



Ministry  
of Justice

# **The impact of experience in prison on the employment status of longer-sentenced prisoners after release**

Results from the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) longitudinal cohort study of prisoners

**Ian Brunton-Smith, University of Surrey  
and Kathryn Hopkins, Ministry of Justice**

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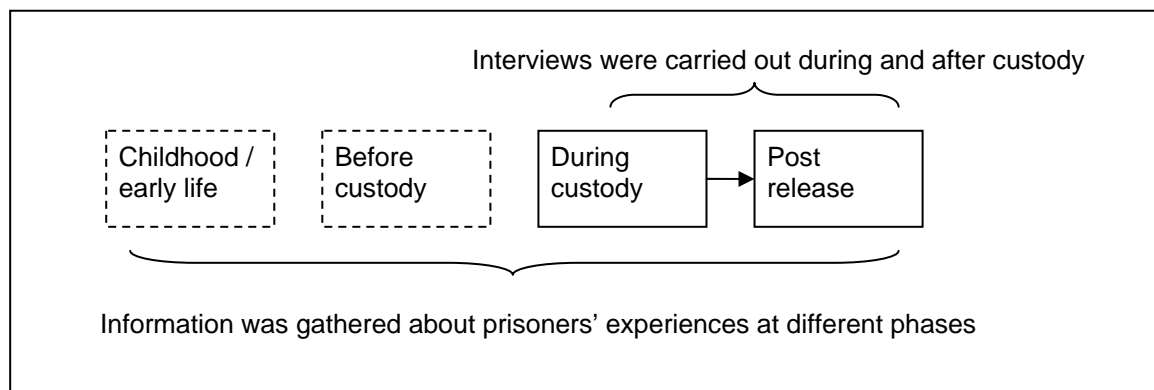
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# 1. Summary

According to survey data,<sup>1</sup> around two-thirds of prisoners are unemployed both before and after custody. The importance of employment in supporting reducing re-offending has long been recognised. There is less understanding of why some prisoners are able to secure work, whilst others do not. Improving our understanding is a key priority for those involved in the management and rehabilitation of offenders.

Between 2005 and 2010 a longitudinal cohort study (*Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction – SPCR*) was conducted, involving face to face interviews with prisoners during and after custody, as well as matching individuals to administrative data such as criminal records. Figure 1.1 provides a schematic outline of interview topics and timing.

**Figure 1.1: SPCR interviews and topic areas/life stages**



During the SPCR interviews, prisoners were asked about events and circumstances in childhood and early life and before coming into custody as well as their experiences in prison and after release.

Previous reports from the SPCR study have focused on the background characteristics of 1,435 prisoners sentenced to between one month and four years in prison (SPCR Sample 1), including childhood experiences, education, employment, drug and alcohol use, health and mental health, needs and attitudes, accommodation before custody, and criminal history (MoJ, 2010a; Boorman & Hopkins, 2012; Hopkins, 2012; Williams, Poyser & Hopkins, 2012; Williams, Papadopoulou & Booth, 2012; Light, Grant & Hopkins, 2013) These reports were based on bivariate analysis and explored prevalence of these pre-custody factors and

whether they were associated with higher rates of re-offending on release. In addition, a longitudinal report (Brunton-Smith & Hopkins, 2013) demonstrated which factors identified in the bivariate analyses remained independently associated with re-offending after release from prison, once all other factors were taken into account.

SPCR respondents were asked about their employment status during the Wave 3 interviews, conducted **a few months**<sup>2</sup> post-release from prison. The current report presents findings about the factors that are associated with **employment after release**, for 2,171 prisoners serving sentences of between 18 months and four years (SPCR Sample 2). These sentence lengths are not typical, as on average, most prisoners are sentenced to less than one year in prison.<sup>3</sup> However, longer-sentenced prisoners are more likely to access programmes and interventions in prison, and this focus on longer-sentenced prisoners may allow analysis of the effects of these programmes on outcomes such as employment after release. The research first uses bivariate analysis to describe a range of factors before, during custody and after release, exploring how post-custody employment rates vary according to these factors. The analysis then focuses more specifically on identifying the factors that were **most strongly** associated with higher likelihood of reporting employment after release. To do so the analysis used logistic regression, developing a multivariate model to allow several factors to be tested for their association with post-custody employment at the same time. This allows us to demonstrate which factors were **independently** associated with employment, when all factors were considered together.

Logistic regression analysis does not establish causal links between events, circumstances and re-offending. Nevertheless, the approach allows us to identify a range of factors directly associated with employment after release from prison, and to consider the relative importance of different factors to support policy makers and practitioners working with prisoners and ex-prisoners.

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<sup>1</sup> Administrative data, such as the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) linked data, report lower levels of employment amongst prisoners (MoJ, 2011 and 2014), as they do not include self-employment, all earnings under the National Insurance threshold, and informal employment.

<sup>2</sup> Wave 3 interviews were planned to take place around one to two months after a prisoner's release. In practice 53% of interviews took place within 14 weeks of release; 20% between 14 and 20 weeks; and 27% more than 20 weeks after release. See Cleary et al. (2014) for details.

<sup>3</sup> Fewer than 10% of prisoners were sentenced to more than four years in prison in 2006: *Offender management caseload statistics (annual)*, available at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/statistics-and-data/prisons-and-probation/omcs-annual.htm>



## Findings

Thirty-one per cent of Sample 2 prisoners reported that they had been in paid employment since being released from prison (interviews were conducted a few months after release).

The factor **most strongly** independently associated with increased likelihood of employment after release from custody amongst the SPCR longer-sentenced prisoners was **employment before custody**. Offenders who reported being employed in the four weeks before custody were more likely to report being employed shortly after custody (compared with those who reported working before this reference period, and those who reported never having worked).

Other factors directly associated with increased reporting of employment after release were identified. These were:

- **Participation in paid work in custody.** Prisoners who had worked while in prison were more likely to be in employment shortly after release.
- **Vocational training in custody.** Prisoners who had attended vocational training in prison were more likely to securing employment shortly after release.
- **Accredited programmes to address offending behaviour and reduce drug or alcohol use in custody.** Prisoners enrolled on accredited programmes to address offending behaviour and to reduce drug or alcohol use were more likely to be in employment shortly after release.
- **Qualifications before custody.** Prisoners who had reported holding school-level qualifications (GCSE and A levels) were more likely to be in employment shortly after release (compared with those with no qualifications).

Factors independently associated with **reduced** likelihood of employment after release included:

- **Accommodation.** Prisoners who were homeless after release from prison were less likely to report being employed.
- **Disability.** Prisoners reporting having a long-term limiting illness were less likely to be employed after release.
- **Needing help with job-related skills.** Prisoners who reported on reception that they needed this help were less likely to report being in employment after release
- **Treatment/counselling.** Prisoners who reported attending treatment or counselling for a drug or alcohol problem after release were less likely to report being in employment after release, compared with prisoners who did not receive treatment or counselling.

These independent relationships with employment on release provide information on areas where interventions may have an opportunity to effect change and therefore improve offenders' likelihood of post-release employment. This may include improving opportunities for involvement in paid work, vocational training and accredited programmes while in prison, and addressing homelessness.

## Conclusion and implications

Overall, a number of factors were found to be independently associated with employment on release amongst a large sample of longer-sentenced prisoners, demonstrating where interventions to improve the employment of ex-prisoners may be most effective:

- Employment before custody was the strongest predictor of employment after custody. This suggests that prisoners with little or no pre-custody employment may need extra help.
- Some in-prison interventions were shown to be associated with improved likelihood of employment, specifically, accredited interventions to address offending behaviour and substance misuse; vocational training; and participating in paid work in prison.
- Prisoners' living arrangements after custody were associated with employment on release, with those who reported being homeless shortly after release less likely to be in employment compared with those who were in more stable accommodation.

These findings, and the low rate of employment of ex-prisoners, suggest that interventions have a role to play both during and post-custody and support a focus on 'offender journeys' and 'through the gate' services to improve employment and accommodation outcomes for ex-prisoners.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the results show that some in-custody activities may be important in increasing the likelihood of employment for ex-prisoners, whilst other in-custody activities may have a less important role (but may be important for other reasons, such as maintaining order and improving prisoner well-being). However, these findings are based on analysis of **longer-sentenced** prisoners (sentenced to between 18 months and four years), and cannot necessarily be applied to all prisoners, most of whom are sentenced to less than one year in prison.

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<sup>4</sup> Employment and accommodation problems after release are associated with re-offending (Brunton-Smith & Hopkins, 2013), suggesting that re-offending can be addressed by managing accommodation and employment problems.

## 2. Context

### 2.1 Background

Having a paid job is regularly identified as an important factor in the effective resettlement of offenders on release from prison (e.g. Sampson & Laub, 1993; Farrall, 2002; Laub & Sampson, 2003; May, Sharma & Stewart, 2008), and in turn in reducing re-offending. Prisoners also emphasise the importance of employment for helping them to reduce their offending (MoJ, 2010a).

The majority of prisoners are unemployed after release from prison.<sup>5</sup> A data sharing exercise between the Ministry of Justice, the Department for Work and Pensions and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs showed that just over a third (36%) of prisoners had been in paid employment<sup>6</sup> at some point during the first two years since their release from prison in 2010/2011, with 23% identified as working at the two year mark (MoJ & DWP, 2014). Over a half (54%) of offenders released from prison in 2010/11 were claiming out-of-work benefits one month after release from prison, decreasing to 42% two years after (MoJ & DWP, 2014). This data-sharing exercise also showed that ex-prisoners who gained formal employment on release were less likely to re-offend than similar prisoners who did not find work (MoJ, 2013b).

The importance of developing the vocational and employability skills that offenders need to find and keep jobs has been emphasised in a joint Department for Business, Industry and Skills and Ministry of Justice report (BIS & MoJ, 2011). Improving employment services to offenders and increasing the employability of offenders has also been identified as critical to increase social inclusion and reduce re-offending (MoJ & DWP, 2010).

Analysis of Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) Sample 1,<sup>7</sup> which is representative of the flow of the majority of prisoners into prison, showed that many offenders enter prison with limited work experience and no educational qualifications (Hopkins, 2012). A considerable emphasis is placed in policy and practice on the provision of effective work

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<sup>5</sup> Prisoners are recorded as having the lowest rates of employment amongst all offenders: see Table 1.5 of: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/276080/annex-c-table-chart-underlying-data.xls](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/276080/annex-c-table-chart-underlying-data.xls)

<sup>6</sup> P45 employment only. This does not include all earnings below the National Insurance threshold, self-employment, and informal employment. Surveys (including SPCR) indicate that the actual employment rates of prisoners and ex-prisoners is higher than that recorded in management information.

<sup>7</sup> SPCR consists of two samples: Sample 1, which is representative of the flow of prisoners into prison, and consists mostly of prisoners sentenced to less than one year, and Sample 2, which is representative of longer-sentenced prisoners (18 months to four years).

experience and training in prison, as well as enabling prisoners to gain basic numeracy and literacy skills.

The importance of regular working hours, vocational training and effective skills provision was highlighted in the Government green paper *Breaking the cycle: effective punishment, rehabilitation and sentencing of offenders* (MoJ, 2010b) and consultation paper *Making prisons work: skills for rehabilitation* (BIS & MoJ, 2011). These papers emphasised the importance of strategies designed to provide prisoners with the vocational and employability skills they need to get a job on release from prison. This included a commitment to improve the careers advice available to prisoners that reported needing help with employment, and maintaining this support on release from prison. At the same time, *Breaking the cycle* introduced working prisons, where prisoners would undertake a full working week, supported by education programmes aimed at providing work-based skills (MoJ, 2010b). Additionally, the *Transforming Rehabilitation* strategy (MoJ, 2013a) pointed to employment needs as one of offenders' 'life management' issues that need to be tackled.

## **2.2 The current research**

### **Aim**

The aim of the analysis presented here was to identify the factors associated with ex-prisoners (sentenced to between 18 months and four years) reporting being in paid employment shortly (a few months) after release from prison.

The analysis aimed to examine factors relating to offenders' experiences, before, during and after custody, drawing on a series of three interviews: Wave 1 (on reception to prison), Wave 2 (pre-release) and Wave 3 (post-release).

### 3. Approach

SPCR is a longitudinal cohort study of adult (age 18 years and over) prisoners serving sentences in England and Wales. Interviews were conducted twice in prison, once on reception (Wave 1) and once in the weeks before release (Wave 2), with a third interview conducted a few months<sup>8</sup> after release (Wave 3). The analysis in this report is based on data from Sample 2<sup>9</sup> of SPCR, a sample of 2,414 reception prisoners sentenced in 2006 and 2007 to between 18 months and four years (spending up to two years in prison, as prisoners typically spend half their sentence in custody). This enabled an examination of the associations between experiences within prison on employment opportunities for prisoners who were not on short sentences (e.g. for less than one year), resulting in a substantial absence from the workplace.

The sample is largely representative of prisoner receptions of these sentence lengths at the time, except it also included an oversample of 400 female prisoners. To better match the population of prisoners, 39% of the female oversample was randomly selected, resulting in a final sample of 2,171 prisoners. Details on the sampling are available in the Wave 1 technical report (Cleary et al., 2012).

Potential explanatory factors from the initial reception interview (Wave 1) covered basic demographics and details of the sentenced offence, as well as offenders' pre-sentence situation (including information about prior employment, drug use and accommodation arrangements – see MoJ, 2010a; Boorman & Hopkins, 2012; Cunniffe et al. 2012; Hopkins, 2012; Williams, Poyser & Hopkins, 2012; Williams, Papadopoulou & Booth, 2012; Light, Grant & Hopkins, 2013). This was supplemented with information from the pre-release (Wave 2) interview covering details of involvement in prison-based work and education and training, as well as specific interventions designed to tackle offending behaviour and promote successful reintegration into the community (such as anger management, drug/alcohol programmes). Information from the post-release interview (Wave 3) was also explored, in particular prisoners' resettlement experience (for example, in terms of accommodation arrangements) and their drug and alcohol use.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Wave 3 interviews were planned to take place around one to two months after a prisoner's release. In practice 53% of interviews took place within 14 weeks of release; 20% between 14 and 20 weeks; and 27% more than 20 weeks after release. See Cleary et al. (2014) for details.

<sup>9</sup> Sample 1 of SPCR is a sample of 1,435 prisoners sentenced to between one month and four years in 2005 and 2006. Results from Sample 1 are available on the MoJ website.

<sup>10</sup> Descriptive statistics from the Waves 2 and 3 interviews are published in Hopkins & Brunton-Smith (2014). A similar longitudinal analysis with proven re-offending at one and two years after release is published in Brunton-Smith & Hopkins (2013).

Bivariate analyses<sup>11</sup> were used to identify which of the factors identified in the Waves 1-3 interviews were directly or indirectly linked with employment on release. Factors which are associated (at face value) with employment on release may not be independently associated with employment when all factors are entered into a model together (that is, the association may be due to association with a third factor). Therefore, to identify which of these factors were independently associated with increased likelihood of employment, multivariate logistic regression models<sup>12</sup> were used. All factors identified as statistically significant from the bivariate analysis were entered simultaneously; variables that were no longer statistically significant at the 5% level were removed following backwards stepwise procedure. The final model also retained basic details about each offender (gender, age and ethnicity) and his or her sentenced offence (offence type and sentence length) to adjust for basic differences between offenders.

## Limitations

This study is based on data from offenders measured a few months after release. While the short-term resettlement experience of ex-prisoners is important for reducing re-offending, a longer-term measure of employment would help identify additional factors associated with being employed.<sup>13</sup>

The study was also restricted to those serving longer sentences; different factors are potentially more important among those who are not in prison for long and who consequently have reduced opportunities for involvement in vocational courses, prison-based work and educational training compared with longer-sentenced prisoners. In addition, shorter- and longer-sentenced prisoners have different characteristics: longer-sentenced prisoners tend to have committed more serious offences, are less likely to re-offend, and report more stable backgrounds than shorter-sentenced prisoners. Comparisons between shorter sentenced (Sample 1) and longer-sentenced (Sample 2) prisoners are made in this report, and brought together in Annex A.

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<sup>11</sup> A bivariate analysis looks at associations between two factors, e.g. employment before prison and employment after prison. No other factors are controlled for, e.g. employment and training in prison.

<sup>12</sup> Logistic regression models allow several factors to be tested for their association with employment outcomes at the same time. For example, employment before prison and employment and training in prison can be tested together, and the model will show whether employment and training in prison has any effect on employment outcomes after release, **over and above** the effect of employment before custody.

<sup>13</sup> Longer-term employment outcomes of ex-prisoners can be explored using the MoJ/DWP datashare: see MoJ & DWP (2014).

SPCR suffered from attrition (drop-out of survey participants) at Wave 2 and Wave 3. Multiple Imputation (MI)<sup>14</sup> was used to adjust estimates for this missing data (Brunton-Smith et al. 2014). MI enabled the research to maximise the available data included in the analysis, adjusting the estimates and standard errors to incorporate the additional uncertainty associated with the loss of information. However, this can result in conservative estimates of significance for these variables, potentially limiting the number of explanatory factors that were identified in the model.

In-prison interviews for this study were undertaken between 2006 and 2008, with post-release interviews occurring shortly (a few months) after release. There have been changes to offender management practices since this time. Nonetheless, the results presented here improve our understanding of factors affecting ex-prisoners' likelihood of employment.

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<sup>14</sup> Multiple Imputation (MI) involves creating statistical proxies for missing answers based on available data.

## 4. Results

This chapter first considers prisoner characteristics, experiences in prison and employment outcomes on release: it examines the bivariate, or unadjusted, associations of these factors with employment. All differences reported are statistically significant<sup>15</sup> at the 5% level.

The second section presents results of the multivariate logistic regression model, identifying those factors significantly and independently associated with employment. These relationships are then considered in more detail.

### 4.1 Prisoner characteristics and associations with employment shortly after release

#### Offender characteristics (Wave 1)

Table 4.1 presents an overview of prisoner characteristics for SPCR Sample 2. Prisoners were predominantly male (93%), with a mean age of 30 (median 28) and only 5% over the age of 50. In line with the general prison reception population, the sample was also predominantly white, with fewer than one in five prisoners (18%) self-identifying as belonging to a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) group. Approximately two in five prisoners (43%) were serving a sentence of 18 months to two years, with a further two in five (39%) serving a sentence of between two and three years. Around one in five prisoners (19%) were serving a sentence of between three and four years. Approximately three in ten prisoners (29%) self-reported as having a limiting long-term illness.

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<sup>15</sup> Tests of statistical significance were derived from bivariate logistic regression models, using the Wald test.



**Table 4.1: SPCR Sample 2: gender, age, ethnic background (two groupings), sentence length, offence type and self-reported long-term limiting illness**

	<b>Factor</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	2,014	93
	Female	157	7
<b>Age</b>	18-20	343	16
	21-24	456	21
	25-29	405	19
	30-39	552	25
	40-49	300	14
	50+	115	5
<b>Ethnic background</b>	White	1,781	82
	Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME)	389	18
	Unknown	1	<1
<b>Sentence length</b>	Over 18 months up to 2 years	928	43
	Over 2 years up to 3 years	839	39
	Over 3 years up to 4 years	404	19
<b>Offence type (self-reported)</b>	Acquisitive <sup>16</sup>	632	29
	Violence <sup>17</sup>	480	22
	Drugs	538	25
	Vehicle-related	66	3
	Other <sup>18</sup>	445	21
	Unknown	10	<1
<b>Limiting illness (self-reported)</b>	Yes	624	29
	No	1,542	71
	Not stated/refused	5	<1
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,171</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Totals may not add up to 100% because of rounding.*

### Employment status after release from custody (Wave 3)

To measure employment since release from prison, a question from the post-release (Wave 3) interview was used. This asked offenders whether they had been in paid employment at any time since release from prison:

- Just under one third (31%) of all Sample 2 ex-prisoners reported they had been in paid employment since being released from prison.
- Of these, more than four in five (82%) were still employed at the time of the post-release interview.

This rate of employment in the months after release was higher than for the shorter-sentenced prisoners (28%) in SPCR Sample 1 (Hopkins & Brunton-Smith, 2014). Higher rates of employment amongst longer-sentenced prisoners was also observed in a recent Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) datashare (MoJ & DWP, 2014).

<sup>16</sup> Robbery; burglary; theft and handling.

<sup>17</sup> Violence against the person.

<sup>18</sup> Fraud and forgery; sexual offences; other offences.

**Pre-custody factors (Wave 1)**

**Employment**

Prior employment is likely to be an important factor in securing employment on release from prison. Just over one in three prisoners (37%) reported that they were in paid employment in the four weeks prior to their sentence, with a further fifth (21%) indicating they had been employed at some point in the last year but not in the previous four weeks. Around one in ten (11%) said they had never been in full-time employment (Table 4.2).

**Table 4.2: SPCR Sample 2: employment status prior to custody and associations with employment in the months after release (MI adjusted results)<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Employment status before custody**</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Employed in the months after release (%)</b>
Worked in the 4 weeks before custody	37%	51%
Worked in the 4-52 weeks before custody	21%	28%
Did not work in the last year	32%	15%
Never worked	11%	19%
<i>Sample size (imputed sample size)</i>	<i>2,165</i>	<i>1,329 (2,158)</i>

<sup>1</sup> Percentages derived from bivariate logistic regression models.

\*\* Denotes statistical significance at the 5% level.

*Totals may not add up to 100% because of rounding.*

Prior employment was strongly related to employment after release from prison with just over half (51%) of all Sample 2 prisoners that had been working in the four weeks prior to their sentence reporting that they had been employed again since release, compared with just under one in five (19%) of those who had never worked and 15% of those who had not worked in the last year.

**Accommodation**

Details about the accommodation arrangements of SPCR Sample 2 offenders before custody were collected from all prisoners during the initial (Wave 1) interview (Table 4.3). Sixteen per cent of prisoners reported owning or part-owning their home. The majority (59%) of prisoners were living in accommodation they rented. Seven per cent of offenders were living in temporary accommodation or reported being homeless prior to their sentence. These figures suggest that longer-term prisoners had more stable accommodation arrangements prior to custody than the predominantly shorter-sentenced Sample 1 prisoners; thirteen per cent of Sample 1 prisoners reported living in accommodation they owned (or part-owned) before custody, 53% reported renting or paying board for their accommodation, and 15% reported being homeless before custody (Williams, Poyser & Hopkins, 2012).

**Table 4.3: SPCR Sample 2: accommodation status prior to custody and associations with employment in the months after release (MI adjusted results)<sup>1</sup>**

Accommodation status before custody**	Total	Employed in the months after release
Owned or part owned house/flat	16%	43%
Rented/paid board	59%	30%
Lived rent free	12%	32%
Temporary accommodation or homeless	7%	18%
Other (includes living with family)	5%	32%
<i>Sample size (imputed sample size)</i>	<i>2,169</i>	<i>1,334 (2,165)</i>

<sup>1</sup> Percentages derived from bivariate logistic regression models.

\*\* Denotes statistical significance at the 5% level.

*Totals may not add up to 100% because of rounding.*

Longer-term prisoners who owned/part owned their accommodation were more likely to be employed (43%) since release from prison than all others. Those who were homeless or living in temporary accommodation were least likely to be employed, with fewer than one in five (18%) employed (compared with approximately one in three for all other accommodation types – rented/paid board 30%, rent-free 32%, and ‘other’ 32%).

### Education

SPCR Sample 2 prisoners had varied educational histories (Table 4.4), with just over two-fifths (43%) reporting they had no educational qualifications, compared with 47% of Sample 1 (Hopkins, 2012). Around a third (36%) had no qualifications higher than GCSEs<sup>19</sup> and fewer than one in ten (9%) reported that they had completed A-levels<sup>20</sup> or equivalent.

Prisoners with qualifications were more likely to be in employment in the months after release from prison, with 35% of those with GCSEs and 46% of those with A-levels in employment, compared with 24% of those with no qualifications (higher proportions of those with a degree or equivalent or an alternative form of qualification were also employed, but this did not reach conventional levels of significance).

<sup>19</sup> General Certificate of School Education, usually taken at age 16 in England and Wales.

<sup>20</sup> A-levels are the highest level of school qualifications in England and Wales, usually taken at age 18.

**Table 4.4: SPCR Sample 2: Educational status prior to custody and associations with employment in the months after release (MI adjusted results)<sup>1</sup>**

	<b>Factor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Employed in the months after release</b>
<b>Educational status before custody</b> (highest qualification achieved)**	No qualifications	43%	24%
	GCSE or equivalent (all grades)	36%	35%
	A-level or equivalent	9%	46%
	Degree or diploma or equivalent	7%	30%
	Other qualification (including overseas and trade apprenticeships)	5%	34%
<i>Sample size (imputed sample size)</i>		1,318 (2,139)	1,318 (2,139)
<b>Regular truant from school**</b>	Yes	55%	29%
	No	45%	34%
<i>Sample size (imputed sample size)</i>		2,147	1,320 (2,142)
<b>Expelled from school**</b>	Yes	35%	26%
	No	65%	34%
<i>Sample size (imputed sample size)</i>		2,145	1,318 (2,140)

<sup>1</sup> Percentages derived from bivariate logistic regression models.

\*\* Denotes statistical significance at the 5% level.

More than half (55%) of longer-term prisoners reported that they had been regular truants from school, while around a third (35%) had been permanently excluded (expelled) from school (compared with over two-fifths (42%) of Sample 1 prisoners who had been permanently excluded (Williams, Papadopoulou & Booth, 2012). Both groups were less likely to be employed on release from prison (29% compared with 34% and 26% compared with 34% respectively).

### **Drug and alcohol use**

SPCR Sample 2 prisoners also reported details of their drug and alcohol use just prior to their sentence (Table 4.5). Just over two-fifths (43%) reported that they had not used drugs in the four weeks before they entered custody, with just over one in five (21%) reporting that they had never used drugs. This compares with just over one third of Sample 1 prisoners (36%) reporting they had not used drugs in the four weeks before custody, and just under one in five (19%) reporting they had never used drugs (MoJ, 2010a), suggesting that drug problems were slightly more prevalent among shorter-sentenced than longer-sentenced prisoners.

**Table 4.5: SPCR Sample 2: Substance misuse prior to custody and associations with employment in the months after release (MI adjusted results)<sup>1</sup>**

Factor		Total	Employed in the months after release
<b>Drug use before custody**</b>	None in last 4 weeks	43%	36%
	Class A only	11%	28%
	Class B/C only	20%	34%
	Class A and B/C	26%	24%
<i>Sample size (imputed sample size)</i>		2,165	1,330 (2,158)
<b>Daily alcohol use in the four weeks before custody**</b>	Yes	22%	26%
	No	78%	33%
<i>Sample size (imputed sample size)</i>		2,163	1,332 (2,158)

<sup>1</sup> Percentages derived from bivariate logistic regression models.

\*\* Denotes statistical significance at the 5% level.

More than a third (37%) of SPCR Sample 2 reported that they were Class A<sup>21</sup> drug users in the four weeks before custody, with just over one-quarter (26%) combining this with Class B/C<sup>22</sup> drugs. Class A users just before custody were less likely to report being in paid employment on release from prison (28% of Class A only drug users, 24% of Class A and B/C drug users, compared with 34% of Class B/C only users and 36% of those who did not use drugs in this period).

Just over one in five prisoners (22%) identified themselves as daily alcohol users, and this group of offenders were also slightly less likely to be employed on release from prison (26% compared with 33% for those who did not report using alcohol daily in the four weeks before custody).

**Arrival in prison (Wave 1)**

**Help with needs**

During their initial (Wave 1) interview, prisoners were asked whether they felt they needed help with a range of problems including reading, writing and ability with numbers, education, job-related skills and finding a job or a place to live on release (Table 4.6).

<sup>21</sup> Ecstasy, LSD, heroin, crack cocaine, cocaine and unprescribed methadone.

<sup>22</sup> Amphetamines, cannabis and unprescribed tranquilisers.

**Table 4.6: SPCR Sample 2: reported needs on reception to prison and associations with employment in the months after release (MI adjusted results)<sup>1</sup>**

Reported need on reception to prison		Total	Employed in the months after release
<b>Help to improve reading, writing, or ability with numbers</b>	Yes	18%	28%
	No	82%	32%
<i>Sample size (imputed sample size)</i>		2,171	1,335 (2,166)
<b>Help with education**</b>	Yes	40%	27%
	No	60%	34%
<i>Sample size (imputed sample size)</i>		2,167	1,333 (2,162)
<b>Help with work-related skills**</b>	Yes	39%	25%
	No	61%	35%
<i>Sample size (imputed sample size)</i>		2,167	1,333 (2,162)
<b>Help with finding a job on release**</b>	Yes	48%	22%
	No	52%	40%
<i>Sample size (imputed sample size)</i>		2,165	1,330 (2,160)
<b>Help with finding a place to live on release**</b>	Yes	34%	23%
	No	66%	35%
<i>Sample size (imputed sample size)</i>		2,158	1,328 (2,153)

<sup>1</sup> Percentages derived from bivariate logistic regression models.

\*\* Denotes statistical significance at the 5% level.

Nearly two in five (39%) prisoners reported that they needed help with work-related skills, and nearly half (48%) needed help finding a job on release. Two in five felt they needed help with their education. These figures are similar to those reported by Sample 1 prisoners (40%, 48% and 41% respectively) (Hopkins, 2012), suggesting that work-related needs are similar for prisoners of different sentence lengths. SPCR Sample 2 prisoners who reported needing help with these issues were less likely to be in employment following release from prison. One-quarter of those who reported needing help with work-related skills reported being in employment shortly after custody compared with just over one-third of those (35%) who did not report needing help with work-related skills. Just over one fifth (22%) of those who reported needing help finding a job on release reported being in employment shortly after custody compared with two-fifths (40%) of those who did not report needing the same help. The employment (shortly after custody) figure for those who reported needing help with education was 27% compared with 34% of those who did not report needing help with education. No statistically significant differences in employment after release were observed between those who reported needing help to improve reading, writing, or ability with numbers compared with those who did not report needing this help.

Around 34% of SPCR Sample 2 reported that they needed help finding a place to live on release. This compares with around 37% of Sample 1 prisoners (Williams, Poyser & Hopkins, 2012), meaning that a considerable minority of prisoners of all sentence lengths have accommodation problems. Sample 2 prisoners reporting needing help finding a place to

live on release were less likely to report being in employment in the months after release (23%) compared with prisoners who did not report needing help (35%).

## Experience of prison (Wave 2)

### Work in prison

Around four in five (79%) SPCR Sample 2 prisoners were involved in some form of paid work during their sentence (Table 4.7). The types of work prisoners were involved in included cleaning, kitchen work, maintenance and construction. Prisoners who were involved in work during their sentence were more likely to have secured employment since release, with a third of prisoners who worked in prison subsequently finding work (33%) compared with less than a quarter (23%) of those who did not work during their sentence.

**Table 4.7: SPCR Sample 2: paid work in prison and associations with employment in the months after release (MI adjusted results)<sup>1</sup>**

Factor		Total	Employed in the months after release
<b>Worked in prison**</b>	Yes	79%	33%
	No	21%	23%
<i>Non-imputed sample size (imputed)</i>		1,456 (2,166)	942 (2,166)

<sup>1</sup> Percentages derived from bivariate logistic regression models.

\*\* Denotes statistical significance at the 5% level.

### Education and vocational training

Many SPCR Sample 2 prisoners were also enrolled in education and work-based training during their sentences (Table 4.8).

**Table 4.8: SPCR Sample 2: education and training in custody and associations with employment in the months after release (MI adjusted results)<sup>1</sup>**

Factor		Total	Employed in the months after release
<b>Basic literacy, numeracy, English skills</b>	Yes	40%	28%
	No	60%	33%
<i>Non-imputed sample size (imputed)</i>		1,456 (2,166)	942 (2,166)
<b>Academic qualification</b>	Yes	35%	34%
	No	65%	30%
<i>Non-imputed sample size (imputed)</i>		1,454 (2,164)	941 (2,164)
<b>Vocational training course**</b>	Yes	34%	40%
	No	66%	27%
<i>Non-imputed sample size (imputed)</i>		1,454 (2,164)	940 (2,164)

<sup>1</sup> Percentages derived from bivariate logistic regression models.

\*\* Denotes statistical significance at the 5% level.

Two in five prisoners (40%) reported being enrolled in basic education courses to improve their reading and writing, basic numeracy, and English speaking skills. More than a third (35%) of prisoners were enrolled in other educational training including A-levels and GCSE qualifications, ICT<sup>23</sup> courses and other higher education qualifications.

Just over a third (34%) of prisoners also took part in vocational training during their sentence. Prisoners enrolled on these courses were more likely to be employed on release from prison, with 40% in employment compared with 27% of those who did not take part in vocational training.

### **Other prison-based interventions**

SPCR Sample 2 prisoners reported being involved in other prison-based intervention programmes including drug detoxification schemes and group drug therapy sessions, as well as accredited interventions designed to deal with drug and alcohol problems (e.g. Therapeutic Communities, 12 Steps, and RAPt<sup>24</sup>).

One in five SPCR Sample 2 prisoners (20%) had been enrolled on an accredited programme designed to deal with drug or alcohol problems, a further 13% of prisoners took part in a detoxification programme, and 13% were enrolled in a non-accredited form of counselling programme or a drug maintenance programme.

Restricting the focus to prisoners who were frequent drug or alcohol users prior to prison (Table 4.9), prisoners who were enrolled on an accredited programme (27% of those who said they used drugs or alcohol in the four weeks prior to custody) were more likely to be employed on release from prison than drug users who were not enrolled (34% compared with 25%).

Sixteen percent of frequent drug or alcohol users were enrolled in drug or alcohol detoxification programmes whilst nearly a quarter (23%) was enrolled in other drug or alcohol interventions.

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<sup>23</sup> Information and communication technology: computer skills.

<sup>24</sup> Rehabilitation for Addicted Prisoners Trust (RAPt).



**Table 4.9: SPCR Sample 2: drug and alcohol interventions in custody and associations with employment in the months after release – drug and alcohol users shortly before custody only (MI adjusted results)<sup>1</sup>**

Drug/alcohol treatment		Total	Employed in the months after release
<b>Accredited drug/alcohol programme**</b>	Yes	27%	34%
	No	73%	25%
<b>Drug or alcohol detoxification</b>	Yes	16%	21%
	No	84%	29%
<b>Other drug/alcohol intervention</b>	Yes	23%	25%
	No	77%	29%
<i>Non-imputed sample size (imputed)</i>		619 (1,375)	619 (1,375)

<sup>1</sup> Percentages derived from bivariate logistic regression models.

\*\* Denotes statistical significance at the 5% level.

More than a quarter (29%) of prisoners were enrolled in another form of accredited intervention designed to help understand offending behaviour (e.g. ETS,<sup>25</sup> Cognitive Skills Booster, Think First, R&R,<sup>26</sup> and Focus on Resettlement) or strengthen anger management skills (e.g. CALM,<sup>27</sup> CSCP,<sup>28</sup> and Healthy Relationships) (Table 4.10). Prisoners enrolled on these programmes were more likely to be in employment when re-interviewed after release from prison, with 37% employed compared with 29% of prisoners not enrolled in these programmes.

**Table 4.10: SPCR Sample 2: accredited interventions to address offending behaviour in custody and associations with employment in the months after release (MI adjusted results)<sup>1</sup>**

Factor		Total	Employed in the months after release
<b>Accredited intervention**</b>	Yes	29%	37%
	No	71%	29%
<i>Non-imputed sample size (imputed)</i>		1,456 (2,166)	942 (2,166)

<sup>1</sup> Percentages derived from bivariate logistic regression models.

\*\* Denotes statistical significance at the 5% level.

### Help finding work and help with resettlement

SPCR Sample 2 prisoners were asked whether they had received any help finding accommodation, work or training opportunities while in prison (Table 4.11).

<sup>25</sup> Enhanced Thinking Skills, now called Thinking Skills.

<sup>26</sup> Reasoning and Rehabilitation.

<sup>27</sup> Controlling Anger and Learning How to Manage It.

<sup>28</sup> Cognitive Self-Change Programme.

**Table 4.11: SPCR Sample 2: help with accommodation and employment in custody and associations with employment in the months after release (MI adjusted results)<sup>1</sup>**

Type of help received		Total	Employed in the months after release
<b>Finding a place to live</b>	Yes	16%	26%
	No	84%	32%
<i>Non-imputed sample size (imputed)</i>		1,453 (2,163)	941 (2,163)
<b>Finding a job, with additional training or education**</b>	Yes	19%	37%
	No	81%	30%
<i>Non-imputed sample size (imputed)</i>		1,451 (2,161)	940 (2,161)

<sup>1</sup> Percentages derived from bivariate logistic regression models.

\*\* Denotes statistical significance at the 5% level.

Around one in six prisoners (16%) reported receiving help with sorting out accommodation, with a similar number (19%) reporting receiving help with finding work, additional training or education on release. Prisoners who had received help with employment were more likely to be employed (37% were employed compared with 30% of those who did not receive this help).

**Family visits**

Most SPCR Sample 2 prisoners (89%) received at least one visit from family during their sentence (Table 4.12). Those who received visits were more likely to report being in employment in the months after release from prison (33% compared with 19%).

**Table 4.12: SPCR Sample 2: visited by family in custody and associations with employment in the months after release (MI adjusted results)<sup>1</sup>**

Factor		Total	Employed in the months after release
<b>Received visits from family**</b>	Yes	89%	33%
	No	11%	19%
<i>Non-imputed sample size (imputed)</i>		1,325 (2,156)	1,325 (2,156)

<sup>1</sup> Percentages derived from bivariate logistic regression models.

\*\* Denotes statistical significance at the 5% level.

**Post-release resettlement experience (Wave 3)**

SPCR Sample 2 ex-prisoners were re-interviewed a few months after release from prison. In addition to information about their employment, the ex-prisoners were asked about their living arrangements and whether they were currently receiving any treatment or counselling (Table 4.13).

**Table 4.13: SPCR Sample 2: resettlement experiences and associations with employment in the months after release (MI adjusted results)<sup>1</sup>**

Factor		Total	Employed in the months after release
<b>Living with immediate family**</b>	Yes	66%	34%
	No	34%	25%
<i>Non-imputed sample size (imputed)</i>		1,326 (2,157)	1,326 (2,157)
<b>Homeless or living in temporary accommodation**</b>	Yes	14%	15%
	No	86%	34%
<i>Non-imputed sample size (imputed)</i>		1,334 (2,165)	1,334 (2,165)
<b>Participated in treatment or counselling**</b>	Yes	28%	21%
	No	72%	35%
<i>Non-imputed sample size (imputed)</i>		1,334 (2,165)	1,334 (2,165)
<b>Class A drug user**</b>	Yes	18%	24%
	No	82%	33%
<i>Non-imputed sample size (imputed)</i>		1,334 (2,165)	1,334 (2,165)

<sup>1</sup> Percentages derived from bivariate logistic regression models.

\*\* Denotes statistical significance at the 5% level.

Two-thirds (66%) reported living with immediate family since release, with this group more likely to be employed when re-interviewed (34% compared with 25%). Just under one in seven (14%) were identified as living in temporary accommodation or were homeless since release, and this group were less likely to report being in employment (15% compared with 34% of those who did not report being homeless since release).

Over one-quarter (28%) of ex-prisoners reported that they had received treatment or counselling since they were released from prison, with this group also less likely to be employed (21% compared with 35% of those who did not report receiving treatment or counselling). Around one in five (18%) reported regular use of Class A drugs since release from prison, with this group also less likely to be employed (24% compared with 33% of those who did not report regular use of Class A drugs since release).

**4.2 Multivariate results: factors independently associated with ex-prisoners reporting being in employment on release**

Bivariate analyses demonstrated that a number of factors were related (either directly or indirectly) to increased likelihood of being in employment after release from prison. Many of these factors are likely to be interrelated, therefore multivariate models<sup>29</sup> were used to identify factors that were independently or directly associated with likelihood of employment on release amongst SPCR Sample 2 prisoners (and not indirectly associated, as a result of their association with other factors).

<sup>29</sup> Logistic regression models using backwards stepwise regression.

The factors independently associated with **increased odds** of being in paid employment at any time since release among SPCR Sample 2 prisoners were:

- Having an academic qualification before custody
- Being involved in paid work in prison
- Completing a vocational training programme during their sentence
- Taking part in an accredited prison-based intervention programme (including drug or alcohol programmes).

The factors independently associated with **reduced odds** of being in paid employment were:

- Age in years (older prisoners were less likely to report being employed)
- Having a long-term limiting illness
- Not working in the four weeks prior to sentence
- Reporting that they needed help with work prior to entering prison
- Attending treatment or counselling since release from prison
- Being homeless or living in temporary accommodation since release.

Factors identified in the bivariate analyses that did not remain statistically significant when examined simultaneously were removed from the final model. These were:

- Being a regular truant from school or having been expelled from school
- Being a regular drug/alcohol user shortly before custody
- Needing help in prison with education; with finding a job or a place to live on release
- Receiving help in custody with finding a job, with additional training or with education
- Receiving family visits in custody
- Living with immediate family on release
- Being a Class A drug user since release.

These variables were no longer significant because of their associations with other factors (which were independently associated with employment on release). This means they can be interpreted as 'markers' of other issues which were more directly associated with the outcome of interest. This is important as it can help identify which prisoners are least likely to succeed in finding employment on release (e.g. those prisoners who do not receive family visits). It can also demonstrate where other interventions may have an indirect effect on employment: early interventions to ensure school completion, or drug treatment to reduce drug dependence, for example.

Some factors were found not to be associated with employment on release at any stage in the analysis. These included:

- Attending in-prison courses to improve literacy, numeracy, and English speaking skills.
- Attending courses to gain academic qualifications.
- Receiving help to find a place to live on release.

Table 4.14 presents the *odds ratios* for each factor that was statistically significant in the final model. The odds ratio can be interpreted as the independent association of each factor remaining in the model (the non-significant factors have been removed) while controlling for all other factors in the model. An odds ratio greater than one (1.0) demonstrates an independent association with increased odds of an ex-prisoner being in employment in the months after release, and an odds ratio less than one shows an independent association with lower odds of being in employment in the months after release.

The 95% confidence intervals (CI) are also provided – these show the likely boundaries of the true value of the odds ratios. '**B**' (beta) refers to the coefficient (the log-odds ratio) and **SE** is the standard error of the coefficient.

**Table 4.14: SPCR Sample 2: factors independently associated with ex-prisoners reporting being in employment in the months after release (MI adjusted)**

Factor	B	S.E	Sig	Odds ratio	95% CI	
					Lower	Upper
<b>Female</b> <sup>30</sup>	-0.22	0.30	0.46	0.80	0.45	1.44
<b>Age</b>	-0.02	0.01	0.02	0.98	0.97	1
<b>Sentence length</b> <sup>31</sup> (compared with a sentence of 18 months up to two years)						
Over 2 years up to 3 years	0.23	0.16	0.14	1.26	0.93	1.71
Over 3 years up to 4 years	-0.08	0.19	0.67	0.92	0.63	1.34
<b>Offence type</b> <sup>32</sup> (compared with acquisitive offences – robbery, burglary, theft and handling)						
Violence	0.22	0.19	0.27	1.24	0.85	1.82
Drugs	0.31	0.19	0.10	1.37	0.95	1.98
Motoring	-0.30	0.46	0.52	0.74	0.30	1.84
Other	-0.39	0.22	0.08	0.68	0.44	1.05
No details	-0.55	1.31	0.67	0.58	0.04	7.62
<b>Education level</b> (compared with no qualifications)						
Up to GCSE (or equivalent)	0.42	0.16	0.01	1.52	1.10	2.10
Up to A level (or equivalent)	0.54	0.24	0.02	1.72	1.08	2.75
Up to degree (or equivalent)	0.27	0.34	0.42	1.31	0.68	2.55
Other	0.75	0.35	0.03	2.11	1.06	4.17
<b>Prisoner with BAME ethnic background</b>	-0.21	0.21	0.31	0.81	0.53	1.23
<b>Employment prior to prison</b> (compared with worked in four weeks before custody)						
Worked in last year	-1.00	0.18	<0.01	0.37	0.26	0.53
Worked but not in last year	-1.53	0.18	<0.01	0.22	0.15	0.31
Never worked	-1.15	0.26	<0.01	0.32	0.19	0.53
<b>Reported a long-term limiting illness</b>	-0.47	0.17	0.01	0.62	0.45	0.87
<b>Reported needing help with work-related skills</b>	-0.64	0.14	<0.01	0.53	0.40	0.69
<b>Participated in an accredited intervention</b>	0.39	0.16	0.02	1.47	1.06	2.04
<b>Participated in vocational training</b>	0.54	0.18	<0.01	1.72	1.19	2.48
<b>Paid work in prison</b>	0.46	0.22	0.04	1.58	1.02	2.47
<b>Attended treatment or counselling since release</b>	-0.45	0.17	0.01	0.64	0.46	0.89
<b>Homeless or temporary accommodation since release</b>	-0.64	0.24	0.01	0.53	0.33	0.84
Constant	-0.59	0.26				
<i>Non-imputed sample size (imputed)</i>	920	2,118				

<sup>30</sup> Gender was not statistically significant in the model but was retained to allow this factor to be controlled for.

<sup>31</sup> As above.

<sup>32</sup> As above.

## Independent associations with employment

Not reporting being in paid work prior to prison was strongly related to unemployment on release.<sup>33</sup> Compared with those who reported working in the four weeks prior to custody, all other prisoners were less likely to be employed in the months after release. This was particularly strong for those who had not worked at all in the last year, and those who had never worked, with 78% and 68% lower odds of being in employment after release respectively.

Experiences of work in prison were also closely related to job prospects on release, with prisoners who participated in paid work in prison having approximately 58% higher odds of being employed when compared with prisoners who did not work. Similarly, those involved in vocational training during their sentence had 72% higher odds of securing paid employment on release. In contrast, prisoners who reported needing help with work-related skills prior to their sentence had approximately 47% *lower* odds of being employed shortly after custody.

Prisoners with educational qualifications also had higher odds of employment. Those with school qualifications were more likely to report being in employment on release than those with no qualifications, with the odds of employment 52% higher for those with GCSEs and 72% higher for those with 'A' levels. This pattern was also observed amongst those who reported holding 'other' qualifications (including overseas qualifications and trade apprenticeships). These prisoners had nearly twice the odds of reporting being in employment after release, compared with those who did not report holding any qualifications. When considering the few prisoners who had a degree qualification or higher, there was no difference in the reporting of employment amongst these prisoners compared with those with no qualifications. However, this may have been due to small samples.

Prisoners enrolled in an accredited intervention programme during their sentence (including drug and alcohol interventions, programmes to help understand offending behaviour, and interventions designed to deal with anger management issues) were also more likely to have been in paid employment since release from prison, with the odds of being employed around 47% higher for those who did participate.

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<sup>33</sup> Analysis of linked Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) data also showed that employment prior to imprisonment was related to employment after release, for prisoners of all sentence lengths, released in 2008 (MoJ, 2013b).

Older prisoners and those with a long-term limiting illness were identified as less likely to be in employment since release from prison. Each year of increase in age was associated with approximately two per cent lower odds of being employed in the months after release.

Reporting having a long-standing limiting illness was associated with approximately 38% lower odds of being employed in the months after release.

Reporting having been in treatment or counselling since release from prison was associated with 36% lower odds of reporting being in employment shortly after release, whilst reporting being homeless or in temporary accommodation was associated with a 47% lower odds of being employed.

### **Other associations with employment**

A number of factors were identified during the bivariate analysis stage (see Section 3.1) as being associated with employment on release, but did not remain significant in the final multivariate model (once all other factors were held constant). This means that these factors were not independently associated with employment on release, but were associated with other factors (identified above) which were independently associated with employment. These factors are nevertheless important because they can help to identify which prisoners are likely to have employment problems (if information on factors directly associated with employment is not available, for example). They can also demonstrate where early interventions may be appropriate. Factors identified as being indirectly associated with employment on release, for example, may be associated with employment *before* custody (which was strongly and directly associated with employment on release). Early interventions may improve the employment prospects of offenders and those at risk of offending overall, and as a result reduce the likelihood of further offending (see Brunton-Smith & Hopkins, 2013 for associations between employment and re-offending).

Factors identified as being indirectly associated with reduced employment prospects on release included problems with schooling in childhood, substance misuse, reporting and receiving help with education and finding a job in custody. These factors are likely to be associated with unemployment before custody.

Factors indirectly associated with increased employment on release included receiving family visits in prison and living with immediate family on release. These family relationship factors may also be associated with employment before custody.



### **No associations with employment on release**

A number of in-custody activities were not associated with increased employment on release. This includes some courses, gaining qualifications, and receiving help with accommodation on release. Robust individual evaluations of each type of intervention would be needed before their effects can be conclusively demonstrated. This research was not designed to evaluate individual interventions.

## 5. Conclusion and Implications

This study found that the majority of SPCR Sample 2 (longer-term) prisoners (69%) reported not being in paid employment in the months since they were released from prison.

The study identified a number of factors that were independently associated with improved employment opportunities on release for longer-term prisoners. **Previous employment experience**, particularly in the four weeks before custody, was identified as a strong predictor of likelihood of subsequent employment. This may suggest that there may be further scope to target interventions in prison at those with greater need (e.g. those unemployed before custody), to help break the cycle of unemployment experienced by many prisoners.

**Educational qualifications before custody** were also associated with greater likelihood of employment among SPCR Sample 2 prisoners, with those without qualifications before custody the least likely to be employed after release. The emphasis on improving the education of prisoners can therefore be supported: however there was evidence that attendance on educational courses in prison was not associated with employment on release. This may be because of the quality or targeting of these courses. Robust individual evaluations of courses delivered in prisons would be needed before conclusions can be drawn.

The likelihood of employment post-release was higher for those prisoners enrolled on some prison interventions, including **vocational training, and participation in paid work**. This confirms the benefits of work-based training for prisoners

The likelihood of employment was also higher for those attending **accredited interventions to address substance misuse and offending behaviour**. These programmes promote effective reintegration of prisoners on release from prison. The association with employment opportunities is encouraging, and we might also expect indirect impacts on offending levels if employment is retained in the longer term.

The study also demonstrated lower likelihood of employment among those who felt they would **need help with employment** when they were first interviewed in prison. Effectively identifying the specific needs of offenders will be a key part of the provision of skills-based training and employment in prisons.

The study also highlights the reduced employment likelihood of those offenders who did not have **stable accommodation** on release from prison. Not having accommodation limits the successful reintegration of prisoners into communities, and it restricts their ability to secure employment. Efforts to support these ex-prisoners are needed in order to maximise opportunities for their successful resettlement, and may be best provided by ‘through the gate’ services, as there was evidence that receiving help with accommodation in custody was not directly associated with employment (although this may be because of selection effects or limitations in the model).

Employment and accommodation problems are associated with increased re-offending of prisoners on release (May, Sharma & Stewart, 2008; Brunton-Smith & Hopkins, 2013; MoJ 2013b): managing these problems, for example through a focus on ‘offender journeys’ and ‘through the gate’ services, may support the successful resettlement of prisoners into communities and also reduce re-offending.

These findings relate to **prisoners sentenced to between 18 months and four years** in prison. Most prisoners are sentenced to less than 12 months in prison. Longer-sentenced prisoners differ from shorter-sentenced prisoners in a number of ways (see Annex 1). Longer-sentenced prisoners have generally committed more serious offences, and are less likely to re-offend on release. They are also more likely to access programmes and interventions in prison, and tend to report more stable employment and accommodation status before custody than shorter-sentenced prisoners. It is therefore important not to attribute positive post-release outcomes amongst longer-sentenced prisoners to their sentence lengths, when other factors may be influential.

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## Annex 1

### Key characteristics of SPCR Sample 1 and Sample 2

Sample 1 of Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) is representative of reception prisoners sentenced to between one month and four years in 2005 and 2006 in England and Wales. Sample 2 is representative of reception prisoners sentenced to between 18 months and four years in 2006 and 2007.

**Table A1.1: SPCR Sample 1 and Sample 2: Demographic characteristics**

Factor		Sample 1		Sample 2	
		No.	%	No.	%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	1,303	91	2,014	93
	Female	132	9	157	7
<b>Age</b>	18-20	174	12	343	16
	21-24	297	21	456	21
	25-29	328	23	405	19
	30-39	417	29	552	25
	40-49	171	12	300	14
	50+	48	3	115	5
<b>Ethnic background</b>	White	1,211	84	1,781	82
	Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME)	224	16	389	18
	Unknown	0	0	1	<1
<b>Offence type (self-reported)</b>	Acquisitive <sup>34</sup>	412	29	632	29
	Violence <sup>35</sup>	237	17	480	22
	Drugs	76	5	538	25
	Vehicle-related	253	18	66	3
	Other <sup>36</sup>	354	25	445	21
	Unknown	103	7	10	<1
<b>Limiting illness</b>	Yes	482	34	624	29
	No	949	66	1,542	71
	Not stated/refused	4	<1	5	<1
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,435</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,171</b>	<b>100%</b>

Totals may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

<sup>34</sup> Robbery; burglary; theft and handling.

<sup>35</sup> Violence against the person.

<sup>36</sup> Fraud and forgery; sexual offences; other offences.

**Table A1.2: SPCR Sample 1 and Sample 2: Proven re-offending in the one and two years after release from custody**

		Sample 1		Sample 2	
		No.	%	No.	%
<b>Re-offended or not within 1 year of release</b>	Yes	713	54	531	27
	No	618	46	1,454	73
	<i>Total</i>	1,331	100%	1,985	100%
<b>Re-offended or not within 2 years of release</b>	Yes	900	68	863	44
	No	430	32	1,122	57
	<i>Total</i>	1,330	100%	1,985	100%

Note that not all survey participants were successfully matched to the Police National Computer (PNC), and that police records are subject to change over time.

Totals may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

**Table A1.3: SPCR Sample 1 and Sample 2: Background characteristics (Wave 1 questionnaire administered on reception to prison)**

		Sample 1	Sample 2
<b>Employment status before custody</b>	Worked in the 4 weeks before custody	32%	37%
	Worked in the 4-52 weeks before custody	20%	21%
	Did not work in the last year	36%	32%
	Never worked	13%	11%
	<i>Base size</i>	1,435	2,165
<b>Accommodation status before custody</b>	Owned or part owned house/flat	13%	16%
	Rented/paid board	53%	59%
	Lived rent free	12%	12%
	Temporary accommodation or homeless	15%	7%
	Other (includes living with family)	5%	5%
<i>Base size</i>	1,434	2,169	
<b>No qualifications</b>		47%	43%
	<i>Base size</i>	1,428	2,139
<b>Regular truant from school</b>		59%	55%
	<i>Base size</i>	1,425	2,147
<b>Expelled from school</b>		42%	35%
	<i>Base size</i>	1,426	2,145
<b>Drug use before custody</b>	None in last 4 weeks	36%	43%
	Class A only	12%	11%
	Class B/C only	19%	20%
	Class A and B/C	33%	26%
	<i>Base size</i>	1,432	2,165
<b>Daily alcohol use in the four weeks before custody</b>		21%	22%
	<i>Base size</i>	1,435	2,163
<b>Need help to improve reading, writing, or ability with numbers</b>		21%	18%
	<i>Base size</i>	1,435	2,171
<b>Need help with education</b>		41%	40%
	<i>Base size</i>	1,435	2,167
<b>Need help with work-related skills</b>		40%	39%
	<i>Base size</i>	1,428	2,167
<b>Need help with finding a job on release</b>		48%	48%
	<i>Base size</i>	1,428	2,167
<b>Need help with finding a place to live on release</b>		37%	34%
	<i>Base size</i>	1,430	2,158

Totals may not add up to 100% because of rounding.