenders told us that they had the following living arrangements on release:

Own place

5.14 Fourteen (18%) offenders told us that they would be returning to their own place (rental or owned). Interestingly, eight of these were female and many (nine) were released from an open prison. Most of the offenders reported that they had been helped by parents, partners or adult children to maintain the rent/mortgage on properties while they were in custody. One offender, who had lost her previous property while in custody, had managed to secure a rental property before release through a landlady she knew. She explained that this had been a stressful experience, however, as she was due to be released in two weeks' time and had only found out her exact release date within the previous week. Offenders returning to their own place were understandably happy with this situation and felt that it would work.

Case study C

One offender had initially been assessed as a high risk of harm to others while in custody. This would usually mean that as part of his licence conditions he would, at least initially, have had to stay in approved premises on release. However, while in custody he had been granted release on temporary licence (ROTL) several times, and this had given him the opportunity to prove his trustworthiness before release. His offender manager had therefore reassessed his risk as medium, which meant that he had been able to return to his home on release, rather than go into approved premises. At the six-month follow-up, the offender was still living with his partner, had engaged in ad hoc work and was considering options for setting up his own business.

Family/partners/friends

5.15 Thirty-six (46%) offenders were planning to stay with family, partners or friends on release. However, this was often because they had no other options, rather than this being a permanent or stable arrangement. Therefore, while most offenders were happy to go to family/friends initially, some expressed a desire to find independent accommodation as soon as possible and, for some, arrangements were only meant to be temporary. Reasons for this varied; some offenders mentioned that the housing would be crowded, with at least one telling us that he would be sleeping on the sofa. Some had been advised by their offender manager to return home to their parents, at least for a short time, before they considered finding their own place or returning to live with partners. Offenders with children said that they would need more space for them than was available in the home of their relatives. One told us:

'I will apply for housing. The kids are growing up and will need their own space.'

5.16 Regardless of their desire to stay with their family in the long term, all offenders felt that the situation would work in the interim and often felt that their family would be a positive and supportive influence on their release.

Approved premises

5.17 Ten offenders thought that they would be living in a hostel on release, although it appeared they were using the term 'hostel' broadly and in fact were referring to approved premises. Offender supervisors spoke about approved premises in the case of five of these offenders; of these, only one place had been confirmed at the time of our fieldwork, as places cannot normally be booked in advance.

5.18 None of the offenders wanted to go to approved premises but as they had been assessed as a high or very high risk of serious harm, this was required as part of their licence conditions so that their risk could be managed effectively. Offenders had mixed views about how they would fare in the approved premises/hostels – some seemed to adopt a 'means to an end' attitude, whereas others who had not experienced living at a hostel before were less sure. Some who had stayed in hostels before said that they did not feel that it was a safe environment to be released to. Reasons for this varied, but were largely down to their perceptions of other residents and the availability of drugs. Examples of comments included:

'It's high risk straight away. I'm being put somewhere high risk. I have been drug free for over two years; I'm worried about other users and being influenced.'

'...I am worried about the people that will be there.'

Supported accommodation

5.19 Two offenders said they would be living in supported accommodation on their release.

Unknown

5.20 At the time of our prison fieldwork, 15 (19%) offenders in our sample did not know exactly where they would be living when they were released, although most had some idea about where they might stay.

- Four offenders were hoping to get their own place. One had been saving for a deposit, another had started looking for places when on home leave and two were trying to secure their own place but were having difficulties arranging this in time for release.
- Three offenders thought that they would end up going to approved premises.
- One offender was applying for a council house.
- One was possibly going to live with a family member or potentially into supported housing.
- One wanted to live with his mother but stated *'it's all up in the air at the moment'* – he gave no more detail.

5.21 The remaining five told us that they had no idea about where they might end up living on release. This included one woman who was under investigation by Home Office Immigration Enforcement and therefore was not able to secure accommodation until they had made a decision. However, offender supervisors reported that planning/arrangements were in place for the other four.

- Two would be going to live with family on release, although one was also working with the housing officer to try to secure his own place.
- One would be going to approved premises.
- One had had an appointment with the housing agency on the previous day and the offender supervisor was confident that accommodation would be arranged.

Support to maintain relationships

5.22 Considering that almost half of our sample was planning to live with family, partners or friends on release and that over half said they had arranged their accommodation through them, it is clear how important these relationships are, where appropriate, as a form of both emotional and practical support on an offender's release.

5.23 We were told that offenders were able to maintain contact with their family, partners and/or friends via telephones on the wing, letters and visits held at the prison. However, this is dependent on access to telephones, offenders having money to make calls and whether an offender is held close enough to their home area to make visits viable. Also, while contact in itself is important, it is not always sufficient. We found that there was limited structured family or relationship work completed, even when there was a history of family or relationship issues recorded in an offender's OASys assessment. In our sample, we found no evidence of family/friends attending sentence planning meetings so that they could support and be involved in planning for release.

5.24 Thirty-one (40%) offenders had been granted ROTL for family contact or home leave. Most of them were from open prisons, although there were also a few examples from a closed woman's prison and category C training prisons. This enabled offenders to have contact in their home environment and was viewed as important by the offenders who received it, in terms of preparing for their life on release.

Case study D

One offender explained that he had applied for ROTL to see his family and to set up a bank account but told us it had not been granted because he was in regular receipt of visits anyway. If this was the case, then the assessor had failed to appreciate the importance of family relationships in supporting resettlement. There was no information in the case file or from the offender supervisor to corroborate this, although the case file noted: *'...being in contact with family is crucial for x's motivation. He admits lack of contact has contributed to his low mood, tearfulness and had been increasing the feelings of stress on him.'*

Finance and benefits

- 5.25** Thirty-three offenders said that they would need to pay rent on release and an additional seven said that they would have to pay it once they had started working. Most said that they would be reliant on family or benefits to support them financially until they found work. All prisons had Jobcentre Plus workers, who offered guidance about benefits support. Offenders had a good awareness of the benefits they may have been eligible for on release, such as the Community Care grant and Job Seeker's Allowance. Forty-five (58%) offenders said that they had received financial advice and support to apply for benefits from Jobcentre Plus or other services offering such advice at the prison, such as Nacro. However, eight of those who expected to pay rent on release said that they had received no help with accessing the benefits to which they were entitled.
- 5.26** Only four offenders felt that paying rent would be an issue for them; this appeared over-optimistic, particularly given the delays often experienced in the payment of benefits. Only a few offenders mentioned having completed a money management course, which would have included advice on budgeting.

Accommodation following release

- 5.27** Information on our offender sample following release comes from a questionnaire completed by offender supervisors on the day of the offender's release, and interviews with offenders and their offender managers one month and six months after release.
- 5.28** Three offenders in our sample had been detained in custody for immigration purposes; all other 77 offenders had been released. Table 2 provides an overview of the planned living arrangements at the point of our prison fieldwork, then actual arrangements on the day of release and one month and six months after release. This is grouped according to the type of accommodation that offenders went out to on their day of release. More detail is provided for each group in the text following Table 2.

Table 2: Living arrangements following release for those in our sample (grouped by type of accommodation on the day of release)

One month before release →	Day of release →	One month later →	Six months later
13 own accommodation 5 family/friends	18 own accommodation	18 own accommodation	3 moved to new own accommodation 2 family/friends 13 same own accommodation
19 family/friends 2 approved premises 1 own place 7 did not know 1 not interviewed	30 living at family or friend's home	1 NFA 3 own accommodation 25 family/friends 1 rearrested	4 own accommodation 7 different family/friends 16 same family/friends 1 hostel 1 rearrested 1 recalled
7 approved premises 1 did not know 1 not interviewed	9 approved premises	1 recalled 8 approved premises	2 recalled 1 supported accommodation (probation hostel with less intense support) 1 hostel 3 family/friends 2 own accommodation
Knew would be going to supported accommodation	1 supported accommodation	Unknown	1 friends/family
Knew would be 'no fixed abode' (NFA) (due to sale of house while in custody), so would arrange hotel for release	1 paid for his own hotel room	Own accommodation	1 own accommodation
2 did not know 1 of those who went to the Salvation Army emergency accommodation thought that he may end up there on release	3 released homeless: - 1 accommodated at a hotel by the local authority after reporting as homeless on release - 2 to Salvation Army emergency accommodation	1 recalled (NFA, then local authority placed him in a hotel room 1 in a hostel 1 unknown	1 recalled 2 in shared accommodation
10 family/friends 1 approved premises 1 supported housing (drug recovery) 3 did not know	15 not known	1 recalled after one week (offender who thought he would be going to drug recovery) 11 with family/friends 1 own home 2 approved premises	2 recalled (including one who had been at approved premises) 1 own accommodation 10 with same family/friends (including 1 who was in approved premises) 2 with different family/friends

1 did not know 2 family/friends	3 detained for immigration	2 not released 1 family/friends	2 not released 1 family/friends
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5.29 Overall, on the day of release:

- 18 had their own place (rental or owned);
- 30 moved in with family/friends;
- nine went to approved premises;
- one went to supported accommodation;
- one had paid for his own hotel room as otherwise he would have been homeless;
- three were released homeless;
- for 15 offenders, we did not receive information but they mainly appeared to have been released to family/friends and two to approved premises;
- three were detained in custody for immigration purposes.

Those released to their own accommodation

5.30 As detailed above, 18 (23%) offenders were released to their own accommodation (including that jointly owned or rented) and all 18 were still there at the one-month interview. By the six month follow up, 13 remained in their own accommodation and three had moved to alternative premises (either because of problems with landlords, relocation to a new area or moving to a bigger house). Two were living with family – both had moved back in with parents.

Case study E

A male offender was living in private rental accommodation, with a six month lease, costing £600 per month. His mother had arranged this for him before his release, as, having previously worked for a housing association, she recognised the difficulties for ex-offenders in obtaining accommodation. His mother had paid the deposit and was still paying the rent for her son at the one-month follow-up stage as he had not found work. He had still not found work six months after release, so had decided to move back in with his father as he was unable to afford the rent and his living costs. He was reasonably positive about this, explaining that he got on well with his father, so hoped that the living situation would be okay.

Living at family or friend's homes

5.31 Thirty (39%) offenders went to live at their family or friend's home on release. This included eight who had not known at the time of our prison fieldwork where they would be living on release. Several who had wanted their own place had been advised to go to family or friends initially, until they were able to find their own place. One offender had thought at the time of our prison fieldwork that he would have to go into approved premises but had actually been able to return to live with one of his parents, as he had wanted to do. Six others went to live with family as they appeared to have no other option, having not managed to secure other living arrangements before release.

5.32 At the one-month interview, 25 offenders were living at the same place as on release, and most felt that this was working out for them, and that they could stay at their current place indefinitely. However, there were several who, while pleased to have accommodation, wanted to find alternative living arrangements; this included the six offenders who had had to move in with family on release or report as homeless. This was usually due to overcrowding issues or not wanting to be a burden to their family or friends. In some instances, as in the case studies

below, the arrangements were actually deemed unsuitable by the offender and/or their offender manager.

Case study F

One woman was living with her three children, aged between seven and 14, in one room at her mother's rented council house. Her mother had been the main carer for her children while she was in prison and she had had ROTL releases to the address, as this was where her children lived. Her offender manager explained that she had been offered a property but had declined it as it was too far away from her family support and she did not want to disrupt her 14-year-old son's schooling.

Case study G

One offender was living in an overcrowded property with her family who were known criminals. She had had several successful ROTL releases to this address. She planned to continue with a job she had obtained while in custody; although this was located 30 miles from her accommodation, she did not think this would be a problem as her brother would be able to drive her there. However, by the time of the six-month follow-up, she had given up her job as the travelling had become too difficult, and she wanted to focus on sorting out her own accommodation. She was engaging with housing services to try to obtain her own, more suitable accommodation.

5.33 A key cause of offenders' feelings of being a burden to the family or friends that they were living with was that they were often reliant on their goodwill to allow them to live rent-free for a period until they found employment or claimed benefits. Those without employment were solely reliant on benefits or help from family/friends to cover their costs. However, they often experienced a delay between release and the receipt of benefit payments, which put unnecessary stress on both the offender and their family/friends.

Case study H

One offender told us that he had had to wait six weeks to receive his first benefit payment, despite having applied for a Community Care grant before release. He had also seen a representative from the Department for Work and Pensions while in prison and had had a Jobcentre Plus interview arranged for shortly after his release to assist with a Job Seeker's Allowance claim. In the interim, the offender had been entirely reliant on his family for financial support. By the six-month follow-up, he had secured employment and was also in the process of applying for funding to start his own business. With the assistance of his offender manager, he had managed to secure his own accommodation.

5.34 By the six-month stage, one offender who had been living with family or friends had been recalled to prison and one had been rearrested. Sixteen were still living with the same family or friends, and seven were living with different family or friends to those with whom they had initially gone to stay. For the latter, this reflected the short-term nature of the accommodation arrangement or a breakdown in the relationship between the offender and the person they were living with. Only one of the new living arrangements could be described as suitable or sustainable, and three reported that they were still actively looking for alternative accommodation. There was no evidence that any work had been done to maintain relationships, despite the importance of this to maintain their accommodation and key support system. This was a key gap in service provision offered in prisons and by probation trusts.

5.35 Four had found their own accommodation and one was in a hostel.

Case study I

One woman had initially gone to live with a parent but this relationship had broken down. Her offender manager and community mentor had helped her to find alternative accommodation at a YMCA. At the time of the six-month follow-up, the offender had been living in YMCA accommodation for approximately four months. The offender manager explained that at the next sentence plan review, they would explore options with the offender and come up with an objective regarding accommodation; it was not clear why they had to wait until a sentence plan review to take action.

Approved premises

5.36 Nine offenders, all male, went to live in approved premises on release. When interviewed in the community, offenders had had mixed experiences about staying at approved premises. Several were not positive about this arrangement but were attempting to make the best of it, although more found their approved premises more acceptable than thought they would before release. Concerns raised included fears for safety, most notably drug use in the area, and a generally unpleasant environment. Others were frustrated by their lack of independence and other restrictions on their movement that were a condition of their stay. However, these were relaxed, depending on behaviour, the longer they were in the accommodation. One offender who had had ROTL before release to attend the approved premises said:

'Because of my time at the approved premises on ROTL, I proved I am trustworthy so I am in the self-catering part of the hostel.'

5.37 By the six-month stage, two offenders who had been living at approved premises had been recalled to prison. The other seven had moved on to other accommodation: three were living with family or friends, one was living in supported accommodation (described as a probation hostel but with less intense supervision or support), one was in a hostel and two had secured their own accommodation (both had secured private rental properties – it is not clear whether they had received any assistance to arrange this or whether they sorted it out themselves).

Case study J

One young adult had been released to approved premises. After four months, having complied with the requirements of this accommodation, his offender manager began to talk to him about moving on; as his assessed risk had dropped to medium, he was interviewed and subsequently moved to a staffed hostel. He resided there for about a month, after which it was decided that he did not require the level of support offered by this hostel; he was then moved to what he described as a 'halfway house', which he was sharing with two others. He had signed a six-month lease and thought that he would remain there until independent living had been arranged, although he was aware that this could take a while, as one of the people he was sharing with had been there for two years already. He was positive about his current accommodation, in that it offered him more freedom and independence, although he complained about the quality of living conditions.

Case study K

One offender had been released to approved premises away from his home area as there were no places closer to where he lived. He stated: *'I had no choice in the matter and was directed there or face recall to prison. The whole thing has been very impersonal and I am basically sat stewing here for seven weeks so far.'* By the six-month stage, he had managed to secure a place via the local authority; although this had taken some time, he had persevered and been successful.

Other

5.38 One offender had been released to supported accommodation and one had arranged a hotel room for release; their cases are detailed below.

Case study L

One woman who had been living in supported accommodation was unhappy as the restrictions at the premises meant that her daughter was not allowed to visit her there and, due to her licence conditions, she had limited time to see her daughter elsewhere. She had since moved into a friend's spare bedroom with her daughter. Although not ideal, she felt this was better than her original accommodation as she could be with her daughter.

Case study M

One offender had pre-booked himself into a hotel for three weeks on release. He had sold his house while in custody and, although he would technically be NFA on release, he was not eligible for social housing because of the funds that he had available. He ended up staying in the hotel for three weeks and then moving into his own rental accommodation – he had been unable to arrange this prior to release.

Homeless on release

5.39 Three offenders were released without accommodation; their cases are outlined below.

Case study N

One offender, a young adult who had 'leaving care' status, was released as NFA. At the time of our prison fieldwork, the offender said that he did not know where he could live; this had not been resolved by the time he was released as there appeared to be some disagreement between two borough councils over who would be responsible for housing him. The offender manager explained that he had asked Groundworks, a charitable organisation, to be involved as mentors, collect him from the prison and take him to the housing office to report as homeless. He also explained that as the offender had 'leaving care' status, the local authority would have responsibility to house him. However, the offender was subsequently booked into a hotel for the first week after release, which was neither suitable nor sustainable accommodation, before being moved to a bedsit. By the time of our one-month follow-up, he had been recalled back into custody.

Case study O

One offender had had no accommodation arranged for release. The offender manager had contacted the Salvation Army 'Safe Sleep' programme (providing emergency accommodation for the homeless) but the offender had been unable to get a place until five days after his release. Until then, he had 'sofa surfed' with family; this had not been successful because of poor relationships. By the six-month stage, he was living in a shared house and working. The offender manager did not feel that this accommodation was ideal but there were no other options available at the time.

Case study P

One offender had been released to the Salvation Army 'Safe Sleep' programme, which had been arranged by the prison advice centre. He had remained there for four nights before moving on to a hostel for the homeless. Delays in receiving benefits had prolonged his search for more stable accommodation, although his offender manager had helped him with this. By the six-month follow-up stage, he had a room in a shared house.

Monitoring of outcomes on release

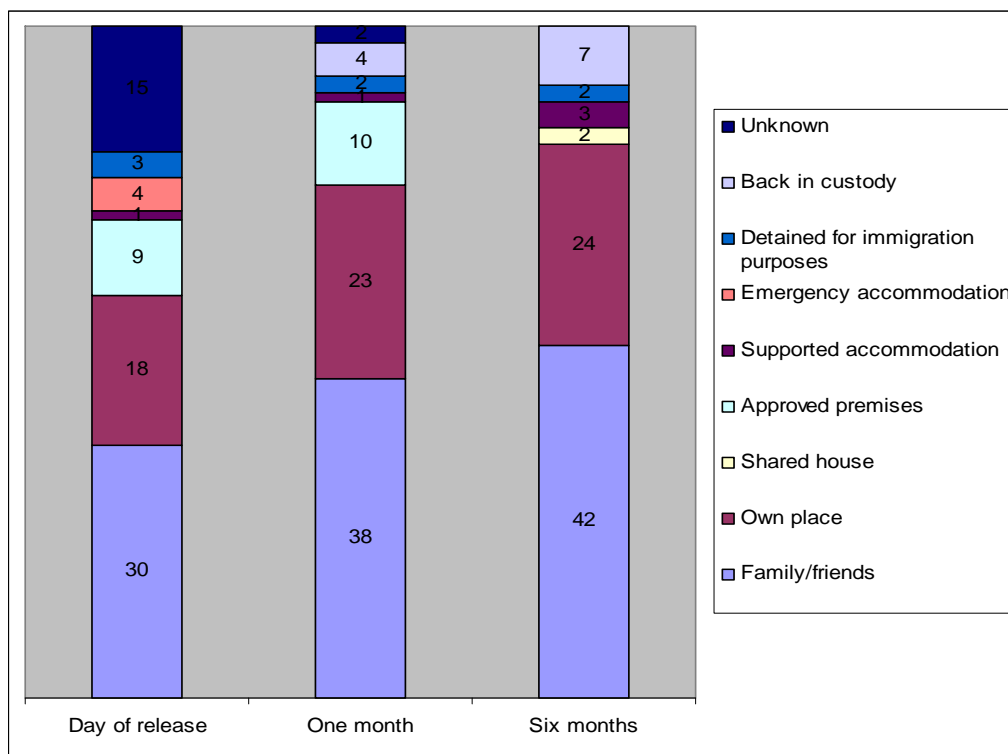
5.40 Monitoring data are collected by the prison on an offender's release, based on self-reported information. Of note, the only data collected in relation to accommodation are whether or not they had somewhere to live on release. Therefore, in our sample only the three who were known to have been released as NFA would have been flagged as an issue. This reporting system fails to capture whether the accommodation is both suitable and/or sustainable.

5.41 Both Shelter and Nacro contracts were managed through a payment-by-results model, with a small proportion (around 15%) subject to the meeting of targets. Such targets related to those set for the prison for finding settled accommodation, and in each case the target was being met or exceeded. However, as with the situation with data collection described above, outcomes were based solely on offender self-disclosure at the point of release, and there was no mechanism to follow up post-release, to establish whether the accommodation had been used or sustained.

5.42 Overall, for our sample at six months after release:

- 42 were living with friends or family. For 27 (64%) of these, this was a stable arrangement that they had had since release, whereas a third had moved. For a few this was due to a progression from approved premises or supported accommodation to living with family/friends, but for the rest this indicated ad hoc, temporary living arrangements;
- 24 were in their own accommodation and two were in shared houses;
- three were living in supported accommodation/hostels;
- six had been recalled to prison and one offender had been re-arrested (see section 4 for case studies on each of these);
- two were still being detained for immigration purposes.

The graph below shows where our sample was living at each point of follow-up after their release. At each stage, the largest proportion was living with family/friends.



- 5.43** Thirty-five (45%) had moved at least once since their release. For 20, this had been from temporary to more suitable, stable accommodation; however, for 15 this reflected a breakdown in the living arrangements they had had on release or continuing ad hoc, temporary arrangements.
- 5.44** Considering the findings from our small sample, this demonstrates how misleading the monitoring figures collated by prisons are in terms of the actual outcomes for offenders, as they do not take into account the suitability or sustainability of the accommodation to which they were released. The case study below illustrates how chaotic and ad hoc an offender's living arrangements can be on release, despite a prison recording this as a 'positive' result.

Case study Q

One young adult was recorded as having gone to live with family on release but this had actually involved 'sofa surfing' at the homes of different family members for three nights before going to stay at a YMCA. He had been given notice to quit the YMCA due to behavioural issues. He had then had the option of a night shelter, which he would have had to leave each morning, but had instead 'sofa surfed' and then lived in a tent for a period. At the six-month stage, he was alternating between staying with his new partner and his brother, but neither was a permanent arrangement.

Women

- 5.45** There were 20 women in our offender sample. Two were detained in custody for immigration reasons and were still there six months after their sentence release date. Ten (eight from an open prison) returned to their own property, seven went to live with family/friends and one went out to supported accommodation.

- 5.46** Six months after release, one young adult woman had been recalled to custody. Eight had moved since release – in most cases to more suitable accommodation, but one woman had had to move into a hostel owing to a breakdown in her relationship with the family member she was living with.
- 5.47** Some of the women in our sample had children and this had an impact on their accommodation (see case study below) and ETE needs because of childcare arrangements and, in some cases, the necessity of prioritising paid employment over education/training to ensure that they could provide for their family.

Case study R

One woman planned to live with her mother on release. Her mother had been looking after her children while she was in custody and, once her offender manager had assessed the accommodation as suitable, she had been able to have several ROTL releases to this address to maintain contact with her children and mother before her release.

On release, she had moved in with her mother as planned, although she aimed to find her own place with her children, as the property was overcrowded with all of them living there.

However, at the six-month stage they were still at that address. She had initially been offered accommodation in a different area but had declined this as she did not want to be so far away from her family and friends or move her children – especially as one was about to take their GCSEs. She had been referred to the local housing authority but had been told that there was a four- to five-year waiting list but that if she had work, she would have a better chance of getting a place.

She had initially planned to complete an Open University course she had started in prison but, owing to her accommodation needs, had deferred her final year to focus on finding a job and a suitable place to live with her children. Despite actively engaging with ETE services, she did not have a job by the six-month stage and was struggling to find work because of her criminal record.

Young adults aged 18–21

- 5.48** There were 13 young adults in our sample, three of whom were female. Ten went to live with family/friends on release, one returned to their own place and two went to approved premises. By the six-month stage, six were still living with family/friends, two were living at a hostel (one had progressed there from approved premises and the other had had to move there following a breakdown in relationship with the family member they were living with) and two had their own place. Three young adults had been recalled to custody by this stage.

Section 6. Education, training and employment

Expected outcomes:

Offenders' education, training and employment needs are addressed prior to release. An effective multi-agency response is used to meet the specific needs of each individual prisoner in order to maximise the likelihood of successful reintegration into the community.

Context

6.1 As set out in the background to this report, prisoners often have a poor educational and employment history^{52,53}. Linked to this, almost half of prisoners in the SPCR survey said they needed help to find a job and two-fifths needed help with education and improving work skills. Two-thirds felt that having a job would help stop them from reoffending⁵⁴.

6.2 In addition to the high level of education, training and employment (ETE) needs found among offenders, access to ETE on release is affected by the local and national employment situation. We were also told of several other barriers offenders faced when trying to obtain ETE on release. These included, but were not limited to:

- difficulties searching for jobs or training/education places while in custody. A report by the Prison Reform Trust and Prisoners Education Trust⁵⁵ highlighted the need for controlled and secure internet access to support education and training in custody and finding and applying for ETE on release.
- having a criminal record. Recent changes to legislation⁵⁶ have helped to address this by changing the disclosure requirement for some offenders with low level convictions.
- delays in receiving certificates for qualifications that offenders had achieved in custody. These were required by employers/education providers to evidence achievements.
- difficulties in completing remaining course modules, as education providers in the community often only offer a full course rather than individual modules.
- not having any proof of identity. Obtaining a citizen card often took up to two months and there was no evidence that the application process had been started while the offenders were still in custody.

⁵² Ministry of Justice (2012) *Prisoners' childhood and family backgrounds: Results from the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) longitudinal cohort study of prisoners.*

⁵³ Ministry of Justice (2012) *The pre-custody employment, training and education status of newly sentenced prisoner. Results from the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) longitudinal cohort study of prisoners.*

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Prison Reform Trust and Prisoners Education Trust (2013) *Through the Gateway: How computers can transform rehabilitation*

⁵⁶ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/53>

Our findings

ETE provision in custody

- 6.3** Education, training and employment were provided under the Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) 4 contracting arrangements. This placed the management of learning and skills with area heads of learning and skills (HOLS), who were responsible for a number of prisons in a geographical location. Each prison described reasonably good relationships with the area HOLS, especially in the development and implementation of OLASS 4. However, in some areas there was relatively little shared practice or strategic development across prisons, which were often very different in terms of the population they held. Most area HOLS had ambitious plans to rationalise provision and sequence education and training for longer-term offenders, but at the time of our fieldwork these plans were mainly at an early stage and had yet to have an impact on improvements in provision.
- 6.4** Too few HOLS focused on resettlement as their starting point when planning provision. In general, there was little use of market intelligence to attempt to link ETE provision in custody to tangible job opportunities in the community, or of employer engagement to inform ETE provision strategically. There were, however, some examples of good nationwide employer engagement (for example, work placements offered by Hilton Hotels, Mitie, Timpson and Greggs). These were valued opportunities which helped offenders to progress to ETE on release; however, they benefitted only a small number of offenders.
- 6.5** Most prisons provided English and mathematics courses from entry level to level 2⁵⁷ and, when there was need, courses for those for whom English was not their first language. Several provided a wide range of industry-recognised vocational training qualifications and levels (for example, in tiling, plumbing and hairdressing) but too much of the provision was only at level 1. Therefore, although offenders were able to gain qualifications in a wide range of subjects, these were usually at a level that often would not meet employers' minimum standards. Too few experienced a sequenced and focused approach that would enable them to progress to higher-level learning in an area that would help them to access further training or employment on release. This was a particular issue for those serving longer-term sentences.
- 6.6** There was also a group in our sample who found it difficult to find any type of purposeful ETE in prison, having already completed education to degree level before coming into custody. For example, offenders said:
- 'When I first arrived here, I quickly realised there was no work here suitable for me. I decided that education would be a better route to go down... [however] the levels of courses offered are for the lowest common denominator.'*
- 'It's difficult for those here who have an educational background; I started to work on the farm here, just to get out of the "house", but it's not something that will help me in future.'*
- 6.7** All offenders undertook an assessment of their ETE needs on arrival to custody and all sentenced offenders were expected to participate in ETE while in prison. In most cases, allocation to ETE took into account the initial assessments, particularly in relation to any identified needs in an offender's level of English and/or mathematics. Often, prisons set mandatory attainment levels for English and mathematics before offenders could participate in vocational training and/or skilled work. This was not always well received by offenders, but

⁵⁷ The National Qualifications Framework is split into nine levels, from entry level qualifications that recognise basic knowledge and skills to level 8 which includes doctorates. Level 1 qualifications would include GCSEs at grades D–G; and Level 2 GCSEs at grades A*–C.

helped to ensure that educational barriers to accessing higher-level courses and skilled work in prison and in the community were reduced. At least one prisoner in our sample had learnt to read and write in prison, having not been able to do so before.

6.8 Links between ETE providers and the offender management unit (OMU) were poor. We saw several examples where information in offender assessment system (OASys) assessments was based on what offenders reported, although ETE assessment data would also be available. Although offender supervisors/managers often included ETE targets in offenders' sentence plans, these were often vague due to the limited, if any, input from ETE providers. Examples of general or vague targets included: '*to make constructive use of time here*' or '*employment advocacy*'. Updates on progress were also often provided by offenders. This meant that offenders' involvement and progress in ETE was not coordinated within their wider OASys assessment or other sentence plan targets, plans for their release or their case management following release.

6.9 A range of issues was also experienced when offenders transferred to a different prison, which was often linked to population management rather than sentence plan targets or progression. These included:

- Systems such as the Learner Record Service were not used sufficiently well to record learning and skills achievements so that records were available to ETE providers on an offender's transfer to another prison or on release. Again, this meant that there was an over-reliance on offenders to provide evidence of their previous educational achievements.
- Inconsistencies across prisons in procedures and rules sometimes created a barrier to offenders' progress in ETE. Two offenders in our sample had been unable to complete the degrees that they had begun while in other prisons – one because of administrative delays at his current prison which had caused him to miss the start date for the final year of the course, and another because his current category D prison did not allow him to access a laptop computer to complete the work, although the category C prison he had come from had allowed this.
- Continuity of the education and vocational training offered between prisons was poor. Some of the offenders in our sample had started activities in one prison but been transferred to another before they could complete their course or training. Several had been unable to complete the course as it had not been offered at the prison they had transferred to. Some of the other affected offenders had hoped to finish courses in their new establishment but had been unable to do so because of administrative delays or waiting lists. For example, one offender had been moved to an establishment specifically to complete his forklift licence, only to find that there was a six- to eight-month waiting list, so he had been unable to complete it. These offenders were often frustrated and felt that they had wasted time beginning a course for which they would not then gain accreditation and therefore would not help them to find employment on release.

Case study S

One motivated prisoner had ambitions to find employment in catering on release. He began a course in catering at his first establishment but then, just six weeks before his release date, he was transferred to a new establishment which did not offer the course. This offender did not have employment at the time of our one-month follow-up fieldwork. At the time of the six-month follow-up, he had done some temporary work at festivals (starting as a litter picker and progressing to working on food vans), organised through an employment agency. However, he had subsequently had to sign on for Jobseeker's Allowance again and was in the process of applying for other jobs.

Case study T

One prisoner told us:

'When I got here, I was two years into a business management degree. I only had one year to do, but the paperwork here took so long to process that I missed the start date.'

The prisoner hoped to finish the course on release but had been prioritising gaining employment to support himself financially at the time of our interview. He was looking into options to start his own business, which he felt would have been helped by completion of his degree. At the six-month follow-up, he was in full-time employment and was in the process of setting up his business (a social enterprise to help ex-offenders find work), although he was finding it difficult to get a business bank account. It was not clear whether he had completed his degree course. He commented that neither the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) nor the prison had helped him with the course or encouraged him to do it. He had received the funding from the Prisoners' Education Trust charity. He was, however, very positive about his offender manager, who had helped him to apply and secure funding to get his driving licence.

Case study U

One offender explained that he was interested in learning a trade while in custody. However, he believed that he had to finish his sentence plan first – it was not clear why learning a trade was not included within his targets – and one of his objectives was to complete the controlling anger and learning to manage it (CALM) course. He had been assessed as needing to attend the CALM programme while at another establishment but had been moved to his current prison as part of a population management strategy and the programme was not run there. In his case file, it was noted that the OMU at his first establishment had attempted unsuccessfully to block the move for this reason. He was also on a waiting list to do the thinking skills programme but had not been able to complete this since arriving at the new establishment owing to time constraints. His case file read: *'x displays motivation to complete courses but has been unable to complete the programmes required due to being transferred to an establishment that doesn't run them'*. As a result, despite being motivated to change, he had not done any work to address his offending behaviour during his sentence, or undertaken any work to increase his suitability for employment. Before release, the prison Nacro worker had arranged a place for him on an employment suitability course, which would in turn lead to him being able to work towards getting a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card and forklift licence. The offender had not begun this on the intended start date as it clashed with his required attendance at the Jobcentre Plus work programme. The course had been rearranged but by the time of the six-month follow-up interview, the offender did not appear to have been on this course and was currently waiting for a place on the 12-week Resolve programme. He had completed some casual work but was not working at the time of the interview.

6.10 Offenders were able to access career advice and guidance at all fieldwork sites, provided under the National Careers Service contract. However, the quality of information, advice and guidance that offenders received was of variable quality. All offenders received an induction with National Careers Service workers but where follow-up work was conducted, the contract model at the time of our fieldwork specified a maximum of three 'interventions' in a 12-month period. This caused confusion and appeared restrictive as it limited opportunities for further work with any offenders who required more support. Much work was done by the goodwill of guidance workers who extended their services beyond their contractual requirements to meet an offender's individual needs. Since our fieldwork the contract has been revised to allow more flexibility in contact according to offender needs.

6.11 The use of the 'virtual campus', which provides secure web-based access to courses and other resources to support training and employment, was highly variable. Only a few prisons were

using it to good effect to enable offenders to prepare their CVs or for job search activities. In too many prisons, the facilities were greatly under-utilised. The reasons given for this were that it had never worked because the IT infrastructure did not support it, or that prisons were unable to staff it.

- 6.12** The third sector ran some highly successful programmes to support the resettlement needs of offenders. A key feature of these programmes was the continuity of support through the gate, for sometimes up to a year, to help offenders gain and sustain employment. However, they only served a small proportion of the population and offenders usually had to meet specific criteria to be eligible for the support. Poor links with prison-based services often led to duplication with the work of the National Careers Service guidance workers.
- 6.13** All probation trusts had dedicated ETE workers, and offenders could be referred to these by their offender manager as required, although this was mainly after an offender's release. Unsurprisingly, we found that communication was more effective when ETE workers were based in the same office as offender managers. There was a mix of arrangements for the delivery of ETE in the probation trusts we visited, as provision had been contracted to various providers under the NOMS European Social Funding (ESF) contract. The present NOMS ESF contract expires in June 2015. In some areas, agencies were delivering services under the NOMS ESF contract and the National Careers Service contract. Offenders also had access to mainstream Further Education and Skills services.

ETE plans before release

- 6.14** All but one offender – who had been transferred to the establishment with only six weeks left of his sentence and believed that there was not enough time left to complete any further courses – told us that they had been involved in some form of ETE in their current establishment.
- 6.15** In our sample, 80% of offenders reported that they had worked at some point while at their current establishment, including:
- 21 (27%) who said that they had worked in the servery or kitchens;
 - 18 (23%) who said that they had worked out in the community in voluntary or paid work;
 - 12 (15%) who told us that they had worked as wing cleaners or industrial cleaners.

Other occupations included workshop work, such as packing leaflets or assembling plumbing fittings, painting and recycling/waste management work. There were also a smaller number working as gym or library orderlies, or in the gardens.

'Working out'

Nearly a quarter (18) of the offenders in our sample had worked in the community while at their current establishment (although not all were doing so at the time of being interviewed). The vast majority of these were at open prisons, although a couple of women were working out from a closed women's prison. The range of positions held by offenders included voluntary work in charity shops, advisory roles at community centres, through to paid employment in restaurant kitchens or warehouses. Offenders with the opportunity to work in the community were typically positive about their experiences. One explained:

'Community work, it puts you back in a situation of dealing with people; strange at first, not just dealing with other offenders. Other times I've been released, I've been scared, anxious and overwhelmed being back in the

community – when you first go out on community work, someone comes with you for the first few days, takes you through how to get there, etc. Gives you confidence for paid work.'

However, some (including those who had secured work) commented that they had not felt supported or encouraged to find work in the community and had had to arrange this themselves without support. Comments included:

'They put jobs up on the wall but you get no help with finding work. If you keep getting knockbacks, it's demoralising and knocks your confidence.'

Four offenders had been able to continue working for the same employer on their release.

6.16 Forty-three (55%) offenders stated that they had been involved in education and/or training while at their current establishment, and a further 10 said that they had done so at a previous prison during their current sentence. Education courses included English and mathematics, IT and business courses, and media studies, and one prisoner had studied for a degree while in custody. Thirty-two (41%) reported that they had been involved in courses to learn a trade – for example, tiling, plumbing, hairdressing, carpentry and horticulture.

6.17 Overall, 47 (60%) offenders said that they thought that the ETE that they had taken part in while in prison would help them on release. They felt that qualifications in English and mathematics and learning a trade were the most helpful – mainly because they had learnt a new trade or skill while in custody, or now had qualifications to back up the experience they already had in particular industries. Examples of comments included:

'Bricklaying course – I did an apprenticeship with my uncle, who is a bricklayer, before coming into custody so, now I have the qualification, I should be able to get a job when released.'

'Because of how well I did in tiling, I'm considering doing an apprenticeship... I'm good at it, I have a talent for it.'

6.18 Offenders also considered trades to be well-paid occupations and were motivated by the potential earning power and the option of being self-employed.

6.19 Other than community work placements, offenders rarely felt that the jobs they had participated in during custody would be directly helpful to them in gaining employment on release. For example, while the majority of offenders who had worked in the kitchens felt that they had learnt a useful life skill, only two of the 21 offenders involved were planning to work in catering on release, as this was the area they had been working in before coming into custody.

6.20 Several offenders thought that they would benefit from the work ethic and general work skills they had developed, regardless of whether they felt that the actual job they had been doing would help them find employment on release. One prisoner, who had never been employed before coming into custody, was working in the recycling department of a prison at the time of our interview, and said:

'It won't help towards getting a job. But getting up early, doing hard work, even in the snow! It has taught me how to do that.'

6.21 However, most prisons were poor at establishing the skills and experience that would be gained from work placements and therefore did not record the gains that offenders made in developing important work skills such as punctuality, taking instruction, working independently and showing initiative.

6.22 Half of the offenders said that there were activities they would have liked to have done during their time in custody but had been unable to. This most often involved learning a trade, obtaining a CSCS card, or getting a forklift or driving licence. Although offenders frequently spoke about wanting to get their CSCS card or their forklift licence, only four had worked towards these while in prison. When offenders had been unable to participate in their preferred activity, this was most often because it had not been offered at their current establishment. In some instances, courses had been available but had lost funding or had been stopped owing to changes in provider. One prisoner, who would have liked to have worked towards regaining his driving licence remarked:

'Driving theory and driving have all stopped. Some of the most useful things you could get.'

6.23 Other barriers to preferred activities included administrative delays, long waiting lists and unanswered applications.

6.24 Almost all the offenders in our sample (94%) told us that they planned to work when they left custody, although only around a quarter said that they had a job to go to, which in most cases they had arranged themselves via family/friends or previous employers – although some of these had fallen through by the time of their release. Many were willing to take any job that they could find in the first instance in order to support themselves financially:

'I will do any job, happy to do anything to start with.'

6.25 Most offenders had been seen by National Careers Service staff on arrival to prison; however, after the initial interview, offenders are not automatically seen again, and have to request an appointment with guidance workers or be referred by prison or education staff. At the time of our interview, about one month before their release, only two-fifths of offenders told us that they had received careers advice. Careers advice or guidance while in custody, provided by either the prison or outside agencies, was perceived by offenders to be limited and the advice they had received was not typically viewed as helpful. Advice often seemed to have been given on arrival at the prison rather than in preparation for release.

6.26 When interviewed in custody, almost half the offenders in our sample planned to undertake further education or training when on release from custody, often alongside work. However, none of the offenders or their offender supervisors said that the offender had an ETE appointment or education/training place arranged for their release; this seemed to be due to the timing of our prison fieldwork, as at least 27 had appointments in place by the time of their release (see Table 3; ETE on the day of release was 'unknown' for 29 offenders). Preferred courses were linked to trades, work-based training and business-based skills, all with the aim of increasing their employability. Some of the desired courses were more advanced than those they had completed in prison, to build on what they had already done and to obtain the qualification level required by employers, while others planned to obtain work-relevant cards such as the CSCS card. Comments included:

'The book-keeping course opened my eyes up to accountancy – it's not easy but a good skill to have, so I might consider doing a course in the future.'

'Plumbing, go back to that, finish it off. I need an apprenticeship.'

6.27 However, at the time of our prison fieldwork, only two offenders said that they had a confirmed education or training place, which prison staff had helped them to arrange.

6.28 Most offenders planned to organise their training or education once released, often alongside finding employment. In several cases, there was insufficient action by some agencies, including probation trust-based ETE workers, to get offenders straight into ETE on release so that they could participate in the community. Some ETE workers thought that offenders needed to

prioritise other interventions (for example, a drug misuse intervention) before focusing on ETE. However, other ETE workers were concerned about the risk of drift and felt that if offenders were not engaged with ETE within about six weeks of their release, there was a tendency for them to drift back into pro-criminal lifestyles. We felt that this should be determined on an individual basis, according to need.

ETE following release

6.29 Information on our offender sample following release comes from a questionnaire completed by offender supervisors on the day of the offender's release, and interviews with offenders and their offender manager one month and six months after release.

6.30 Table 3 provides an overview of the ETE arrangements at the different interview stages. This is grouped according to the ETE that offenders were actually released to.

6.31 Overall, on the day of release:

- 13 (16%) had employment or training in place;
- 27 had appointments with ETE services such as Nacro, probation ETE services or Jobcentre Plus;
- seven had left prison with no education, employment or training (NEET).
- one offender had retired.

6.32 We did not receive a completed questionnaire from 20 offender supervisors, and an additional nine did not know what offenders would be doing; for a number of these, they thought/assumed that the offender manager would be arranging ETE or would be aware of the offender's plans.

6.33 Three had been detained in custody for immigration purposes, so had not been released.

6.34 More detail is provided in the text after Table 3.

Table 3: ETE arrangements on release for our case sample (grouped by type of ETE on day of release)

Day of release →	One month later →	Six months later
13 in employment or education: - 12 employment - 1 education	9 still in work 3 NEET 1 employment course and work programme	3 NEET 6 employed 1 recalled 1 employed 1 casual work 1 NEET
27 appointments with ETE services: - 3 appointments with Probation ETE - 3 working with other ETE providers - 7 working with Nacro/REACH ⁵⁸ project - 12 appointments at Jobcentre Plus/enrolled on courses - 2 interviews for work-based training opportunities	1 in employment (found work 3 days after release) 1 NEET 1 recalled 2 education 1 NEET 1 in employment 5 NEET 1 recalled 1 in employment 10 NEET 1 rearrested 2 NEET	1 in employment 1 NEET 1 recalled 2 NEET 1 due to start education 1 in employment 1 in employment 3 NEET 1 work-based training 1 recalled 1 employed 6 NEET 1 education 2 employed 1 due to start employment 1 rearrested 2 NEET
7 NEET	1 due to start work-based training 6 NEET	1 NEET 2 education 1 employed 1 casual work 2 NEET
1 retired	1 retired	1 retired
29 offender supervisor questionnaires either not returned or ETE arrangements unknown	20 NEET	11 NEET 5 working 1 work experience 1 education 1 training 1 recalled

⁵⁸ Regional Employability Challenge

	1 training 2 due to begin education/training 5 employed 1 recalled	1 NEET 1 casual work 1 NEET 4 employed 1 recalled 1 recalled
3 detained due to immigration status	1 work programme 2 not released due to immigration status	1 NEET 2 not released due to immigration status

Those with employment or education on release

6.35 We were told that 12 offenders had employment arranged on release and one had a place on a training course. Four offenders from an open prison had been working outside the prison while in custody and had been able to continue in the same job on release – some, fortunately, lived near the prison they were located in and others had been able to secure transfers to branches of the business closer to where they lived. Another prisoner at an open prison had likewise been offered a job by the company he had been working for before release but had been unable to accept it as he lived too far from where the job offer was based. He had therefore arranged alternative employment. All other offenders with employment in place were either returning to a job they had had before going into custody or had arranged this through family or friends.

6.36 Ten offenders were still in ETE at the one-month post-release stage and three were NEET, although they were all still engaging with ETE services and looking for ETE at the time. At the six-month stage, one of the NEET offenders had been recalled to prison, although he had been in ETE before that, and the other two had found work.

6.37 By the six-month interviews, four offenders were NEET. One was a young adult who had had a variety of different jobs but none lasting more than a week – his offender manager felt that he lacked motivation. One offender was trying to organise more permanent, suitable accommodation and was prioritising this before arranging new ETE. One woman had had a training course on release and, having completed it, was looking for work with the support of her offender manager and Jobcentre Plus.

Those with ETE appointments on release

6.38 Twenty-seven offenders had ETE appointments arranged for them on release, including with Probation Services, Jobcentre Plus and third-sector ETE services, to support them with finding ETE.

6.39 At the one-month stage, only five of these had found employment or education, and three were still employed at the six-month stage. Two had had an education place arranged, but one of them had been unable to attend for health reasons and the other had deferred their university course for a year and was instead looking for work to finance accommodation.

6.40 Nineteen were still NEET at the one-month stage and this was still the case for 12 of them at the six-month stage. A couple were unable to work for health reasons but, although most were still engaging and looking for ETE, they were struggling to find work. Most of those who

had found work had arranged this through family or friends, and one was participating in a course at his approved premises.

- 6.41** By the six-month stage two offenders had been recalled to prison and one had been rearrested.
- 6.42** There were long waiting lists for some courses which offenders wished to enrol on, but in areas where employment opportunities were low, for example in construction site work (CSCS card) and forklift truck driving (warehouses etc). This could be de-motivating and supported the need to better match service provision and careers advice with the demand in the local job market.

Those released NEET

- 6.43** Seven offenders were released NEET. At the one-month stage, only one of these had something arranged, although this subsequently fell through. At the six-month stage, one was self-employed, one was working intermittently and two had begun college courses – one of whom was likely to be working alongside this. The others were still in contact with their offender manager but were either unable to work for health reasons or did not appear motivated to get involved in ETE.

Those with unknown ETE on release

- 6.44** We did not receive information on the ETE in place for 29 offenders, although it appeared that most had not had any work or education arranged. By the one-month stage, 20 were NEET and 11 of these still did not have anything in place by the six-month stage. Other than one who could not work for health reasons, all were actively looking for ETE. Five were employed at the one-month stage and three were in, or about to begin, training/education. This all seemed to have either been arranged for release or resulted from an ETE appointment they had arranged on release.

Support in the community

- 6.45** Following release, offenders were supported by their offender manager and specialist ETE workers within their probation trust. To encourage better attendance, offender managers tended to arrange their appointments on the same day as, and at similar times to, those with the ETE workers. However, too many offenders in our sample missed community appointments with ETE staff.
- 6.46** In some cases, offender managers were aware of the ETE that the offender had completed in prison; this was only the case if the offender's OASys assessment had been updated before release, and the ETE section had listed or described the course and programmes in which they had participated. However, the different electronic information systems in use by the various organisations working with offenders restricted their ability to share their ETE information easily. This meant that, in the first few weeks after release, offender managers and ETE workers often had to rely on offenders telling them about the qualifications they had gained in prison when making decisions about appropriate ETE interventions for them. In addition, many offenders experienced a delay in receiving their ETE certificates on release, with several still waiting for their certificates three or more weeks after release. This had a direct impact on those applying for further education or work as they could not provide proof of their qualifications.
- 6.47** There were not enough links between the ETE based in prisons, including OLASS 4 providers, and that in the community to help offenders complete or continue courses on release. There

were exceptions, where offender managers helped offenders to complete courses in the community that had been unfinished at the point of release. However, in general, providers in the community expected offenders to complete courses in their entirety rather than only the modules they did not manage to complete while in prison.

Good practice

There was good support in London for offenders on release, by the Regional EmployAbility Challenge (REACH) project peer mentors. These individuals met offenders at 'the gate' and accompanied them to their first appointments with Jobcentre Plus and 'Moving-On', which is a government-backed project providing support in finding employment and courses.

Monitoring of outcomes following release

6.48 Most offenders who had found employment on release had arranged this themselves, or with the help of family and friends. For example, one offender told us:

'I was released from prison on the Friday and commenced full-time employment on the Monday! I worked in my brother's building business before entering custody and he kept my job open, so that I could start after my release.'

6.49 However, some offenders had believed that they had employment lined up through a friend or family member but this had subsequently fallen through, and they were not in any employment when we interviewed them in the community.

6.50 The type of employment gained by offenders varied from general labouring jobs, such as working in a car factory and installing racking in warehouses, to service industry jobs, such as telephone sales. Only a small number were in trades, and they had been previously employed in this way before entering custody.

6.51 Of note, when interviewed in the community, no offenders were working in the trade they had learnt in prison. This was sometimes because of a lack of jobs in that trade or the need to complete further qualifications first, such as obtaining a CSCS card or driving licence. However, some offenders were entering, or attempting to enrol in, related training, such as courses in painting and decorating or beauty therapy, in the community.

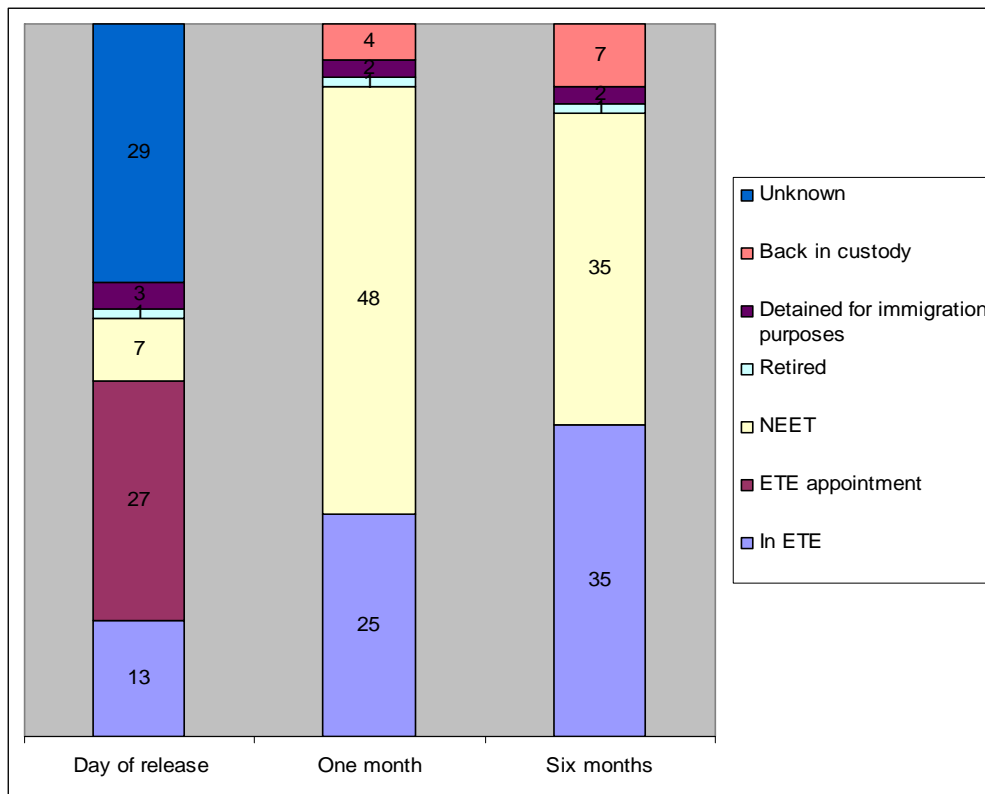
6.52 The majority of education and training was gained with the help of the offender's probation trust and referrals to other agencies, such as Jobcentre Plus and Pertemps, or via their approved premises, when offenders lived in these on release. Most offenders were positive about the level of support they had received, and in particular about back-to-work programmes, which provided extra help in finding jobs and updating CVs, and supported offenders in gaining funding for potential courses or business initiatives.

6.53 There was no monitoring of ETE outcomes on release by the National Careers Service or education contractors. Contact between guidance workers in prison and in the community was very limited, so there was no follow-up action to assess if the interventions planned had successfully resulted in employment or further training. For our sample, at the six-month post-release stage:

- 35 were NEET
- 35 were in ETE or about to start ETE
- one offender was retired
- six had been recalled and one offender had been re-arrested

- two were still being detained for immigration purposes.

6.54 The graph below shows the type of ETE offenders in our sample had at each follow-up stage.



6.55 Although only a small sample, there were some patterns between those who had ETE at the six-month stage and those who did not. Those engaged in ETE at the six-month stage were more likely to have told us the following information during their interview in prison:

- they knew what area they wanted to work in;
- they had ETE already arranged for their release;
- they had had release on temporary licence before release.

6.56 Those who were not in ETE at the six-month stage were more likely to have moved since release and for this to represent unstable living arrangements, rather than a move to more permanent and suitable accommodation. As the case study below illustrates, this situation hinders ETE plans.

Case study V

One offender had engaged with REACH while in prison but accommodation issues had disrupted his ETE plans for release. He had wanted to go to a YMCA but there had been no space available, although he was on the waiting list. At the eleventh hour, he had been able to arrange to go to the home of a family member on a temporary basis, as otherwise he would have been homeless. At the six-month stage, he was still hoping to get a place at the YMCA but was residing with a friend's family in the interim. His priority was resolving his accommodation issues but he was confident that he would be able to find work once he had a permanent address.

Women

- 6.57** On the day of release, four women (three from an open prison) had had a job arranged. At the one-month follow-up stage, half of the 20 women in our sample were either in ETE or unable to work because of their age or for health reasons. The other half were actively looking for work.
- 6.58** At the six-month follow-up, most of this group were continuing to engage in ETE; all but one of those working at the one-month follow-up were still in employment (one had had given up her job owing to accommodation difficulties). Fewer were continuing education that they had gone into on release although, of those who were not, most reported being motivated and actively seeking employment. The offender who was completing an Open University course (see case study R) had had to put this on hold because of difficulties in accessing a computer and her need to find employment to support her family.

Young adults aged 18–21

- 6.59** Of the 13 young adults in our sample, only two had left prison with work arranged. By the six-month stage, three were in ETE and seven were engaging with ETE services to varying degrees – for some of them, the offender managers cited lack of motivation as an issue. Three had been recalled to custody.

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