

Home Office Research Study 291

The impact of corrections on re-offending: a review of 'what works'

Third edition

Edited by Gemma Harper and Chloë Chitty

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors, not necessarily those of the Home Office (nor do they reflect government policy).

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Foreword

The establishment of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) provides what the Home Secretary has called a ‘once in a lifetime opportunity’. I believe passionately that we can help change offenders’ lives for the better and by so doing, reduce re-offending and the burden that it places on society.

To do so, we need the best possible evidence of the impact of our programmes. This stock-take of the state of the evidence is therefore timely. It is positive in confirming that there is a sound theoretical basis for our programmes, and that for some programmes there is now good evidence that they do indeed reduce re-offending.

But the report also sets us some major developmental challenges – for more powerful research methods that will give us a clearer picture, more sophisticated measures of impact, more complex interventions that tackle the mix of criminogenic factors present in each individual and the creation of offender management as an effective tool for targeting the right interventions in each case.

These are challenges which NOMS was established to meet and we are determined to do so.

Martin Narey
Chief Executive
National Offender Management Service

Preface to second edition

This second edition incorporates two updates to the review of the 'what works' evidence. Since the first edition was published in December 2004, two relevant reports have been published by RDS: an evaluation of offending behaviour programmes in England and Wales (Hollin *et al.*, 2004) and a study of approved premises (Foster, 2004).

The results of the evaluation of offending behaviour programmes are discussed in Chapter 3 under 'Programme Outcomes in England and Wales' and provide evidence from a recent large-scale study of programmes in the community. The additional material on approved premises supports the statement made in Chapter 4 that the primary role of approved premises is public protection.

Abstract

Keywords: correctional services, re-offending, reconviction, risk factors, what works, offending behaviour programmes, community integration.

This report was commissioned by the Home Office to review and update knowledge of ‘what works’ in corrections to reduce re-offending. The report builds on a review, which assessed the evidence available in the mid-1990s on ways to reduce offending (Goldblatt & Lewis, 1998). The report identifies the policy context in terms of developments in sentencing and recent legislative changes. Against a background of more severe sentencing, rising prison population, increase in community sentences, reduction in use of fines, and the twin aims of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) to punish offenders and to reduce re-offending, this report reviews the evidence on the impact of corrections on re-offending. First, the report establishes the methodological background to the evidence through assessing the standards of research design, identifying limitations and benefits of reconviction outcomes, and including proposals for refining reconviction measures and incorporating non-reconviction benefits into an integrated model. Secondly, the report identifies factors associated with offending, including problems with education, employment, accommodation, drugs and alcohol, mental health and social networks. The evidence on case management models identifies core principles for effective offender management to support the delivery and effectiveness of interventions to address these problems. Thirdly, the evidence on the effectiveness of offending behaviour programmes (OBPs) in England and Wales, including offence-specific and offender-specific programmes, is reviewed. Fourthly, the evidence on alternative approaches to integrating offenders into the community is reviewed, setting out the penal and probation practice in England and Wales before discussing the evidence of what works in employment, education, accommodation, drug misuse and mental health to integrate offenders into the community. The review concludes with an assessment of the evidence and the quality of the research to highlight improvements that are required in policy design, implementation and evaluation to determine the success of NOMS.

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We should also like to offer special thanks to Professor Carol Hedderman for her advice and support.

Gemma Harper
Chloë Chitty

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Executive summary

Introduction: the policy context and assessing the evidence

This report was commissioned by the National Probation Directorate, the Prison Service, the Adult Offenders Rehabilitation Unit, the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and the Research, Development and Statistics (RDS) Directorate of the Home Office to review and update knowledge of ‘what works’ in corrections to reduce re-offending. The review builds on an RDS report, which assessed the evidence available in the mid-1990s on ways to reduce offending (Goldblatt & Lewis, 1998). This report focuses on correctional services¹ interventions with adult offenders, which aim to reduce re-offending. This review of the evidence aims not only to describe ‘what works’ in corrections but also to provide direction, through advocating robust research design and methods, to build on the evidence of what works for *whom* and *why*.

Developments in sentencing

NOMS works with offenders to reduce re-offending, and the profile of those offenders is partly determined by practices of the sentencing courts. Recent changes in sentencing have been central to the development of NOMS. In particular, sentencing has become more severe over the past decade (Hough *et al.*, 2003a; Carter, 2004). This is most likely due to an interaction of factors including: a perception among sentencers that cases have become more serious; changes in sentencing policy; and a climate of more punitive attitudes on the part of media, public and politicians. An increase in both the proportionate use of custody by the courts and, in some instances, sentence lengths means the prison population has continued to rise since the early 1990s and now stands at over 75,000 (Home Office, 2004a). The use of community sentences has also increased over the past decade, seemingly at the expense of fines, the use of which continues to decline (Morgan, 2003). The ability to reverse this sentencing drift, to revivify fines, and to bolster the credibility of community sentences are central to the success of NOMS. The work of NOMS will also be affected by the new sentencing provisions of the Criminal Justice Act (CJA) 2003, which will introduce significant changes to the custodial and community sentences² available to the courts. The sum effect of these legislative and sentencing changes poses a significant challenge to NOMS and its primary aims to punish offenders and to reduce re-offending.

1 The National Offender Management Service was introduced in June 2004. However, the British evidence presented in the volume refers to interventions provided by the Prison Service and the National Probation Service.

2 For example, the Community Order (previously known as the generic community sentence) and Custody Plus.

Assessing the evidence

The reconviction rates for custodial and community sentences have been over the 50 per cent mark for some years, although recent measures for the Public Service Agreement (PSA) target of reducing reconviction rates suggested they are now falling (Home Office, 2002a). However, variations in reconviction rates both between and within these broad sentence types are difficult to separate from differences in characteristics of the offenders who receive them.

Whilst there is a growing evidence base in Britain, much of the evidence on 'what works' with offenders to reduce re-offending comes from the United States and Canada. There are difficulties in generalising from these studies because it cannot be assumed that their conclusions automatically apply to the British context. In addition, the methods employed by studies vary considerably, which may in part explain differences in the reported effectiveness of programmes. Furthermore, weak research design has contributed to the lack of knowledge about 'what works'. For example, reconviction studies in Britain have met Standards 1 to 4 of the Scientific Methods Scale³ but they have rarely achieved Standard 5, a randomised control trial (RCT) (Weisburd *et al.*, 1990; Farrington & Joliffe, 2002). Moreover, few studies in the Britain have achieved sufficient sample sizes⁴.

Carter *et al.*, (1992) emphasised the importance of reconviction as a key indicator of performance within the English and Welsh Prison Service and it remains the standard measure of re-offending. However, the shortcomings of reconviction rates in measuring sentence effectiveness are well-known. They include: being an undercount of actual offending; being affected by changes in police and prosecution practice; being an all or nothing measure; not accounting for severity or frequency of offence; and being a proxy for re-offending (Lloyd *et al.*, 1994; Friendship *et al.*, 2002a). There are a number of ways in which reconviction can be refined in order to provide a greater understanding of the type of benefits that can be attributed to interventions, for example, through measuring severity and frequency. There are also a number of other outcomes, known as non-reconviction benefits, for example short-term, interim or proxy outcomes, that can be used to supplement reconviction to assess the impact of interventions to provide a better understanding of how

3 The Scientific Methods Scale (see Farrington *et al.*, 2002a) was developed to assess the methodological standards in crime prevention programme evaluation. The Scale has been adapted for the purpose of this report to assess the work done by the correctional services as measured by reconviction data and other outcomes. This reflects the correctional services' key aim of reducing re-offending and the research to support this aim, which focuses on measuring reconviction outcomes.

4 It is important to consider sample sizes used, because smaller sample sizes are less likely to detect effects. In particular, there is a danger that small studies could be misinterpreted as the intervention having no effect, when the correct interpretation should be that the sample size was insufficient to detect an effect.

interventions work (Friendship *et al.*, 2003a). Based on this range of indicators, an integrated model of evaluation has the ability to evaluate programme design, implementation and impact on re-offending.

Factors associated with offending

There are risk factors which influence the development of criminal careers through affecting the onset of offending behaviour, persistence of offending over time and desistance from criminal activity (see Farrington, 1997). Whilst there is some evidence to suggest a causal relation between some of these risk factors and offending behaviour, there is also evidence to suggest indirect links and, in many cases, the nature of the relation is as yet unproven. As static risk factors, for example criminal history, cannot be altered, it is through changing the dynamic risk factors, for example education, employment and substance misuse, that future offending can be reduced (see Bonta, 1996 cited in Benda *et al.*, 2001). As a result, programmes or interventions that seek to reduce re-offending directly target dynamic risk factors (Andrews & Bonta, 1998; Hanson & Harris, 2000; Hoge, 1999 cited in Benda *et al.*, 2001). Taylor (1999) concluded that although criminal history was a strong predictor of reconviction, this was because it acted as a proxy for social and behavioural problems. McGuire's (2002a) summary of meta-analytic reviews concluded that offenders often have multiple problems and criminogenic needs and those with many are most likely to re-offend. Therefore, interventions that tackle a range of problems will be more effective than those that target a single problem and offenders may need additional practical support/training in relation to accommodation, education, and employment.

Recent Offender Assessment System (OASys) data suggested that offenders were assessed as having significant problems in relation to an average of four criminogenic needs and that, overall, offenders in custody had a greater number of needs. The information in Table 1 is based on 10,000 assessments from 19 areas (Home Office unpublished data).

Table 1 *Factors associated with offending*

Section of OASys		Percentage of offenders assessed as having a problem	
		Community sentences	Custodial sentences
1&2	Offending information*	50%	66%
3	Accommodation	31%	43%
4	Education, training and employment	53%	65%
5	Financial management and income	22%	29%
6	Relationships	36%	42%
7	Lifestyle and associates	35%	52%
8	Drug misuse	27%	39%
9	Alcohol misuse	34%	33%
10	Emotional well-being	40%	38%
11	Thinking and behaviour	50%	59%
12	Attitudes**	21%	32%
	No. of criminogenic needs	3.99	4.97
	No. of criminogenic needs excluding sections 1&2	3.50	4.31

* Offending information includes the current offence and criminal history.

** The percentages with attitudes needs are likely to rise when an amendment is made to the OASys scoring system, effective from early 2005.

Table 1 shows that over half of the offenders had 'needs' with regard to criminal history, education, training and employment (ETE) and thinking and behaviour. Additionally, just over half of offenders in custody were also assessed as having a 'need' with regard to lifestyle and associates, which encourage criminal activity. A much larger proportion of offenders in custody was assessed as having drug problems than offenders on community sentences.

There is no current evidence to suggest that a lack of basic skills is predictive of offending. However, basic skills are related to a number of other factors known to be associated with offending, for example, poor school experience, unemployment, social exclusion and various psychological or cognitive factors linked to self-concept and attitudes to offending (Porporino & Robinson, 1992). There is strong evidence to suggest that unemployment and offending are linked, although the nature of this link is not clear (Farrington *et al.*, 1986). Unemployment may be an indirect rather than a direct cause of crime (Tarling, 1982), which interacts with a variety of other social and demographic factors. Studies have identified that it is not merely the fact of having a job that is

associated with reduced re-offending, but the stability and quality of that employment along with the level of satisfaction expressed toward it (Motiuk & Brown, 1993; Farrington, 1989). Stable accommodation is both directly and indirectly linked to reductions in re-offending (May, 1999; Niven and Stewart, forthcoming).

Substance misuse (whether drug or alcohol misuse) is associated with offending (Social Exclusion Unit [SEU], 2002). Research suggests that substance misuse has wider implications for offenders, for example it may affect their prospects of employment (SEU, 2002; Niven & Olagundoye, 2002). The research also suggests that many prisoners experience significant physical and mental health problems, but that treatment services for these problems are insufficient to meet needs adequately (SEU, 2002). There is some evidence from the US that social networks, or 'social capital', are associated with crime (Office for National Statistics, 2001), however, this evidence is limited and inconclusive. Good family relationships are a significant element of social networks and there is evidence in the UK that the maintenance of these relationships is particularly important in aiding the successful resettlement of prisoners and in reducing re-offending (see Niven & Stewart, forthcoming).

Men and women exhibit different types and patterns of offending behaviour (Home Office, 2004b). On average girls and women offend less frequently than boys and men, start offending later and generally desist earlier (for example, Graham & Bowling 1995; Jamieson *et al.*, 1999; Flood-Page *et al.*, 2000). When women do offend they tend to commit acquisitive rather than violent crime (Home Office, 2004b). Hedderman (2004) assessed the limited evidence available and concluded that programmes which focus on male criminogenic factors are unlikely to be as effective in reducing reconviction among female offenders as they are for men because they fail to address factors which are unique to, or more relevant for, women who offend.

In line with the evidence that offenders have multiple criminogenic needs, there is an emerging consensus that a multi-modal approach to interventions is likely to be the most effective way of treating offenders (McGuire, 2002b). This approach is dependent on inter-agency communication to deliver high quality services in the community and in custody. Recent research on case management approaches in the Probation Service in Britain supports this view (Partridge, 2004). This research identified several core case management principles which enhanced offender engagement and hence improved the effectiveness of the case management system, including acknowledging offenders' experiences and needs and providing continuity of contact. Openness, flexibility and support were also highlighted as key motivating factors for offenders.

There is also increasing evidence that effective targeting and tailoring of interventions is more likely to be achieved when interventions adhere to a number of key principles. These have become known as the 'what works' principles. McGuire (2000) outlined these principles, concluding that programmes and services work best to reduce re-offending when they conform to the following: they are based on an explicit model of the causes of crime; they have a risk classification; they target criminogenic needs; they are responsive; the treatment method is based on cognitive-behavioural techniques; and they have programme integrity.

Offending behaviour programmes in prison and probation

International evidence from systematic reviews of effective practice on reducing re-offending tends to support the use of cognitive-behavioural offending behaviour programmes and interventions with offenders. Current evidence in the UK, summarised in Table 2, is predominantly based on quasi-experimental or non-experimental evaluation studies, which make it difficult to attribute the outcomes to the effects of the treatment or intervention. More often than not, the results can be attributed to selection or other effects if not poor implementation. Outcome studies therefore need to be based on more effective research design. At the same time, sufficient focus should be placed on implementation to ensure that programmes are delivered as intended so that theory failure and implementation failure do not confound evaluation of effectiveness.

Table 2 'What works' evidence: offending behaviour programmes

Study	Intervention	Rating	Key findings	Sample sizes	Critical comments
Cann <i>et al.</i> (2003), England and Wales	Accredited Enhanced Thinking Skills (ETS) and Reasoning & Rehabilitation (R&R) Prison	4	No differences in the one- and two-year rates between adult men or young offenders who started a programme and an individually matched comparison group. Significantly lower reconviction rate for men and young offenders who completed after one year but not two.	Treatment men: 2,195 Treatment young offenders: 1,534 Control men: 2,195 Control young offenders: 1,534	No random assignment /no control of dynamic factors.
Falshaw <i>et al.</i> (2003a, 2004), England and Wales	Accredited ETS and R&R Prison	4	No significant differences in the two-year reconviction rates for adult male prisoners who had participated in cognitive skills programmes and individually matched comparison group who had not.	Treatment: 649 Control: 1,947	No random assignment /no control of dynamic factors.
Friendship <i>et al.</i> (2002b, 2003b), England and Wales	Pre-accredited ETS and R&R Prison	4	Significantly lower reconviction rate of 14 percentage points for medium-low risk and 11 percentage points for medium-high risk adult male offenders compared to individually matched control group.	Treatment: 667 Control: 1801	No random assignment /no control of dynamic factors.
Friendship <i>et al.</i> (2003c), England and Wales	Pre-accredited Sex Offender Treatment (SOTP) Prison	3	Significant lower reconviction rate of 3.5 percentage points in two-year reconviction rates for sexual or violent offences for treatment group compared to individually matched control group.	Treatment: 647 Control: 1,910	No random assignment /no control of dynamic factors.

Study	Intervention	Rating	Key findings	Sample sizes	Critical comments
Allam (1998), England and Wales	Pre-accredited SOTP Probation	3	Significantly lower reconviction rates of 8.1 percentage points for child sex abusers compared to control group followed up for 1 to 3 years.	Treatment: 155 Control: 74	Weakly matched comparison group and small sample.
Dobash <i>et al.</i> (1996), Scotland	Two programmes for domestic violence Probation	3	Significantly lower rates in frequency of violence and further violence for programme group at 12-month follow-up compared to control groups, based on partner's reports.	Treated: 51 Control: 71	Weakly matched comparison group and small sample.
Farrington <i>et al.</i> (2002b), England and Wales	ETS as part of intensive regime for Young Offenders Prison	3	Significantly lower rates by 10 percentage points for experimental group after one year but not after two when compared to control group. Experimental group took longer to re-offend and committed significantly fewer crimes after two years.	Treatment: 175 Control: 127	Weakly matched comparison group and small sample.
Hollin <i>et al.</i> , (2004) England and Wales	ETS, R&R, Think First, One2One, Addressing Substance-Related Offending Probation	3	Significantly higher reconviction rates of 12 percentage points for offenders with a programme order compared to similar group without programme orders after 18 months. Significantly lower rates for completers and higher rates for non-completers.	Treatment: 2,230 Control: 2,645	Un-matched comparison group.
Raynor and Vanstone (2001), England and Wales	Pre-accredited R&R Probation	3	Lower reconviction rate for community-sentenced treatment group compared to prison-sentenced group after one year but not two. Lower rates for completers.	Treatment: 107 Control: 82	Weakly matched comparison groups and small samples.

Study	Intervention	Rating	Key findings	Sample sizes	Critical comments
Steele and Van Arendsen (2001), England and Wales	Think First Probation	3	Higher reconviction rate after one year for treatment group of adult men and women compared to non-treatment group serving community sentence in same period.	Treatment: 74 adult men and women Control: 40	Weakly matched comparison group and small sample.
Stewart-Ong <i>et al.</i> (2003), England and Wales	Pre-accredited Think First Probation	3	Significantly higher two-year reconviction rate of 24 percentage points for adult males on community-based programme compared to adult males sentenced to custody without programme.	Treatment: 267; Control: 254	Weakly matched comparison group.
Sugg (2000a), England and Wales	Aggression Replacement Training (ART) Probation	3	Lower rate of 9.2 percentage points for treatment group compared to non-treatment group with similar community penalties. Lower rates for completers.	Treatment: 153 Control: 153	Weakly matched comparison group and small sample.
Sugg (2000b), England and Wales	Drink Impaired Drivers (DID) Probation	3	Lower rate of 2 percentage points in reconvictions for drink-related offences for treatment group compared to custodial sentence group and lower rate of 1 percentage point compared to other disposals.	Treatment: 100 Comparison: 101	Weakly matched comparison group and small sample.

Overall programme outcomes

Analysis of outcomes for offenders who complete or do not complete programmes (and other interventions) in both international and national research, produces a more favourable pattern of findings than outcomes for programmes overall. The pattern typically shows that completers do better than non-starters, non-completers and comparison groups, and that those who start and fail to complete do much worse than the other groups (see for example Borduin *et al.*, 1995; Polaschek & Dixon 2001; Raynor & Vanstone 2001; Feilzer *et al.*, 2002; Cann *et al.*, 2003, Van Voorhis *et al.*, 2004). However, analysis by completion status does not provide the best evaluation of policy (Sherman, 2003) or meet the required design for drawing cause and effect conclusions because it does not sufficiently control for other plausible explanations of the outcomes (Shadish *et al.*, 2002).

Implementing interventions effectively

The evidence suggests that implementation problems are likely to have affected the success of offending behaviour programmes in reducing re-offending. Research on offending behaviour programmes has highlighted three main problems in delivering these interventions effectively including: the rapid expansion of programmes; targeting programmes ineffectively; and higher than expected attrition rates. The monitoring of programme quality is thought to be particularly important at a local level because of the many different features of implementation that can influence overall programme effects (Elliott *et al.*, 2001).

Alternative approaches to integrating offenders into the community

To a considerable degree, the success of interventions rests upon offenders being able to integrate or reintegrate into society (in the case of prisoners, on their release from custody). The evidence to date is summarised in Table 3. For most prisoners, efforts to cease offending constitute a long-term process, and participation in programmes whilst in custody is only part of the rehabilitative process. Factors such as employment and stable accommodation have a role in ensuring that gains achieved in prison are maintained after release and in reducing the likelihood of re-offending. It is important, therefore, for prisons to plan and arrange adequate aftercare and support *before* prisoners are released, as is shown by both British and American research (Lewis *et al.*, 2003; Travis *et al.*, 2001).

With offenders dealt with in the community, attention has also been moving from sole focus on offenders' cognitive deficits to community integration. There have been some significant achievements, for example in raising the profile of basic skills and developing a more consistent framework to tackle basic skills needs, although some efforts to test the impact of interventions have been hampered by implementation difficulties. While the evidence indicates integrated approaches, this makes it more difficult to determine the contribution of individual interventions.

Table 3 *'What works' evidence: integrating offenders into the community*

Study	Intervention	Rating	Key findings	Sample sizes	Critical comments
Prend- ergast <i>et al.</i> (2004), US	Amity Therapeutic Community	4	5-year re-imprisonment rates lower among the treatment group of prisoners. As with the 3-year study, the lowest rates were among those who had received aftercare.	Treatment group of 341 and no-treatment comparison of 235. Treated subgroups: completed treatment and aftercare=79, aftercare dropouts=26, treatment completer only=159 and treatment dropouts=77.	Also modelled time to re-imprisonment and employment outcomes.
Wexler <i>et al.</i> (1999), US	Amity Therapeutic Community	4	3-year re-imprisonment rates substantially lower for those who completed both drug treatment and aftercare, compared to treatment dropouts, treatment completers only, and a no-treatment comparison group. Results for subgroup comparisons may reflect selection effects.	Total sample of 478 prisoners. Treatment group of 289 and comparison group of 189. Treated subgroups: completed treatment and aftercare=62, treatment dropouts=73 and treatment completers only=154.	Used random allocation to the programme by randomly selecting participants from a pool of prisoners on a waiting list for treatment. Some results based on analyses of relatively small subgroups.

Study	Intervention	Rating	Key findings	Sample sizes	Critical comments
Hough <i>et al.</i> (2003b), UK	Drug Treatment Testing Orders (DTTOs)	3	Offenders on DTTOs less likely to be reconvicted (80%) than comparison group on 1A(6) orders (91%).	174 of the 210 offenders on DTTOs were compared to 80 offenders on the 1A(6) order.	Small sample size and poorly matched comparison group. Significant result for completers (53%) versus non-completers (91%) but may be due to selection effects.
Saylor and Gaes (1997), US	Post-Release Employment Project	3	Participants in prison work or vocational programmes less likely to be arrested 12 months after release, compared to a matched group of non-participants. Similar results for longer-term re-imprisonment rates.	Over 7,000 in total. Group sizes not clear.	Prospective study that used strong statistical controls for selection bias.

Multi-modal interventions

One of the most comprehensive reviews of the prison intervention literature concludes that the full range of individual offenders' criminogenic needs must be addressed if their propensity towards crime is to be successfully reduced (Gaes *et al.*, 1999). This was echoed by Webster *et al.* (2001), who concluded that there was a need for integrated programmes addressing personal development, accommodation and substance misuse needs as well as training and employment issues for those offenders dealt with in the community.

Conclusions and the way forward

The evidence suggests that offenders have a wide range of criminogenic needs. The successful targeting and tackling of offenders' criminogenic needs ultimately depends on an effective assessment system to identify these needs and measure change in the degree to which they are present. There is robust evidence to support the use of offending behaviour

programmes, though the majority of this comes from meta-analytic studies and primary studies of research done abroad. In Britain, the evidence is mixed and limited. The methodological constraints of British evaluations to date have meant that often it is difficult to separate the effects of programmes from other important factors that influence offending behaviour, for example, offenders' motivation. These evaluations have also highlighted the difficulty in implementing offending behaviour programmes on a large scale. The evidence of the effectiveness of employment and education schemes in prisons is also mixed. There is recognition of the role of employment agencies and employers in helping to secure employment for ex-prisoners. The emerging evidence on basic skills training in prison suggests that these courses can improve prisoners' skills but the extent to which these can be improved sufficiently to have a positive impact on employment prospects by prison training alone is still in doubt. The evaluations to date of drug treatment programmes suggest that these programmes can reduce re-offending. The research also suggests that combining drugs treatment with cognitive-behavioural interventions, particularly for less educated offenders, can increase the impact of the programme. However, the evidence makes clear that the gains made in prison can be quickly lost if there is insufficient aftercare for prisoners once they are released.

Evaluations of correctional services interventions have often been based on sub-optimal research designs. To help to tackle the use of sub-optimal research design, the adoption of an integrated model of reconviction is proposed together with ways to improve the measure of the impact of the correctional services. However, it is also important to recognise the reality that underpins offending behaviour. Offenders often have multiple criminogenic needs. As such, the research effort needs to reflect the multiple and complex problems of offenders. It is important to examine the breadth and range of interventions that offenders receive in the context of these multiple needs and not simply to examine each intervention or need in isolation. Various studies are planned to help to do this, for example, a courts survey, and research into the needs, and provision of interventions to address those needs, of a cohort of offenders in custody and on community sentences. However, to assess the impact of those interventions on re-offending, there is also a need to develop randomised control trials in the correctional services. This will ensure that knowledge of 'what works' is improved and the existing equivocal evidence is replaced with greater certainty and greater confidence in NOMS's delivery of successful interventions to reduce re-offending.

Introduction: the policy context and assessing the evidence

Caroline Friendship, Robert Street, Jenny Cann and Gemma Harper

Background to the report

This report was commissioned by the National Probation Directorate, the Prison Service, the Criminal Justice Group, the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and the Research, Development and Statistics (RDS) Directorate of the Home Office to update and review knowledge of ‘what works’ in corrections. The review builds on a previous RDS report, which assessed the evidence available in the mid-1990s on ways to reduce offending (Goldblatt & Lewis, 1998). This report focuses on correctional services⁵ interventions with adult offenders. The correctional services need to know what works to reduce re-offending to decide what interventions to deliver to offenders. However, simply knowing ‘what works’ only identifies what should be delivered rather than whether or not it will be effective; it does not, for example, give important detail about whether interventions affect people differently and in what circumstances, nor does it say anything about how interventions work. Without knowing how interventions work, NOMS cannot maximise efficiency or effectiveness, as good practice cannot be identified and weaknesses in the system eliminated. This review of the evidence therefore aims not simply to describe ‘what works’ in corrections but also to provide direction to build on the evidence of what works for *whom* and *why*.

Developments in sentencing

To understand the context of the impact of corrections on re-offending, this report must first briefly review the recent history of sentencing. The correctional services do not operate in a vacuum. The offenders with whom they work and the ways in which they work with them are at least partly determined by other elements of the criminal justice system – in particular, the courts that sentence those offenders to different disposals. As a result, the effectiveness of the correctional services is dependent to some extent on the practices of the sentencing courts.

There can be no doubt that sentencing has become more severe over the past decade (Hough *et al.*, 2003a; Carter, 2004). The custody rate for indictable offences has increased

⁵ The National Offender Management Service was introduced in June 2004. However, the British evidence presented in the volume refers to interventions provided by the Prison Service and the National Probation Service.

at both magistrates' courts and the Crown Court. Average length of custodial sentences has also increased at the Crown Court. The chances of an offender being imprisoned for most offence types are now markedly greater than they were in past decades. The full reasons for these changes are not clear. It does not appear to be caused by structural changes, for example more cases coming before the courts, or (as far as is known) any worsening in the seriousness of offences and offenders involved. Most likely it is due to an interaction of a number of factors (see Hough *et al.*, 2003a; Carter, 2004):

- A perception among sentencers that the cases appearing before them are qualitatively more serious than they once were (for example, increased levels of drug use among offenders).
- Changes in sentencing policy, for example increases in some maximum sentence lengths, the introduction of more minimum sentences, and a raising of many 'entry points' in the Magistrates' Courts Sentencing Guidelines, which may have put broader upward pressure on sentences.
- A climate of more punitive attitudes on the part of media, public, and politicians. While the courts should sentence according to the circumstances of individual cases and not according to public opinion, they do have a duty to reflect and reinforce the norms of wider society.

Whatever lies behind it, this increase in sentencing severity has had a marked effect on the prison and probation services. An increase in both the proportionate use of custody by the courts and sentence lengths means the prison population has continued to climb since the early 1990s and now stands at over 75,000 (Home Office, 2004a). The use of community sentences has also markedly increased over the past decade (a majority of that increase comprising first-time offenders), seemingly at the expense of fines the use of which continues to decline (Morgan, 2003). The sum effect of these changes means not only that there are more offenders receiving custodial and community sentences than ever before but that they include those who would probably not have received such sentences for equivalent offences a decade ago. This increase in workload, and change of caseload mix, poses a significant challenge to NOMS.

The sentencing provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 will further affect the work of the correctional services. This Act will, when fully implemented, introduce significant changes to the custodial and community sentences available to the courts (for example, the Community Order and Custody Plus).

The Criminal Justice Act also enshrines the traditional aims of sentencing – incapacitation, protection of the public, punishment, deterrence, rehabilitation and reparation – in statute for the first time. Recent reviews (Moxon in Goldblatt & Lewis, 1998; Halliday, 2001) have assessed the evidence on the effectiveness of sentencing against those aims. Effectiveness can, of course, have different meanings. The effectiveness of sentencing – that is, the act of passing sentence on a convicted individual – can be measured by examining the extent to which it adheres to key principles such as consistency (treating like cases alike), and proportionality (making any sentence commensurate to the seriousness of the offence and the extent of the offender's culpability). However, effectiveness tends to be defined and measured as the impact sentencing has on crime⁶. This impact is commonly represented by the reconviction rates for different sentence types. The rates for custodial and community sentences have been over the 50 per cent mark for some years, although recent measures for the Public Service Agreement (PSA) target of reducing reconviction rates suggested they are now falling compared to their predicted rates⁷ (Home Office, 2002a). Yet there are some major difficulties in using reconviction data in this aggregate way to assess sentence effectiveness. First, variations in reconviction rates both between and within broad sentence types remain difficult to separate from differences in the particular characteristics of the offenders who receive them; for example, one might expect less serious, lower risk offenders commonly to be fined, which is likely then to be reflected in relatively low reconviction rates for that disposal. Secondly, it can be difficult to link changes in reconviction rates with sentencing aims. To do so would require more detailed individual-level data than currently exists, and in particular more information about offenders' perceptions and motivations. The difficulty is compounded further by the fact that sentences can be imposed with almost any combination of aims in the court's mind.

While the evidence for the effectiveness of the aims of sentencing remains either sparse or hard to interpret, much more is known about the impact of the means by which sentences are enacted. The rest of this report considers in detail how effective the individual components of different correctional interventions are in reducing re-offending. As is demonstrated, the evidence base for these is growing in quality and quantity.

Research has been central to the identification of predictive factors which affect the onset and persistence of, as well as desistance from, offending behaviour. Some of these factors are amenable to change and have become a focus of the correctional services' work. Such

6 Evidence for the effectiveness of sentencing in achieving the aims which are not based on reducing offending (for example, punishment and reparation) is sparse.

7 To take account of changes in reconviction rates being due to changes in the characteristics of offenders receiving different sentence types, a predicted (or expected) reconviction rate is calculated for each sentence type. This then provides a benchmark against which to compare actual (observed) reconviction rates.

developments in the evidence base about the impact of corrections, under the 'what works' banner, have been an important driver in the changes in recent years to how the correctional services deal with offenders. Much of the pessimism of the last few decades about the ability of the Prison and Probation Services to cut crime by rehabilitating and resettling offenders has been replaced by a cautious belief that, by using well designed and implemented interventions, this can be achieved.

The evidence which supports the effectiveness of interventions reducing re-offending is at the heart of the development of NOMS (Home Office, 2004c). This reform, which will combine the Prison and Probation Services into one organisation, gives the correctional services in England and Wales an opportunity to develop an effective, integrated offender management system that is based on proven interventions and focuses on offenders rather than the institutions that work with offenders. The evidence reviewed in this report is intended to consolidate this approach to provide strong indications of which interventions are likely to succeed. To achieve this, the British and international evidence to date has been included, critically assessing its value and hence contribution to the evidence base by giving different weights to the evidence depending on its quality.

Critically assessing the evidence: the methodological background to this report

Not all evidence is of the same quality and the experience of the last few years has highlighted some deficiencies in the reducing re-offending evidence. This section, however, sets out some of the key issues involved in any assessment of the research evidence on the impact of corrections, and provides suggestions for improving the quality of primary research studies.

Reliance on international research evidence

While there is a growing evidence base in Britain, much of the evidence on 'what works' with offenders in reducing re-offending comes from the United States and Canada.

There is undoubtedly much to be learnt from the international evidence but there are difficulties in generalising from these studies because it cannot be assumed that their conclusions automatically apply to the British context. For example, the characteristics of offenders, the nature of prison regimes and interventions, labour markets and benefit systems in North America differ in many respects from those in England and Wales, meaning that what works abroad may not necessarily work for England and Wales.

It is also often difficult to compare studies and hence to assess their relative value in increasing our knowledge. Despite the diverse range of international correctional services programmes which have been evaluated, detailed information on their operation is frequently not provided. This makes it difficult to make meaningful comparisons of individual programmes within categories of intervention. In addition, the methods employed by studies vary considerably, which may in part explain differences in the reported effectiveness of programmes.

Standard of research

'What works' research inevitably focuses on measuring outcomes because it attempts to find out whether an intervention has the desired effect for the correctional services. When critically assessing the outcome evidence, it is therefore helpful to consider the two levels of outcome research (Davies *et al.*, 2000). These are:

- individual outcome studies (*primary outcome studies*);
- meta-analytical studies and systematic reviews (*combined outcome studies*).

Both primary outcome studies and combined outcome studies vary in the standard of the research design (McGuire, 2002a). The Scientific Methods Scale (Sherman *et al.*, 1997) was developed in the US to assess the methodological standards in crime prevention programme evaluation (see Farrington *et al.*, 2002a). These are presented in Table 1.1: Standard 1 is the lowest standard and Standard 5 the highest.

Table 1.1 The Scientific Methods Scale

Standard	Description
Level 1	Correlation between a prevention programme and a measure of crime at one point in time (e.g. "areas with CCTV have lower crime rates than areas without CCTV")
Level 2	Measures of crime before and after the programme, with no comparable control condition (e.g. "crime decreased after CCTV was installed in an area")
Level 3	Measures of crime before and after the programme in experimental and comparable control conditions (e.g. "crime decreased after CCTV was installed in an experimental area, but there was no decrease in crime in a comparable control area")
Level 4	Measures of crime before and after the programme in multiple experimental and control units, controlling for other variables that influence crime (e.g. "victimisation of premises under CCTV surveillance decreased compared to victimisation of control premises, after controlling for features of premises that influenced their victimisation")
Level 5	Random assignment of programme and control conditions to units (e.g. "victimisation of premises randomly assigned to have CCTV surveillance decreased compared to victimisation of control premises")

The Scientific Methods Scale has been adapted for the purpose of this report to assess the work done by the correctional services as measured by reconviction data and other outcomes. This reflects the correctional services' key aim of reducing re-offending and the research to support this aim, which focuses on measuring reconviction outcomes. Table 1.2 presents the standards of research design for reconviction studies that is used in this review. Similar to the Scientific Methods Scale, Standard 1 is the lowest standard and Standard 5 the highest.

Table 1.2 Scientific Methods Scale adapted for reconviction studies

Standard	Description
Level 1	A relationship between intervention and reconviction outcome (<i>intervention group with no comparison group</i>)
Level 2	Expected reconviction rates* (or predicted rates) compared to actual reconviction rates for intervention group (<i>risk predictor with no comparison group</i>)
Level 3	Comparison group present without demonstrated comparability to intervention group (<i>unmatched comparison group</i>)
Level 4	Comparison group matched to intervention group on theoretically relevant factors e.g. risk of reconviction (<i>well-matched comparison group</i>)
Level 5	Random assignment of offenders to the intervention and control conditions (<i>Randomised Control Trial</i>)

* Expected reconviction rates can be generated using the Offender Group Reconviction Scale-Revised (OGRS-R), see Taylor (1999). This is a Home Office-developed risk prediction instrument that assesses the likelihood of reconviction based on criminal history risk factors.

Where possible, randomised control trial (RCT) design should be applied to outcome research. In an RCT, offenders are allocated randomly to the treatment group(s) and to one or more control group(s), who will either receive a different treatment or treatment as usual. This approach minimises the chances that the treated and control groups differ in significant and important ways and that one group is biased from the outset to do better or worse. Failure to randomise means that studies are likely to include uncontrolled variables and/or selection effects, which mean interpretation of results is very difficult, if not impossible. Whether an RCT design is applied or not, it is essential to have a counterfactual, i.e. a comparison group that adequately shows what would have happened in the absence of the intervention, to assess what has caused any changes to occur and what these changes have been.

Matched comparison groups

Within the level 4 Standard, outcome research can be improved by the quality of the match between intervention and comparison group. Outcome research studies should clearly describe both how the match has been achieved and the level of comparability obtained. Comparison groups should, at a minimum, comply with the recommendations outlined by Colledge *et al.* (1999) to match on static risk factors. Static risk factors (for example, criminal history, gender) cannot be altered, whereas dynamic risk factors (for example, drug use, education) can be changed (Andrews & Bonta, 1998; Bonta, 1996). It is recognised

that static risk assessment, for example the Offender Group Reconviction Scale (OGRS), does not measure dynamic variables which are related to reconviction, for example, drug misuse, education and employment status. Ideally, samples would be matched on both static and dynamic factors.

Recommended sample size

It is not, however, sufficient simply to assess critically the research design and method. It is also important to consider the sample sizes used, because smaller sample sizes are less likely to detect effects. In particular, there is a danger that small studies could be misinterpreted as the intervention having no effect, when the correct interpretation should be that the sample size was insufficient to detect an effect. If the sample size falls below a minimum (see Table 1.3, based on Fleiss, 1987) for any of the above standards, the reliability of the reconviction rates is reduced and should, therefore, be treated with caution⁸.

Table 1.3 Minimum sample size required by expected reduction in reconviction*

Expected percentage point reduction in reconviction	Minimum number of people in treatment and control/comparison groups
10	325
7.5	572
5	1,273
2.5	5,024

* It was assumed the average general reconviction rate for offenders was 50% within two years from the start of a community sentence or release from prison, a 1-tailed test 95% confidence and 80% power (type II error).

Few studies in the UK have achieved sufficient sample sizes. This is due to three key issues:

- pressure to evaluate individual interventions as soon as possible after implementation, before numbers have built up sufficiently to produce reliable outcome results;
- insufficient numbers of offenders commencing interventions; and/or
- insufficient offenders have passed through the interventions, particularly in the community, to provide large enough sample sizes for robust outcome studies.

8 This covers power but not other problems related to small sample sizes, for example, sampling error.

Non-completers

There has been some debate as to whether or not to include people who drop out from interventions in outcome studies as there may be systematic differences between offenders who complete an intervention and those that do not (for example, the completers and non-completers may be motivated and unmotivated participants respectively). Colledge *et al.* (1999) recommended that outcomes for non-completers (or people who drop out of interventions) should be included within the intervention group in order to counter selection effects, for example, motivation to participate, a recommendation endorsed by this review. In addition, from a cost-effectiveness perspective, the costs associated with offering the intervention cannot be limited to those who ultimately complete it (Sherman, 2003). In any case, counterfactuals are required for both completers and non-completers to take into account as far as possible selection effects.

Improving research standards

Reconviction studies in the UK have rarely achieved Standard 5, an RCT (Weisburd *et al.*, 1990; Farrington & Joliffe, 2002). The Home Office is currently piloting Restorative Justice (RJ) schemes using an RCT design and is planning to use this for other schemes, which examine pre-court RJ or RJ schemes which focus on cautioned offenders. Further work is required to ensure that RCTs are more widely used, where appropriate, in the evaluation of NOMS interventions. This issue is discussed further in Chapter 5 of this report.

In addition to using primary outcome studies to extend the understanding of 'what works' in corrections, it is important to consider the role of combined outcome studies. The Campbell Crime and Justice Group (CCJG) is following the lead of the Cochrane Collaboration in aiming to develop and maintain standards for systematic reviews in the fields of education, social and criminological research (Davies *et al.*, 2000). In line with this, RDS is developing meta-analytical studies and systematic reviews of the correctional services. These studies are, however, difficult to do because reports of individual studies often lack sufficient information to enable comparisons to be made. It is, therefore, recommended that a more strategic approach is adopted in the UK to documenting primary outcome studies and to making the data available for combination in both meta-analytical studies and systematic reviews.

Limitations of reconviction outcomes

The Scientific Methods Scale adapted for reconviction studies, outlined in Table 1.2, reflects the acceptance of this measure as the principal measure for re-offending, of sentence effectiveness and intervention impact for the correctional services, both in the UK and abroad (although criminal justice research in the US routinely uses arrest rates as its basic measure of effectiveness).

The shortcomings of reconviction rates and other outcome studies in measuring sentence effectiveness are well documented and include the fact that they are an undercount of actual offending and that they are affected by changes in police and prosecution practice. The limitations of reconviction as an outcome measure for assessing the impact of interventions have been discussed in the criminological literature (Lloyd *et al.*, 1994; Friendship *et al.*, 2002b), which concludes that:

- it is an all or nothing measure equated with success or failure of an intervention;
- it does not account for changes in the severity and frequency of subsequent offending; and
- it is only a proxy measure of re-offending.

Reconviction studies develop understanding of whether an intervention works or not (Shadish *et al.*, 2002) although, reconviction studies *per se* do not help the understanding of how a programme works. In particular, Pawson and Tilley (1994) criticise reconviction studies for ignoring the underlying mechanisms by which an intervention mediates change.

Benefits of reconviction as an outcome

Despite the inherent methodological limitations, as an outcome measure the value of reconviction is not in dispute because it represents the only readily accessible empirical measure of re-offending. Reconviction data in England and Wales are systematically recorded and therefore are easily accessible through the Offenders Index. Lloyd *et al.* (1994, p.3) describes reconviction data as "...an essential part of the tools of the trade of the criminologist".

Carter *et al.* (1992) also emphasised the importance of reconviction as a key indicator of performance within the English and Welsh Prison Service. There are also a number of examples of how reconviction data have informed criminal policy and practice (Cooke & Michie, 1998).

- It can be used to evaluate sentencing policy, i.e. to assess the relative merits of custodial sentences over community-based disposals (for example, Lloyd *et al.*, 1994).
- It provides a baseline against which to assess different management and treatment regimes (or interventions) for offenders.
- It can be used to assess the probable impact of changes in criminal policy on reconviction rates.
- Reconviction provides actuarial data which can be used for the basis of risk prediction.

The following section discusses in more detail the conventions for expressing reconviction and how this measure could be refined in the future.

Improving the evaluation of 'what works'

Conventions for reconviction

Reconviction is defined as the conviction of another offence during a specified follow-up period. It is the most common outcome in England and Wales. Reconviction has traditionally been expressed as an 'all or nothing' event, i.e. reconvicted or not reconvicted (Lloyd, *et al.*, 1994). As the evidence presented in this report demonstrates, reconviction rates tend to express the proportion of a sample who were reconvicted. Reconviction within two years has been the convention for reconviction studies in England and Wales and is prominent in official statistics for adult offenders (Kershaw *et al.*, 1999)⁹. This tradition has been influenced by two factors. First, there is a time delay in the criminal justice system between an offender being charged and convicted. This delay is longer for some offences than others (for example, violent and sex offences). Thus, for reconviction rates to improve the accuracy of representing all offences, a two-year duration is considered sufficient for cases to have reached the conviction stage. Secondly, most offenders who are going to be reconvicted will be reconvicted within two years of release. For example, 55 per cent of prisoners discharged from prison in 1988 in England and Wales were reconvicted within two years while the four-year rate was 64 per cent, only a nine per cent increase (Kershaw *et al.*, 1999). For some specific offender groups, longer follow-up periods need to be adopted, for example, sex offenders where the base rate of sexual reconviction is low (Friendship & Thornton, 2001).

9 One-year reconviction rates are the standard for juvenile offenders.

Typically, two-year reconviction rates for offenders are calculated from the start of a community sentence or release from custody. However, for offenders who participate in community-based interventions (i.e. while on probation), it can be argued that reconviction should be calculated from the point an intervention is completed rather than the commencement of the community sentence (Friendship *et al.*, 2003a). 'What works' interventions aim to reduce offending behaviour and it is only when an intervention is completed that the full potential impact on behaviour can be expected.

Reconviction outcomes

As discussed earlier, few British studies reached the highest standard on that scale, a score of five, i.e. an RCT. To improve knowledge of 'what works', it is important, therefore, for future evaluations of interventions in England and Wales to be based on higher standards of reconviction studies. However, reaching the gold standard, level 5 or an RCT, is difficult and has rarely been achieved in offender research due to practical and ethical issues.

Alongside improving standards of reconviction studies, there are a number of ways in which reconviction can be refined in order to provide a greater understanding of the type of benefits that can be attributed to interventions. For example, an offender may have been reconvicted but for a less serious offence. There are also a number of other outcomes that can be used to supplement reconviction to assess the impact of interventions. These are referred to as non-reconviction benefits and these outcomes can also provide a better understanding of how interventions work (Friendship *et al.*, 2003a). The rest of this chapter therefore examines the ways in which reconviction can be refined and the non-reconviction benefits of interventions, which can be used as short-term indicators of impact.

Refining reconviction

Although reconviction within two years has been the convention for reconviction studies and official statistics there is some evidence that treatment is more likely to have a short-lived impact on reconviction. For example, an evaluation of a prison regime for young offenders showed a significant reduction in one-year reconviction rates (Farrington *et al.*, 2000) but this had disappeared by the two-year follow-up point (Farrington *et al.*, 2002b).

Although longer-term reconviction rates are considered more reliable (Friendship *et al.*, 2002a), it is sensible for studies to calculate both one- and two-year reconviction rates when assessing the impact of offender interventions.

A non-standardised time period can also be used, for example, where the available follow-up period differs from offender to offender. This has some methodological advantages over standardised rates (for example, a two-year rate). Primarily, it makes more efficient use of the available data. For example, a statistical technique called survival analysis evaluates the time period between two events, for example, discharge from prison and first reconviction (Lee, 1992).

In conjunction with reconviction rates, over a given period studies can make greater use of other reconviction outcomes, for example the severity and frequency of reconviction as well as the time to first reconviction (Lloyd, *et al.*, 1994). An offender may have been reconvicted following discharge but the offence was less serious than the original, his/her rate of offending was lower than during the period prior to sentence and, finally, there was a delay in the offender acquiring a subsequent conviction. These types of reconviction analysis need to be piloted in order to develop a systematic methodology for researchers to use.

In addition, for offence specific interventions, for example sex offender treatment programmes and the drink-impaired drivers' programme, which target specific offending behaviours, the outcome needs to reflect these targets. General reconviction rates, therefore, are not the best indication of programme impact in such cases.

Falshaw *et al.* (2003b) recommended that researchers should aim to supplement reconviction data with other offence-related outcome data. In particular, this is most appropriate when evaluating interventions that aim to reduce specific types of offending; for example interventions for sex offenders where sex offence reconviction rates are far lower than general reconviction rates. The above study piloted the use of unofficial sources of data to supplement reconviction for sex offenders, including intelligence provided by police, Probation Service, social services and the National Health Service. Collecting data in this way provided more realistic evidence of offending and related behaviours after discharge.

Non-reconviction benefits

Gendreau and Andrews (1991) differentiated between factors that sustain criminal behaviour and those that do not. Interventions need to reduce reconviction by targeting those factors that lead to offending behaviour. In the case of offending behaviour programmes (for example, cognitive skills programmes and sex offender treatment programmes), attitudes, behaviours and skills are routinely measured via an assessment battery which includes psychological

measures (Friendship & Falshaw, 2003). Where these have a proven link to re-offending or reconviction, these may be used as interim or proxy measures for re-offending or reconviction. However, these outcome measures also require a counterfactual to indicate what would have happened in the absence of the intervention.

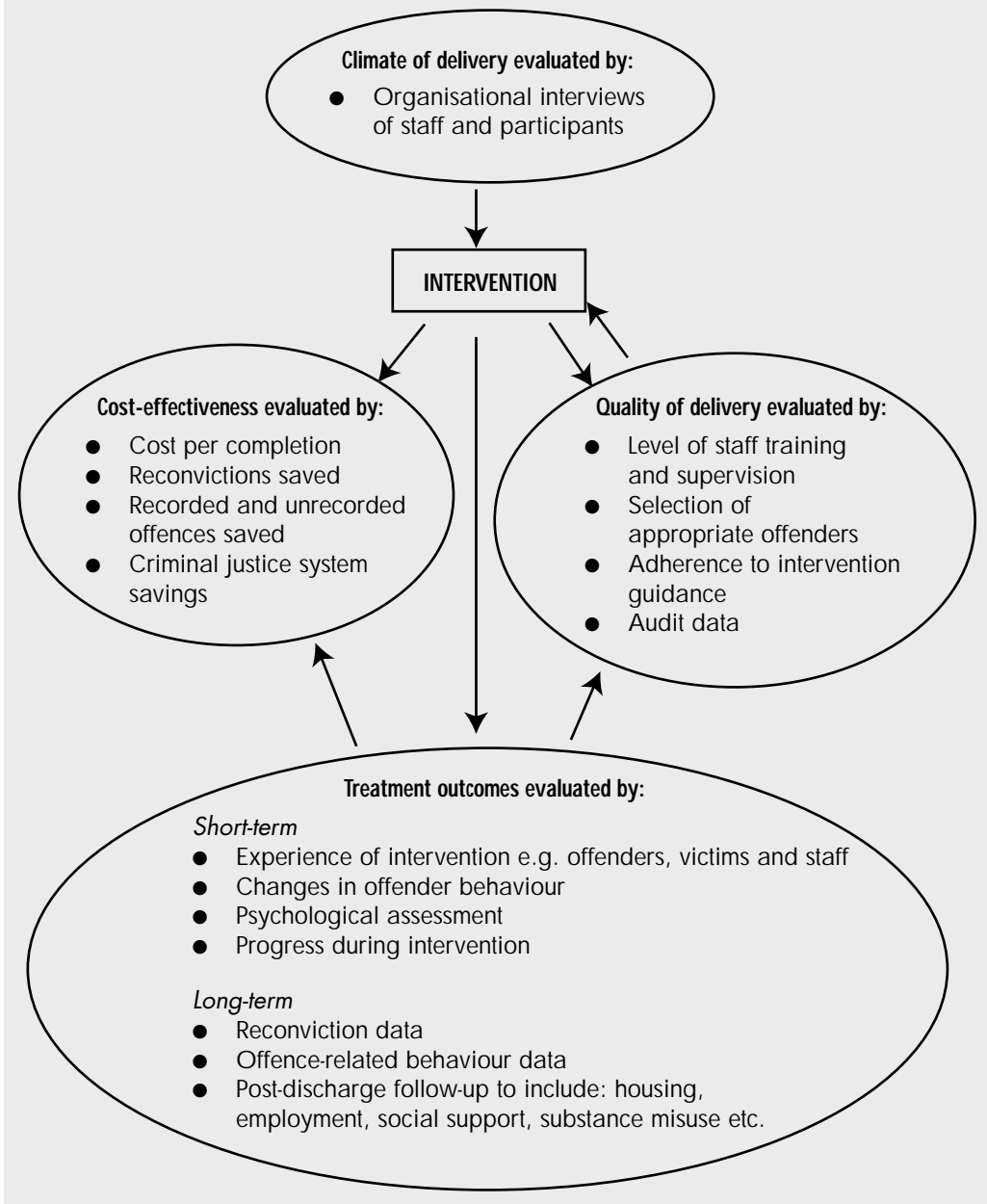
Reconviction studies assume that all offenders benefit equally from an intervention but this ignores the underlying notion of 'what works with whom' as individuals respond differently to interventions. Thus, grouping all offenders who have participated in an intervention may mask the impact of treatment (Friendship, *et al.*, 2003a). Assessing changes in offenders' attitudes, behaviours and skills over the course of an intervention would provide a short-term indication of the impact. From this it would be possible to identify which offenders had benefited from treatment and, as long as there are large enough samples to enable subgroup analysis, answer the question 'what works with whom and why?'

Short-term outcomes could also be used in addition to reconviction in order to provide indications of intervention impact. These results would be timelier for policy makers. Short-term evaluation also informs programme development. It can provide information to assess whether the intervention is meeting the identified short-term treatment targets and to examine whether these targets are linked to long-term change, for example, reduced reconviction. This would give a better understanding of how an intervention works.

An integrated model of evaluation

Interventions for offenders typically collect a range of data for monitoring and evaluation purposes. One model might utilise all the relevant data in order to gain a comprehensive picture of impact. Figure 1.1 identifies the possible sources of the data in order to assess both reconviction and non-reconviction outcomes. Traditional reconviction studies rely on quantitative research methods but an integrated model of evaluation aims to use these in conjunction with qualitative-based methods, for example, offender and staff experiences of an intervention as part of process evaluations.

An integrated model of evaluation has the ability to evaluate programme design, process and outcome. The model offers useful stages for evaluative research and, depending on the purpose of the research or the resources available, planned evaluations can address one or more of these. From the integrated model it is, therefore, possible to identify reasons why interventions are not reducing offending, for example, theory failure, implementation failure and evaluation failure.

Figure 1.1 *An integrated model to evaluate the impact of interventions*

Future challenges for the evaluation of the impact of NOMS on re-offending

The 'what works' agenda has identified a broad range of interventions that can reduce reconviction. These include offending behaviour programmes, basic skills education, drug treatment and the custody to work programme. There is also a strong resettlement agenda that recognises the importance of supporting offenders in the community with employment and housing.

It is likely that offenders will have undergone more than one 'what works' intervention and may well have done so in both custodial and community settings. This has implications for outcome evaluation in terms of isolating the differential effect of interventions on outcome. For example, in addition to asking whether interventions are effective, there is a need to move towards a more precise examination of the ways in which interventions are delivered (McGuire, 2002b). Specific elements of the experience, for example relationships with staff, contact with family members and previous enrolment in programmes, are likely to influence offenders' participation in interventions. Identification of these kinds of mediating factors should improve the ability of offender managers to match interventions to offenders' needs, and is consistent with the multi-modal approach advocated here.

More research is also needed to understand how different types of interventions work in combination, whether optimum or sufficient 'doses' of interventions can be identified, and how these relate to different offender profiles. This issue is discussed further in Chapter 5 of this report.

Introduction

In recent years, the main aim of the correctional services has been to reduce re-offending. This role has been reinforced in the stated aims of NOMS (Carter, 2004; Home Office, 2004c). This focus reflects a move (in the early 1990s) by part of the correctional services in Britain from a punitive to a more rehabilitative model¹⁰. This development was supported by international empirical evidence, which suggested that it is possible to reduce re-offending rates by rehabilitating offenders rather than simply punishing them (for example, Ward & Stewart, 2003; McGuire, 2001; Hollin, 2001; Andrews *et al.*, 1996; Lipsey & Wilson, 1998; McGuire & Priestley, 1995).

The rehabilitative model is based on targeting risk factors that are associated with offending behaviour and changing those that are amenable to change to reduce the probability of re-offending, as discussed in Chapter 1. This chapter focuses on identifying the criminogenic needs of offenders and targeting risk factors with interventions that adhere to the 'what works' principles.

Factors associated with offending

International and British research has identified predictive factors, or 'criminogenic needs', which influence the development of criminal careers. 'Criminal careers' are defined in Farrington (1997) as "the longitudinal sequence of offences committed by an individual offender". These factors affect the onset of offending behaviour, persistence of offending over time and desistance from crime. This chapter focuses primarily on factors associated with persistence of offending.

Andrews and Bonta (1998) have identified two types of risk factors: static and dynamic. Static risk factors, for example criminal history, cannot be altered. Dynamic risk factors, on the other hand, such as education, employment, substance misuse (see, for example, Bonta, 1996 cited in Benda *et al.*, 2001) are amenable to change. As a result, correctional services' interventions that aim to reduce re-offending directly target dynamic risk factors (see, for example, Hanson & Harris, 2000; Hoge, 1999 cited in Benda *et al.*, 2001). Taylor (1999)

¹⁰ This does not include the National Probation Service, the original purpose of which was to advise and assist offenders.

concluded that although criminal history was a strong predictor of reconviction, this was because it acted as a proxy for social and behavioural problems.

Various studies have attempted to assess the relative importance of different dynamic risk factors in predicting re-offending. For example, Motiuk (1998) found that for male offenders, the strongest predictors of re-offending after release were, in order of importance, unemployment, substance abuse, criminal associates, marital/family status and personal/emotional problems. A meta-analysis of 131 international studies identified criminogenic needs, criminal history, social achievement, age/gender/ethnicity and family factors as predictors of adult re-offending (Gendreau *et al.*, 1996). Less robust predictors included low intelligence, personal distress, and low socioeconomic status of the family of origin (Gendreau *et al.*, 1996). However, it is not clear that international evidence is transferable to England and Wales due to demographic, cultural and economic differences.

Other authors have argued for the importance of considering dynamic risk factors, including Beech *et al.* (2002) who demonstrated that the predictive value of static risks increased when offenders' psychological profiles were taken into account. McGuire's (2002a) summary of meta-analytic reviews reached the following conclusions:

- Offenders often have multiple problems and criminogenic needs and those with many are most likely to re-offend. Interventions that tackle a range of problems will be more effective than those that target a single problem.
- Offenders may need additional practical support/training in relation to accommodation, education and employment.

The Offender Assessment System known as OASys (Home Office, 2002b; Howard *et al.*, forthcoming) aims to monitor offenders during their sentence on a comprehensive number of factors, for example, risk of reconviction, regime participation and resettlement needs. OASys is being used in England and Wales to collect data on most offenders in contact with the Prison and Probation Services. It will provide systematic information regarding offenders during their contact with the correctional services. This data system will provide researchers with an invaluable tool that could support a more integrated approach to evaluation, as proposed in Chapter 1.

Recent OASys data found that offenders were assessed as having significant problems in relation to an average of four criminogenic needs and that, overall, offenders in custody had a greater number of needs. Each criminogenic need is scored on the OASys form and used to calculate risk of reconviction. Those scoring above the stated 'cut-off point' for individual risk factors are considered to have a criminogenic need in that area. The

following table presents the percentage of offenders assessed as having these needs based on 10,000 assessments from 19 areas (Home Office unpublished data)¹¹.

Table 2.1 Factors associated with offending

Section of OASys	Percentage of offenders assessed as having a problem	
	Community sentences	Custodial sentences
1&2 Offending information*	50%	66%
3 Accommodation	31%	43%
4 Education, Training and Employment (ETE)	53%	65%
5 Financial management and income	22%	29%
6 Relationships	36%	42%
7 Lifestyle and associates	35%	52%
8 Drug misuse	27%	39%
9 Alcohol misuse	34%	33%
10 Emotional well-being	40%	38%
11 Thinking and behaviour	50%	59%
12 Attitudes**	21%	32%
No. of criminogenic needs	3.99	4.97
No. of criminogenic needs excluding sections 1&2	3.50	4.31

* Offending information includes the current offence and criminal history.

** The percentages with attitudes needs are likely to rise when an amendment is made to the OASys scoring system, effective from early 2005.

Table 2.1 shows that over half of the offenders had 'needs' with regard to static risk factors (offending information), as well as dynamic risk factors including education, training and employment (ETE), and thinking and behaviour. Additionally, just over half the offenders in custody were also assessed as having a 'need' with regard to lifestyle and associates. A much larger proportion of offenders in custody was assessed as having drug problems than those on community sentences.

A validation study of OASys (Howard *et al.*, forthcoming) concluded that the total OASys score was as predictive of reconviction as the Offender Group Reconviction Scale¹² and that

11 The sample is not randomly drawn from the population of offenders serving custodial or community sentences and is therefore not nationally representative.

12 Offender Group Reconviction Scale (OGRS), see Taylor (1999) Home Office Research Findings 104.

most of the criminogenic needs assessed by OASys were predictive of reconviction, with the exception of emotional well-being, relationships and alcohol misuse.

Identifying criminogenic needs

The main evidence on factors associated with re-offending is reviewed below with respect to education, employment, accommodation, drugs and alcohol, mental health and social networks. Cognitive skills and attitudes are other important criminogenic needs and are discussed in Chapter 3.

Much of the evidence produced to date has focused on the separate needs of offenders on community sentences or in custody and, as a result, the evidence is presented separately. It is clear, however, that there is a substantial amount of overlap between the needs of offenders in custody and in the community.

Education

There is no current evidence to suggest a lack of basic skills¹³ is predictive of re-offending. However, basic skills are related to a number of other factors known to be associated with offending, for example, poor school experience, unemployment, social exclusion and various psychological or cognitive factors linked to self-concept and attitudes to offending (Porporino & Robinson, 1992). Research has shown that many prisoners lack essential basic skills (Niven & Olagundoye, 2002). Over half (55%) of all prisoners were at or below level 1 in literacy (equivalent to GCSE grades D-G), over two-thirds were at or below level 1 in numeracy and over half (57%) of all prisoners entering custody had no qualifications (Niven & Olagundoye, 2002).

There is evidence, too, that offenders on community sentences often lack basic skills. For example, unpublished OASys data suggested that a quarter (24%) of 18- to 20-year-olds on community sentences had basic skills deficits and that there was a higher prevalence of this deficit in 18- to 20-year-olds compared with older offenders. A recent evaluation of basic skills provision in the Probation Service found that about a third of offenders screened at the pre-sentence report stage were probably below level 1 in basic skills, and about half of these offenders were unemployed, compared to the total UK unemployment rate of five per cent at the time of the study (McMahon *et al.*, 2004).

¹³ Basic skills are defined as "The ability to read, write and speak in English or Welsh and to use mathematics at a level necessary to function and progress at work and in society in general" (Basic Skills Agency, 2004, p.21).

Employment

There is strong evidence to suggest that unemployment and offending are linked (for example, Farrington *et al.*, 1986), although the nature of this link is not clear. Unemployment may be an indirect rather than a direct cause of crime (Tarling, 1982), which interacts with a variety of other social and demographic factors. Many prisoners experience unemployment before imprisonment and lack the essential skills to secure employment after release. The 2001 Resettlement Survey found that two-thirds of prisoners were unemployed before they entered custody and that 12 per cent of prisoners aged over 17 years had never had a paid job (Niven & Olagundoye, 2002). As a consequence of their lack of work experience and imprisonment, many prisoners have difficulty arranging employment on release. Those most adversely affected are prisoners serving shorter sentences of less than 12 months. Studies have shown that two-thirds of prisoners who were working before they entered prison lost their pre-prison jobs whilst in custody (Home Office, 2001) and around two-thirds of prisoners left prison with no job or training to go to (Niven & Olagundoye, 2002). Research has found that the likelihood of a prisoner finding employment on release is often tied in with other factors such as having stable accommodation, having qualifications, not having a drug problem and receiving help and advice with finding work (Niven & Olagundoye, 2002).

There is also some evidence that unemployment and the offending behaviour of those on community sentences are linked. For example, in a study of offenders in six probation areas (with a sample of more than 7,000 offenders), May (1999) found that those who were recorded as unemployed were significantly more likely to be reconvicted than those who were employed.

Studies have identified that it is not merely the fact of having a job that is associated with reduced re-offending, but the stability and quality of that employment along with the level of satisfaction expressed toward it (Motiuk & Brown, 1993; Farrington, 1989). Farrington also noted in his longitudinal 'Cambridge Study' of a cohort of men born in England in 1953 that instability in employment at the age of 18 was strongly predictive of a first conviction after this age (Farrington, 1989). The Cambridge study also concluded that the employment status of fathers was predictive of the onset of delinquency in their children. Thus, interventions to assist offenders into stable and satisfying employment may have an effect in reducing offending for subsequent generations.

Accommodation

As the evidence on social networks below demonstrates, stable accommodation is both directly and indirectly linked to reductions in re-offending. For offenders on community sentences, May (1999) found that in four of the six probation areas examined, offenders who experienced accommodation problems were more likely to be reconvicted. The 2003 Resettlement Survey reported that the odds of having employment, training or education arranged on release were over four times higher for prisoners with accommodation arranged than those without (Niven & Stewart, forthcoming).

Research also suggests that homelessness is a problem for many prisoners both before and after imprisonment. The Rough Sleepers Unit (2001) identified that being discharged from institutions such as prisons was a primary route into homelessness. A proportion of prisoners who have accommodation before custody will lose it while serving their sentence, due to a lack of communication with landlords and benefit agencies (SEU, 2002). The 2003 Resettlement Survey findings suggest that almost one-third (29%) of prisoners did not have an address to go to on release in the last three weeks of their sentence (Niven & Stewart, forthcoming).

Drugs and alcohol

Substance misuse (whether drug or alcohol misuse) is associated with re-offending (SEU, 2002). In recent years, research has shown that drug users are prolific offenders and this has focused policy-makers' attention heavily on drug-related offending rather than alcohol-related offending.

Research on drug misuse suggests that many offenders who are sentenced to custody enter prison as recent users of drugs. For instance, in the Prison Criminality Survey of recently imprisoned male offenders carried out in 2000, around half had used heroin, cocaine or crack within the last year and nearly three-quarters of this sample reported that they had used drugs within the last year. Of these drug users, over half reported that their offending was linked with their drug use, primarily to finance their habits (Lewis & Mhlanga, 2001; Liriano & Ramsay 2003). The same survey also reported on alcohol misuse and found that nearly a quarter of newly arrived male prisoners reported a link between their drinking and offence(s) generally citing lapses of judgement following drink.

The forthcoming Community Penalties Criminality Survey (the community equivalent of the Prison Criminality Survey cited above) of offenders on community sentences will provide a national picture of alcohol use within the probation population. The most recent evidence, by Mair and May (1997) who surveyed 1,000 offenders, found that at least ten per cent reported dependent drinking. In addition, the OASys pilot highlighted that 35 per cent of

offenders considered their alcohol use to be a problem at the pre-sentence report (PSR) stage. The OASys pilot also showed that 47 per cent of those who had reported that they had a drinking problem further admitted that their violent behaviour was related to alcohol use and 38 per cent considered their alcohol use to be linked, in some way, to their current offence. The pilot found that 33 per cent of the sample had a criminogenic need in relation to alcohol (Home Office unpublished data).

Research also suggests that substance misuse has wider implications for offenders, for example it may affect their prospects of employment (SEU, 2002; Niven & Olagundoye, 2002). In the 2001 Resettlement Survey, of those who stated they had a problem with drugs or alcohol before they entered custody, only 20 per cent had a paid job or training arranged on release compared with 30 per cent of the total sample (Niven & Olagundoye, 2002).

Mental health

The literature on mental health and offending is wide-ranging (see, for example, Woodward *et al.*, 1999) and is not fully reviewed here. The research does suggest that many prisoners experience significant physical and mental health problems, but that treatment services for these problems are insufficient to meet needs adequately (SEU, 2002). Herbst and Gunn (1991) reported that 17 per cent of men and 54 per cent of women in prison were diagnosed with some form of mental disorder. Sawyer and Lart (1996) found that in remand and sentenced prisoners in Winchester prison a quarter of sentenced prisoners had a history of mental health problems and a third of remand prisoners had mental health problems. However, Murray (1989) concluded that the re-offending rates for this group were no higher than those for any other group of offender.

Social networks

There is some evidence, mostly from the US, that social networks or 'social capital' (Putnam, 2000)¹⁴ are linked to crime. In a review of the literature on social capital, the Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2001) reported that high social capital was associated with lower crime rates (see, for example, Halpern, 1999, 2001; Lutze *et al.*, 2000; Chamlin and Cochran, 1997; Edwards and Foley, 1997). Although associations between levels of mutual trust amongst neighbours and crime rates have been observed in the US (for example, Sampson *et al.*, 1997), the evidence is inconclusive both in terms of a causal relationship and the extent to which social capital is related to other factors associated with offending.

¹⁴ Social capital is defined by Putnam (2000) as "...networks, norms, and trust that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives" (Baron *et al.*, 2000, cited in ONS, 2001).

There is clearer evidence on particular aspects of social networks in England and Wales, particularly family relationships. Research has shown that the maintenance of these relationships is important in aiding the successful resettlement of prisoners and in reducing re-offending. For example, the 2003 Resettlement Survey found that nearly four-fifths (79%) of those who had received at least one visit from a family member or partner had accommodation arranged on release compared with only half (51%) of those who did not receive a visit (Niven & Stewart, forthcoming). In the same survey, almost two-thirds (62%) of prisoners who were not employed or in training before they entered custody but had one of these arranged on release, had relied on family and friends or other personal contacts to arrange this before they were released. The survey also found that a third of adult prisoners and 14 per cent of young offenders had not received any visits from their partner or family members for a number of reasons including distance from home and expense (Niven & Stewart, forthcoming).

A different approach for male and female offenders?

Men and women exhibit different types and patterns of offending behaviour (Home Office, 2004b). On average, girls and women offend less frequently than boys and men, start offending later and generally desist earlier (for evidence related to girls see Graham and Bowling 1995; Jamieson *et al.*, 1999; Flood-Page *et al.*, 2000). When women do offend they tend to commit acquisitive rather than violent crime (Home Office, 2004b). They also demonstrate different underlying factors and personal circumstances, which suggest a different approach may be needed for men and women. The research highlights that although there are some common problems (for example, substance abuse, physical abuse) among male and female offenders, differences have been observed in the degree and type of psychological problems they experience (Byrne & Howells, 2000; Flanagan, 1995; Pollock, 1998, cited in Sorbello *et al.*, 2002).

Gelsthorpe's (1999) review concluded that the substantial gender differences in offending were related to differences in opportunity, upbringing and societal expectations. Financial problems, high levels of sexual and physical victimisation in childhood and as an adult, relationship problems, mental health issues, childcare problems and difficulties in being assertive typically characterised female offenders. These issues have also been identified by Sorbello *et al.* (2002) as particularly problematic for female offenders (for example, Armytage, 2000; Thomas & Pollard, 2001; Trevethan, 2000, cited in Sorbello *et al.*, 2002). Sorbello *et al.* suggested that female offenders have educational and employment problems, which may lead to involvement in the drugs trade to support themselves and their dependent children (for example, Laishes, 1997).

Sorbello *et al.* (2002), citing Andrews and Bonta (1998), have argued that a risk management model, focusing on criminogenic needs or harm avoidance, has dominated rehabilitation policy. They argue for a gender-specific holistic rehabilitation programme, for example the 'enhancement model', citing Ward and Stewart (2003), "which attempts to reduce recidivism by enhancing offender capabilities (i.e. non-criminogenic needs) to improve quality of life" (Sorbello *et al.*, 2002, p198). This would enable female offenders to address physical and sexual abuse, mental health problems, relationships with children and families, vocation and life skills, and substance abuse. The evidence in favour of this approach is, however, unclear.

Dowden and Andrews (1999) reviewed the Morash *et al.* (1995) study which identified 67 evaluations reporting promising intervention strategies for female offenders but found only 12 of these included an outcome measure, none of which provided evidence for the effectiveness of programmes. McGuire (2002a) stated that the review by Andrews and Dowden (1999) was designed to address the lack of evidence on intervention for female offenders, given that Lipsey's (1992) meta-analysis found only three per cent of published studies focused exclusively on samples of female offenders. The review examined whether criminogenic and non-criminogenic needs identified by Andrews and Bonta (1998) and Andrews *et al.*, (1990a) were valid for female offenders. The review found that the principles of risk, need and general responsivity were associated with treatment outcomes for female offenders. However, factors identified as targets for intervention, for example, substance abuse and basic educational skills (see Koons *et al.*, 1997) were not as important for female offenders. The review concluded that the strongest predictor of treatment success for female offenders was interpersonal criminogenic needs particularly related to the family.

Hedderman (2004) also assessed the limited evidence available and concluded that programmes which focus on male criminogenic factors are unlikely to be as effective in reducing reconviction among female offenders as they are for men. This is not only because they focus on factors which are less relevant to, or operate differently for women, but also because they fail to address factors which are unique to, or more relevant for, women who offend.

This view is supported by recent OASys evidence (Home Office unpublished data), which suggests that female offenders had markedly higher levels of criminogenic need in the areas of relationships and emotional well-being, while male offenders had higher levels of need with regard to offending, alcohol misuse, thinking and behaviour and attitudes. The average number of 'needs' for each gender was very similar. However, female prisoners had a higher average than male prisoners, whereas male offenders on some community orders had higher averages than equivalent female offenders.

In response to this evidence, the Home Office's Women's Offending and Reduction Programme Action Plan (Home Office, 2004b), launched in March 2004, set out a different approach for male and female offenders. This included proposals for Women's Offending Action Teams, Women's Community Supervision and Support Centres and multi-agency mental health liaison.

Targeting risk factors

In addition to recognising offenders' multiple criminogenic needs and the differing needs of female offenders, a growing body of literature, cited in Antonowicz and Ross (1994), suggests that effectiveness of programmes is dependent on a variety of factors. These include type of programme, suitability of offenders and staff skills (for example, Andrews *et al.*, 1990b, Gendreau & Ross, 1979; Lipsey, 1992).

Lipsey's (1992) assessment of 443 programmes, which targeted criminogenic needs and included comparison groups, found that 64 per cent of the studies reported reductions associated with treatment. The average reduction in recidivism was ten per cent. Antonowicz and Ross (1994) concluded that programme efficiency is dependent on targeting criminogenic needs of offenders. They reported that 90 per cent of successful programmes targeted criminogenic needs compared to 58 per cent of unsuccessful programmes.

'What works' principles

There is also increasing evidence that effective targeting of interventions is more likely to be achieved when interventions adhere to a number of key principles. These have become known as the 'what works' principles. McGuire (2000) outlined these principles, concluding that programmes and services work best in reducing re-offending when they conform to the following:

- they are based on an explicit model of the causes of crime, drawn from empirically sound data;
- they have a risk classification – i.e. more intensive programmes should be targeted at high and medium risk offenders;
- they target criminogenic needs;
- they are responsive, so that offenders benefit from interventions, which are meaningful to them and delivered in a way that is appropriate to their learning styles;
- offenders should be given the opportunity to practise new skills/attitudes and behaviour, and motivation should be addressed;

- the treatment method is skills-oriented, active and designed to improve problem solving in social interaction, based on cognitive behavioural techniques;
- programme impact is substantially influenced by the manner and setting of delivery (i.e. quality of delivery and programme integrity¹⁵).

In addition to this, Latessa *et al.* (2002) proposed that effective treatment depends on:

- organisation cultures being based on well-defined ethical principles and responding efficiently to issues that have an impact on treatment facilities;
- programmes based on empirically defined needs, which are consistent with organisational values;
- professionally trained staff with experience of working in offender treatment programmes; and
- psychometric instruments of proven predictive validity to assess offender risk.

McGuire (2000) suggested that community-based programmes, in general, produce more positive results (see also Gendreau, 1996). Interventions using cognitive-behavioural techniques, which focus on the thinking skills of offenders, also produce the greatest reduction in re-offending (for example, Hollin, 1999). Antonowicz and Ross (1994) found that behavioural programmes that included a cognitive component were very likely to be effective: 75 per cent of successful programmes were behaviourally orientated and included a cognitive component, whereas behavioural programmes that did not include a cognitive component were unsuccessful. Further evidence of the effectiveness of programmes designed according to the 'what works' principles is reviewed in the following chapters.

Offender management

In line with the evidence that offenders have multiple criminogenic needs, there is an emerging consensus that a multi-modal approach to interventions is likely to be the most effective way of treating offenders (McGuire, 2002b). This approach is dependent on inter-agency communication to deliver high quality services in the community and in custody.

Recent research on case management approaches in the Probation Service in Britain supports this view. This research, which comprised a staff survey and interviews with a small sample of staff and offenders, highlighted three main case management models: the

¹⁵ Programme integrity means programmes should have clear and identified aims, appropriate methods and guidelines for delivery, with appropriate management and training for staff.

Specialist, Generic and Hybrid (Partridge, 2004). Different models had benefits for different key stakeholders – senior management, practitioners and offenders. Specialist models allowed senior management to co-ordinate service delivery tightly and target resources at specific offenders and key supervision stages. However, offenders who experienced a high degree of task separation and movement between different teams, most apparent in the specialist models, had the least coherent supervision experience. Generic models enhanced staff motivation by allowing them to work with a mixed caseload of offenders and have continued contact with the same offenders enabling them to see the impact of their work. Local contextual differences (geographical configuration, staff resources, skills and turnover) restricted the degree of specialisation within a model and the ability to design one model to 'fit' all probation areas.

Whatever the model type, several core case management principles were shown to enhance offender engagement and hence improve the effectiveness of offender management. Partridge concluded that:

- models should acknowledge offenders' experiences and needs;
- continuity of contact with the same case manager and other staff was essential to build confidence and rapport with the offender, particularly during the initial stages of supervision;
- the greater the level of task separation, the more offenders were confused by why they undertook different elements of their supervision, particularly where contact with the case manager had been limited;
- face-to-face contact with a small case management team was beneficial for both staff and offenders; and
- openness, flexibility and support were key motivating factors for offenders, exemplified by three-way meetings between case managers, practitioners and offenders and where case managers attended initial meetings with partnership agencies.

The National Offender Management Service seeks to build on this evidence, focusing on the offender rather than the processes or agencies that work with that offender. NOMS intends to bring together the Prison and Probation Services to ensure that the whole sentence of the court is planned and delivered in an integrated and effective way. As well as its overall remit to manage offenders, reduce re-offending and cut crime, NOMS will be responsible for:

- improving the enforcement and credibility of community punishments so that prison is not the first resort for less serious offences;

- ensuring that both custodial and community punishments encourage offenders to address their behaviour and offer a path away from crime; and
- raising educational standards among offenders in order to break the link between low educational attainment and criminality.

Ten Regional Offender Managers will be responsible for effective management of offenders in custody and in the community through implementation and operation of an integrated end-to-end model of offender management. They will also source prison places, community punishments, supervision and other interventions required for offenders through contracts with public, private, not-for-profit and voluntary sector providers.

Conclusion

Research has been successful in identifying risk factors which are associated with re-offending, including education, employment, accommodation, substance misuse, mental health and social networks problems (as well as thinking and behaviour, which are discussed in the following chapter). The evidence suggests that offenders often have multiple problems, many of which contribute directly towards their offending (and may therefore be termed 'criminogenic'). Some of these factors are dynamic in the sense that they are amenable to change, in contrast to other risk factors (notably criminal history) which, although strong predictors of reconviction, are static. Criminal history is believed by some to be a proxy for social and behavioural problems. This means that static risk factors cannot be considered on their own. By targeting dynamic risk factors, programmes designed to reduce reconviction through employing the 'what works' principles, should be successful, although to what extent is still inconclusive. Recent research suggests that the evidence on criminogenic needs and the subsequent development of programmes designed to target dynamic risk factors, may have neglected to recognise the differing needs of female offenders. However, this imbalance is beginning to be addressed through initiatives, such as the Women's Offending Reduction Programme.

Despite the limited evidence, it is now widely accepted that a multi-modal approach addressing multiple criminogenic needs is likely to be the most effective way of reducing re-offending. The introduction of NOMS, and the concept of end-to-end offender management to improve the effective and efficient delivery of the sentence should allow for more effective targeting of interventions to offenders' criminogenic needs and ultimately reduce reconviction rates. This yet remains to be seen and will only be demonstrated through the commission of robust studies into the effectiveness of the new offender management model and interventions (reviewed in Chapters 3 and 4) aimed at tackling the range of factors associated with offending.

Policy context and programmes in England and Wales

In line with, and in response to, the 'what works' principles discussed in the previous chapter, in the 1990s the correctional services in England and Wales adopted offending behaviour programmes as one of the cornerstones of their rehabilitative work.

The adoption of these programmes was also a response to the report cited in Chapter 1 produced for the US Department of Justice called *Preventing Crime: 'What works', What Doesn't, What's Promising* (Sherman *et al.*, 1997). This report re-examined the evidence on what was effective with offenders, and found that there were interventions that had effectively reduced reconviction; most notably those based on cognitive-behavioural theory and practice.

In the UK, McGuire's, Sherman's and other colleagues' reports were summarised in Goldblatt and Lewis (1998) and were influential in the creation of the £250 million, three-year *Crime Reduction Programme* (CRP) in 1999 (Welsh *et al.*, 2002). The main purpose of the CRP was to obtain evidence of the most effective methods for reducing crime, and it included a wide range of initiatives used by police and crime and disorder partners, including the Prison and Probation Services.

In addition, the impetus for offending behaviour programmes was supported by the publication in 1998 of HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) reports *Strategies for Effective Offender Supervision and Evidence-Based Practice: A Guide to Effective Practice* (HMIP, 1998a; HMIP, 1998b). These documents set out the principles and foundation of what has since become the 'what works' movement within the Prison and Probation Services. Mirroring McGuire's 'what works' principles, HMIP identified the following factors for effective programmes:

- multi-modal (employing a variety of methods to address a range of criminogenic needs);
- skills-oriented;
- based on theories and methods of cognitive-behavioural psychology;
- generally but not solely community-based;
- delivered by staff adept at pro-social modelling;
- monitoring and evaluation built in from the outset.

(HMIP, 1998b: p14)

From these factors followed the definition of an offending behaviour programme as “a systematic, reproducible set of activities in which offenders can participate”.

The Prison Service introduced an accreditation process for its offending behaviour programmes in 1996, based on the principles set out by McGuire in 1995 (McGuire, 1995). The General Accreditation Panel was created to formalise the process of implementing programmes in the Prison Service, which had been running programmes since 1992, and to ensure that the principles for effective practice were incorporated (Rex *et al.*, 2003).

As part of a commitment to 'what works' principles and evidence-based practice, in 1998/99, the *Guide to Effective Practice* announced that a number of pathfinder programmes would be developed for use with offenders under community supervision and a system of accrediting the design and delivery of such programmes would be established. The result was the Joint Prisons/Probation Accreditation Panel, building on the existing arrangements in the prison service¹⁶.

Thus, from the mid-1990s, a range of pre-accredited and accredited offending behaviour programmes were set up and running in the Prison and Probation Services in England and Wales. The first few cognitive skills programmes accredited by the Panel were rapidly rolled out across both Services while many new programmes were adapted and developed for accreditation.

Offending behaviour programmes directly target criminogenic needs of attitudes and beliefs by addressing deficits in thinking and behaviour. The cognitive skills programmes (for example, Enhanced Thinking Skills (ETS), Reasoning and Rehabilitation (R&R) and Think First) target problem solving, creative thinking, social perspective taking, moral reasoning, social skills and critical thinking for treatment. In doing so these programmes aim to affect other criminogenic needs less directly through improved cognitive and social functioning.

Currently, the Prison Service lists nineteen fully or provisionally accredited programmes¹⁷ (including seven drug treatment programmes) and six programmes not yet accredited or under development. The Probation Service lists sixteen fully or provisionally accredited programmes (including two drug treatment programmes) and another two under development.

¹⁶ The accreditation panel was reconstituted as the Correctional Services Accreditation Panel (CSAP) in 2002 (CSAP, 2002).

¹⁷ Additionally, two Therapeutic Communities have been accredited in the Prison Service.

There are five programmes common to both Prisons and Probation, fully accredited for use in both services: Enhanced Thinking Skills, Reasoning and Rehabilitation¹⁸, Think First, Controlling Anger and Learning to Manage it (CALM) and the Cognitive Skills Booster programme which was jointly developed.

As of 1 April 2004, accredited programmes were being delivered in 112 of 137 prisons in England and Wales. Fifty-four of these deliver more than one programme, typically a cognitive skills programme, a sex offender treatment programme (SOTP), and in some cases a third programme. All 42 probation areas of the National Probation Service delivered a general offending behaviour programme (i.e. one of four cognitive skills programmes) and at least one other of an SOTP, Aggression Replacement Training (ART), or ASRO (Addressing Substance-Related Offending).

International literature on offending behaviour programmes

There is considerable evidence from meta-analytic studies and systematic reviews originating mainly from North America to support the effectiveness of offending behaviour programmes. These findings are sufficiently consistent and robust to draw some conclusions about 'what works', or more specifically, what has worked abroad and may work for correctional services in England and Wales.

McGuire (2002a) summarised the findings from 30 meta-analytic reviews of evaluations in the international literature published between 1985 and 2001. These studies indicate that reductions in reconviction rates ranging from six to 15 percentage points for some types of intervention (Losei, 1995) and report reductions as high as 20 percentage points for interventions adhering to 'what works' principles of risk, need, responsivity and programme integrity (Vennard *et al.*, 1997; Vennard & Hedderman, 1998).

The literature also indicates that behavioural or cognitive-behavioural treatment methods, including social skills and cognitive skills training programmes, reinforcement and incentive programmes, have proven effectiveness in reducing recidivism (Pearson *et al.*, 2002). Cognitive-behavioural programmes also have the highest mean effect size for drug use relapse of the various treatment modalities (Lipton *et al.*, 1998)¹⁹.

18 Both the Prison and Probation Services decided to phase out the use of R&R from spring 2004.

19 In CDATE (Correctional Drug Abuse Treatment Effectiveness) database.

Studies of specific offending behaviour programmes include the Reasoning and Rehabilitation programme developed for Correctional Services Canada. This has now been evaluated on a number of occasions with different offender populations in controlled experimental studies. The research from North America has produced mixed findings of the programme's effectiveness in reducing recidivism. Earlier studies found evidence of treatment effect in the form of statistically significant reductions in recidivism for certain types of offenders (Porporino & Robinson, 1995; Robinson 1995; Spruance *et al.*, 2000), but the most recent study detected no statistically significant difference between experimental and comparison groups on various outcome measures (Van Voorhis *et al.*, 2004). Findings from Sweden also did not find statistically significant differences between those who completed the programme and the matched comparison group (BRÅ, 2002). Although both of these latter studies found statistically significant differences between treatment completers and non-completers on outcomes of re-offending, these results do not provide strong evidence of treatment effectiveness.

A recent systematic review of research on the R&R programme concluded that it was effective in Canada, the US and the UK, in community and institution settings for low and high risk offenders (Tong & Farrington, in press). Overall it reported a 27 per cent reduction in recidivism for treated offenders compared to controls, however, this review did not include the most recent research in the UK that found no treatment effect for the ETS and R&R programmes in prison (Falshaw *et al.*, 2003a, 2004; Cann *et al.*, 2003), which might have affected the size of the reduction reported, if not the conclusion.

Evaluations of Aggression Replacement Training have shown it is effective with young offenders in America (Goldstein & Glick, 2001). In addition, the evaluation of the CALM programme developed for Correctional Services Canada showed it was effective in reducing both violent and non-violent recidivism for high risk offenders in one study lacking methodological rigour (Dowden *et al.*, 1999). A slightly better designed evaluation of the South Australian Anger Management Programme in Western Australia found similar improvements in pre- and post-treatment psychometric tests for both the treatment group of 200 men and a group of waiting list controls. While participants who were worse off or highly motivated showed the most benefit, the treated group differed significantly from the comparison group only on measures of anger knowledge and readiness to change on the post-treatment measures (Howells *et al.*, 2002).

The evaluation of the Cognitive Self-Change Programme for violent offenders, has demonstrated promising, but inconclusive indications of effectiveness in reducing recidivism and particularly reconvictions for violent offences (Bush, 1995). More recently, a small-scale

(and weakly designed) study of a violence prevention project in New Zealand reported lower reconviction rates of 0.4 per cent in the follow-up period for all offenders who started the programme whether or not they had completed it (Polaschek & Dixon, 2001). One small-scale study conducted in Scotland, evaluated two programmes for domestically violent men and reported inconclusive but encouraging findings of reduced violence and reduced frequency of violence according to partners' reports (Dobash *et al.*, 1996).

Meta-analytic studies of international research on treatment programmes for sex offenders have produced mixed results (Mackenzie, 2002), however, a systematic review of the research concluded that sex offender treatment using cognitive-behavioural methods in community settings were effective while outcomes for prison-based programmes were less conclusive but promising (Mackenzie, 2002). Research that was not reported in that review continues the pattern of mixed results with some finding evidence of reduced sex offending (McGrath *et al.*, 1998; Looman *et al.*, 2000), others findings reductions in non-sex offences (Zgoba *et al.*, 2003) and others finding no evidence of effect on further general, sex or violent re-offending (Schweitzer & Dwyer, 2003).

Finally, Moral Reconciliation Therapy which focuses on increasing moral reasoning, has been listed amongst the few treatment programmes with sufficient robust evidence to be classed under the heading 'what works' in evidence-based crime prevention (Mackenzie, 2002).

Reviews of international literature have also found that conclusions about treatment programmes focused on anger management, victim awareness, living skills and different types of sex offenders, await sufficient robust evidence and rigorous evaluation of their effectiveness. At the same time, there have been no offending behaviour treatment programmes that have been sufficiently evidenced as interventions that 'do not work' to reduce re-offending.

Programme outcomes in England and Wales

The evidence base on offending behaviour programmes in England and Wales is still in the early stages of development, due mainly to insufficient time having elapsed for reconviction outcome studies to be completed²⁰. However, the results of outcome studies are beginning to emerge.

The findings from a limited number of reconviction outcome studies of cognitive-behavioural programmes (including the sex offender treatment programme) in the UK Prison Service and

²⁰ Reconviction rates two years after release from prison or completion of order are only available from the Offenders Index three years after the offender has been on the programme.

National Probation Service have shown some effectiveness with some offenders, but not all. Several studies that evaluated a few programmes prior to and after accreditation have been completed in both custody and the community, producing mixed outcomes. In addition to outcomes on effectiveness, this research also covers programme implementation and delivery, with a common finding of problems and shortfalls.

The remainder of this section outlines this evidence from higher quality studies on effectiveness (i.e. those that scored three or above on the Scientific Methods Scale for reconviction studies outlined in Table 3.12) in more detail and comments on findings for implementation. Lower quality studies are also included in this review. The lower quality studies have examined the effectiveness of offending behaviour programmes in prison and probation focusing on ETS and R&R, Think First, Think and Change, motoring offences programmes and acquisitive offenders. They have produced useful findings on programme completion rates and factors associated with completion, however, their conclusions on treatment effects and programme effectiveness are not validly drawn from their research design and thus they do not contribute to evidence of 'what works'. These studies are noted in the summary table at the end of this chapter and detailed in the Appendix. The results reported here are sectioned by programme type with pre-accredited and accredited programmes presented separately.

General offending behaviour programmes

Pre-accredited Enhanced Thinking Skills and Reasoning and Rehabilitation in prison

Friendship *et al.* (2002a) evaluation²¹ of the pre-accredited prison-based cognitive skills programmes Reasoning and Rehabilitation and Enhanced Thinking Skills in 30 prisons found a significant reduction in reconviction rate of 14 percentage points for medium to low risk offenders²² and 11 percentage points for medium to high risk offenders (see Table 3.1). For the low and high risk treated offenders there was a change in the expected direction although this difference was not significant. The results indicate that reconviction rates fell after participation in R&R and ETS programmes and that both programmes had a similar impact on reconviction rates.

21 See also Friendship *et al.*, 2003b.

22 The treatment group consisted of adult male offenders serving a custodial sentence for two or more years who had voluntarily participated in either R&R or ETS and the comparison group consisted of offenders who had not participated in such treatment. The groups were matched on a number of relevant risk factors including current offence, sentence length, age at discharge, year of discharge, number of previous convictions and probability of reconviction using the Offender Group Reconviction Scale (OGRS) (Taylor, 1999).

Table 3.1 *Pre-accredited ETS and R&R prison programmes (first study) – two-year reconviction rates*

Risk category ²³	Treatment group		Comparison group		% point difference
	%	(n)	%	(n)	
Low	5	(5)	8	(46)	3
Medium-low	18	(26)	32	(126)	14 **
Medium-high	43	(72)	54	(229)	11 *
High	75	(189)	80	(319)	5
Overall	35	(667)	43	(1801)	8

* p<.05.

** p<.005.

It is worth noting that although encouraging, the above results might be explained by differences between the treatment and comparison groups that were not measured or controlled in the research design (e.g. levels of motivation and offence-related needs that were not matched and that would result in a selection rather than a treatment effect).

Accredited ETS and R&R in prison

A second study of the two prison-based cognitive skills programmes after accreditation found no difference in the two-year reconviction rates for prisoners who had participated in accredited cognitive skills programmes between 1996 and 1998 and a matched comparison group²⁴ (see Table 3.2) (Falshaw, *et al.*, 2003a, 2004).

23 Using OGRS risk bands.

24 The comparison group consisted of 1,947 offenders who did not participate in treatment. The two groups were matched on ethnicity, sentence length, offence type and risk of reconviction using the Offender Group Reconviction Scale.

Table 3.2 Accredited ETS and R&R in prison (second study) – two-year reconviction rates

Risk category ²⁵	Treatment group		Comparison group	
	%	(n)	%	(n)
Low	5.2	(8)	5.4	(25)
Medium-low	21.7	(34)	24.6	(116)
Medium-high	52.4	(87)	46.8	(233)
High	73.4	(127)	75.0	(389)
Overall	38.1	(649)	38.0	(1,947)

Note: There were no significant differences.

The findings from this study might be explained by differences between the treatment and comparison group on dynamic risk factors that were not controlled or assessed (such as attitudes to offending and motivation to change and circumstances on release from prison).

A third evaluation of ETS and R&R programmes in custody following the same methodology (Cann *et al.*, 2003), found no differences in the one- and two-year reconviction rates between adult men or young offenders who started the programme and their matched comparison groups (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3 Accredited ETS and R&R prison programmes (third study) – one-year reconviction rates

	Treatment group – men		Comparison group – men		Treatment group – YOs		Comparison group – YOs	
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)
Reconvicted	18.1	(397)	19.9	(436)	33.6	(516)	35.5	(545)
Total n		2,195		2,195		1,534		1,534

Note: There were no significant differences.

The contrast between these findings and those in the previous evaluation of prison programmes delivered between 1992 and 1996 may merely reflect expected variation. This is consistent with the international experience of variable reduction rates found so far in the evaluation of prison-based cognitive skills programmes. The contrasting findings might also be explained by differences in programme delivery and implementation. Staff running the earlier programmes and the prisoners who participated in the first study may have been

²⁵ Risk of being reconvicted of any offence, within two years using OGRS.

more highly motivated. Programmes in the second study were rapidly expanded and this may have affected the quality of delivery. Thus the findings may be the results of evaluation failure, implementation failure, programme failure or a combination of the three.

ETS as part of Young Offender Institution Regime

In the evaluation of intensive regimes at Thorn Cross Young Offenders Institution, ETS was included alongside basic skills, vocational training, and community placement. This research found a significant drop of about ten per cent one year after discharge for the Thorn Cross group (Farrington, *et al.*, 2000)²⁶. Two years after release, however, there was no significant difference in the reconviction rates for the treated and comparison groups although the Thorn Cross group took longer to re-offend and committed significantly fewer crimes (see Table 3.4) (Farrington, *et al.*, 2002b).

Table 3.4 *ETS as part of Thorn Cross Young Offenders Institution – two year follow-up*

	Treatment group n = 175	Control group n = 127
Average no. of days between release and re-offending	228	177
Average no. of offences	3.5	5.1

Note: There were no significant differences.

Pre-accredited R&R in probation

An evaluation of the pre-accredited R&R programme was conducted in mid Glamorgan between 1991 and 1992. Also referred to as the STOP programme (Straight Thinking on Probation) (Raynor & Vanstone, 1997, 2001), the study found favourable differences between predicted and actual reconviction rates for each group but a higher reconviction rate of five percentage points in the actual rate between the treatment and 'other probation' comparison group at 12 months and at 24 months (see table 3.5)²⁷ adjusted to four percentage points after accounting for pseudo reconvictions. In addition, the research found differences in the seriousness of reconvictions for each of the follow-up periods for the groups compared with the treated group having less serious offences after 12 months.

26 The study compared a treatment group of 175 male offenders age from 18 to 21 recruited into the high intensity programme with a comparison group of 127 similarly aged males recruited to a military regime at the Military Corrective Training Centre at Colchester.

27 The comparison groups consisted of 548 offenders. Comparisons were made between treatment and comparison groups on predicted reconviction rates using the National Risk of Reconviction Predictor, based on static risk factors including age, and criminal record. This identified the comparison groups receiving custodial sentences as most similar to the treated group on predicted risk.

Table 3.5 One- and two-year reconviction rates for pre-accredited R&R/STOP programme treatment and comparison groups

Group n	12 month reconviction		24 month reconviction	
	%	(n)	%	(n)
Treatment group n=107	49	(52)	70	(75)
Other probation n = 100	44	(44)	65	(65)
Community service n = 194	35	(68)	53	(102)
Suspended prison n = 90	30	(27)	44	(40)
Immediate prison n = 82	45	(37)	57	(47)
Young Offender Institute n = 82	56	(46)	74	(61)
Combined custodials n = 164	51	(83)	66	(108)

The numbers included in this study are too small for tests of statistical significance to be meaningful and the results might be explained by other differences between the groups apart from participation in treatment. However, they can be read as generally supportive of an association between treatment and less serious re-offending in the short term.

Pre-accredited Think First in probation

Stewart-Ong *et al.* (2003) conducted an evaluation of pre-accredited Offence-Focused Problem-Solving Programme (also known as the Maguire programme and as Think First) in three probation areas (Greater Manchester, Teesside and Devon) between January 1997 and December 1998. As Table 3.6 shows, the research found an average of 22 percentage points difference in the *unexpected* direction between the treated offenders and comparison group offenders, i.e. the treatment group had reconviction rates *higher* than the comparison group²⁸.

28 The treatment group consisted of adult male offenders proposed for Think First as part of a community sentence. The comparison group consisted of adult male offenders proposed for the programme but sentenced to custody. The comparison group was matched to the treatment group on a number of relevant risk factors including age at first conviction, age at sentence and risk of re-offending using the Offender Group Reconviction Scale (OGRS2).

Table 3.6 *Pre-accredited offence-focused problem solving in the community – two-year reconviction rates*

Follow-up period ²⁹	Treatment group % (n)	Comparison group % (n)	% point difference in reconviction (<i>increase</i>)
6 months	44.8* (119)	24.6 (62)	20.2
12 months	69.7* (186)	45.4 (115)	24.3
18 months	78.7* (210)	56.2 (142)	22.5
24 months	84.1* (224)	59.7 (151)	24.4
Total n	267	254	

* p < .0001.

Although a fairly large sample size was used and the comparison and treatment groups were matched on relevant risk factors, the two groups differed significantly on several risk factors (i.e. number of previous custodial sentences, probation and combination orders and seriousness of offence). They also differ in the conditions under which they were followed up (for example, imprisoned group followed up two years on release from prison, and probation group followed up two years from start of sentence), which makes them not entirely comparable and allows for other plausible explanations of the results. The research, therefore, does not support reliable conclusions about the programme's effectiveness or ineffectiveness.

Accredited Think First in probation: a single area study

A single area study by Steele and Van Arendsen (2001) of the Think First programme in Merseyside probation area between September 2000 and September 2001 found differences in reconviction rates after 12 months but the study design and sample size were inadequate to reliably inform evidence-based practice. The comparison group's rate of reconviction was 8.5 per cent less than the treated group (i.e. the comparison group is reconvicted less) (see Table 3.7). It also found greater differences when analysis retained only those offenders (n = 36) within the Think First eligibility band using OGRS risk predictor³⁰.

29 Risk of being reconvicted of any offence, within two years using OGRS.

30 The comparison group consisted of offenders serving community-based sentences during the same time period. The comparison group was not matched to the treatment group but consisted of offenders selected to be within targeted risk levels for programme using OGRS risk assessment.

Table 3.7a Think First in Merseyside – one-year reconviction rates

Follow-up period ³¹	Treatment group		Comparison group		% point difference in reconviction (<i>increase</i>)
	%	(n)	%	(n)	
12 month	46	(34)	37.5	(15)	8.5
Total n		74		40	

A few aspects of this study point to the need for cautious interpretation of the results. First, the numbers included were too small for analysis of statistical significance to be meaningful. Secondly, the treatment and comparison groups were not matched and the results may therefore be explained by differences between the groups other than effects (or non-effects) of treatment (for example, level of risk, need, motivation, history and/or maturation).

Accredited ETS, R&R, Think First, Priestley One-to-One and ASRO in probation

A recent report provides results from an evaluation of general offending behaviour pathfinder programmes and the Addressing Substance Related Offending programme (ASRO), across twenty-four probation areas between January 2000 and December 2001. This research found higher rates of reconviction for offenders given a programme order compared to a matched group without a programme order in a follow-up period of 18 months (see Table 3.7b) (Hollin *et al.*, 2004). After differences in risk found between the two groups were statistically controlled, the higher reconviction outcome for programme-ordered offenders remained. The authors reported this difference as a 'null finding' (p16), although it was a statistically significant difference between the groups. The outcome might best be explained as the result of implementation failure evidenced by the low completion rate and relatively low proportion of appropriately targeted offenders.

This research also found lower rates of reconviction for offenders who completed a programme and higher rates for offenders who did not complete a programme, compared to reconviction rates for offenders in the comparison group. These findings were emphasised by the authors as evidence of a 'treatment effect'. The interpretation of the findings should be treated with caution given the strong indications of implementation failure and weaknesses in the research design, specifically, the absence of a reliable 'counterfactual', that is, a comparison group that could reliably demonstrate what would have happened to the offenders in the absence of the programme order. Although the research used statistical control of static risk factors, it was unable to discount other plausible explanations of the outcomes arising from dynamic factors, in particular, the effect of selection, in which the

31 Risk of being reconvicted of any offence, within two years using OGRS.

offenders who completed the programme may have been those less likely to re-offend in any event because they had fewer offence-related needs or were more motivated to change.

Table 3.7b *ETS, R&R, Think First, One-to-One and ASRO – reconviction rates at 18 months*

	Offenders with programme orders (n)	Offenders without a programme order (n)
Reconvicted	70% (1,558)	58% (1,532)
Not reconvicted	30% (672)	42% (1,113)
Total number of cases	2,230	2,645

Offence-specific programmes

In addition to evaluations of general offending behaviour programmes, there have been a number of studies of offence-specific programmes, including sex offender treatment programmes and motoring offence programmes in England and Wales.

Pre-accredited Sex Offender Treatment in prison

Friendship *et al.* (2003c) examined the effectiveness of a national Sex Offender Treatment Programme run in 23 prisons in England and Wales between 1992 and 1994, prior to accreditation. As Table 3.8 shows, this study found a significant reduction in reconviction when sex offence and violent reconviction rates within two years of release were combined. Overall, this resulted in a 3.5 percentage point reduction in reconviction for sex offence or violent reconvictions. However, whilst the treatment group had lower two-year reconviction rates than the comparison group for a further sex offence (except for the high risk group) and also for any offence type, these differences were not statistically significant³².

32 This study examined 647 adult male sex offenders serving a custodial sentence of four years or more for a sex offence who had voluntarily participated in an SOTP and had been discharged from prison for two or more years. Comparisons were made with 1,910 adult male sex offenders with the same sentence length who were discharged during the same period but who had not participated in the programme. The results are presented by level of risk using the Static-99 risk assessment schedule (Hanson and Thornton, 2000).

Table 3.8 Pre-accredited SOTP in prison – two-year reconviction rates

Risk category ³³	Sexual reconviction		Violent or sex reconviction		Any reconviction							
	Treated	Comp	Treated	Comp	Treated	Comp						
	group	group	group	group	group	group						
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)				
Low	1.1	(3)	1.2	(12)	1.9	(5)	2.6	(25)	5.7	(15)	6.7	(65)
Medium-low	1.3	(3)	3.4	(22)	2.7	** (6)	12.7	(83)	13.3	(30)	25.3	(166)
Medium-high	2.8	(3)	5.2	(12)	5.5	* (6)	13.5	(31)	21.1	(23)	27.1	(62)
High	16.0	(8)	14.0	(8)	26.0	(13)	28.1	(16)	36.0	(18)	38.6	(22)
Overall	2.6	(17)	2.8	(54)	4.6	** (30)	8.1	(155)	13.3	(86)	16.5	(315)

* p < .05.

** p < .01.

Preliminary indications are, therefore, that the Sex Offender Treatment Programme is having an impact on reconvictions for sex or violent offences. However, it is important to recognise that sex offenders (in the absence of any intervention) are reconvicted for a sex offence at a very low rate. It is worth supplementing sex offence reconviction data with non-official data as this is closer to measuring re-offending than reconviction alone.

Sex offender treatment in probation

Evaluation results of the West Midlands SOTP in the community between January 1995 and June 1996 have also been reported (Allam, 1998). The research showed significant reductions in reconviction ranging from 7.4 to 24 percentage points for the treated child sex abusers and non-significant reductions in reconviction for treated rapists and exhibitionists (see Table 3.9)³⁴. The sample sizes for two of the treated groups were too small for tests of statistical significance to be meaningful. The research concluded that sex offenders who participated in community-based sex offender treatment were less likely to be convicted of sex, violent or other offences than untreated sex offenders. However, the small sample size in the study suggests that the findings should be viewed with caution.

³³ Risk of being reconvicted of any offence, within two years using Static-99 (Hanson and Thornton, 2000).

³⁴ This study compared 155 adult male sex offenders (including child sex abusers, rapists and exhibitionists) who had been on the programme with 74 offenders with similar groupings.

Table 3.9 West Midlands SOTP – two-year reconviction rates

Offender-type	Sexual recon		Violent recon		Other recon		Any recon	
	Treated group	Comp group	Treated group	Comp group	Treated group	Comp group	Treated group	Comp group
%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Child sex abusers n=126	3.2 *	10.6	2.4 *	12.8	5.7 *	27.7	8.1 *	31.9
Rapists n = 13	7.7	26.3	7.7	26.3	15.4	47.4	23.1	57.9
Exhibitionists n = 16	18.8	37.5	12.5	37.5	31.3	62.6	43.8	62.5

* p<0.05 level.

Motoring offence programmes in probation

A small-scale evaluation of the Drink Impaired Drivers programme, which is designed to reduce risk of future drink-related driving offences through cognitive-behavioural work and education, in the South Yorkshire Probation Area in 1997, found a reduction of two percentage points for drink-related offences for the treatment group compared with a group who received custodial sentences (see Table 3.10) (Sugg, 2000b).

Table 3.10 Drink Impaired Drivers programme – one- and two-year reconviction rates

	Treated group		Custodial comparison group		Other disposals comparison group		% point difference
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	
Reconvicted	21	(21)	21	(12)	20	(9)	1
Reconvicted for drink-related offence	16	(16)	14	(8)	17	(8)	2
Total n		100		56		45	

Aggression Replacement Training in probation

The aggression replacement therapy programme is designed to reduce aggressive behaviour by improving social skills, anger management and moral reasoning. A study of the ART programme by Sugg (2000a) in Wiltshire between 1996 and 1999, pre-accreditation, found an overall reduction in reconviction rate of 9.2 percentage points for the treatment group versus a matched comparison group (see Table 3.11)³⁵.

³⁵ The comparison group consisted of offenders who had similar community penalties in Wiltshire during the same period. The comparison group was matched to the treatment group on OGRS2 risk bands (Taylor, 1999).

Table 3.11 ART in probation – one-year reconviction rates

	Treatment group		Comparison group		% point difference
	(n = 153)		(n = 153)		
	%	(n)	%	(n)	
Percentage reconvicted	32	(49)	41.2	(63)	9.2

Several aspects of these two studies point to the need for cautious interpretation of the results. First, the numbers included were too small for meaningful analysis of significance. Secondly, the comparison groups were only weakly matched on risk, and thus the findings may be explained by pre-existing differences between the groups (for example, need and readiness for treatment) or factors other than the treatment itself.

Programmes for acquisitive offenders

One study examined the effect of cognitive skills programmes (i.e. ETS and R&R) on acquisitive offenders and found improvement in the pre- and post-treatment psychometric test scores similar to that found with non-acquisitive offenders. The study concluded that these programmes were as effective with acquisitive offenders as they were for non-acquisitive offenders but that highly acquisitive offenders might benefit from something else in addition (Wilson *et al.*, 2003). While the findings provide an interesting comparison by offence type, they do not provide reliable evidence of treatment effects for these programmes for any of the groups examined. Moreover, the sample was drawn from the same population of programme participants included in the reconviction studies that found mixed results on treatment effectiveness. Thus, the conclusions on treatment effects are not valid.

Offender-specific programmes

The positive effects of adherence to the principles of effective treatment (i.e. risk, needs, responsivity) have been found for younger offenders, ethnic minority and ethnic majority groups, in community and institutional corrections and in a variety of types of programmes (Dowden & Andrews, 1999). This suggests that programmes designed with adult men in mind may also be suitable for younger offenders and offenders with different cultural backgrounds.

In summarising conclusions from meta-analytic reviews, McGuire (2002b) reported that: use of structured cognitive-behavioural programmes focused on risk factors for re-offending are the methods most reliably effective with adult offenders. Effect sizes with adults tend to be lower than those obtained with juvenile offender samples. Effect sizes for acquisitive crimes have generally been lower than those for personal crimes (i.e. violent and sexual). Larger effect sizes are usually obtained from work with more persistent offenders.

More careful study is needed of the kinds of variations that might need to be made in programmes to accommodate diversity among participants in age, gender, ethnicity or other cultural differences as well as variation in criminogenic needs.

Programmes in England and Wales tend to be targeted more at specific types of offences than at specific types of offenders, with a few exceptions.

The National Probation Service has developed programmes specifically for minority ethnic offenders in the form of additional modules for general offending behaviour programmes, adapted Drink Impaired Drivers programme and groups run with exclusive minority ethnic offenders membership. Research on the implementation of these programmes found that they were not sufficiently ready for outcome studies for various reasons (Stephens *et al.*, 2004).

The National Probation Service has also developed a specialist programme for female offenders convicted of acquisitive offences, which was accredited in October 2003 by the Correctional Services Accreditation Panel. A report on the pilot phase of implementation has been produced (Lovbakke & Homes, 2004), and an evaluation of it in the longer term will constitute a unique study of a female-specific offending behaviour programme.

Overall programme outcomes

The studies reported above show mixed outcomes for offending behaviour programmes in England and Wales Correctional Services. They suggest that the evidence on the effectiveness of these programmes is inconclusive overall. A different picture emerges, however, whenever research focuses attention on those who actually complete a programme compared to those who do not.

Analysis of outcomes for completers and non-completers in programmes (and other interventions) in both international and national research produces a more favourable pattern of findings. The pattern typically shows that completers do better than non-starters, non-completers and comparison groups, and that those who start and fail to complete do

much worse than the other groups (see, for example, Borduin *et al.*, 1995; Polaschek & Dixon 2001; Raynor & Vanstone 2001; Feilzer *et al.*, 2002; Cann *et al.*, 2003; Van Voorhis *et al.*, 2004; Hollin *et al.*, 2004). While some argue that these findings provide a better test of the programme theory and a better indicator of the programme's effectiveness (Hollin *et al.*, 2004), others point out that such analysis does not provide the best evaluation of policy (Sherman, 2003), which has outcomes other than those seen for completers.

Moreover, analysis by completion status does not meet the required design for drawing cause and effect conclusions because it does not sufficiently control for other plausible explanations of the outcomes (Shadish *et al.*, 2002). The findings may be interpreted as selection effects, that is, that the programme simply served to sort those who would do well anyway from those who would not, regardless of the treatment. The difficulty lies in the inability of the analysis (and the research design) to demonstrate the 'counterfactual', that is, what would have happened in the absence of the programme to the offenders who completed or dropped out?

Arguably, both types of analysis should be considered in programme and policy evaluation, however, both types of analysis are also based on an assumption that the programme or intervention has been delivered as intended and that the evaluation was not undermined by implementation failure. The research suggests that this assumption is not always met.

Implementing interventions effectively

The evidence suggests that implementation problems are likely to have affected the success of offending behaviour programmes in reducing re-offending. For example, a recent qualitative study of prison-based ETS and R&R found that issues of implementation, timing of participation in sentence, motivation and resettlement arrangements were all important considerations in programme outcomes (Clarke *et al.*, 2004). Programme participants and staff suggested that: long waiting lists affected offenders' motivation; there was a need for post-programme booster work prior to release; and institutional support for the programmes was important in enhancing the impact of programmes and could be strengthened by staff awareness training and role-model training for non-programmes.

Research on offending behaviour programmes has highlighted three main problems in delivering these interventions effectively, including:

- the rapid expansion of programmes;
- targeting programmes ineffectively;
- higher than expected attrition rates (i.e. offenders not starting or not completing programmes).

Although there is little published evidence on the effect of large-scale expansion on the effectiveness of programmes, speculation among experts suggests that treatment quality might be compromised (Gendreau *et al.*, 1999). The monitoring of programme quality is thought to be particularly important at a local level because of the many different features of implementation that can influence overall programme effects, such as characteristics of implementer, environment and the target population (Elliott *et al.*, 2001)

Offending behaviour programmes in prison and probation underwent rapid expansion which may have affected the quality of implementation and programme delivery. For example, in the Prison Service, expansion of ETS and R&R went from 30 sites and 746 completions in 1995/96 to 130 sites and 6,383 completions in 2002/03. The equivalent targets for probation tripled in three years, from 10,000 to 30,000 completions between 2001/02 and 2003/04 (although these targets were subsequently reduced to 12,000 in 2002/03 and 15,000 in 2003/04).

Cognitive skills programmes are expected to produce the greatest impact for medium risk offenders (Andrews *et al.*, 1990b). There is some evidence that programmes may not be targeting offenders as intended. For example, the proportion of high risk offenders decreased over the three prison-based ETS and R&R studies and the proportion of medium risk offenders increased. The proportion within the low risk group also increased, peaking in the second evaluation. This suggests a shift in programme targeting, initially to lower risk offenders and more recently to medium risk offenders. Similarly, the evaluation of the Think First programme in the community found that only 37 per cent of offenders targeted for the programme fell within the recommended range of OGRS risk scores (Ong *et al.*, 2003). The study by Hollin *et al.* (2004) of programmes delivered between 2000 and 2001 reported that 54 per cent of targeted offenders were of an appropriate level of risk.

Many Prison and Probation Service interventions have suffered higher than expected attrition rates. For example, approximately ten per cent of offenders failed to complete prison-based ETS and R&R (Cann *et al.*, 2003). Forty-one per cent of these left through their own choice. Completion rates for community-based offending behaviour programmes have been even lower. For example, Stewart-Ong *et al.* (2003) found 28 per cent of offenders completed Think First, and that attrition tended to occur early during the programme. On average, non-completers

attended less than a quarter of the core programme and half completed fewer than four sessions. Just over a third of non-starters and non-completers were re-allocated to new programmes following non-attendance. Other community-based research has reported completion rates of 55 per cent (Raynor & Vanstone, 1997); 73 per cent (Sugg, 2000a); 45 per cent (Belton, 2002); 39 per cent (Steele & Van Arendsen, 2001) and 35 per cent (Hollin *et al.*, 2004).

Completion rates are strongly linked to motivation. The study by Clarke *et al.* 2004, quoted above, suggested that not all offenders who started prison-based offending behaviour programmes were equally motivated to change. An earlier study by Stewart-Ong *et al.* (2003) found that attendance at pre-group sessions was associated with increased completion rates. The most important elements of the pre-group sessions appeared to be: talking about the programme content; trying to solve barriers to attendance (for example, transport, severe problems with accommodation, drug abuse); examining how Think First related to the overall supervision period; and developing offenders' motivation.

Evidence of implementation difficulties also comes from an evaluation of the literacy demands of general offending behaviour programmes, which showed a large mismatch between literacy skills demanded by programmes and the basic skills of some offenders (Davies *et al.*, 2004). The Home Office has developed an action plan to address these issues and has produced an effective practice guide for offending behaviour programmes in probation (Home Office, 2002c).

UK programme evaluations in progress

Whilst there is a growing evidence base for UK offending behaviour programmes, much is still to be learnt about their effectiveness in the British context, particularly in the community setting. A large-scale evaluation is expected to be available in 2005 on cost-effectiveness and reconviction outcomes of Probation Service pathfinder programmes. It is expected to include an outcome evaluation of the following programmes: Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme, ETS, R&R, Think First, One-To-One, ART, Drink Impaired Driver, Community Sex Offender Group Programme and Thames Valley Sex Offender Programme (Hollin *et al.*, 2002).

A study of treatment change in the Prison Service is currently being planned and will examine the associations between offender characteristics, prison factors and short-term outcomes for cognitive skills programmes, using psychometric tests and measures of prison behaviour. In the longer term, findings from this research will be linked to reconviction outcomes.

In 2003, both the Prison and Probation Services in England and Wales implemented the cognitive skills booster programme for offenders who had previously completed ETS, R&R or Think First. Longer-term evaluation of this programme's effectiveness using rigorous design should provide findings of any added value contributed to the original programme outcomes.

RDS-NOMS Research and Evaluation section are seeking to make more use of randomised control trial (level 5 designs) to evaluate single interventions, as part of a larger programme of work on improving standards of outcome studies within NOMS.

Conclusion

International evidence from systematic reviews of effective practice on reducing re-offending tends to support the use of cognitive-behavioural offending behaviour programmes and interventions with offenders. In the UK, some research has demonstrated the effectiveness of programme work with some offenders in both prison and community-based settings while other research has not. There is still much to be learned about 'what works' with whom and why.

Current evidence in the UK is predominantly based on quasi-experimental or non-experimental evaluation studies, which makes it difficult to attribute the outcomes to the effects of the treatment or intervention. More often than not, the results can be attributed to selection or other effects if not implementation failure. Outcome studies therefore should be based on more effective research design. At the same time, sufficient focus should be placed on implementation to ensure that programmes are delivered as intended so that theory failure and implementation failure do not confound evaluation of effectiveness.

Table 3.12 'What works' evidence: offending behaviour programmes

Study	Intervention	Rating	Key findings	Sample sizes	Critical comments
Cann <i>et al.</i> (2003), England and Wales	Accredited Enhanced Thinking Skills (ETS) and Reasoning & Rehabilitation (R&R) Prison	4	No differences in the one- and two-year rates between adult men or young offenders who started a programme and an individually matched comparison group. Significantly lower reconviction rate for men and young offenders who completed after one year but not two.	Treatment men: 2,195 Treatment YO: 1,534 Control men: 2,195 Control YO: 1,534	No random assignment/ no control of dynamic factors.
Falshaw <i>et al.</i> (2003a, 2004), England and Wales	Accredited ETS and R&R Prison	4	No significant differences in the two-year reconviction rates for adult male prisoners who had participated in cognitive skills programmes and individually matched comparison group who had not.	Treatment: 649 Control: 1,947	No random assignment/ no control of dynamic factors.
Friendship <i>et al.</i> (2002b, 2003b), England and Wales	Pre-accredited ETS and R&R Prison	4	Significantly lower reconviction rate of 14 percentage points for medium-low risk and 11 percentage points for medium-high risk adult male offenders compared to individually matched control group.	Treatment: 667 Control: 1,801	No random assignment/ no control of dynamic factors.
Friendship <i>et al.</i> (2003c, 2003d), England and Wales	Pre-accredited Sex Offender Treatment (SOTP) Prison	3	Significant lower reconviction rate of 3.5 percentage points in two-year reconviction rates for sexual or violent offences for treatment group compared to individually matched control group.	Treatment: 647 Control: 1,910	No random assignment/ no control of dynamic factors.

Study	Intervention	Rating	Key findings	Sample sizes	Critical comments
Allam (1998), England and Wales	Pre-accredited SOTP Probation	3	Significantly lower reconviction rates of 8.1 percentage points for child sex abusers compared to control group followed up for 1 to 3 years.	Treatment: 155 Control: 74	Weakly matched comparison group and small sample.
Dobash <i>et al.</i> (1996), Scotland	Two programmes for domestic violence Probation	3	Significantly lower rates in frequency of violence and further violence for programme group at 12-month follow-up compared to control groups, based on partner's reports.	Treated: 51 Control: 71	Weakly matched comparison groups and small sample.
Farrington <i>et al.</i> (2002b), England and Wales	ETS as part of intensive regime for Yo Prison	3	Significantly lower rates by 10 percentage points for experimental group after one year but not after two when compared to control group. Experimental group took longer to re-offend and committed significantly fewer crimes after two years.	Treatment: 175 Control: 127	Weakly matched comparison group and small sample.
Hollin <i>et al.</i> , (2004), England and Wales	ETS, R&R, Think First, One2One, Addressing Substance-Related Offending Probation	3	Significantly higher reconviction rates of 12 percentage points for offenders with a programme order compared to similar group without programme orders after 18 months. Significantly lower rates for completers and higher rates for non-completers.	Treatment: 2,230 Control: 2,645	Unmatched comparison group.
Raynor and Vanstone (2001), England and Wales	Pre-accredited R&R Probation	3	Lower reconviction rate for community-sentenced treatment group compared to prison-sentenced group after 1 year but not 2. Lower rates for completers.	Treatment: 107 Control: 82	Weakly matched comparison groups and small samples.

Study	Intervention	Rating	Key findings	Sample sizes	Critical comments
Steele and Van Arendsen, (2001), England and Wales	Think First Probation	3	Higher reconviction rate after 1 year for treatment group of adult men and women compared to non-treatment group serving community sentence in same period.	Treatment: 74 adult men and women Control: 40	Weakly matched comparison group and small sample.
Stewart-Ong <i>et al.</i> (2003), England and Wales	Pre-accredited Think First Probation	3	Significantly higher 2 year reconviction rate of 24 percentage points for adult males on community-based programme compared to adult males sentenced to custody without programme.	Treatment: 267; Control: 254	Weakly matched comparison group.
Sugg (2000a), England and Wales	Aggression Replacement Training (ART) Probation	3	Lower rate of 9.2 percentage points for treatment group compared to non-treatment group with similar community penalties. Lower rates for completers.	Treatment: 153 Control: 153	Weakly matched comparison group and small sample.
Sugg (2000b), England and Wales	Drink Impaired Drivers (DID) Probation	3	Lower rate of 2 percentage points in reconvictions for drink-related offences for treatment group compared to custodial sentence group and lower rate of 1 percentage point compared to other disposals.	Treatment: 100 Comparison: 101	Weakly matched comparison group and small sample.
Belton (2002), England and Wales	Think First Probation	2	Significant differences in actual and predicted reconviction rates between treatment completers and non-completers of 22 percentage points.	Treatment: 117 Control: none	No control group. No control of dynamic factors in predictor.

Study	Intervention	Rating	Key findings	Sample sizes	Critical comments
Haslewood-Pocksik and Roberts (2003), England and Wales	Motoring offending projects Probation	2	Lower reconviction rate by 1.6 percentage points compared to predicted rates.	Treatment: 198 Control: none	No control group. No control of dynamic factors in predictor.
Sugg (1998), England and Wales	Motoring projects Probation	2	Lower reconviction rates by 6 percentage points for offenders aged over 21 and higher rates by 9 percentage points for offenders under 21-years-old compared to predicted rates.	Treatment: 1,087 Control: none	No control group. No control of dynamic factors in predictor.
Beech <i>et al.</i> (2001), England and Wales	SOTP Probation	1	Ten per cent of men classified as 'benefiting from' treatment reconvicted compared with 23 per cent of men classed as 'unresponsive' to treatment.	Treatment group: 53 Control: none	No control group.
Blud <i>et al.</i> (2003), England and Wales	ETS and R&R Prison	1	Significant differences between pre- and post-treatment psychometric test scores.	Treatment: 5,255 Control: none.	No control group.
Ong <i>et al.</i> (2003), England and Wales	Accredited Think First Probation	1	Significant differences in reconviction rates between treatment completers, non-starters and non-completers ranging from 13 to 33 percentage points.	Treatment: 492 Control: none	No control group.
Wilson <i>et al.</i> (2003), England and Wales	ETS and R&R with acquisitive offenders Prison	1	Significant differences between pre- and post-treatment psychometric test scores and behavioural checklist measures for all three groups.	Treatment group: 2,537 non-acquisitives; 2,427 medium; and 3,339 high acquisitives Control: none	No control group.

4 **Alternative approaches to integrating offenders into the community**

Robin Elliott-Marshall, Malcolm Ramsay and Duncan Stewart

Introduction

This chapter provides a broad-based overview of issues and reconviction/outcome studies bearing on the integration of prisoners and probationers into the community. The focus is on 'alternative approaches' to integrating offenders as opposed to the offending behaviour programmes reviewed in the previous chapter. This chapter considers the scope for five types of intervention, and the evidence for their effectiveness. The five types of intervention concern employment, education, accommodation, drugs, and mental health. It is sensible to state at the outset that there is only limited evidence on the effectiveness of these interventions, perhaps particularly where probation is concerned. With interventions geared to prisoners there is a much more extensive North American literature to draw upon, but it should not be assumed that the same results would be replicated in this country. At least to some extent prisoners face different issues from those offenders sentenced to community penalties. Integration is inevitably more complex when someone has been removed from his/her normal social context by being sent to prison although, conversely, prison can also provide opportunities to address the roots of prisoners' offending.

Successful integration may not be exactly the same as refraining from crime, but it is often measured by the absence of one or more of the three different outcome indicators: re-offending, reconviction and re-imprisonment. It was noted in Chapter 2 that there is some evidence that delivery in a community setting might be more effective than institutional settings. With prisoners, as discussed below, there is a vital need to supplement any interventions delivered in prison with aftercare, or, indeed, to sustain active throughcare from initial reception into prison through to release from custody and then back in the community.

Penal and probation practice in England and Wales

Chapter 1 described changes in sentencing over time which have directly affected penal policy in England and Wales. One obvious indicator of the change in penal policy is the level of the prison population. The number of male prisoners, which was relatively stable for the first half of the twentieth century, has increased steadily and substantially since then. Much the same is true of the number of male prisoners relative to the total population of

England and Wales, over the same period. The number of female prisoners, both absolutely and relative to the wider population, dropped more dramatically in the early part of the century, and only increased substantially in the 1990s.

The international evidence is relevant. First, as Chapter 1 suggested, there is not a straightforward link between the use of custody and crime levels. Secondly, some countries or jurisdictions have managed to bring down their prison populations even in the face of increases in crime; sometimes this has been achieved by focusing strongly on resettlement (Tonry, 2002). In particular, one route to reduction of the prison population is through curtailing short sentences of less than a year in which it is difficult to deliver interventions likely to promote resettlement and rehabilitation (Tonry, 2002). However, under the Custody Plus provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 2003, there will be a new emphasis on starting to deliver interventions to relatively short-term prisoners while they are in custody, and then on continuing with these activities back in the community.

Just as the use of custody has increased, so too have community penalties. The evidence discussed in Chapter 1 suggests that some offenders who would have previously received financial penalties now receive community sentences. As well as dealing with low risk offenders who may previously have received fines, probation staff arguably face special challenges in encouraging and enforcing attendance and compliance of offenders in the community in the face of greater competing interests and demands than the prison environment may offer and without the structure to their lives that prison imposes. It is not yet clear to what extent interventions in the community will be affected by the introduction of the generic community sentence under the Criminal Justice Act 2003, or by the advent of NOMS. However, the evidence reported in Chapter 2 suggests that many offenders on community penalties are marginalised members of society, not enjoying the same benefits of education, employment, accommodation and health that many take for granted.

Evidence of what does/does not work

The integration of prisoners into the community is broadly defined here. The process begins with the assessment of prisoners' needs on reception, or even prior to that point, and includes interventions or support provided during custody, and assistance provided to prisoners in finding employment and accommodation near the time of release. Support for prisoners after release is currently less common although, as mentioned above, this is set to change. To some degree, this reflects the large number of prisoners who are sentenced to

less than 12 months (around two-thirds of adult male receptions). These prisoners are not subject to statutory probation supervision after release, and opportunities for further intervention are consequently reduced.

A growing body of research evidence suggests that prison-based interventions targeted on the particular risks and needs of individual offenders can have an impact (see Chapter 3, which focuses on OBPs). Reviews of correctional services suggest that a broader or more multi-modal approach, going beyond any individual intervention, is 'what works' best in reducing re-offending (Lipsey, 1995; Gaes *et al.*, 1999; McGuire, 2002a).

For offenders in the community, supervision plans will be drawn up and, in principal, interventions will be targeted according to needs, within the scope of the community order. With the development of OASys, the identification of needs and the planning process should be more systematic: the intention is that probation case managers should update their OASys assessments as the order progresses to record development and review risks and priorities as appropriate. However, implementation of OASys is still continuing and it is not yet clear how well it is being used. As for custodial sentences, there may not always be scope in the time allotted to address all the offenders' needs sequentially; multi-modal interventions offer the prospect that work on several fronts could be tackled simultaneously, with the potential to achieve more than the traditional 'linear' approach.

Employment

Employment is often seen as playing a vital part in social integration, and thus in reducing re-offending (SEU, 2002). While prisons run a variety of workshops and employment schemes, the modest number of prisoners accessing them may limit their effectiveness. For example, the 2001 Resettlement Survey of prisoners awaiting discharge (Niven & Olagundoye, 2002) found that only 20 per cent who had actively sought employment or training on release reported receiving some form of help in this endeavour. The majority of those who did not receive help looking for a job or a training course would have liked to have received some. Niven and Olagundoye also showed that only 38 per cent of prisoners took part in prison workshops.

The evidence of the impact of employment and training schemes on prisoners' job prospects is, however, mixed (MacKenzie, 2002). The 2001 Resettlement Survey found that even when prisoners had attended job clubs, education classes, prison workshops or vocational training whilst in custody, less than a third had a job arranged for them when they were released (Niven & Olagundoye, 2002). Research by Hamlyn and Lewis (2000), focusing on

female prisoners' work and training in custody and on release, found little relationship between work experience/skills developed in prison and jobs obtained post-release. Any new skills acquired in prison were generally not found by respondents to be transferable to the outside workplace. Tailoring employment interventions to the local job market and involving local employers are important, as is ensuring that post-release appointments are in place before prisoners are released (Webster *et al.*, 2001).

However, there is some evidence that participation in some work-related activities during custody can benefit prisoners. For example, Lipsey's (1995) meta-analysis of nearly 400 studies of juvenile offender programmes found that employment-focused prison programmes had a greater impact on recidivism than other types of intervention. In their study of the Post-Release Employment Project (PREP), Saylor and Gaes (1997) evaluated the impact of prison work and vocational and apprenticeship training on post-prison rates of employment and offending. The study attempted to control for selection bias by using a propensity score matching procedure. A comparison group of subjects were matched to the study group on the basis of factors predictive of participation in the scheme and a range of demographic and background variables. The study group was 35 per cent less likely than the comparison group to violate the terms of their supervision or to be re-arrested during the first 12 months after release. During the same period, the study group was 14 per cent more likely to be employed. Longer-term outcomes (between 8 and 12 years after release) showed that those who had undertaken prison work or had participated in vocational or apprenticeship training were less likely to have returned to prison.

Although the Probation Service in England and Wales has had a long history of employment-related work, there is little evidence about how effective these interventions can be. This may in part be related to the great variation in practice between areas. There is also little evidence of systematic targeting according to need. An inspection of seven areas in 2003 (HMIP, 2004) found that there was no evidence of greater provision for unemployed probationers, suggesting that this might be due to sequencing other interventions before employment work.

There are few published evaluations of probation-led initiatives and even fewer good quality evaluations. One report of evaluations of eight projects and agencies aimed at addressing offenders' employment needs (Downes, 1993) suggested that some schemes had good results – for example one workshop in Nottingham was cited as having 56 per cent two-year reconvictions compared to 67 per cent predicted. However, sample sizes were not reported and no mention was made of any comparison groups, raising doubts about the robustness and the validity of the findings.

Similarly, Roberts *et al.* (1997) evaluated seven initiatives aimed at helping offenders on particular community orders into training or employment. The initiatives ran for at least six months with some focusing on advice and guidance, and others on providing training. The evaluation reported positive outcomes (obtaining qualifications or entering further education, training or employment) in many cases but did not include control or comparison groups, nor examine impact on reconvictions.

Bridges' (1998) study is a little more robust. Among 480 offenders who were unemployed at the start of supervision, double the rate of positive outcomes (finding work) were found for those with an intervention against those without (40% against 20%). However, this may be related to differences between the two samples, and the study did not examine the impact on re-offending.

More recently an evaluation by Sarno *et al.* (2000), of two probation employment schemes, found that 16- to 25-year-old offenders who attended an ASSET³⁶ programme had a lower one-year reconviction rate (43%) than those referred to the project who did not attend (56%). Interestingly, participants were slower to re-offend than non-attenders. Although it is possible that these findings were due to selection effects, this does suggest that it may be useful to consider delays in reconvictions alongside other measures (such as frequency and severity) in future studies. Comparisons were also drawn with offenders "who will have received a normal dose of ETE advice in a similar borough" but the number of offenders in that comparison group (n=26) was too low to draw any statistically significant conclusions. However, the authors themselves stated that their comparison groups were insufficiently robust to draw firm conclusions and noted that what appeared to be a programme effect could actually have been a selection effect.

Even with the larger literature from North America, most evaluations of employment interventions for offenders have focused on custodial programmes. The only recent systematic review of interventions in a community setting which could be identified (Visher *et al.*, 2003) suggests that employment programmes for ex-offenders do not reduce recidivism. This review examined eight randomised control trials, which were assessed as sufficiently robust, all from the US, and the authors acknowledged that "the RCT literature on this question is quite small and quite dated".

A narrative review of the available literature on employment programmes (both prison and community-based, in the UK), by Webster *et al.* (2001, p.19), found that "help is rarely targeted at those at higher risk of offending, although there is some evidence to suggest

36 ASSET is the Youth Justice Board's assessment tool for juvenile offenders.

that, as with other interventions, these are the ones who benefit most". Perhaps it should not be surprising, therefore, if those programmes piloted to date have failed to demonstrate significant reductions in reconvictions.

Education

Education programmes may also improve offenders' prospects by enhancing their employability. There is some North American evidence that basic skills training can contribute to a reduction in re-offending. Porporino and Robinson (1992) found lower rates of re-imprisonment among offenders who had completed an adult basic education programme while in prison (30%), compared to those who had been released before completion of a programme (36%) and those who had dropped out (42%). Group comparisons suggested that the programme graduates were lower risk offenders, but this did not account for the observed link between completing the programme and lower rates of re-imprisonment. Hollin and Palmer's review (1995) found mixed evidence for the effectiveness of prison education programmes, but suggested that they may be of greatest benefit to prisoners with a higher risk of re-offending.

Importantly, the duration of involvement in training activities may be more important than enrolment in programmes *per se*. Adams *et al.* (1994) compared prisoners who participated in an academic/vocational training programme with a sample that had not received the intervention. There were no differences in re-imprisonment rates between participants and non-participants in the programme. However, prisoners who spent more time in academic programmes (at least 300 hours) and vocational programmes (at least 200 hours) were less likely to be re-imprisoned after release than those with less intensive involvement. The benefits of greater participation were most evident among prisoners with the lowest level of academic achievement.

Basic skills assessment and provision for offenders on community sentences has had a patchy history. For example, Davies *et al.* (1997) found there was a lack of training and understanding of the importance of basic skills in most probation areas; assessment was *ad hoc* and unsystematic in most areas; and there was great variation in how much support was available. A basic skills pathfinder was established under the Crime Reduction Programme, and while few offenders received basic skills tuition as a result, the pathfinder demonstrated the feasibility of screening for basic skills at Pre-Sentence Report stage (McMahon *et al.*, 2004). However, there is little or no evidence that examines the impact of probation basic skills programmes on recidivism.

Accommodation

Although it is possible to obtain employment without having accommodation, it is obviously helpful to have somewhere suitable to live. The 2001 Resettlement Survey showed that among prisoners with an address on release, 31 per cent had paid work arranged compared with only nine per cent of those who had not found somewhere to live on release. Overall, approximately a third of prisoners interviewed close to their release did not have anywhere to live after leaving prison (Niven & Olagundoye, 2002).

Probation policy is developing rapidly on offender accommodation, particularly concerning approved premises. Whilst approved premises have been in existence for over a century, they have been a neglected area of the criminal justice system, until recently. There are now 100 approved premises in England and Wales providing about 2,000 bed spaces (Home Office, 2004d).

Traditionally, approved premises have been considered as “bail hostels”, but they currently “provide an enhanced level of residential supervision for a wide range of individuals including bailees, those on probation orders, and those on license, with a condition of residence” (Wincup, 2002, p2). A recent strategy paper describes the role of approved premises as primarily one of public protection, with premises housing more serious offenders (Home Office, 2004d). This is supported by the evidence from a snapshot survey in March 2003, which found that half of residents were on licence compared to just 6 per cent identified by HMIP in 1993 (Foster, 2004).

While approved premises staff do seek to provide constructive work for residents, given the current focus on high risk cases and public protection, there are clearly limits on what approved premises can be expected to achieve in this respect. However, there is very little evidence on the impact of different forms of help in finding accommodation/types of accommodation in reducing reconvictions. A literature review (Grimshaw, 2002) was commissioned by the Home Office in 2002 to draw together the evidence from English-speaking and near-European countries. The review concluded that at certain points accommodation needs may contribute to offending but the relationship is complex and that sometimes offending can also contribute to accommodation problems. However, studies examining the statistical effectiveness of interventions to address accommodation needs were lacking. Key issues are listed below.

- Accommodation needs change over the life course. This suggests a need to consider different interventions for people at different stages of their lives.
- The majority of offenders want access to normal provision.

- Housing needs should be considered in the context of multiple needs. Some groups, such as sex offenders and mentally disordered offenders, pose special issues.
- Services for offenders tend to be time-limited but there may be needs for ongoing support. Related to this, there is a shortage of appropriate move-on accommodation.

Treatment for drug misusers

Prison-based drug treatment programmes have proliferated in recent years, although from a very low baseline. Most evaluations have been of residential in-prison treatment (usually therapeutic communities). These have shown that prisoners who complete their treatment are less likely than untreated offenders to use drugs or to re-offend after release (see Bullock, 2003 for a review of the mainly US literature).

To date, the 12-step Rehabilitation of Addicted Prisoners Trust (RAPt) programme is the only prison-based drug treatment programme in England and Wales to have been evaluated. An initial evaluation found that prisoners who completed the programme (approximately half of those evaluated) achieved greater reductions in self-reported drug use and offending compared with dropouts and non-starters (Martin and Player, 2000). Reconviction rates for graduates of the programme were approximately half those of non-graduates (dropouts and non-starters). Further reconviction analyses, drawing on a fresh sample of respondents (Liriano *et al.*, 2003), showed that programme completers had significantly lower rates of reconviction than prisoners from comparison groups after one year (25% versus 38%) and two years (40% versus 50%). The comparison group comprised prisoners from the same establishments matched by age, previous convictions and OGRS scores.

The results of these reconviction studies, however, should be treated with some caution. Treatment effects are likely to have been overestimated because a comparison group of dropouts from the programme was not included in the samples. Those prisoners electing for treatment and completing the programme may have been the most motivated to change their behaviour. Also, the comparability of the graduates and comparison group is questionable, since it was not possible to determine whether the latter had drug problems.

The research evidence is, however, clear that the gains made in prison can be quickly lost if there is insufficient aftercare support for prisoners once they are released. One of the most consistent findings from the drug treatment literature is that outcomes are most favourable for offenders who participate in, and complete, aftercare. For example, Wexler *et al.* (1999) reported a three-year re-imprisonment rate of 27 per cent for prisoners who completed both an in-prison and community aftercare therapeutic

community. Rates for in-prison treatment dropouts, those who completed prison treatment but did not progress to aftercare, and a no treatment control group were 82 per cent, 79 per cent and 75 per cent respectively. However, differences in recidivism rates between the overall treatment and control group observed earlier in the study were not apparent at three years.

This study is also of interest because it attempted to control for selection bias by placing prisoners eligible for the programme on a waiting list and randomly selecting individuals to the treatment condition as places became available. Prisoners who were not selected for treatment remained on the waiting list until they had less than nine months to serve on their sentence, when they were assigned to the control group. A more recent analysis of five-year outcomes for the same sample found that re-imprisonment rates were significantly lower among the treatment group, but treatment was not predictive of time to first re-incarceration (Prendergast *et al.*, 2004). Participation in aftercare was associated with lower rates of re-imprisonment, longer time to re-imprisonment and higher levels of post-release employment. The forms of aftercare provided by US programmes vary, but usually include further residential treatment and/or community supervision and support. With drug treatment, as with employment-related interventions, housing and other forms of social support are usually needed as part of the package.

Drug and alcohol treatments were introduced as additional requirements for probation orders (now community rehabilitation orders) by the 1991 CJA. This was followed by the introduction of Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs) as a new community sentence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. DTTOs were made available in England and Wales in April 2001; 4,851 orders were made in the first year. Orders are targeted at serious drug misusing offenders aged 16 and over, with the aim of treating their drug use in order to reduce the amount of crime committed to fund a drug habit. Most recently the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, gave new powers to drug test offenders under supervision by the Probation Service, drug abstinence orders, drug abstinence requirements (for offenders on community rehabilitation or punishment orders) and a condition of release for licencees.

However, there is a lack of research on the effectiveness of those drugs and alcohol interventions for offenders in the community. The evaluation of the DTTOs pilots (Turnbull *et al.*, 2000; Turnbull, 1999) found self-reported spending on drugs fell from an average of £400 before arrest to £25 in the early stages of the order. Interviews at six months suggested these reductions were sustained.

A two-year reconviction study of offenders sentenced to DTTOs during the pilots found that offenders who commenced the order were statistically significantly less likely to be reconvicted (80%) than offenders in a comparison group (91%), and they reduced their annual conviction rates to levels well below those of the previous five years (Hough *et al.*, 2003a). There were statistically significant differences in reconviction rates between offenders whose orders were revoked (91%) and those who completed their orders (53%) but the findings could reflect selection effects rather than programme effectiveness. The authors concluded that the evidence about the relative effectiveness of DTTOs was limited given that DTTOs were targeted at a group of more persistent and slightly older offenders. Caution is also needed on extrapolating to the general drug misusing population on probation because the numbers involved in the study were small (of the 210 offenders sentenced to DTTOs, 174 were matched on the Offenders' Index, the Home Office's convictions database). Research comparing demonstration projects with practical implementation also suggests that effects seen at the pilot stage are not always replicated in national roll-out (or 'going to scale'). A recent audit suggested a number of ways in which the implementation and effectiveness of DTTOs might be improved, while recognising the difficulties of working with chaotic drug misusers (National Audit Office, 2004). These included greater attention to motivating offenders and post-order arrangements to continue treatment and support.

Mental health

Mental health problems are likely to impede the ability of both prisoners and probationers to access and properly engage in offending-related programmes. There is a paucity of published data available on provision by prisons and probation areas for the mental health needs of offenders. However, it is known that mentally disordered offenders vary greatly in their risk to themselves and others. The likelihood of them committing new offences is determined not only by their characteristics but also the intensity and quality of supervision and treatment they receive when they have access to the community (MacCulloch & Bailey, 1993). While there is a lack of research on the impact of the supervision of mentally disordered offenders in the community, there is potential for improving the intensity and quality of the interventions that some mentally disordered offenders receive.

The benefits of resettlement work with short-term prisoners

A recent interim evaluation of seven resettlement pathfinder programmes for prisoners both in custody and more particularly on their release has cast some light on the possible

benefits of supporting those sentenced to less than 12 months (Lewis *et al.*, 2003). It has already been noted that this group comprises the majority of prison receptions, but they also have the highest risk of reconviction. These prisoners currently have very few opportunities to participate in formal programmes during custody. To some degree, therefore, the evaluation provides an indication of the impact of such programmes without having to take the effects of other interventions into consideration.

The programmes included three probation-led and four voluntary-led projects. All were intended to provide one-to-one support for practical resettlement problems including housing, but the probation-led projects also ran cognitive/motivational programmes designed to address offending behaviour. Participation in the pathfinders was voluntary. The continuity of services was encouraging. Of prisoners still on the scheme when released, 43 per cent had some contact after release. There were also improvements in attitudes to crime (CRIME-PICS II), and to a lesser extent with self-reported problems. Comparison of the programmes suggested that these improvements were greatest among prisoners on the probation-led programmes, particularly among those who completed the cognitive/motivational programme, although the study did not control for differences between these groups.

Multi-modal interventions

Given the overall positive nature of the 'what works' literature, it is possible to see how a carefully selected portfolio of interventions may benefit the offender in a broader sense. One of the most comprehensive reviews of the prison intervention literature concludes that the full range of individual offenders' criminogenic needs must be addressed if their propensity towards crime is to be successfully reduced (Gaes *et al.*, 1999). Lipsey (1992) also noted the potential advantage of combining different interventions over the effectiveness of individual programmes. This was echoed by Webster *et al.* (2001), who concluded that there was a need for integrated programmes addressing personal development, accommodation and substance misuse needs as well as training and employment issues, for those offenders dealt with in the community.

Thus, a multi-modal or individually tailored approach involves providing prisoners or probationers with (as necessary) cognitive skills training, drug treatment, sex offender treatment and educational and vocational training, together with help in securing accommodation. Addressing the range of their needs is certainly a challenge, and requires appropriate assessment and co-ordination, by way of case management. Some offenders may appreciate assistance from a mentor (as provided on a voluntary basis), in addition to

being 'case managed'. However, a literature review of findings from the US and the UK shows that while some American studies point to mentoring having relatively modest impacts on deviant behaviour, the British evidence base is 'very poor', largely because the topic is under-researched (Hall, 2003; see also Lewis *et al.*, 2003).

Conclusion

To a considerable degree, the success of interventions rests upon offenders being able to integrate or reintegrate into society (in the case of prisoners, on their release from custody). The treatment of drug misuse discussed above provides a good example of how both prison and post-prison experiences are important in determining outcomes. For most prisoners, efforts to cease offending constitute a long-term process, and participation in programmes whilst in custody is only part of the rehabilitative process. Factors such as employment and stable accommodation have a role in ensuring that gains achieved in prison are maintained after release and in reducing the likelihood of re-offending. It is important, therefore, for prisons to plan and arrange adequate aftercare and support *before* prisoners are released, as is shown by both British and American research (Lewis *et al.*, 2003; Travis *et al.*, 2001).

With offenders dealt with in the community, attention has also been moving from sole focus on offenders' cognitive deficits to community integration. There have been some significant achievements, for example in raising the profile of basic skills and developing a more consistent framework to tackle basic skills needs, although some efforts to test the impact of interventions have been hampered by implementation difficulties. While the evidence indicates integrated approaches, this makes it more difficult to determine the contribution of individual interventions.

This highlights the importance of good research design. There is a significant body of evidence, detailed in this chapter and earlier chapters, to suggest that certain interventions imposed during custodial or community sentences may help address re-offending. Yet there is limited evidence to demonstrate what impact these interventions actually have in practice. There is also evidence of research failure, defined here against the Standards set out in Chapter 1; the design of most studies looking at outcomes is significantly below the 'gold standard' (level 5).

Research failure is not the whole story though. Implementation failure is also an issue. Implementation failure has various meanings; at its extreme, it can mean that the intervention was not delivered in any meaningful numbers (for example, the basic skills and

phase 1 employment pathfinders). In such circumstances, no research design, however rigorous, would be able to say anything about effectiveness. In other instances it is used to describe poor quality implementation, which may mean poor targeting of the interventions, high attrition or that the quality of the delivery is in question, perhaps as a result of 'going to scale' (as discussed in Chapter 4). The context in which interventions are delivered may be just as important in determining the success (or otherwise) of their implementation as the design of the interventions themselves. For example, the probation pathfinders have been in competition with other interventions, most notably the general offending behaviour programmes (which, while also subject to a pathfinder, were rolled out nationally before the other pathfinders completed). With the drive to increase the number of offenders going through offending behaviour programmes, it is perhaps not too surprising that the number of offenders completing some pathfinders has been low. Motivating staff is important to successful delivery but there is a risk in relying on targets to create these incentives. It is evident that the solution cannot simply be to create more and more targets, but there has been little energy considering alternative incentives. This issue needs to be tackled if more complex, integrated or multi-modal packages of interventions are to be delivered successfully. Delivering more complex packages seems inherently more difficult than implementing single interventions. Both implementation and research design need to be given renewed consideration if knowledge of what works in this area is to be developed.

Table 4.1 'What works' evidence: integrating offenders into the community

Study	Intervention Rating	Key findings	Sample sizes	Critical comments
Prendergast <i>et al.</i> (2004), US	Amity Therapeutic Community	4 Five-year re-imprisonment rates lower among the treatment group of prisoners. As with the three-year study, the lowest rates were among those who had received aftercare.	Treatment group of 341 and no-treatment comparison of 235. Treated subgroups: and aftercare=79, aftercare dropouts=26, treatment completer only=159 and treatment dropouts=77.	As Wexler <i>et al.</i> (1999). Also modelled time to re-imprisonment and employment completed treatment outcomes.
Wexler <i>et al.</i> (1999), US	Amity Therapeutic Community	4 Three-year re-imprisonment rates substantially lower for those who completed both drug treatment and aftercare, compared to treatment dropouts, treatment completers only, and a no-treatment comparison group. Results for subgroup comparisons may reflect selection effects.	Total sample of 478 prisoners. Treatment group of 289 and comparison group of 189. Treated subgroups: completed treatment and aftercare=62, treatment dropouts=73 and treatment completers only=154.	Used random allocation to the programme by randomly selecting participants from a pool of prisoners on a waiting list for treatment. Some results based on analyses of relatively small subgroups.

Study	Intervention	Rating	Key findings	Sample sizes	Critical comments
Hough <i>et al.</i> (2003b), UK	Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs)	3	Offenders on DTTOs less likely to be reconvicted than comparison group on 1A(6) orders.	174 of the 210 offenders on DTTOs were compared to 80 offenders on the 1A(6) order.	Small sample size and poorly matched comparison group. Significant result for completers (53%) versus non-completers (91%) but may be due to selection effects.
Saylor and Gaes (1997), US	Post-Release Employment Project	3	Participants in prison work or vocational programmes less likely to be arrested 12 months after release, compared to a matched group of non-participants. Similar results for longer-term re-imprisonment rates.	Over 7,000 in total. Group sizes not clear.	Prospective study that used strong statistical controls for selection bias.
Adams <i>et al.</i> (1994), US	Education programmes	2	More time spent in prison academic and vocational training associated with lower rates of re-imprisonment than less intensive or no participation.	Over 14,000. Comparison based on 8,001 non-participants, 5,051 on academic programme, 422 on vocational programme and 1,359 on both academic and vocational programmes.	A large-scale study of prisoners released from establishments in 1991 and 1992. Utilised a naturally occurring comparison group of non-participants.

Study	Intervention	Rating	Key findings	Sample sizes	Critical comments
Liriano <i>et al.</i> (2003), UK	RAPt drug programme	2	Significantly lower one- and two-year reconviction rates for RAPt graduates, compared to comparison groups matched on age, conviction history and OGRS scores.	Treatment groups: 274 at one year and 137 at two years. Comparison group of 931.	Only prison drug treatment programme to be evaluated in England and Wales. Results biased by excluding programme dropouts from analysis. Comparison group not matched on drug use.
Porporino and Robinson (1992), Canada.	Basic skills	2	Lower rates of re-imprisonment among offenders who completed an adult basic education programme, compared to those released before programme completion and dropouts.	Total sample of 1,736. Completers=899 Released before completion=462 Dropouts=375.	Few studies of prison basic skills programmes. No non-intervention comparison group.
Martin and Player (2000), UK	RAPt drug programme	1	Programme graduates reported lower levels of self-reported drug use and offending after release from prison. Reconviction rates were 20% for graduates and 39% for non-graduates.	Total of 200: 95 graduates, 35 dropouts and 70 non-starters. Only 75 interviewed after release.	Small study, particularly at post-release follow-up. Reconviction analysis did not use a comparison group. The follow-up period for reconvictions varied between 6 and 18 months.

Study	Intervention Rating	Key findings	Sample sizes	Critical comments
Sarno <i>et al.</i> (2000) UK study	Employment schemes	1 One-year reconviction study on two employment schemes; 43% of those on ASSET were reconvicted compared to 53% of those who were referred but did not attend ASSET.	219 participants, 90 offenders referred who did not attend.	Compares non-starters with completers. Does not compare predicted and actual rates. Included comparison group from another borough who received "normal" ETE advice but it was too small (n=26) to draw any statistically significant conclusions from it.
Downes (1993), UK study	Employment interventions in 8 areas	1 Varied. Nottingham was cited as having 56% two-year reconvictions compared to 67% predicted.	Not reported.	Predicted and actual reconviction rates compared but no comparison group. Would have rated as 2 but lack of information on sample sizes means it is not clear that this warrants a 2.

Study	Intervention Rating	Key findings	Sample sizes	Critical comments
Bridges (1998), UK study	Employment interventions	N/A Those receiving intervention were twice as likely to find work as those without (40% against 20%).	480 total sample.	Reconvictions not assessed. Lack of detail about comparison group; possibility of differences between groups which could explain differences in employment outcome.
Roberts <i>et al.</i> (1997), UK study	Employment interventions in 7 areas	N/A Positive outcomes claimed for between 14 and 60 offenders per project (obtaining qualifications or entering further education, training or employment).	Data on 6 of 7 projects reported. Between 24 and 350 offenders involved per area.	Did not include control or comparison groups and numbers were small.

Introduction

The Carter Review and the Government's response to it have provided an opportunity to reform the correctional services and it is important that the experience and lessons both from Britain and abroad are learnt, to inform that reform. This report has therefore attempted to bring together the evidence on 'what works' in corrections for adult offenders. In doing so, it has, however, found that the evidence is incomplete and that there is much still to be learnt not just about 'what works' but also 'what works for whom and why'. The latter question is important in order to open up the 'black box' of correctional services' interventions and understand not just what should be delivered but also how to tailor interventions to individuals and how to enhance delivery locally. At present, the best available evidence provides only a few robust answers, though it does provide some useful pointers about what might work for whom and why. The evidence suggests, too, that there is a great deal of scope to improve the efficacy of implementation of correctional services' interventions.

The correctional services do not, of course, exist in a vacuum; they are inherently linked to earlier parts of the criminal justice system. In particular, they rely on the courts to determine the number and type of offenders with whom they work. Changes in sentencing practice therefore have a strong effect on the correctional services and these have changed dramatically in the last ten years, as sentencing has become more severe. The full reasons for these changes are not known but there is no evidence that the offender or offence mix appearing before the courts has become more severe.

The sentences that the courts give out are determined by the purposes behind them. These purposes are now enshrined in legislation, under the CJA 2003. Sentencers are therefore expected to consider the following when passing sentence: the punishment of offenders; the reduction of crime (by rehabilitation, deterrence or incapacitation); the protection of the public; and the making of reparation by offenders to people affected by their offences. By comparison, the key aims of the National Offender Management Service are to reduce re-offending and protect the public. Thus, although they overlap, the sentencing system has wider aims than the correctional services. This is important because the aims underpinning sentencing decisions will not always cohere with the aims of the correctional services and

ultimately, whatever the reasons underlying the imposition of different sentences, in many cases, the correctional services are responsible for delivering those sentences.

The correctional services need to know how effective they are at achieving their aims. The principal aim, reducing re-offending, is measured by changes in reconviction rates for offenders. To understand the effectiveness of different sentences, it is tempting simply to compare their reconviction rates. However, this has little meaning when reconviction outcomes reflect the different purposes and the different characteristics of offenders given the different disposals. These differing characteristics also have affected the correctional services and their response to offenders.

'What works' evidence: factors associated with offending

Research has highlighted that there are predictive factors that affect the onset of offending behaviour, the persistence of offending and desistance from criminal activity. Some of these factors change and it is these that the correctional services need to target if they want to reduce offending behaviour. The British and international literature highlight the following as the main dynamic risk factors: employment; drugs and alcohol misuse; education (including basic skills); social networks; pro-criminal associations; and poor emotional management, attitudes and mental health issues. Some of these appear to be indirectly linked to offending behaviour, for example by affecting offenders' ability to gain employment. The evidence suggests that offenders have a wide range of criminogenic needs, on average four per offender, and this pattern of needs is individual. Thus, there is evidence that for interventions to be successful in reducing re-offending, they need to be targeted and tailored to the needs of the individual, i.e. there is a need for the correctional services to base their services on offenders' needs rather than on functional lines. The evidence also suggests that offender management models that adopt a generic or integrated, rather than specialist or fragmented, approach are likely to be more effective in reducing re-offending, although it is important (and necessary) for such approaches to reflect local circumstances.

There is increasing evidence, too, that interventions are more likely to be successful if they adhere to what are known as the 'what works' principles. There is also evidence that some factors militate against effective work, in particular, organisational cultures and behaviours that undermine (if unintentionally) rather than reinforce these principles.

The successful targeting and tackling of offenders' criminogenic needs ultimately depends on

an effective assessment system to identify these needs and measure change in the degree to which they are present. Preferably, level of need should be established at the pre-sentence report stage, to help inform sentencers' decisions about appropriate disposals. The development of offender assessment systems, for example OASys, is therefore crucial, as it aims to identify and prioritise offenders' criminogenic needs, as well as to measure changes in level of need over time and in response to interventions targeted at these needs. Such a system is being rolled out to the correctional services, alongside the ASSET system used for young offenders managed by the Youth Justice Board. It is essential that these systems are sufficiently reliable, valid and sensitive measures of risk factors so that they can perform their assessment and monitoring tasks effectively.

'What works' evidence: offending behaviour programmes

There is robust evidence to support the use of offending behaviour programmes, though the majority of this comes from meta-analytic studies and primary studies of research done abroad. Reductions in reconviction rates ranging up to 15 percentage points have been found for some types of cognitive-behavioural interventions. Examples of programmes evaluated as successful abroad include: Reasoning and Rehabilitation, Aggression Replacement Training, the Controlling Anger and Learning to Manage It programme and the Cognitive Self-Change Programme, although these studies have not all been of a sufficiently high standard.

In Britain, the evidence is mixed and limited. Evidence is beginning to emerge and more will become available over the next year or so from ongoing evaluations of these interventions. The methodological constraints of British evaluations to date have meant that often it is difficult to separate out the effects of programmes from other important factors that influence offending behaviour, such as offenders' motivation. These evaluations have also highlighted the difficulty in implementing offending behaviour programmes on a large scale.

Evaluations of ETS and R&R in prison and Think First in probation suggest that these treatments can have positive impacts, although these may be confined to smaller scale roll-out, and medium to high risk offenders. The evaluations of sex offender treatment programmes in prison and in the community suggest that these programmes have had a positive impact on reconviction rates. Evaluations of motoring offence programmes in probation and ART in probation also suggest that these can have a positive impact on reconviction, although caution is required here because of the quality of the studies.

'What works' evidence: integrating offenders into the community

Tackling offenders' multiple criminogenic needs requires an integrated approach to offender management that targets and tailors interventions according to those needs. With the development of the National Offender Management Service, and the introduction of the new sentences of Intermittent Custody, followed by Custody Plus and Custody Minus, there is greater need and scope to manage interventions that offenders receive across the community and custodial settings. Indeed, although offenders who have been in custody are likely to have greater needs than those in the community, there should be substantial overlap between the interventions that are successful in the resettlement of prisoners and those that enable successful rehabilitation of offenders on community sentences.

Much of the research on the integration of offenders into the community reflects the historical separation of the Prison and Probation Services in England and Wales and there remains a paucity of evidence on the effectiveness of community-based interventions. Over the past decade, the National Probation Service in England and Wales has implemented a raft of interventions and pathfinders to tackle the criminogenic needs of offenders on community sentences. Many of these interventions have, however, suffered implementation problems. As a result, the evaluations of these schemes have provided valuable lessons about how to improve the delivery of services in the community but there remains little robust evidence on their effectiveness. For example, evidence suggests that initiatives aimed at helping ex-offenders to find work can produce positive results.

Thus, most of the evidence that exists about integration of offenders into the community is based on research with prisoners. The evidence of the effectiveness of employment and education schemes in prisons is mixed. There is recognition of the role of employment agencies, such as JobCentre Plus, and employers in helping to secure employment for ex-prisoners. The emerging evidence on basic skills training in prison suggests that these courses can improve prisoners' skills but the extent to which these can be improved sufficiently to have a positive impact on employment prospects by prison training alone is still in doubt.

The evaluations to date of drug treatment programmes in prisons suggest that these programmes can reduce re-offending. The evidence base for England and Wales is relatively limited. There is, however, some evidence that community-based efforts to address drugs and alcohol use of offenders on probation have had some effect. For example, research suggests offenders reduce their alcohol consumption during probation but it is

difficult to say whether this is due to probation. In addition, evaluations of DTTOs have shown that these *may* be successful in reducing self-reported spending on drugs and in reducing reconviction. DTTOs have the potential, therefore, to become an important component of the Community Order.

In sum, the evidence suggests that, for prisoners at least, efforts to cease offending constitute a long-term process and participation in programmes whilst in custody is only part of the rehabilitative process. Factors such as employment and stable accommodation have an important role in ensuring that the gains achieved in prison are maintained after release and in reducing the likelihood of re-offending.

‘What works’ evidence: NOMS and the way forward

The development of the National Offender Management Service gives the correctional services in England and Wales a real opportunity to develop an effective, integrated offender management system that is based on proven interventions and which focuses on offenders rather than the institutions that work with offenders. To support the development of NOMS, this report has examined the evidence of ‘what works’. However, although the knowledge of ‘what works’ provides some useful pointers about which interventions should work, it falls short of answering the question.

The essence of the task to understand ‘what works’ is to establish which policies and interventions the correctional services should implement in order to achieve their objectives. As such, the evaluation task (as described in Chapter 1) is largely concerned with establishing whether a policy is effective or not. The state of knowledge to date is not sufficient to do this in most cases. There are two main reasons for this: poor implementation and sub-optimal research design.

First, as Chapters 3 and 4 demonstrated, over the last decade or so, many of the interventions delivered by the correctional services have suffered from poor implementation. Many programmes, particularly those based in the community, have suffered from low completion rates and many have had difficulties in adhering to the ‘what works’ principles of effective practice. Clearly, if interventions are not implemented as planned, the results of any research or evaluation effort will reflect the problems of implementation rather than provide a sound assessment of the efficacy of the policy. As a result, many of the results reported in this volume say a great deal about implementation, its problems and its effects on outcomes rather than the true effects of interventions. At best, there are some pointers of

what might work if implementation were improved and in recent years, as knowledge about implementation has improved, this has been used to drive up the performance of the correctional services.

Secondly, evaluations of correctional services interventions have often been based on sub-optimal research designs. This means that the research is incapable of answering the research question. The quality of the research design affects the interpretations that can be made from the results: the lower the quality of the research design, the greater the uncertainty about the validity of the interpretations (and in turn any decisions) that can be made from them. In the quest for knowledge about 'what works', it is important, therefore, not just to consider the amount of evidence available but also the quality of that evidence.

To try to answer the question of whether interventions work, different studies have used different strategies to tease out the difference between the outcomes that are associated with offenders who undertake interventions and those that would have occurred anyway without the intervention (the counterfactual). These have included comparing the outcomes for offenders who were allocated to an intervention with a matched comparison group who did not. In response to implementation difficulties and, in particular, the low completion rates suffered by many programmes, some evaluators have attempted to establish the effect of a programme or intervention by comparing the outcomes for those who completed the intervention with those who did not and with an equivalent comparison group that was not exposed to the intervention. However all of these methods suffer from the same problem: they do not fully control for the effect that other factors, or 'selection effects' (such as offenders' motivation to change or their level of criminogenic need) have on outcomes. As a result, these methods do not allow one confidently to attribute any changes in offenders' behaviour to the programme or intervention under study and nor do they allow one to conclude unequivocally that these interventions work, or fail.

To help fellow researchers and correctional services stakeholders to understand the quality (and hence value) of the research evidence and following from the work first done by Sherman, this report has proposed a hierarchy of research standards for reconviction studies. This hierarchy rates studies that reach Standard 5 as the best and those at Standard 1 as the worst. For completeness, this report has reviewed the available studies and scored them; however, in line with other equivalent quality scales, the authors have taken the view that studies should score at least 3 before being considered robust enough to contribute to the 'what works' debate. Of the 30 outcome evaluations examined in this report, just over half reached this standard. This of course means that nearly half did not. In addition, none

reached the 'gold standard' of 5. Thus, no outcome evaluation reviewed in this report provides unequivocal evidence of 'what works' in corrections.

There may have been good reasons why evaluations of correctional services' interventions have used sub-optimal research designs, not least time and money constraints and practical difficulties in implementing randomised control trials. However, the only sure way to increase the quality and validity of knowledge is to use the right research design to answer the research question and for outcome evaluations, this generally means using randomised control trials. Randomised control trials have not been commonly employed in the criminal justice system in England and Wales. The two that have (one previous and one current) have both examined the impact of restorative justice programmes at different stages of the criminal justice process.

To help to tackle the use of sub-optimal research design, in Chapter 1, the authors proposed the adoption of an integrated model of reconviction. In addition, reflecting the need to improve the knowledge of 'what works', the authors have proposed ways to improve how to measure the impact of the correctional services, beyond the use of the usual reconviction measure.

However, it is also important to recognise the reality that underpins offending behaviour. As Chapter 2 demonstrated, offenders have multiple criminogenic needs. As such, the research effort needs to reflect the multiple and complex problems that offenders have. In addition to randomised control trials, it is important to examine the breadth and range of interventions that offenders receive in the context of these multiple needs and not simply to examine each intervention or need in isolation.

There is, therefore, a considerable challenge to improve the quality of knowledge about 'what works' and to extend our understanding further to 'what works for whom and why', in order to enable NOMS to prescribe and deliver the right mix of interventions for offenders to meet its twin aims of reducing re-offending and punishment.

Various studies are planned to help to do this. These include a study of treatment change in prisoners, which will explore the relationship between treatment change, prison/organisational factors and reconviction. A survey of offenders on custodial sentences and one of offenders on community sentences will follow a cohort of offenders through and beyond their sentence to improve our knowledge of the mix of interventions used with different types of offenders, and the contribution they make to re-offending and offence-related outcomes.

In addition, there is a need for research into the relative uses and impacts of different sentences, including custody, community sentences, and fines. RDS is preparing to set up a large-scale study of courts' decision-making and its outcomes ('the courts survey') that will include an examination of the cost-effectiveness of different types of sentence. In so doing it will provide a baseline for an eventual similar assessment of the new sentences being introduced under the CJA 2003. Some effort also needs to be devoted to assessing or monitoring the impact of changes to other sentences and disposals (for example, measures to increase use of fines, and the new Conditional Caution). Their success or failure will have a direct effect on the type and number of offenders receiving custodial and community penalties.

Finally, there is a need to develop randomised control trials in the correctional services, so that our knowledge of 'what works' is truly improved and the existing equivocal evidence is replaced with greater certainty and, ultimately, greater confidence for the correctional services that they are delivering effective interventions with offenders. It is this challenge that the Home Office and other researchers, as well as the correctional services, must now rise to in order to ensure that this once-in-a-generation opportunity is grasped with both hands.

Lesser quality evaluations***Accredited ETS and R&R in prison***

A study of psychometric test scores of offenders who participated in accredited ETS and R&R between April 2001 and March 2002 found statistically significant differences between pre-treatment and post-treatment scores and concluded that the programmes had a short-term impact and that the impact was greatest for those with greater needs (Blud *et al.*, 2003).

Accredited Think First in probation

An evaluation of the Think First programme after accreditation in three probation areas, between October 2000 and July 2001 (Ong *et al.*, 2003), did not include a control group or comparison group in the design. Although it reported favourable differences between those who completed treatment and those who failed to start treatment or dropped out, the findings cannot be read as evidence of treatment effectiveness. There were plans to create a comparison group for this study at a later date.

Think and Change in probation

A small-scale study evaluated the Think and Change programme for offenders who attended between April 1999 and April 2000 (Belton, 2002). It did not include an acceptable control group for comparison. The study found that completers had lower reconviction rates than predicted and lower rates than non-completers, with a sample of 117 offenders.

Motoring projects in probation

An evaluation of 42 schemes designed to deal with motoring offences prior to accreditation, which included various techniques such as challenging offenders' attitudes and behaviour, and a racing and car maintenance workshop, produced mixed results. The research found that actual reconviction rates for offenders under 21 years of age were nine per cent higher than predicted rates, while offenders over 21 years had an actual reconviction rate six per cent lower than predicted (Sugg, 1998)³⁷. The main finding was which type of programme worked – racing and car maintenance were actively harmful.

37 The treatment group consisted of 1,087 male and female offenders who attended motoring offence projects between 1989 and 1993.

Motoring offence programmes in probation

A second study, of the Responsible Road Users and Motoring Offending Group programmes in the West Midlands probation areas, found lower than predicted reconviction rates for 198 offenders who participated in the programmes between January and December 1998. The research found an actual reconviction rate of 48 per cent compared to the predicted rate of 49.6 per cent within 24 months of the motoring sentence (Haslewood-Pocksik and Roberts, 2003).

However, the two studies above used the OGRS risk prediction model and this may not take into account other factors that contribute to the higher or lower than predicted rates found, such as motivation and levels of offence-related needs.

Sex offender treatment

A study, of community treatment for child molesters with a six-year follow-up period, found that ten per cent of men classified as 'benefiting from treatment' were reconvicted in comparison to 23 per cent of men classified as 'not responsive to treatment' (Beech *et al.*, 2001). Although these outcomes are not necessarily caused by the treatment, they point to important considerations for evaluating treatment effectiveness.

ETS with acquisitive offenders

This study (Wilson *et al.*, 2003) found significant differences between pre- and post-treatment psychometric test scores and behavioural checklist measures for both high and medium acquisitive offenders as well as non-acquisitive offenders. Although results of the comparisons were interesting, they should not be attributed to effects of ETS.

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Errata

Page 22, last sentence of second paragraph,

'over two-thirds (71%)' corrected to 'almost one-third (29%)'.