The Impact of IMPACT - Overcoming Barriers to Employment for Ex-offenders

A collection of articles highlighting the experiences, successes and learning of working with the European Social Fund to address disadvantage
IMPACT is part of a community programme called EQUAL – a European Social Fund initiative which tests and promotes new ways of combating all forms of discrimination and inequality in the labour market.

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FOREWORD

After finding suitable accommodation, getting a job is probably the most significant factor influencing the positive resettlement of an offender on release. Yet getting a job can be one of the most difficult things for an ex-offender to achieve once they come out of prison. The obstacles to employment are many and various for ex-offenders. IMPACT (Innovation Means Prisons and Communities Together) set out to identify the barriers to employment for offenders, to develop materials and methods that would enable ex-offenders to improve their prospects for employment, to test the effectiveness of those methods and to make them available to people working with offenders in the employment field. In producing these materials it became clear that many of the methods and tools have a value to all people working on employment with those who are disadvantaged in one or more ways.

For this reason, I am pleased to be able to introduce you to this book, which outlines and explains those materials that have been developed by IMPACT and tested for their usefulness in getting people into work. More than this, it offers the benefit of the learning gained within the project; it records what has worked well, what pitfalls and difficulties were overcome during the life of the IMPACT research project and what could have been done better. I trust this will enable anyone interested in improving the employment prospects of people from disadvantaged groups to get started with the useful benefit of IMPACT’s hindsight and more easily put into practice measures that can make a difference.

There are many people who have contributed to the achievements of this project; most importantly this has been a multidisciplinary achievement in which HM Prison Service, as the lead agency, has worked with its statutory and voluntary partners to do what could not have been achieved by one Service alone.

Ian Lockwood CBE

North West Area Manager

H M Prison Service
Susan Morrison, Director of IMPACT

What is IMPACT?

The fundamental purpose of IMPACT has been to undertake research and to pilot and evaluate projects in prisons and the community; developing new and innovative tools, effective interventions and regimes to enhance the employability of ex-offenders. This work has focused on those offender groups who experience the greatest barriers to finding employment and has been supported by the European Social Fund – EQUAL.

EQUAL’s focus on developing employability sits comfortably within a context that embraces a number of European, National and Regional Governmental agendas, addressing economic development and Reducing Re-offending. Through the extensive partnership of IMPACT the EQUAL objective has been applied to complement the work of many of the Criminal Justice system’s Reducing Re-offending Pathways. In this way IMPACT has been able to contribute to the NOMS agenda to reduce re-offending by addressing individual needs - many of which are linked to developing sufficient skills to gain and sustain employment. This has allowed us to not only maximise the human potential of those individuals with whom we work, but also to make a contribution to safer communities whilst at the same time supporting the wider economic infrastructure.

Being clear about what interventions and approaches are effective also ensures that limited resources can be focused in the right places where they will achieve the best results. As an action research project, IMPACT has been able to identify gaps in service delivery and test the validity of the pilot interventions we have developed to address these gaps.

The project has expanded considerably over the last eight years and this latter round of activity has been valued at £32M. IMPACT is regarded as one of the largest and most effective Equal funded Development Partnerships within Europe.

Articles in this publication reflect the diversity of the projects with which IMPACT has been engaged. Some - such as the Thinking Skills in the Workplace Course, Motivational Interviewing Training and the Portfolio of Achievement - have attracted levels of interest that we could not have predicted and demand for them quickly exceeded our capacity to respond.

In addition to our broad domestic portfolio of activity, we have gained a reputation for innovation and practical delivery with a wide range of partners across Europe.

Effective partnership working

IMPACT is a development partnership of approximately 40 partners from across all sectors. It is led by HM Prison Service and based in the North West. Our partners come from a range of organisations as diverse as: The National Probation Service, Cheshire Fire and Rescue, Partners of Prisoners (POPs) and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC); Rochdale Centre for Diversity (RCD), the Youth Justice Board (YJB), NHS Trusts, S.O.V.A, Job Centre Plus and the Forestry Commission.

IMPACT is actively involved with four separate trans-national partnerships involving a total of 11 partners within the European Community delivering 35 objectives.

Research has shown us that gaining and sustaining stable employment is the single most important protective factor in reducing re-offending.

Over 40% of adult men have a criminal conviction 1 and with 1 in 6 applications disclosing a conviction going straight in the bin 2 we have learned that we need not just to up-skill offenders, but also, to address the concerns and needs of employers while pointing them towards a valuable and under-utilised labour resource.

This complex and intricate challenge can not be addressed by the Criminal Justice Community, the Business Community, the Voluntary Sector or any other agency in isolation. We must look beyond ourselves for solutions and value a diversity of approaches by

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1 Home Office, 2002
2 NACRO UK
working in partnerships. Last year 96% of ex-offenders leaving the IMPACT Partnership went into full-time training, education or employment – that’s an outcome of which we are all very proud.

Working with such a large and diverse group of partners has been a journey of learning and discovery. Part of that journey has been to recognise the frustrations and, sometimes, mistakes that were made and to learn from those experiences. It is also appreciated that the combined constraints of ESF Regulations, Treasury Rules and working in a secure environment have meant that some of the partners, particularly the small voluntary groups, have found the experience to be particularly challenging. However, their special commitment is valued and the outcomes are the better for it.

Conclusion

The IMPACT Partnership has provided a unique opportunity in terms of its established and tested experience in delivering effective partnership working to produce creative and effective interventions, increasing ex-offenders potential for employability and reducing the social and economic costs of re-offending.

Not only are the individual products and interventions grounded firmly in academic and action research; the activities and function of IMPACT have been subjected to independent evaluation, in their entirety.

The headline findings of this evaluation read as:

“Overall IMPACT has operated effectively as a research project, developing a range of highly successful delivery models and learning outcomes. This has added significant value compared to the normal level of provision available to these target groups within the Prison system. In this respect, and through the development of mainstream activities, it has created a culture change and new ways of thinking and working within the Prison and Probation Services. This provides a lasting legacy and foundation on which policy makers can build in the future. The project has also been well managed both strategically and in terms of its operational delivery.” 3

Researching and developing innovative solutions to moving ex-offenders on from worklessness is not a luxury. Some may argue that this investment is unaffordable in a competitive environment driven by budgetary constraint and public opinion. However, in reality, it represents enlightened self interest in promoting productivity and growth within the regional economy and beyond and making a cost effective contribution to public safety.

The methods and approaches that have been developed by IMPACT can be adapted to break down the barriers to employment and social engagement, not only, faced by ex-offenders, but also, by other disadvantaged groups in our society.

I hope you will find the following contributions useful.
The Origins of IMPACT

Keith Ingram, Former Assistant Chief with Cheshire Probation Area

In 1995 The Home Secretary of the time wanted to explore the potential of the Boot Camp regime as a means of reforming young offenders. The common concept of Boot Camp was a military style institution dispensing a rigorous and demanding regime to fill the waking hours of a trainee to instil discipline and deter offending. He selected HMYOI Thorn Cross and the military establishment in Colchester to develop a programme and test it.

HMYOI Thorn Cross is an open prison establishment for young offenders aged 16 to 21, located in Warrington. It remains the headquarters of IMPACT today.

A small team chaired by Ian Lockwood (Area Manager, North West Prisons) with Iain Windebank (Governor, Thorn Cross), Andrew Taylor (Chief Probation Officer, Cheshire) and Graham Beck (Head of Psychology, North West Prisons) put together and presented to the Home Secretary their proposals. Having looked at Boot Camps in America they were aware that punitive regimes without a positive approach to resettlement had not proved successful. So, they designed a regime that was demanding with a structured programme to fill the day. The regime included opportunities to learn, to change and to get a head start on resettlement issues such as employment and independent living skills. The High Intensity Training programme (HIT) was established at HMYOI Thorn Cross in Unit 5 in 1996 and still operates effectively.

Part of the resettlement element was an integrated approach to employment which involved preparation courses, working out of the prison on licence and the support of volunteer mentors throughout the process. It was this that became the core of the first ESF funded project - Headstart.

Headstart was set up to promote the key resettlement objectives relating to employment initially across Thorn Cross and then to five further Prisons in the North-West. The aim of the project was to investigate and work to overcome the obstacles to employment for ex-offenders. It took the work initiated by the HIT programme and developed a holistic approach with the individual which addressed the development of skills to improve employability and put in place the supports to gain and sustain employment such as: accommodation search; mentors and restoring family links; job search,
with working out where possible; and with education, training or interviews to go to on release.

The structure for delivery was through small units in each prison staffed by prison and probation staff and people contracted from voluntary agencies such as SOVA and YMCA. This project achieved many things, one of which was to demonstrate that individuals from different backgrounds and organisations could not only work together in a collaborative way, but could overlap their tasks and activities despite differences in qualifications, status and employment. It also offered prisons a focus for their employment initiatives and a welcome resource as these methods were developed and put into practice. The project was developmental and used the opportunity with prisons to both design and test ways of working towards the employment of ex-offenders. One of the fundamental elements of Headstart was the partnership nature of the work.

At the end of the project the operational delivery work was taken forward by the Prison Service in the form of Prison Service Plus. The developmental and research elements of Headstart were progressed as Phase 1 of IMPACT.

The task of the new IMPACT project was to create an innovative range of approaches and materials that would enable ex-offenders to tackle barriers to employment. These interventions and products would be assessed by independent evaluators. Partners from the statutory and voluntary sectors collaborated to provide expertise and support for the project.

IMPACT phase one produced a range of products which included:

- A template for a Portfolio of Achievement for offenders to present their qualifications, skills and achievements at interview, including advice on how to address previous offences.

- A cognitive programme to develop an understanding of the workplace and skills in performing in a work environment.

- A means of assessing risks and their management in the workplace (SAVRY- developed with trans-national partners from the Netherlands).

- An Employers Charter embracing a commitment to employ ex-offenders.

- A case management model to provide a structure and process for assessing employment needs and to facilitate and co-ordinate relevant work to meet those needs. This was designed to connect with the OASys assessment and the sentence management process.

- A joint case management record.

In addition to these products, the IMPACT team developed a number of policies of potential interest to others working with barriers to employment especially those working with a multi-agency approach, such as protocols on information sharing, partnership agreements and other formal statements.

This formed a firm base for Phase 2 of IMPACT. The materials described above had all been developed with an offender group largely composed of white adult male offenders. The challenge for Phase 2 of IMPACT was to test the relevance and appropriateness of the materials for offenders with multiple disadvantages in the employment market. The target groups with additional barriers to employment, for the purposes of Phase 2, were any offenders from a Black or Ethnic minority, women offenders, young offenders aged between 16 and 21 and older males. In addition to this, the specific additional barriers to employment for sex offenders were to be tackled by developing opportunities for safe initiatives in self employment.
Working with the European Social Fund (ESF)

Denise Woods, Founder Director of IMPACT

Introduction
This chapter is about the benefits and avoiding the pitfalls of working with European Social Fund funding, but it also has relevance for any organisation considering bidding for funds in complex, multi-disciplinary arenas.

During the development period of pulling the IMPACT programme together, two different sources of European Social Fund funding were accessed; Objective 3 and EQUAL.

- Objective 3 looked solely at beneficiary numbers (numbers of individuals going through the programme), core and non core outcomes. Partnership working was desirable but there was no budget for working across the European Union (EU).
- EQUAL demanded multi-agency, cross sector working to increase the prospect of success for beneficiary and research outcomes. The requirements also included the trans-national dimension. Each bid had to include objectives with other EU countries or would not be considered for funding.

Working with ESF Funding:

Benefits:

1. The greatest benefit of external funding, to any organisation, is the opportunity to enhance budgets, allowing an increase of output/outcomes and stretching delivery to attempt what would otherwise not be done on core budget constraints.

2. The Prison Service’s application for European funding raised awareness of the work of the many services in criminal justice to other organisations, who had not really understood the development of work in prisons, such as the ESF managers, ECOTEC. This allowed the forging of a new and innovative relationship between European funding managers and the Prison Service and its partners.

3. The resettlement of ex-offenders is an objective that is normally constrained by tight budgets and is often the first to be put under pressure at times of high numbers in custody. By using an innovative funding source, IMPACT created an opportunity to bring vision and flair to resettlement through the prison and probation services, to reform out-dated methods.
4. Multi-organisational working allowed for a greater opportunity for effective service delivery, even during the research phase. Beneficiaries of the funding received a better quality of opportunity; for example, deploying the most relevant professional to provide the appropriate service at the right stage offered more effective resettlement.

5. The opportunity to access additional services for many offenders proved a turning point which could not have been achieved without additional funding. The expectation to include offenders in all aspects of the programme, attending meetings, conferences and planning sessions led to many of them fulfilling an additional level of self worth/fulfilment.

6. IMPACT raised awareness of the employment needs of offenders and its response to them at all levels, from voluntary sector organisations to the House of Lords - where the initial report is still in their library. The recognition and support of Members of Parliament and Heads of Service across all relevant organisations, both national and locally, eventually gave greater authority to the work and greater opportunity for problem solving.

7. Benefits to staff were realised via the opportunity to take part in something new that allowed for working with multiple cultural and philosophical norms. This also presented some difficulties at times as not all staff were able to make the leap across the cultural divide.

**Difficulties:**

1. Learning ‘bid speak’. In all bid writing knowing the funding stream and the required use of language for that stream is essential. It is like learning a foreign language for most bid writers. Breaking into a funding stream that normally attracted bids from non-custodial groups took many discussions as to whether a bid would be allowed, what were the legal issues and was it the best use of funding. At one notable stage, ECOTEC (the UK fund managers) queried whether funding could be directed to benefit the beneficiaries because they were in custody, not the community. However the key issue was that they would be returning to their own communities, some very shortly, and intervention was required prior to release, as well as support back into the community, to ensure effective resettlement.

2. The rules and regulations about bidding are extensive. Each section of writing the bid requires painstaking reading of the rules and the advice notes. It is a time consuming process, which usually had to be undertaken alongside the already demanding job of project management. To access other funding it would be desirable to have a dedicated bid team with no other responsibilities – not always possible for resource restricted organisations.

3. Since the lead partner on the bid was the Prison Service, and the focus of the programme was to be on addressing barriers to resettlement, there were a range of communication and knowledge issues that needed to be built up between the bid writers and the European fund managers. Delivery of programmes in a custodial setting was very different from a community setting where all previous bids had been based. Extensive further explanations of delivery proposals were required. Sometimes this was straightforward, and at other times the reasons why it could not be amended (usually to do with security or prisons systems) had to be explained, often at great length, so that the bid was not dismissed out of hand. This was an interesting additional hurdle for a bid coming from the criminal justice sector, and good relationship building to develop the Prison Service, and the fund manager’s understanding of each other was essential. The fund managers, ECOTEC, were not familiar with custodial settings. This led to open lines of communication, with ECOTEC ever willing to advise, discuss and amend some views in the light of explanations as to why some things could or could not be undertaken. On occasions they took uncertainties over rules/interpretation to the Department of Work and Pensions, who are the national managers of ESF, to check validity.

4. The complexity of financial monitoring and management requirements for ESF and HM Prison Service has been the most difficult issue. ESF require financial information and statistical data to tie up, meticulously counting the cost of each beneficiary. HM Prisons organisational systems required financial accounting in a different way.
Timescales for audits, rules about use of funds, fiscal year, asset lists were all different between ESF and HMPS. Match funding rules and regulations created challenges for the lead managers, auditors, partners and project management. The project was required to meet the stringent requirements of both its governing bodies. The scale of this requirement was difficult to manage. It was done successfully, but overcoming this hurdle presenting significant and on-going challenges.

**Top Tips on Getting the Best from ESF funding.**

1. It seems an obvious one – but be sure the funding stream fits what you want to do

2. Effective communication and collaborative working is the key to getting the best out of external funding. From the start IMAPCT took the approach that it would be open and honest about the unique challenges in managing ESF from within a prison and multi-agency criminal justice environment. We recruited strong, appropriate partners who would add value to the work and were committed to the same resettlement outcomes. While this presents challenges, if foundations of honesty are established, it allows partners to work together to overcome the inevitable differences and difficulties

3. Ensure the bid design is clear, manageable and has the 100% commitment of all partners

4. Ensure that all partners are clear about the costs involved, both the up front and hidden costs, such as meeting time and travel etc – do some require payment for this whilst others don’t? Is this fair and equitable and what are the potential issues if one is a large statutory organisation and the other a small voluntary body? These practical details can be a stumbling block to delivery if they are not thought through in advance.

5. Go to see other projects and talk about the issues of managing external funding

6. Think about how the project will influence the future of the organisations involved and their wider delivery work

7. Be inspired by the fact that using ESF can enable innovation that would not otherwise be developed

8. Challenging interpretations of regulations and organisational pre-conceptions was important. This requires staff and partners with strong project management skills.

9. Think carefully about continuity of funding and delivery implications for both staff and clients. Staffing issues presented one of the greatest challenges; continuity of contracts and delivery was often uncertain as one round of funding drew to and end and the next round had not yet been confirmed. Managing the expectations and pastoral needs of staff was essential. Our strategy was to prevail upon HM Prison Service to guarantee funding for core roles through transitory periods. This presented some considerable financial risks to HMPS; the provision of extensive information on costs, risk levels and cost benefit analyses were essential to demonstrate the benefit of this course of action. If funding failed HMPS - as the lead partner - would have to own the risk for those costs. Effective communication and timely information to staff were an essential in staff retention.

10. Managing continuity of work with beneficiaries was also important. All work with beneficiaries had to be wound down to a full stop at the end of each funding Phase, only be reinstated when new funding became available. After the first time this happened creative ways had to be found to prevent a complete waste of time

CELEBRATE YOUR SUCCESSES!
Addressing the Needs of Ex-offenders with Multiple Disadvantage
– The Three Work Themes of IMPACT

Phase 1 of IMPACT set out to identify and challenge the barriers to employment experienced by ex-offenders. The project generated a range of tools and materials for use with ex-offenders to enhance their chances of employment. These resources were generic, based and tested predominantly with adult male offenders the majority of whom were white. It was recognised that this profile does not necessarily meet the needs of all offenders nor respond to the additional disadvantage experienced by people who are from Black and Minority Ethnic communities, young or older men, women of all ages and offenders such as sex offenders where the nature of the offence generates an additional reluctance to employ. In some instances the language and assumptions used in developing basic tools was not easily accessible to all these groups.

IMPACT Phase 2 was intended to adapt the materials from Phase 1 to make them more appropriate or more accessible to ex-offenders who were experiencing dual disadvantage in accessing employment. Phase 2 also sought to research employers’ attitudes to these groups and the nature of the additional barriers they faced.

The resulting funding received for Phase 2 from the ESF EQUAL stream was divided into three distinct areas, or themes, of work for IMPACT. This corresponded to specific categories of EQUAL funding, and allowed for improved project management within the project. The three themes are outlined below and all had their own co-ordinating Manager, and delivery plan.

- Asset worked with men aged 16-21, older males and women
- Ascend worked with Black and Minority Ethnic ex-offenders
- Changing Directions worked with sex offenders or those who pose a risk to children

3.1 The ASSET Theme

Overview

This theme worked with three categories of ex-offenders:

- 16-21 year old adult males,
- older males over 50 years of age
- any female of working age
Working with a range of statutory, voluntary and private sector organisations, the Asset initiative established a range of action research objectives to trial the best methods of supporting resettlement for these target groups. Asset also worked with academic partners and ex-offenders conducting research to best inform the project design.

Asset trialled programmes to enhance assessment of need; pulled together multi-agency case management; developed family support; improved attitudes to work and behaviour in the workplace; developed the role of mentors and promoted the achievements of individuals on the project. The aim of all of these activities was to empower ex-offenders to gain employment pre and post-release and to sustain it.

Research

Work with Liverpool Hope University produced reports detailing the key barriers faced by female ex-offenders to successful resettlement. This target group experiences some very different barriers to male ex-offenders and benefits from a different approach to the resettlement process.

Work with Manchester University explored employer attitudes to ex-offenders, highlighting myths, stereotypes, lack of knowledge and employers’ concerns that needed to be addressed. The research also reviewed employers’ views on skill gaps in the labour market.

Work with Connexions mapped the limited extent of bespoke careers guidance with these target groups.

The full reports can be downloaded from the website www.equal-impact.com.

Project Activities

As the academic research was undertaken and produced by partners at Liverpool Hope University, gaps in service provision and areas for intervention were highlighted. A range of pilot projects were put in place in a range of North West custodial establishments to address these gaps and intervention needs. Asset aimed to trial methods of working that addressed key barriers to resettlement and make these bespoke to each of the target groups.

- **Case Management Model** – using Education Liaison Officers (ELOs), who completed individual assessments with ex-offenders, individual action plans were established to address the specific barriers to employment. A broad approach to the journey towards employment was taken. Staff undertaking the assessment reviewed the holistic needs of the individual. Employment was not a realistic target when substance misuse, accommodation or family issues had to be addressed as a priority. The ELOs were able to make referrals to key partners in the IMPACT project who had expertise in dealing with specific needs. Mentors, Family Link workers and housing support could all be accessed through the project. The case management model also had a single case record, allowing all professionals to input and share work that was happening with the beneficiary. It aimed to develop work and interventions in a custodial setting that could be shared and completed through the gate on release, and support the ultimate goal of moving ex-offenders into work.

- **POA** – The Portfolio of Achievement is a tool to demonstrate how far an offender has travelled on their journey towards rehabilitation. It details the aptitudes and competencies of the individual, contains staff comments on personal qualities and photographic evidence of work experience as well as details of their qualifications and usual CV components. The POA was adapted for each of the target groups, focusing on addressing the most relevant barriers in each case.

- A bespoke cognitive skills training course that uses thinking and problem-solving skills to address barriers to employment and sustain work: The programme, called **Thinking Skills for the Work Place**, has been validated by the Prison Service and is currently available for dissemination. This cognitive course is also being piloted in the community to ensure that it holds relevance and produce positive results in a variety of criminal justice settings.

- A wide range of mentoring projects were set up, these included mentors visiting prisons to work
with young people, peer mentoring in women’s establishments and health based mentoring for older males. The expertise of voluntary sector partners was essential for the delivery of this important support component for beneficiaries.

- **Work Trials** - Work trials for offenders in custody in open prisons were developed. Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) arrangements allowed offenders nearing the end of their sentence to return to the world of work in a gradual and supported way. This built skills, self-esteem, increased the chances of gaining employment on release, resulted in a valuable reference for the individual and also engaged employers.

- **Supporting Mental Health Needs in Custody** - a peer mentoring project was delivered in custodial settings. Peer mentors were trained from prisoners who had experienced mental health difficulties in the past. They became mentors for prisoners who were currently experiencing mental ill-health. The benefits for the mentors included skills development, increased self-esteem and better management of their long term conditions, improved aspirations and new soft skills. Benefits for mentees included support and advocacy, improved mental health, moving out of hospital wings and off suicide watches. Staff also reported improved relationships and atmospheres on the residential units.

- **Working with Young People** – who are often difficult to engage; IMPACT developed projects with young people so that they were offered access to resettlement support in creative ways. This included the award winning Fire Cadet programme. A full time 12 week initiative that delivered education, a range of accredited qualifications, community project experience, techniques for dealing with authority, problem-solving and the development of aspirations. This was all delivered through the auspices of a programme run with Cheshire Fire and Rescue that allowed young people to become junior fire-fighters.

- **Employer Engagement** – Asset developed an employer engagement strategy that tested a range of methodologies to engage employers. It sought to encourage employers to think of ex-offenders as a staffing resource useful to them, rather than unemployable.

**Managing ASSET**

*Sheila Pickering – Co-ordinating Manager ASSET*

The first thing we took forward from Phase 1 was the Case Management Model. We identified the specific target groups – women, young offenders, and men over 50. The next task was to identify where those target groups were placed, and therefore in which prisons we could work. IMPACT developed key relationships with Governors and staff at a number of North West establishments to take this work forward. A range of project management logistical challenges needed to be met including recruitment and deployment of staff across the region. The development of centralised recording, access to required resources, all needed careful co-ordination.

Working parties were convened from the project’s partners and it was important to spend time building trust with partners from a range of different professional cultures. This led to ultimate strengths in delivery. In the early stages a clear recognition emerged that not all the objectives were separated in IMPACT’s different themes and that some activities were common to two or all of the themes. Joint work was initiated, in particular the employer engagement activities. An important learning point, however, is that each of the three themes had separate steering groups and partners did not always have the resources to send representative to all three groups, in spite of the cross-over of some sectors of the work. In a future project there should be less segregation between the themes and a more strategic link between the theme managers. A key issue in planning in the future would be for the three theme managers to agree what is the common work they should be doing together prior to starting implementation. Beneficiaries with multiple disadvantage fall into more than one group and it is unhelpful and artificial to segregate them into different themes.

There was some very clear joint work over the employer consultation exercise run by Manchester University. This was up and running very early on within the project,
and it created a platform for sharing between the Ascend and Asset themes.

**Learning for the organisation**

With regards to Asset: the strongest work that has been delivered in Phase 2 has been the work that was initiated in Phase 1 and developed in greater depth in the second round. We have been able to take this work forward at a quicker pace since the foundations were already in place. An example of this is the Thinking Skills in the Workplace course.

Phase 2 gave us the opportunity to trial the course with offenders who had different needs and make amendments as necessary to ensure the course was relevant for each target group. The psychology team ran it with each of the target groups and then took feedback through the focus groups. Widespread positive feedback indicated that the course was robust with all groups, offering both generic intervention and an interactive format that allowed participants to insert their own relevant examples. When it was trialled at HMP Haverigg, with men over 50, at least one of the members in the original trial group asked to be trained as a facilitator to deliver the programme in the prison. The programme is now being mainstreamed with more demand for it than we can possibly cope with.

The employer’s consultation highlighted the key concerns of employers. They were concerned with the offending history and potential offending behaviour of ex-offenders. Their questions were:

- Does this person have the skills and ability to do this job?
- Will they fit in to my current workforce?
- Will they be a danger to my workforce?
- Are they likely to offend in the future in a way that will discredit the company?

All of the tools we have developed to support ex-offenders into employment have been designed to either support the employer in answering these questions positively, or support the beneficiary to gain these skills.

3.2 The Ascend Theme – Working with Black and Minority Ethnic Ex-offenders

**Overview**

Members of the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community are twice as likely to be unemployed than the general population - 55% of all ex-offenders are economically inactive. Ex-offenders from the BME community face even higher levels of exclusion from the labour market.

Ascend has aimed to give Black and Minority Ethnic ex-offenders equal opportunities to access employment after custody by combating racism and discrimination at all levels. Using a range of research and pilot projects, this initiative has explored the specific barriers to employment that BME ex-offenders face.

Working with a range of statutory, voluntary and private sector partners, the Ascend theme established a range of action research objectives to trial the best methods of supporting resettlement for BME groups. Ascend worked with academic partners, ex-offenders and conducting research to best inform the project design.

Research focused on both the institutional and practical barriers to employment that BME ex-offenders experience. By trialling programmes designed to enhance cultural identity, improve attitudes towards work and behaviour in the workplace, develop the role of mentors and promoting the achievements of individuals, Ascend sought to improve the employment and resettlement prospects of BME ex-offenders.

**Ascend Activities:**

1. **Research**

Working with the University of Manchester, Ascend conducted extensive research into the specific barriers to employment experienced by BME ex-offenders and included consultation with employers. Further research was undertaken to investigate the application of national legislation in regards to race and how this has been incorporated into the Prison Service policies and practices. Another piece of research has investigated the community networks of BME ex-offenders pre and post-release.
2. Resilience and Skills Development

Routes2Roots is a course that has been developed by IMPACT in conjunction with Partners of Prisoners (POPS) and other agencies to enable Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) offenders to explore their cultural identity, address ways to combat discrimination and racism and raise their self-esteem.

Research indicated that BME offenders were not accessing mainstream interventions because they were concerned about the relevance of the programmes to their own cultural needs and had fears of isolation or discrimination. This course is designed to give BME offenders empowerment and support to address their particular needs and to encourage them to engage fully with the resettlement agenda. Participants of the programme have moved on to become prisoner committee members, engaged in other Ascend objectives, set themselves targets for the future to prevent them re-offending, moved to open conditions and become prisoner race equality representatives.

Ascend has also led on developing work trials for the BME target group through the Employment Charter and trialled the Thinking Skills for the Workplace course with BME participants. This course and the Routes2Roots programme have undergone an Equality Impact Assessment.

3. Recording Learning and Attainment

Using Portfolio’s of Achievement; the formal and informal learning, behaviour and work of ex-offenders while they are in custody is fully recorded. The Portfolios are also supported by personal statements, CV’s and testimonials from staff who have observed their progress. The Portfolio of Achievement collects and presents this work in a meaningful and easy to access format. It allows employers and professionals to see at a glance the volume and quality of work completed and ‘distance travelled’ during the sentence period. It has also been used to support progression management and to inform the OASys assessment and action plan.

Specific additions for the Ascend target group have included translation into appropriate languages, identifying equivalence of qualifications gained outside the UK and ensuring the content was culturally sensitive and contained BME specific programme attendance achievements.

4. Employer Engagement

Ascend has established a database of regional employers who are willing to support ex-offenders back into work and built links to promote opportunities for BME ex-offenders, including employment opportunities.

Ascend has made extensive use of the Employment Charters to secure commitments from regional employers to offer guaranteed interviews, work trials and champion employment opportunities for ex-offenders. Part of this work included engaging five Charter Champions, coming from a range of diverse organisations.

Managing the Ascend theme

Lorna Edmondson, Co-ordinating manager

The first challenge faced by this theme was getting sufficient Black and Minority Ethnic beneficiaries to ensure the research/work was credible given the small numbers in some prisons. Extensive work was undertaken with a range of North West prisons to set the foundations for future delivery on the project. Ascend staff and prison officers working in partnership with the project had to overcome initial mistrust from BME offenders who were approached to join the project. Offenders indicated that they had experience of similar research and saw no positive outcomes. There was also suspicion about why the Ascend theme of Impact was just working with BME groups, leaving some offenders from other cultural backgrounds feeling they were being excluded. The project also faced challenges when dealing with some BME offenders who had experienced discrimination, racism and exclusion within the Criminal Justice System and outside. They were wary of being seen to be singled out for preferential treatment because Ascend was only working with BME groups.

To work effectively with the Ascend objectives it was essential that we engaged with a wide range of diverse
partners many of whom came from voluntary agencies and they were often limited in having the time and resources to work in partnership. Ascend placed a great deal of early focus on learning to understand different cultures, religions and ethnicity in order to work effectively with BME ex-offenders. Also, in recruiting staff to reflect the diversity of the population we were working with who could share their valuable skills and experience. The theme aimed to create a Steering Group and staff team that were open to learning and internal debate, discussion and challenge about practice, policy and different philosophies. Of great benefit was the recruitment of a dedicated Diversity Manager with the relevant skills, knowledge and contacts with BME groups. At a management level the Prison Service was committed to the work which made negotiating access to offenders and staff easier.

A fundamental condition of ESF funding required the project to meet targets and deadlines. It was very important to clarify objectives to ensure they were understood when open to different interpretations, this was particularly important for Ascend; common understanding of approaches to diversity and agreed models of practice had to be designed. It was essential we did not perpetuate discrimination by making assumptions or stereotyping in our work with BME groups. We decided on a bottom up approach in designing our products including partners, employers and beneficiaries.

Key Learning Points

Partnership working is the best way forward but requires a lot of maintenance especially with match funding, creating contracts and keeping up effective communication and providing support. Given the size of the overall project and the frequent cross cutting activities between the themes and their common partners, there appeared a need for a dedicated manager to fulfil this role. In the absence of this resource some partners became disengaged during the project, often due to issues relating to communication rather than differences.

We needed more BME partners to encourage greater representation but many interested and willing organisations were small voluntary agencies with few resources to facilitate their engagement. ESF rules indicated they could not benefit financially from the partnership and since this work was not their core business, they had insufficient capacity to remain engaged.

Measures taken to avoid discrimination in meeting our objectives

- IMPACT created and used a steering group of partner representatives to guide objectives and to help understand/interpret them
- BME beneficiaries and partner agencies supported and engaged with us in working groups to design and develop products.
- Ensuring we had representative staff with appropriate experience and skills to deliver our objectives
- Building effective relationships with staff in prisons to support delivery
- Meetings designed to monitor processes and ongoing development
- Equality Impact Assessment training was undertaken and carried out by staff to assess policies and products
- Having the benefit of a Diversity Manager’s experience and her engagement with a wide range of BME organisations, Prison Service Area and Probation Diversity groups both regionally and nationally was extremely valuable
Use of Steering, Strategy and Working Groups all including BME membership, to consult and engage with about meeting and driving forward our objectives

Having BME staff seconded from Rochdale Centre for Diversity

Input from BME partners and beneficiaries sharing their experiences and skills

External evaluation ECOTEC and WM Enterprise (the independent evaluators) and internal monitoring such as breaking down ethnicity of beneficiaries in Ascend to ensure we were engaging with a diverse range of BME groups

Use of Ethnic Minority Business Support networks and a wide range of other BME and non-BME employers to advise, consult with and develop our work

Also membership of the NW Regional Assembly Diversity group and cascading to staff effective diverse practices

Oversight of the Strategy board, Steering and Working groups consisting of partner organisations

Staff attending conferences which addressed the particular needs and concerns of the BME population

**Most Successful Achievements**

- Employer Engagement with diverse employers (using the Charter and Employer Engagement strategy). This has produced excellent outcomes such as beneficiaries gaining employment and additional work skills. It has also increased our employer network
- Individual employment training, education and case management work with beneficiaries
- The Routes2Roots(R2R) course
- The Prison Break programme
- A range of research focusing on the needs of BME ex-offenders
- Thinking Skills for the Workplace programme and Equality Impact Assessment to inform ongoing development of this product
- The Portfolio of Achievement re-designed to be inclusive of BME needs
- Trans-national work and partnership work, especially with prison staff, POPS, Rochdale Centre for Diversity, Business Link and Business Venture

- The involvement of beneficiaries in the design of products and our research, as they often came up with the best ideas
- Clear evidence of beneficiaries growing in self-esteem and confidence and gaining skills for employability
- Evidence of community organisations, families and friends changing their perceptions of the offenders with the work they have undertaken in communities
- Taking positive action in recruiting BME staff who enriched our work
- The design of resettlement leaflets that include specific BME resources
- Facilitating a pilot running at HMYOI Thorn Cross to implement the Investors in Diversity standard (IiD). This is the first prison to do so and if successful this could be rolled out into other prisons. The standard enables organisations to develop and benchmark policies and practices which promote diversity, equality and capture achievements.

**Issues around discrimination**

Racism within prisons is still present amongst staff and offenders and within its policies and practices. This was evidenced in our research that there are still problems with meeting individual religious and cultural needs. The numbers of BME offenders within the criminal justice system is still disproportionate compared to the national population and there is a significant increase in Muslim prisoners. Racist attitudes are still apparent within the community and between different racial groups affecting social cohesion and radicalisation. Staff continue to need more appropriate Diversity training to achieve more effective engagement with BME offenders and to understand and value different cultures and races. Some of our BME staff experienced being stereotyped by staff colleagues. Research is still showing evidence of discrimination and barriers that prevent BME prisoners and ex-offenders from maximising their potential and progressing within the prison system.

**Pitfalls recognised and identified with hindsight**

It is critical in any project seeking to redress discrimination not to underestimate the impact of stereotyping; this takes the form of assumptions about the abilities,
attitudes and behaviour of people from different ethnic groups. If care is not taken, these assumptions can result in processes within the project resulting in further discrimination. There also has to be an awareness of covert and overt discrimination.

The steering group recognised at an early stage that our work plan objectives were open to interpretation and sought to establish clarity about the meaning and intention of those objectives. The recruitment of BME partners to develop the work and assist with Equality Impact assessments was crucial and effective in reducing stereotyping and identifying and challenging assumptions and discrimination. The project took steps to ensure we were working with different BME groups that reflected the general prison population.

It also became clear that the objectives were written at the beginning of the project and Diversity issues had moved on nationally and within the different sectors over the three years of its operation. Throughout the project there was evidence that revealed the continuing dominance of non-BME culture and perspective in our thinking and within the environment, and the need to revise activity and planning as more diverse perspectives were identified and shared. There were frequent reminders of the presence of Institutional Racism and it was important to have an awareness of the subtle ways in which it could significantly impact upon our work.

**Perspectives on the Routes2Roots (R2R) programme:**
*Sadie Tutton, Implementation Manager, Ascend*

In managing the delivery of Ascend, institutional barriers have been the hardest to overcome. BME offenders often start with an expectation that they will receive a poorer service than other offenders e.g. do not get re-categorised to open prison as often. This results in a reluctance to engage with IMPACT and the prison system. There is evidence that BME offenders are less likely to engage with education, workshops, etc because of their previous experience. Routes2Roots has demonstrated some early success in addressing this.

Feedback from BME beneficiaries showed they felt it was important that someone from a black background should run the group, to build commonality in shared experiences relevant to themselves. It was also important that facilitators came from the community, rather than prison staff, to address issues of power imbalances and difficulties with trust and talking freely about sensitive subjects. The evaluator felt R2R could be delivered to mixed groups not just single ethnicity groups. Beneficiaries have indicated they believe staff would benefit from this training. There is a need to demonstrate to Governors the benefits of the R2R programme in terms of contribution to meeting various Prison Service targets by improving the participation of BME prisoners.

The most effective ingredients in the course have been:
- Facilitators – personal skills and their background
- bringing people from different minority cultures into one room to mix
- the opening up about cultures and religion and learning about others – myth-busting resulting in greater interaction on the wings
- greater cohesion
- the opportunity to reflect learning back into the community when they settle back after prison – more likely to interact with others in the community and the workplace

### 3.3 Changing Directions

**Overview**

There is recognition that encouraging companies to employ ex-offenders with sex-related convictions is a difficult task, with concerns about the risk, type, and location of work often being expressed by employers and the public.

Research indicates that unemployment is one of the biggest factors that can serve to increase the risk of re-offending for a particularly disadvantaged group. Importantly, a study found that the only factors associated with reducing re-offending among sex

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4 Predictors of Desistence among Sex Offenders: The Interaction of Formal and Informal Social Controls; Kruttschnitt, Uggen and Shelton 2000
offenders was the combination of stable employment and sex offender treatment.

The Changing Directions initiative assessed the suitability of carefully selected sex offenders for self-employment opportunities. The overall aim was to improve their social and economic reintegration, thereby reducing the risks of re-offending and protecting the public. The project worked in a strong multi-agency framework, with public safety and risk management being the highest priority.

Working closely with the Police, the National Probation Service, Business Link and key voluntary sector agencies; Changing Directions trialled new and innovative assessment and community supervision models.

The Changing Directions programme involved the delivery of a prison-based enterprise training programme; the drawing up of individual business plans and the development of a small business support network designed to empower beneficiaries to sustain small businesses. This model of support has transferability to all ex-offender groups.

**Changing Directions Activities:**

**Research and Information**

The Changing Directions project works entirely within a public protection framework and the MAPPA processes, but adds two additional layers of intervention in the pre-and post release phase:

1) developing self-employment options that incorporate additional risk assessment
2) developing through-the-gate accountability through additional monitoring

Key stages are: An extensive risk assessment process, successful completion of a Sex Offender Treatment Programme, the offender being motivated to work within the strict supervision confines of the programme and the development of integrated, multi-agency risk and offender management plans for robust information sharing and monitoring.

The risk assessment process is lead by the Probation Service and receives input from all of the key criminal justice agencies along with other partners offering specialist expertise. The resettlement plan has more chance of success if this multi-agency process is started before release.

**Developing Self-Employment**

Following the detailed risk assessment process; Business Advisers work within the Prison environment or approved premises to deliver self employment training, develop business ideas, draw up individual business plans and develop small business support networks designed to empower individuals to sustain self-employment post-release. This period is characterised by comprehensive and transparent information sharing, which has proved to be a real strength of the Changing Directions project. It enables the business ideas to be risk managed and linked back to index offences, patterns of behaviour and minimise opportunities to re-offend. It also ensures that new risk information is fed back into the case conferencing and risk assessment frameworks.

**Networks of Post-release Monitoring and Support**

Based on the successful ‘Circles of Support and Accountability’ (COSA) model, the project trains volunteer mentors to work alongside the risk management plan and MAPPA, to offer an additional intensive layer of monitoring and support. Circles of Support and Accountability works by becoming an additional support and supervision network for the offender, holding the individual accountable for their own actions as well as supporting their resettlement plans. Treatment will have helped the individual identify pro-offending beliefs and attitudes; the circle helps the individual apply this learning into every day life. Ultimately, this model provides intensive support and monitoring on a daily, weekly or monthly basis that is otherwise unavailable.

The selection and training of the volunteers is robust and extensive in order to address potential grooming and complicity. Circles always work with multiple members and with professional supervision provided by someone with skills and knowledge in the area of sex offender treatment and risk management.

Regular formal meetings increase the monitoring and supervision of the offender greatly in excess of what
can usually be provided by the statutory services. The circle can also address flagging motivation in the “encircled”, encourage positive behaviour and identify any return to offending behaviour.

Changing Directions have adopted this successful model and have added the dimension of a business mentor to the circle membership. The Business Mentor can offer encouragement and advice in the early stages of self-employment. Equally importantly, if there is a deviation from the agreed business plan this information can be reported back into the risk management process and the option for recall or other sanctions can be assessed.

Transferability

The self-employment methodology may work equally well with other groups of ex-offenders. Changing Directions aims to transfer knowledge and models of working to other areas of the criminal justice service.

Managing Changing Directions
Anna Javed, Coordinating manager

A range of challenges faced this project. Sex offenders are amongst the most difficult group of offenders to “place” in terms of employment for a range of reasons, including the emotive nature of the offences and the potential reaction of other employees.

There was a need to develop the work with partners from the business community many of whom had no previous experience of work with high risk offenders, working in a custodial environment or working within the Criminal Justice environment. Therefore, it was essential to form strong partnership arrangements to ensure that an appropriate representation of skills, experience and knowledge informed the planning of the project.

It was also necessary to identify and address the likely concerns and fears from professionals about the prospect of sex offenders moving into self employment; including whether such a project could be made to work within such a short timeframe and how to evaluate its effectiveness.

To establish a strong research pilot it was essential to set the project up in a way that was structured to be open to audit and evaluation. This required the use of accredited and validated processes and tools, attention to detail, with all information recorded and justifiable.

The project was assisted in the early stages by a firm acceptance by professionals and partners who showed a willingness to engage, despite concerns about the risks. There was also recognition of the potential value of the project once it had appropriate procedures and safeguards in place.
There was close liaison and consultation with partners and stakeholders in the design and development of a process to risk assess offenders and the project benefited from a strong commitment from Business Link (now Business Venture) from the beginning.

Staff in the project quickly learned that the key to good decision making in this area relied upon sound risk management, informed by a process which drew information together from all personnel and fed into MAPPA. Clarity about risk factors and the need for restrictions was central to all decision making in these cases.

The use of motivational interviewing and a positive approach was central to engaging the offenders in the target group because of their frequently held negative view of themselves, reinforced by others. A belief in their own ability to achieve was key in motivating the beneficiaries.

**Most successful Achievements**

- Partnerships are working effectively
- Six beneficiaries are trading or are self employed.
- Circles of Support and Accountability has been delivered with five beneficiaries in the Lancashire and Cheshire areas.
- There has been substantial learning as a project team
- High levels of motivation have been achieved amongst the offenders enrolled
- A business mentor has delivered pilot business mentoring with two men.
- We have learned that suitability; attitudes, values, and response to supervision are more important than technical skills
- We have learned that the profile of offenders who have been successful are very similar (low risk, first offence, treatment and relapse prevention focused, from an ex-professional background)
If we are to raise the levels of employment amongst ex-offenders it is not sufficient to raise their employability skills, we MUST ALSO engage employers in the process and address their needs.

Employers expressed the following views:

- They wanted more information on the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act
- They wanted more information on Risk Management concerns – what was the risk to staff, public and their stock?
- They wanted to understand more about the offender (what happened to them in prison, how had they progressed, what had they learned?)
- They wanted people with clear basic skills, but more importantly they wanted reliable people with the social skills to work in a team
- They wanted to know the cost/benefit of employing an ex-offender
- They wanted help managing the risk and suggested providing mentors/work buddies and a telephone helpline
- Many expressed a willingness to employ ex-offenders but the type of offence was important (specifically in relation to arson and sex offences)
- They were happy to deal with professionals trying to place ex-offenders into work but wanted one clear point of contact who could also offer support

Using steering groups and consultation with employers, an Employer Engagement Strategy was developed.

EQUAL funding has employment for disadvantaged target groups at its core. The end goal of the funding is to ensure greater equality in economic activity. Both the Asset and Ascend project themes had employer engagement objectives as key components of their work plans.

The holistic needs and skills gaps of offenders are well understood. However the IMPACT partnership felt strongly that not enough information was available on what employers thought about ex-offenders. As a result Manchester University undertook extensive research commissioned by IMPACT that consulted with small and large employers across the North West to find out specifically what their fears and needs were in relation to employing ex-offenders 5

5 Employer consultation Survey; employers’ attitudes towards the employment of ex-offenders, Brown, Haselwood-Pocsik and Spencer, 2006
The proposal set out clear strategic links to economic development plans in the North West and to the Reducing Re-offending Action Plan, which outlines priorities for the Criminal Justice sector. The strategy has been dovetailed into the North West Area Employer Engagement Forum, accessing stakeholders at a senior level.

The strategy also outlined a list of employer engagement activities that IMPACT (via the Asset and Ascend work-themes) was committed to trial and review, and to measure their effectiveness as methods of engaging employers.

The following elements were all trialled or developed for use under the Employer Engagement Strategy:

- **Apply Within CD-ROM** – this interactive CD-ROM is aimed at HR professionals and large employers (e.g. Local Authorities and Health Services). It covers legislation, good practice around fair recruitment and gives video clip examples of success stories and barriers overcome.

- **Employer Vacancy Database** – On behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions and alongside the National Employer Panel, Job Centre Plus and the National Job Developers; IMPACT has developed a database that logs employers with vacancies which can be matched to the skills of offenders coming out of custody. This national pilot has gone live – for further information go to the Working Ventures website; www.wvuk.co.uk and search for the Exit2Work initiative.

- **Employment Charter** – IMPACT has developed and signed up employers in the North West to a charter indicating their commitment to employing ex-offenders and fair recruitment.

- **Model for Local Employer Engagement Events** – IMPACT is trialling successful models for events that can be used by Prisons and Probation Services in local areas to engage local employers.

- **Portfolio of Achievement** – Employers told us they wanted to see more than a generic Record of Achievement. They worked with IMPACT to design a Portfolio of Achievement which documents the rehabilitative journey during sentence. The Portfolio includes personal statements and character appraisals from tutors, personal officers, mentors and other professionals involved in the offender’s interventions.

- **Employers who will publicly champion employing ex-offenders** – over the last two years of delivery, IMPACT now has excellent relationships with employers who have had successful experience of employing ex-offenders.

- **Work Trials and Mentors** - with prisons offering Release on Temporary Licence; IMPACT has been developing work trials, building relationships with local employers, offering volunteer support mentors and providing offenders with much needed work experience, positive regimes and, importantly, current and valuable work references that are available on release.

In the sections that follow, this publication attempts to give a flavour of some of the Employer Engagement activity that has occurred over the last three years of IMPACT Phase 2, allowing researchers, staff and employers tell the story of their involvement in their own words.
The Researcher’s Perspective: Ilona Haslewood-Pocsik
(From the report by The Criminal Justice Research Unit, School of Law, The University of Manchester, working with IMPACT, on a survey undertaken on a sample of 2,500 employers)

Few employers appear to actively promote the recruitment of ex-offenders; that is, they make no special efforts to recruit from this particular resource. However, for those employers who had recruited ex-offenders, the overall impression was of a positive experience.

A large number of employers in the survey (60 per cent) requested information on an applicant’s criminal record for all posts. However, it is also apparent that many companies, especially those without a dedicated Human Resources Department, are unfamiliar with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (ROA 1974). Approximately a quarter of employers requesting information on criminal convictions reported that their recruitment staff were not aware of the provisions of the ROA (1974). The awareness of the ROA is considerably lower amongst those companies that do not knowingly employ ex-offenders. This is surprising considering that the ROA (1974) is the central piece of legislation in relation to the employment of people with criminal convictions.

The type of offence committed is seen as crucial in the recruitment process. For the vast majority of employers the policy in relation to recruitment depends upon the type of offence committed. Therefore, a ‘hierarchy’ of offence types exists. The majority of employers stated that those with convictions of sexual offences (70 per cent) and arson (71 per cent) would never be considered for employment. Many companies use the information on criminal convictions to come to a decision on the appropriateness of the applicant for the job for which they have applied. The relevance of the offence to the job is seen as pivotal by employers.

Employers were asked to highlight the key factors that were influential in dissuading them from employing an ex-offender. First and foremost, employers have concerns about the possible risk to customers and to other staff posed by an ex-offender. They also expressed concerns about trustworthiness, and some employers raised issues about dependability and reliability. Although some of the concerns might be defined as somewhat stereotypical in relation to ex-offenders, there can be no doubt that they are real concerns.

The survey also asked employers to comment on what forms of support they would find useful if they considered employing ex-offenders. A large number of employers were of the view that access to personal support for ex-offenders, such as the provision of mentoring, would be beneficial. They were also of the view that access to support for employers, for example a nominated contact person, would be useful.

Furthermore, more than half of the consulted employers viewed guidance on risk assessments and the safeguards that are in place in the management of offenders helpful in supporting a decision to employ ex-offenders. The provision of such support may well reduce the anxiety employers hold in relation to the employment of ex-offenders.

Encouragingly, over half of the respondents considered that employers have a role to assist in the reintegration of offenders into the community. This is supported by the views
of those employers who have employed ex-offenders.

**Key points**
- Employers seemed to be most concerned about the risks posed by the individual with a criminal record, and less concerned about the individual not being motivated to work hard or not deserving to be in employment.
- The highest proportion of employers would find personal support useful for both the ex-offender employee and for the employer, and that more than half of employers would also find guidance on risk assessments and safeguards useful.
- Offering personal support in the form of a mentor for the ex-offender and a nominated contact person for the employer could form a central part of the engagement strategy.
- It is also important that any employer engagement strategy acknowledges employers’ anxieties about risk posed by ex-offenders, and about the existence of personal qualities that constitute a good worker, such as honesty, reliability, and acceptable personal behaviour.

This report is available in full on the IMAPCT website www.equal-impact.com.

**The Staff Perspective: Karen Henry, Work Trial Project Manager, SOVA (voluntary sector partners with IMPACT)**

An objective of the High Intensity Centre (HIT) for young offenders (aged 16-21) at HMYOI Thorn Cross is to rehabilitate beneficiaries back into the community by placing them in work placements in their own geographical areas during their custodial period by releasing them on temporary licence.

IMPACT targeted employment providers, training establishments and further education colleges to achieve the following objectives on behalf of the young people:
- Gain realistic work experience
- Instil the discipline and structure of working life gained from work experience
- Develop skills relevant to the labour market
- Improve self confidence and esteem
- Provide information relating to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (disclosure of criminal convictions to potential employers)

Previous convictions revealed by CRB (Criminal Record Bureau checks) are often the stumbling block to employment, staff will discuss the details of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act with the employer and review the risks associated with previous convictions. The employers are keen to gain information about risk and how to manage it from staff, and have said that they appreciate the on-going support that the staff offer them.

Working out of the prison happens whilst the beneficiary is under ROTL (Release on Temporary Licence) for the last four weeks of their stay at Thorn Cross. A work placement is identified and agreed, then the employer has full support from the SOVA team (on a daily basis) and of course the HIT Unit prison staff. The IMPACT/SOVA employment team builds new contacts and maintains good relationships with existing employers. It also provides the monitoring and feedback necessary for evaluation and further funding.

Some challenges start when working ‘through the gate’ when the beneficiary is released. If the beneficiary is on licence when released, the Probation Service provides support and a hand over between agencies is required. If there is no licence, a volunteer mentor from SOVA can support the beneficiary, but the beneficiary needs to request this support.

The Employment team work with beneficiaries/client groups from HMP Kirkham, HMP Risley, HMP Haverigg, HMP Buckley Hall and HMP Styal, also providing each one of these establishments with ‘through-the-gate’ sign-posting to referral agencies regarding employment and training opportunities. We are very proud of our working and engaging with employers over the years and the diverse areas of occupational interest. The HIT Unit work placement programme has clear evidence of success. It is supplemented by education, vocational skills, team
building and Duke of Edinburgh award schemes to help beneficiaries to build their own confidence and ability to re-integrate back into society effectively. Employers have been recruited to work with the project from fields such as: Quantity Surveying; Town Planning; Film Production; Stables; Landscape Gardening; Fitness attendants; Warehousing; Retail; Voluntary Work; Labouring; Construction; Catering; Fork Lift Truck Training and construction.

Employers have been drawn from: Lancashire; Cheshire; Worcester; Midlands; Leicester; Staffs; Shropshire; Newcastle-Upon-Tyne; Ashton Under Lyne; Scotland; Grimsby; Peterborough; Nottinghamshire; South Devon; Cumbria; Lincolnshire; South and West Yorkshire; Kidderminster; Swindon and Wiltshire to name a few!

Partnerships and relationship building with colleges have resulted in positive work with Warrington Collegiate College; East Durham Community College; Stoke on Trent College; Reaseheath College (Horticultural); Myerscough College; Hugh Baird and Bradford and Ilkley College. Training has been brokered through North Cheshire Training (FLT) Warrington and Specialist Skills (FLT) Manchester.

12,555 Hours of work have been provided by beneficiaries from the HIT Unit at Thorn Cross over the last 2 years (1 Mar 05 – 30 April 07) 4146 hours of direct support were provided to young people being mentored at HMYOI Lancaster Farms. Of the 39 young people mentored, 25 have now been released and at the time of writing 64% had not re-offended.

Over 430 Companies have been involved since the start of HIT programme at Thorn Cross

The SOVA team at IMPACT are very proud of the achievements of their staff, the employers and the lads they work with.

An Employer’s Perspective: Chris Littlewood, Business Development Manager, Computer Recycling Technologies Limited

Computer Recycling Technologies Limited is a specialist environmental company that deals in the refurbishment and resale of redundant I.T. Equipment.

We identified an on going requirement for additional labour assistance within our warehouse processing operations and felt as a responsible community based business; it would be an excellent exercise to provide an opportunity for young offenders to start to re-integrate in to a working environment.

We have had a number of young men working on placements and the exercise has been without exception an outstanding success.

The process is initiated with a visit to Thorn Cross and an interview with a potential candidate for placement.

The interview is conducted similarly to a standard job interview procedure. I run through an explanation of what the Company does on a day to day basis, what duties and responsibilities the candidate will be expected to perform on a daily basis, and what the organisation is like to work for.

I will ask questions relating to the candidates past work and social experiences in order to gain a view of placement suitability.

In general, I am looking for personality traits that show enthusiasm, a level of commitment and ability to work within a team and take instructions.

The candidates have presented me with a Portfolio of Achievements they have developed through their time at Thorn Cross, personally I feel the portfolio helps me make informed decisions on each person I interview.

Having spent 20 years in a senior recruitment position, it is my belief that without the in-depth Portfolio that each candidate has presented to
me, it would be extremely difficult to make the same informed decisions on a person’s suitability, character and personality.

As a potential employee the Portfolios show that a person’s incarceration has not been time wasted, but has been used positively in an effort to re-integrate with society.

The last 3 placements we have had have been really positive, I would have felt comfortable offering all of them full time positions within the company after release from Thorn Cross, but their home locations after release have prevented this. We are however looking in to the possibility of full time employment with our current placement.

At the end of each placement I provide references written for each individual to present to any potential employers.

The changes within the lads are remarkable to say the least. The more time they spend within our working environment, the more confident they become. All have shown a brilliant aptitude for the projects and tasks they are given and all react very positively to working within our team ethos of hard work and individual responsibility.

It is my belief that we are helping each of the placements we take on board to re-adjust to the outside community and are preparing them for work by placing on them the normal demands required of our employees. Our company benefits greatly through the efforts employed by each placement candidate. It is an arrangement we intend to continue.
Alice Williams, Co-ordinating Manager

Why is research important in the criminal justice system?

For professionals and communities alike, creating safer communities is at the forefront of everyone’s agenda. Developing effective ways to prevent crime and reduce re-offending is essential in creating a safer Britain. Statutory organisations involved in the criminal justice arena are striving to address the key issues associated with offending behaviour. Recidivism is estimated to cost the taxpayer £11bn annually, not including the costs to the victim, and the trauma they may experience. There is a clear benefit to moving offenders into becoming ex-offenders, reducing their offending lifestyle and becoming economically active. Public, private and voluntary sectors all have a vested interest in understanding how this can be achieved most effectively.

IMPACT received EQUAL funding to address research questions around what interventions really work and produce results at getting ex-offenders into work. Not only does this end result benefit the individual in turning away from a life of crime, but the benefits arising from economic re-integration and reduced re-offending to the taxpayer are significant. Being clear about what interventions and approaches are effective also ensures that current spending can be focused in the right places where it will achieve the best results. Society’s understanding of crime, causes of crime and dynamics in criminal lifestyles needs to improve and be constantly updated if we are to deliver effective interventions to reduce re-offending.

IMPACT’s EQUAL funding was focused on enhancing the employability of key target groups of ex-offenders. Since studies have shown that stable employment is one of the most important factors in preventing future offending, the important research question was how can employability be effectively enhanced? However, offenders often experience multiple barriers to gaining and sustaining employment. Since over a quarter of the working age population, and up to 40% of men have a criminal conviction (Home Office 2002), this affects a large percentage of the available workforce.
IMPACT focused on target groups that experience double disadvantage in accessing employment:
- Older men
- Young men aged between 16 and 21
- Women
- Black and minority ethnic groups
- Sex offenders

The common thread between these target groups is that all experience additional barriers to gaining and sustaining employment and are more likely to encounter difficulties in accessing the job market. Since a “one size fits all” approach does not work with offenders with complex needs, the IMPACT research looked at developing intervention responses addressing the differing needs of these target groups.

What is Action Research?

Action research is a research approach that seeks to test theories about what works via real project delivery on the ground. Commonly used in sociological research, it offers an opportunity to build intervention delivery models based on a carefully thought through theory and tests the approach by delivering the work and evaluating the results. IMPACT has undertaken a range of action research interventions in custodial and community settings around the North West; involving staff and offenders in the design of the programmes and in any subsequent improvements, through feedback and focus groups, and in the final evaluation.

Delivering IMPACT’s Research Programmes

In order to build robust programmes, IMPACT staff followed a structured pattern to ensure the programmes were well grounded in current knowledge in the field. Staff and offenders working with/from the key target groups were asked to identify what they felt the key barriers to accessing employment were. Following the focus groups’ suggestions, IMPACT commissioned a range of academic research with several North West universities to gain greater depth of understanding. Armed with in-depth information, the action research programmes were designed, ready for live trials.

Developing the Interventions

- What is the perceived gap in intervention/service provision that is forming a barrier to individuals from a key target group accessing employment?
- Academic Research and consultation examines the details of the issues and reviews what practice and theory is currently in use.
- Focus groups and staff design programmes/projects
- Project trials are repeated and review and feedback are again key tools in the process
- Where possible the projects are trialled with other target groups/in other settings to review the transferability of the intervention
- Projects are delivered in a range of community and custodial settings. Constant review offers opportunities for feedback, improvements, re-directing of focus as necessary.
- External and internal evaluation, and tracking of individual post-intervention (re: their employment status) establishes how the programmes have been successful.
The development of IMPACT’s “Thinking Skills for the Workplace” cognitive behaviour programme is a good illustration of using the above flow chart to design and test a new intervention.

**Step 1 – What are the resettlement gaps?**
Focus groups with offenders in custody suggested that some offenders on short sentences were not accessing the existing “Enhanced Thinking Skills” cognitive course that is provided in prisons. This was because they were not in custody long enough to access the lengthy ETS course, or progress through its waiting list. They felt the course would be helpful in addressing some of their Attitudes, Thinking and Behaviour (one of the Reducing Re-offending pathways) around positive resettlement, but they needed a course that could be accessed on short sentences.

In addition, an extensive consultation exercise with employers indicated that their main concern was that ex-offenders needed to have sufficient social skills to fit into a team. Employers said they could offer vocational training themselves, they expected core basic skills, but their main needs were for soft skills like problem solving, dealing with conflict and time-keeping.6

**Step 2 – Reviewing Available Academic Research and Current Practice**
A review of what is known and currently practiced in this field took place. Academic research supported the need for soft skills development. Fabiano et al (1996)7 suggested that job specific skills were not enough for success in the workplace. In order to access and sustain work, people need a triangle of skills starting with the base skills, then the Functional Skills, then the Job Skills. The academic review gave further evidence that action research addressing this gap would be valuable and produce results in supporting resettlement.

**Step 3 – Developing and Testing the project**
The IMPACT Psychology team developed a short programme focusing on soft skills to be delivered over 6 sessions. The programme was called “Thinking Skills for the Workplace”. The programme was run with young people at HMYOI Thorn Cross several times with evaluation and feedback sessions after each course. The course was validated for continued use.

**Step 4 – Transferability**
The “Thinking Skills for the Workplace” course was subsequently delivered to women offenders at HMP Styal, and Black and Minority Ethnic offenders at HMP Buckley Hall. This allowed the programme to be tested with other target groups who have different needs to address their offending. Feedback sessions and focus groups enabled participants to suggest amendments to the programme to ensure that it met their needs more specifically. A key learning outcome from these extended trials was that one of the strengths of the Thinking Skills course is that it uses examples drawn from the participants. This methodology of delivery sticks to the learning points, but allows flexibility and congruence with the audience. The course has also been delivered in a range of community settings with Greater Manchester Probation Service Approved Premises, and Unpaid Work unit.

**Step 5 – Evaluation**
The Thinking Skills for the Workplace course has also had a successful external evaluation. In addition to evaluating the course specifically, IMPACT is also tracking participants at one, three, six and twelve months post-release. The tracking process looks at whether people have been successful in securing and keeping education, training or employment, and whether this is full or part time. While a longer longitudinal study would be useful, it is not possible in the current funding timescale.

**Sharing the Learning – Disseminating “What Works”**
There is another step beyond a positive evaluation that is key to a successful action research project. Sharing the research outcomes and the developed good practice is essential. IMPACT has ensured that the results of the programmes are promoted widely at national conferences and events (see Chapter Nine). Thinking Skills for the Workplace is now being delivered as part of mainstream provision in most of the North West prison establishments.

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6 Employer consultation Survey; employers’ attitudes towards the employment of ex-offenders, Brown, Haselwood-Pocsik and Spencer, 2006

7 Employability; from Research to Practice; Fabiano, LaPlante & Loza (1996), Forum on Correction Research 8 (1)
This Chapter describes a range of products created or adapted by the IMPACT project. They are briefly summarised below so that the reader can access the items of most interest. Further information about all of these items can be found on www.equal-impact.com

1. **PORTFOLIO OF ACHIEVEMENT (POA)** This is a well produced folder containing qualifications and information about the ex-offender’s achievements in a style suitable for presentation to a prospective employer or training establishment. It includes information to enable the individual to discuss, in an open and positive way, issues around their offending and sentence.

2. **ROUTES 2 ROOTS** is a course developed in conjunction with partner agencies. It is designed to enable BME ex-offenders to explore their cultural identity and to empower them to tackle issues of racism and discrimination. It aims to encourage BME offenders to feel more confident about accessing mainstream provision and engaging in structural support.

3. **THINKING SKILLS FOR THE WORKPLACE (TSW)** is a cognitive programme that equips offenders with the thinking skills to enhance their employability.

4. **MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING (MI)** is a technique designed for staff working with offenders to help them identify and change their behaviour in order to stop re-offending.

5. **SELF-EMPLOYMENT** is a model of working with offenders towards independent employment. The model embodies the creation of a training programme in response to each individual’s need, designed to enhance the personal and business skills of beneficiaries wishing to set up in self employment.

6. **FIRE CADETS** is a full time course aimed at young people and delivered during the custodial period. Young people achieve specific skills related to fire fighting along with personal skills including; enhanced confidence, improved communication and problem solving, taking responsibility and working with others.

7. **VOLUNTEER MENTORS** This scheme recruits volunteers from an ex-offender’s home area to provide support during custody and resettlement.
with a focus on gaining and sustaining employment or training post-release.

8. **MENTOR 2 WORK** (a peer mentoring programme) trains suitable offenders in custody, who have experienced mental ill-health, to offer peer mentoring to those offenders with continuing difficulties.

9. **IMPACT CIRCLES** this programme; developed from the nationally acclaimed ‘Circles of Support and Accountability’, operating in the Thames Valley Area since 2002, uses approved mentors from the community to support the resettlement of sex offenders with a specific focus on generating self employment.

10. **PRISON BREAK** – this programme was developed with a local community organisation, and used restorative justice principles to get offenders released on temporary licence from custody to deliver community work, and to work in a preventative way with children from local schools. The participants warned of the dangers of gang affiliations and drug offences. The programme was extremely successful in challenging community stereotypes and reaching large numbers of children with hard hitting, credible messages.

1. **PORTFOLIO OF ACHIEVEMENT (POA)**

This is a simple method of recording offenders’ achievements, experience and aspirations, attitude and behaviour in a form suitable for presentation to a prospective employer or training establishment. IMPACT has used a high quality presentation binder to do this.

It was developed around existing good practice identified in both the National Record of Achievement and Progress File Schemes. The POA was designed specifically to address the concerns of employers, training providers, staff and other stakeholders when considering ex-offenders for employment. Previous documents had concentrated on qualifications and work experience. Although these remain key components of the current POA, there has been a shift towards incorporating information that demonstrates attitudinal and behavioural changes, or “distance travelled”. Research by IMPACT revealed that most recruitment decisions are based on the behaviour and attitude of the applicant. Employers formed part of the design group of the POA to ensure that the product was suitable to meet their needs. Feedback from employers who were presented with the POA by job applicants has been extremely positive.

Employers indicated that during recruitment, they were most interested in the following questions: Can I afford this person?
1. Can they do the job?
2. Can they work with my existing team?
3. Do they pose a risk?

The first question does not affect ex-offenders specifically; however, questions 2, 3 and 4 can cause ex-offenders problems. The POA is a direct attempt to try and overcome these barriers. The POA includes actual examples of relevant work by the offender. For instance, photographic evidence is included to demonstrate the offender’s skills at a particular task such as bricklaying.

The POA includes appraisals of the ex-offender’s character written by professionals within the Criminal Justice Sector (CJS). For example, an ex-offender’s personal officer, tutors and mentors could include statements in the POA outlining the skills knowledge and attitudes of the individual. Additionally, the ex-offender completes their personal statement; which
outlines how they have grown, personally, during their time in custody and how they feel they will be able to add value to an employer’s business. Through these features the POA puts offenders in a stronger position when attempting to gain employment.

IMPACT’s Education Liaison Officers work closely with the Case Officer and the ex-offender to compile and verify the information contained in the POA. This reassures employers as to the accuracy of the information and ensures standardised format and delivery.

A POA “toolkit” has been produced to be utilised by establishments interested in implementing a Portfolio of Achievement scheme. The toolkit is available to download on the IMPACT website. This includes a guidance manual, publicity material and a CD containing software resources. The POA offers a low cost, low resource way of demonstrating to ex-offenders, themselves - and to employers - their current job readiness.

2. ROUTES 2 ROOTS

Routes2Roots is a modular course developed in conjunction with partner agencies and is designed to:
- enable BME ex-offenders to explore their cultural identity and to raise their self-esteem
- empower BME ex-offenders by tackling issues of racism and addressing internalised discrimination often faced by this group
- create a safe environment for BME ex-offenders to enable them to speak openly and honestly about issues that matter to them.
- utilise community based facilitators from diverse backgrounds

Routes2Roots is based on the concept of ‘inter-culturalism’, which is defined as ‘the opportunity for different communities to learn more about each other by a process of mutual learning and joint growth’.

The rationale behind the course:
- The over-representation of Black prisoners in the Criminal Justice System
- The acknowledgement of institutional racism, highlighted in the Mubarek Inquiry (2004) following the tragic murder of Zahid Mubarek by his cellmate Robert Stewart at HMYOI Feltham
- Needs analysis showed very few group work programmes designed to encourage self-esteem and a positive cultural identity for BME ex-offenders
- BME groups do not engage in mainstream courses and Offender Behaviour Programme’s as much as their white counterparts

The course was developed and designed by a number of IMPACT partners, including organisations with expertise in this field. A working party consisted of representatives from statutory, voluntary and private sector agencies. The group was informed by a review of academic understanding and research into the barriers to employment experienced by BME ex-offenders. Focus groups with offenders were also held at HMP’s Garth, Risley and Buckley Hall to further inform the programme.

- 3 courses have been run to date
- Community trials will also take place in partnership with Merseyside Probation in the Toxteth area
- The course has been validated through Open College Network (OCN) at levels 1 and 2
- External Evaluation by WME Consultants has showed extremely positive results
- One graduate of the course felt sufficiently empowered to become a representative of the prison Race Equality Action Team whilst another felt confident enough to apply for the position of gym orderly.
- Graduates of the last course have also used the skills learnt to address issues of race relations though mediation rather than through more formal channels.

Other feedback has included course graduates reporting:
- A greater understanding of relationships and social networks; in particular participants have reported more understanding and productive relationships with Prison Officers and other prisoners
- A better comprehension of black history, black achievements and identity
- Increased self-esteem, self-belief and confidence
- Strong identification with positive role models
- Improved communication skills
- A greater understanding of other cultural groups
and religions as well as their own

- A greater understanding of race relations within the prison setting.

There is also anecdotal reporting of improved progression through the prison system and improved confidence in employment prospects, although further studies would need to confirm this. Further information on this course and how to access it can be obtained from the IMPACT website.

3. THINKING SKILLS FOR THE WORKPLACE (TSW)

Thinking Skills for the Workplace is a cognitive programme that aims to equip offenders with the thinking skills to enhance their employability. It builds on research that demonstrates a link between cognitive deficits and an offender’s ability to function prosocially.

Many offenders identify unemployment problems as a contributory factor in their criminal behaviour and see preparation for employment as an important factor to post-release success. There is a strong emphasis for offenders to gain educational and vocational skills in order to boost their employability. However, an emphasis on teaching job specific skills is not enough as other employment related skills are needed. Employers perceive skills such as teamwork, cooperation, problem solving, and dealing with authority, thinking and learning skills and personal management skills as more important than vocational skills.

As cognitive skills are seen as important in achieving employment, the TSW course improves offenders understanding of the workplace, the behavioural requirements and how to respond more appropriately at work. It incorporates work based examples to aid in the transition from training to real life work situations. The offenders work in a group which allows the course members to learn from shared experience, while promoting motivation and cultivating an environment of peer support. This helps to increase employability and reduce the risk of re-offending.

There are four main areas addressed;-

- **Understanding “Perspective taking”** - this is where the offender has difficulty in agreeing with rules, regulations and standards. They exhibit a lack of participation in team work, find interaction difficult with co-workers and have problems dealing with authority. An egocentric approach to problem solving can lead to a lack of co-operation with the employer and fellow employees.

- **Enhancing Problem solving** - this encourages consideration of consequences; such as attendance patterns, motivation and attitude. This can improve the ability to generate alternative action strategies when difficulties are encountered and to identify and define problems.

- **Developing Self control and Social skills** - these issues are evaluated by looking at impulsive actions, improving the ability to set goals for own standards of performance and enhancing the ability to learn new tasks.

The course consists of six sessions lasting two hours each, using a variety of teaching methods such as; role play, skills practice and discussion. Because the course can be delivered - by two tutors - over a one, two or even three week period, the group members are allowed time to reflect upon what they have learnt and have time to practice in a workshop, educational or other setting.

Through a “Train the Trainer” methodology, this course has been mainstreamed into most of the HM Prisons in the North West, thus reaching a wide range of offenders and giving them the skills and experience to look at their offending behaviour and make significant changes to their lifestyle.

**Community Transferability**

Both Routes2Roots and Thinking Skills for the Workplace were designed to be trialled for their transferability into community settings.

**Thinking Skills for the Workplace**

The transferability of Thinking Skills for the Workplace has been extremely successful with its roll out to Unpaid Work Units across Greater Manchester’s nine Districts. This involved training a pool of facilitators and adapting
the course to ensure its relevance to community groups. Facilitators reported improvements in self-esteem, confidence, assertiveness and communication skills evident amongst graduates of the course.

Routes2Roots

The transferability of Routes2Roots is set to take place with a mixed group (men and women) in Merseyside Probation Area at the South Liverpool Probation Centre, a locality characterised by a high proportion of BME groups. This will be a condensed three day version of the 10 session course which is normally delivered over 5 days to meet the particular needs of this community group.

4. MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING for STAFF

One of the objectives of the Criminal Justice System is to help change those aspects of an offenders’ behaviour which contribute to and support their criminal lifestyle, with the aim of reducing re-offending. For offenders to engage in any process which may lead to change they need to be motivated to embrace that change.

Motivational Interviewing (MI) is an approach based on the principle that all human behaviour is motivated. Originally developed for use with people who had problems with alcohol and drugs, it has now been applied to a wide range of problem areas including offending behaviour. MI has a directive and client centred approach designed to help an individual change their problem behaviour by allowing them to explore and resolve ambivalence which is seen as the primary obstacle to change. Therefore, it acknowledges that many people experience ambivalence when deciding to make changes – they both want and do not want to change as all change involves a loss. It also acknowledges that people can perceive both the advantages and disadvantages of change as well as maintaining their current lifestyle. The aim is not to focus immediately on the action of changing but working to enhance motivation to change.

Whilst MI is a directive approach it is not confrontational or ‘pushy’ but employs a style that allows the individual to move towards change rather than it being externally imposed. The motivation to change has to come from within or it is unlikely to be sustained, therefore, the underlying power of the motivational interviewing technique is that the offender resolves for himself, or herself, to change the behaviour rather than having it suggested or advised by someone else.

The ethos of motivational work is having a genuine desire to understand and empower others to change.

To achieve this it is necessary to:
- Explore the positive and negative consequences of an offending lifestyle
- Provide opportunity to explore their specific concerns
- Use reflective listening and summaries to understand and communicate understanding
- Elicit self-motivational statements
- Help enable the offender to decide whether to change
- Avoid arguing, imposing labels, or trying to break down denial with confrontation.
- Understand the Cycle of Change (Prochaska and Di Clemente, 1982) to determine which stage the individual is at, i.e. Pre-contemplative, contemplative, decision, action, maintenance or (re)lapse
- Utilise techniques and tools to facilitate change in the individual.

According to Miller and Rollnick the culture within prison establishments has traditionally been adversarial and thus not conducive to the collaborative spirit of motivational interviewing. They argue that the techniques used in motivational interviewing have the potential to provide people working face to face with offenders with the skills that will increase the effectiveness of their interactions.

The MI training package was developed with the needs of the Prison Service staff and others working within the Criminal Justice System in mind. The package can be delivered in just one day and, to date, training has been delivered to staff at more than twenty HM Prison Service establishments and other Criminal Justice agencies.

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An enhancement to the training package is a DVD which shows motivational interviewing techniques in action.

Over 200 people from Prison establishments and other Criminal Justice agencies have been trained over the past twelve months. In addition, staff in over ten North West establishments and agencies have received additional support to enable them to train staff in their own establishments.

5. SELF-EMPLOYMENT MODEL

A model of self-employment training for offenders in custody was created after a gap in provision in the Prison Service training programme was highlighted. It was felt that there was too much emphasis on education within the Prison Service and too little focus on the business and working side of an offender’s life. The Self Employment model aims to assess, train and support ex-offenders towards earning a living via their own business or through freelance work.

IMPACT worked with key partners to develop this initiative; HMPS, the Probation Service and, importantly, the business training was provided through our partners Business Venture. This partnership was essential to bring the right mix of risk management, understanding of offenders and the criminal justice system, business and enterprise expertise together. From the outset it was important to manage risk and future offending and supply appropriate business advice.

The model of self-employment was designed to provide individuals with an opportunity not only to learn new skills but also to learn about themselves, their aspirations and their potential whilst developing the confidence to move towards realising that potential. The model is tailored to address the specific needs and goals of each beneficiary. Offenders are assessed by case managers, initially, and referred to a case conference, followed by one-to-one training during the custodial period, then referral to subsequent case conferences and support sessions. The individual creates business plans, budgeting and marketing strategies.

All sessions are evaluated by the offender who provides written feedback. Feedback received has been positive, with individuals highlighting the fact that they have learnt valuable information and are treated with respect. So far there are six beneficiaries who are in self-employment, all in very different areas of business.

While this model was trialled with sex offenders during the IMPACT project, (since this group faces very specific barriers to gaining employment post-release) it is transferable to other sectors of the ex-offender population. It is envisaged that this model could be added to the training curriculum in prisons, encouraging larger numbers of ex-offenders to think about self-employment as an option on release and equipping with the skills to do so.

6. FIRE CADETS – A Programme for Young People

The Fire Cadet Programme is a 12 week, full time, intensive course for young offenders in custody. It introduces learning by stealth to young people who have often been out of formal education for a long time and mixes it with learning to be an active fire fighter. Young people’s interest in the nature of the course is enhanced by team building activities and community projects. For many young people it is the first time
they have achieved qualifications, formal learning and stuck with a structured programme. The course is run jointly by staff at HMYOI Thorn Cross, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and the IMPACT Project.

The course encourages personal development of young people aged 15-17. Young people (Fire Cadets) benefit from raised self-esteem, self-confidence, self-motivation and team working. The programme enables cadets to gain new skills and qualifications including the Health and Safety First Aid at Work Certificate and the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award. Cadets experience a wide range of on-site training opportunities in the Thorn Cross Education Department including Literacy, Numeracy, IT and Citizenship NVQ’s.

The training at Thorn Cross is complemented by a programme of external activities to gain valuable community service experience. By visiting Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service establishments and local industries, cadets underwent simulation exercises learning how to use different fire equipment; for example ladders, hoses and fire extinguishers. Cadets also undertook a range of community projects from supporting local community events to forest clean up activities. In addition, fire cadets benefited from IMPACT’s ‘Portfolio of Achievement’. Cadets also had the opportunity to be matched to a volunteer mentor from their home community, for support, both within custody and during the first few weeks post-release.

The course makes a significant contribution to the rehabilitation of young offenders, crime reduction and improved community safety. This challenging programme combining interest and excitement is capable of acting as a catalyst for change in young offender’s attitudes, knowledge and desire to change their way of life. Thorn Cross staff have seen a positive change in both the attitude and behaviour of those who have taken part and also a positive impact on new arrivals at Thorn Cross.

The programme is a superb example of multi-agency partnership working, in an innovative way, to deliver new and exciting interventions which are appropriate to age and gender aiming to engage ‘hard to reach’ young people in a way that appeals to them.

The Fire Cadet Programme was highly commended at the Criminal Justice Awards in 2006 and won the Best Civic Society Alliance award at the Youth Justice Alliance Awards 2007. The programme also won a The Butler Trust Award in 2007.

The Thorn Cross Fire Cadet Programme is suitable to be used as a template for further development in establishments nationwide.

7. VOLUNTEER MENTORS

IMPACT trialled a project using volunteer mentors to assist ex-offenders to resettle back into their communities. In partnership with SOVA, a large national charity with expertise in this field, IMPACT recruited volunteers from all sections of the local community to support a range of offenders coming out of prison and returning to their communities.

Volunteer mentors support ex-offenders in custody and the community by building positive relationships by offering support, guidance and encouragement. Through these mentoring relationships volunteers can contribute to reducing offending and making communities safer. Work with the offender depends on the nature of their offending and the factors that contribute to it. This includes support in finding information on employment, training and educational options. Help is provided in practising job search skills, such as form filling and interview techniques. Help can be given to find accommodation, start a new interest
and improve reading and writing skills.

The volunteer helps build the confidence, motivation and self-esteem of the offender by helping them put into practice the new skills and behaviours they have learnt on offending behaviour programmes. Volunteers work to an agreed Action Plan with the ex-offender in order to support them in custody and the community; this is monitored and reviewed for positive progress. Volunteers receive regular supervision from staff. Volunteer mentors undergo a careful selection process, against a set of specifications, and this is supported by reference and criminal record checks to ensure their suitability for working with ex-offenders. A volunteer mentor is an additional resource to the probation, prison or other professional staff, not a substitute.

All volunteer mentors complete an initial accredited training course (National Open College Network Level 2).

The standard SOVA preparatory course covers:
- The role, responsibilities and boundaries of being a mentor
- Equal opportunities and Health and Safety
- Confidentiality and Child protection
- Communication and interpersonal skills
- Helping strategies
- Community and Criminal Justice Awareness
- Issues facing ex-offenders in custody and the community
- Barriers to learning
- Self esteem, motivation, goal setting and Action Planning

Mentors have proved extremely successful in a number of establishments. Extensive feedback has demonstrated the value that the mentees place on the relationships. A study at HMYOI Lancaster Farms demonstrated that of young people with mentor relationships 64% had not re-offended, compared to a more usual figure of approximately 70% re-offending rate for young people coming out of custody.

It is hoped to expand the number of volunteer mentors into all areas of the community. With ongoing support in the community ex-offenders are less likely to re-offend.

8. MENTOR 2 WORK - A Peer Mentoring Programme for those in Custody

Mentor 2 Work is an innovative project delivering peer mentor training to individuals in custody who have experienced mental ill-health who then become mentors to offenders who are currently experiencing mental health problems. The mentors are additionally supported on their release into the community with an employment support advisor. Mentor 2 Work adopts an “experts by experience” approach as it puts an emphasis on recognising the unique skills and experience of people who have used mental health services and who live in prison. These skills offer support to those who are less well in custody. The overall result is improvements in health for the mentee and improvements in soft skills and self esteem for the mentor.

Mentor 2 Work was developed in partnership with Network Employment (a part of MerseyCare NHS Trust). People in prison who have mental health issues are doubly disadvantaged and face multiple barriers when it comes to moving into employment. Research has shown that people with mental health problems who take on a work role, either paid or unpaid, are motivated to manage their health problems if given appropriate support. People with mental health problems face greater levels of unemployment than any other group of disabled people and offenders in particular face high levels of discrimination. The beneficiaries on this project have to face the stigma of having a mental health issue and being an ex-offender. The project aims to address the key issues for those in custody with mental health issues by managing their condition, giving people soft transferable employability skills and finding routes into employment.

The model for the Mentor 2 Work project started with the delivery of a peer mentoring course to offenders with stabilised mental health issues, a bespoke module on mental health was added to the training. Graduates of the training course then became peer mentors to other prisoners within the custodial establishment. The mentoring relationships were matched and supervised by the course co-ordinator who offered de-briefing, one-to-one supervision, group supervision and self-development planning. The peer mentor was also matched with a Network Employment ETE advisor who
visited them in prison to complete a vocational plan. The employment advisor then supported the individual through the barriers upon release, i.e. housing, benefits, drug/alcohol services and then, ultimately, into employment using the supported employment model.

Clear benefits have been observed for both the mentees and mentors. Improvements in mental health, reduced medication, increased stability, increased self-esteem, more participation in mainstream prison interventions and movements out of hospital wings are just a selection of the results for the mentees.

The mentors have developed confidence, soft employment skills and - through the additional input of an employment advisor from Network Employment, who works with them through the gate - they have moved into training, education and employment.

An example of feedback from one beneficiary says he gained ‘confidence, self-esteem, motivation, I am worth something’. Another commented…”I used to find it hard to say no, but now I can see that it is a choice and I am able to make that choice now.’

Peer mentors demonstrated increased insight into the impact of their mental ill health and their actions on others. One felt he had ‘more of an understanding of the effects of mental health issues on fellow prisoners’. They felt they had benefited from a “person centred approach” which saw them as individuals and treated them ‘like real people’. They also felt the course had positive impacts on their life in prison …

‘Since being on the course I have been able to move from the health care centre to the wing, I am now able to cope with day to day life much better’

‘I was able to come off a 2052 (suicide watch) and be moved to a cat D (lower security) prison because of the mentoring course’

‘I have looked in the mirror for the first time in 20 years and liked what I saw. This course has shown me I can give something back’

Peer mentoring is a model that can be adapted to all genres; for example, drugs and alcohol use. The co-ordinator would like to see it continue in both HMP Liverpool and HMP Styal and develop in community settings and other prison establishments.

Further details are available from the website www.equal-impact.com alternately contact MerseyCare, Network to Employment on 0151 250 6078

9. IMPACT CIRCLES

IMPACT Circles is based on the successful ‘Circles of Support and Accountability’ project, which has been running in the Thames Valley area since 2002. IMPACT Circles are part of the research project for the Changing Directions work stream.

The IMPACT Circles element of the project works with sex offenders who are being released into the community on completion of their custodial sentence. The project works with the existing statutory provision for public protection and adds additional layers of support and supervision. The model works in the community by putting an offender (a core member) at the centre of a circle of specially trained community volunteers and professionals. The professionals provide support, risk assessment and communication flows with public protection bodies; the volunteers provide a pro-social role model and behave as “critical” friends to develop social skills and healthy citizenship.

The model for a Circle of Support and Accountability was developed to address key re-offending risks assessed in some sex offenders.

For many men convicted of sexual offences, low self-esteem, emotional loneliness, poor coping and lack of friends and family can contribute to the risk of re-offending. The Circles model can provide an element of normal human contact with the emphasis on support within the community and, also, communicate risk information back through the public protection channels (the accountability element of the programme).

The IMPACT model was set up based entirely on the best practice from Thames Valley project. All criminal justice agencies were consulted to involve them in the process. A Circles Co-ordinator was appointed and staff and volunteers were robustly trained. On-going support, supervision and training are essential to support the
volunteers.

IMPACT delivered a total of 6 successful Circles in the Lancashire and Cheshire probation regions during its research period.

The evaluation of the IMPACT Circles project can be seen in the IMPACT Final Evaluation Report on www.equal-impact.com However, the statistics from the Thames Valley project (over 5 years) and the pilot project in Canada (over 10 years) are a relevant basis for validation.

The results from the Thames Valley project indicate that no core member has been reconvicted of any new sexual offence and only one core member has been reconvicted for breach of a Sex Offender Prevention Order. There were several recalls to prison of the core members during this time based on information provided by the Circle volunteers that demonstrated changes in risk levels. These recalls are seen as a success, since they offer solid early intervention in the community to prevent further victims. The results from the pilot project in Canada show that the offenders who took part in the Circles of Support and Accountability had significantly lower rates of any type of re-offending than did the offenders who did not participate in the course. Specifically, offenders who participated had a 70% reduction in sexual recidivism, in contrast to the matched comparison group; a 57% reduction in all types of violent recidivism and an overall reduction of 35% in all types of recidivism.

Following the promising early results, the project staff would like Circles to be developed as part of the core MAPPA framework, which is linked to interventions in the prison and the community, and be resourced and subject to ongoing evaluation.

10. Prison Break

Another product which has achieved considerable success and recognition nationally is the Prison Break programme. This pre-release initiative was born out of a partnership with Preston United Youth Development Programme (YDP), a community and voluntary sector organisation aimed at improving community cohesion.

The programme involved seven BME prisoners from HMP Kirkham being released on temporary licence to carry out over 200 hours face to face youth work activities with young people aged between nine and nineteen. It also involved them speaking to young people about the negative effects of crime as a means of diverting them away from anti-social behaviour and criminal activity. The reparative element consisted of working with community groups to benefit the community and to help the beneficiaries to positively re-engage with their families and social networks by carrying out unpaid work. This also helped to dispel some of the discrimination and stereotyping that BME ex-offenders face from the community. A limited amount of mediation work took place with families of beneficiaries to re-establish or support these networks which are crucial for effective resettlement.

Beneficiaries also worked towards the following qualifications during the project:

- Preston Youth Development Programme Community Award
- Lancashire Youth Association Gold Award
- Community Sports Leaders Award
- Level 1 Football Coaching Certificate
Beneficiaries undertook a considerable amount of community restorative justice work in Preston, specifically in the Deepdale area, which is characterised by a large BME population and increasing levels of gang and drug related crime. Restorative justice activities included the clearance of the grounds and preparatory work at Deepdale Junior School, general improvement work at Preston Muslim Cemetery and the repainting of Preston Muslim Girls School.

Other outcomes achieved during this programme included:

- A highly innovative, unique and nationally recognised restorative justice project that can be used as a model elsewhere;
- Considerable benefits for prisoners involved in terms of the qualifications achieved, confidence and motivation gained and community acceptance;
- Important gains for the community and voluntary sector in engaging with the Prison Service and working in partnership with it resulting in mutually positive outcomes;
- Benefits for organisations that received assistance from the prisoners involved and who have now changed their perceptions of ex-offenders;
- Young people who are increasingly aware of the nature of the prison environment and the potential consequences of involvement with crime;
- The mediation work undertaken with families meant they are now increasingly accepting of an ex-offender after release and aware of the rehabilitation work undertaken.

The programme was showcased at the national Gangs in the UK: What’s Working conference in November 2007 and was featured on BBC News. The programme has since received national recognition from the Home Office and Youth Justice Board and locally from establishments such as HMP Buckley Hall and HMYOI Thorn Cross.

Following its external evaluation by WM Enterprise Consultants, it has been recognised that the programme is transferable to other groups i.e. not only BME groups but prisoners of any ethnicity. The evaluators also praised the content of the programme in meeting the objectives of reparative work in the community, mediation with families and gaining employment qualifications.
Managing Sensitive Information Across Complex Partnerships

Introduction

The legal requirements on all organisations that hold personal information on individuals are specific, uncompromising and absolute. They require that all personal information, whether held in paper or electronic form, is kept securely and accessed solely by persons who are entitled to view it as defined within the legislation. It is not sufficient for people to have authority to access systems, they must have a legitimate reason and authority to see each specific piece of information they view. This means that any user of a system may not browse its contents beyond their authority. The system must include safeguards that prevent inappropriate access whether intentional or accidental.

These requirements place substantial obligations on all organisations even if their systems are exclusive to their own staff. Where a project such as IMPACT has at its heart the sharing of information with employers and trainers, it needs to give careful thought to how that information is to be handled. Being a multi-agency project, where information is obtained and shared by staff from different agencies, there is a necessity for protocols, processes and safeguards beyond those of each of the constituent bodies and which require negotiation and technical solutions. Indeed the successful creation of a single case record for our beneficiaries was one of the most challenging, yet essential pieces of work that IMPACT took on. The contributions that follow show some of the issues that arose for IMPACT, some solutions found and some issues still unresolved.

Managing information within a multi-agency project

Bill Spiby, Co-ordinating Manager and Paul Duffy, Monitoring Manager

Multi-agency projects must ensure that they can comply with the Data Protection act 1998 and the Freedom of Information act 2000. It is often more difficult for multi-agency groups to do this, since they may have no unified policy. Most important is protecting the data of the offenders that are our beneficiaries.

In order to create effective management of information where several discrete organisations collaborate together, IMPACT needed a system that would get people from different agencies to work to a single record. Partners with different working cultures had different perspectives on this. Staff from the statutory agencies often had quite a clear view about what was
the important information. They were aware of issues, such as risk management, but these were not necessarily at the forefront of their thinking; staff from voluntary agencies often had a more client centred approach when looking at individual needs. Reconciling these differences took extensive discussions in a wide range of strategic and practitioner forums.

Ensuring the appropriateness of data that we hold is another very important issue. We must be able to demonstrate that we are holding the data for a useful purpose. Therefore any areas of information about a beneficiary that wouldn’t help key workers to conduct their role would be inappropriate until a strong reason for holding the data can be provided.

Key barriers were overcome by discussing the importance of data sensitivity with all staff to ensure that the protection of data was a high priority. An early step was developing unified data sharing policies through partnership agreements, or where appropriate, as stand-alone arrangements. From the beneficiaries’ point-of-view, they must sign an agreement that allows all partners access to their data. The agreement points out to beneficiaries that the data will only be used to assist them in breaking down barriers to their future employment.

Good practice was developed by following monitoring and compliance guidelines from ESF, and observing the Data Protection Act 1998. Staff were able to move on from here, developing innovative ways of both ensuring reasonable and practical access to key workers, as well as high-level security and sensitivity. Mindful of good practice in this complex area, IMPACT held several training sessions with its own Case Officers outlining the decision to make them lead professionals in respect of the case record. This resulted in clear accountability for gathering, holding and reviewing information for the case records. In addition, IMPACT held several training and review sessions to ensure that the data held on the case records consisted only of information that was required for the purposes of the project. In line with the legislation, non-essential information should not be held on individuals. IMPACT worked extremely hard at ensuring the project did not fall into this common pitfall.

A very important learning point has been the difficulty we have experienced in monitoring working on a centralised project, very much managed from a hub, but with many outposts. These outposts require a massive input from monitoring based on the number of beneficiaries they have. Monitoring these outposts from a central hub has been extremely challenging for a relatively small team.
In Summary:
The contributions below from IMPACT’s wide ranging partners have been honest and direct, they show an appreciation that goes beyond the frustrations and the areas where things can still be improved. IMPACT has created a rare opportunity for partners to try things and do things that would not otherwise have been done. Whatever the future is for IMPACT, the joint nature of this project has reinforced the view that tackling offending and rehabilitation of offenders is best done by organisations working together.

Introduction – the nature of partnerships

Partnership operates within IMPACT at several different levels, and ESF rules require it to be so.

Development Partners (DPs) are required within the bidding process to EQUAL where a lead partner, in this case the Prison Service must work with both statutory and voluntary partners who sign up for a share of the responsibility often including providing match funding for the project. The respective commitments are formalised in a Partnership Agreement. The document cannot be effective without proper consultation and negotiation between the parties. These partnerships can enhance, substantially, the quality of a project, but there is an inherent tension between the time and resource required to achieve a genuine participation and the time constraints to deliver the project to prescribed deadlines.

IMPACT also works with partners at an operational level in which staff from the statutory, voluntary and private sectors are seconded into the IMPACT teams to deliver direct work with beneficiaries and the management of staff. Other partners have been commissioned to undertake work on behalf of IMPACT such as research or independent evaluation.

Other partners work at a community level often delivering services to the beneficiaries, or working in collaboration with IMPACT to create opportunities for employment or training post release. Some of these partners respond to consultations and questionnaires that help to develop and improve the projects ability to prepare beneficiaries for work. The engagement of a range of employers in these activities has been particularly noteworthy. The methods used to engage employers and access to the views expressed are available on the website.
Partnership working in IMPACT has produced some amazing results but it has not always run smoothly. It is important to recognise that the Prison Service is a massive statutory organisation, with a strong culture and unique purpose - maintaining public protection by holding securely the prisoners in its charge. Through IMPACT it has opened its doors to a wide range of partners. This has been done with goodwill and, in order to explore the benefits of partnership working, the Prison Service has been prepared to relinquish some of its traditional control. It has not been an easy journey but much has been learned.

The following contributions from some of the partners within IMPACT show something of what has been achieved and where even more could be learned.

**Partners’ perspectives**

Diane Curry OBE and Zoe Gan-Rankin, POPs
www.partnersofprisoners.co.uk

**Partners of Prisoners and Families Support Group** (POPS) is a registered charity that was established in 1988. POPS provides support to offenders’ families, who are so often labelled ‘GUILTY by association’. We do this to help them cope with the stress and isolation they can feel when trying to support an offender.

POPS has grown tremendously since our early days of supporting a hand full of families. We now support over 250,000 families a year and employ almost 100 staff and 30 volunteers.

POPS have been working with the IMPACT project in the North West for three years. In this time we have been heavily linked to the projects’ Ascend and Asset themes via our Family Link Worker and Black Prisoner Support Project Services.

We have provided the IMPACT project the following services and expertise:

- Director to work with Ascend Steering Group and Chair two working parties
- Support and facilitate the development of the ‘Routes2Roots’ Project for Black Offenders
- Chief Executive is a member of the IMPACT Strategy Board
- Direct employment of one IMPACT Family Service Manager, two Family Link Workers and two Family Link Coordinators.
- POPS’ Finance Team have prepared and delivered all financial information required by both IMPACT’s financial team and ESF.

Over the past years POPS have worked extremely hard to support the IMPACT team to meet their project objectives and in doing so have extended the services that POPS provides. We have listed below what we feel have been the advantages and things to learn for the future when working with ESF / IMPACT.

**Advantages for POPS:**

- Access to new funding, resources and provision of match funding
- An opportunity to experiment with existing provision and to develop innovative new services
- An opportunity to strategically influence the regional outlook and provision of service for offenders’ and their families
- Ability to develop new relationships with agencies across the North West
- An opportunity to share practice with both service users and local/regional/national/international agencies
- The benefit of research and evidence provided from work conducted in the project

**Things to learn for the future:**

We believe that for any future projects there needs to be investment in training at the very start of the project or for when new partners join. This could include:

- How to work with and understand the VCS/Statutory Sector
- Processes and procedures of ESF funding
Roy Williams, Diversity Officer, Rochdale Centre of Diversity.

www.rcdonline.co.uk

The Rochdale Centre of Diversity (RCD) is a voluntary sector organisation formerly known as Rochdale Racial Equality Council. Our involvement and partnership with IMPACT relates to our employment and secondment of three Education, Training and Employment (ETE) Case Officers seconded to the IMPACT project. As an organisation with many contacts in the Black and Minority Ethnic sector we feel our expertise and experience has provided IMPACT with high quality expertise and seconded staff who were able to promote equality and diversity in prisons.

The process for the employment of these ETE case officers might have been better with a tighter structure for the linkage between IMPACT and the RCD. One key learning point has been that the employment process in secondment can take a considerable time - particularly where security clearances are required. Goodwill has been a major factor for achieving tight deadlines and, as a small community agency, this process has taken up a great deal of RCD’s resources.

The stringency of ESF regulations have meant that as a voluntary organisation we have not been able to benefit financially from the expertise in management and practical arrangements we have provided, since these are not eligible for payment under ESF. Whilst the ESF regulations must stand, it is critical that some funding is made available so that smaller charitable organisations are not out of pocket as a result of contributing time and resources to projects of this kind.

As an organisation we are always promoting ‘positive action’ and encouraging people particularly from the BME community into employment. The RCD works very closely with HMP Buckley Hall and services their Race Equality Action Team. The transition between prison and the community is dear to our hearts. The RCD is an invaluable conduit for BME offenders being sign-posted into employment and we provided our services through the three ETE Case Officers, and our own Community Development, Immigration and Equality & Diversity Officers.

Addressing Equality & Diversity is our ‘bread and butter’ work, our role within the borough of Rochdale is to promote good race relations and deliver Equality & Diversity training to the private, statutory, and voluntary sectors. Our work within HMP Buckley Hall is to provide Equality & Diversity training to Prison Officers and to make offenders aware of services within the borough if they find themselves discriminated against.

Lastly, there has been a great deal of carefully thought out project work conducted through partners and IMPACT meetings. I would like to think that as a result of the multi-agency working between partners, at post-IMPACT, there would be specific courses, projects, and pieces of work carried out as a result of hard work and commitment from many people. To capitalise on the past two years is now the work of IMPACT and the partners, ensuring that the initiatives from all partners are carried forward.

Thank you for allowing the RCD to be a partner agency in the life span of IMPACT. I do hope that the lessons learned will be taken on board and used constructively.

Kathy Thomas, NW Regional Director for SOVA

www.sova.org.uk

SOVA has provided mentors to the IMPACT project across all three themes of the programme. The mentors support offenders during their time in custody and following release into the community. In addition, SOVA has offered training to mentors across the
country and to prison staff. The mentors have worked with all the target groups. SOVA has also seconded their Regional Director to be a core member of the management team.

From the point of view of SOVA, a voluntary sector partner, working within the IMPACT partnership has been an interesting challenge. The hardest part, and to some degree the most successful, was building up relationships with officers within the prisons to allow volunteer mentors access to beneficiaries on the wings. We have found that some prisons have been more supportive and have allowed mentors to come into the prison to see their mentee and others have made it difficult and sometimes impossible for a mentoring session to take place. HMYOI Thorn Cross Unit 5 for instance have been very supportive, in terms of allowing officers to attend SOVA volunteer mentor training sessions and sharing their experiences and expertise with mentors on working with offenders within the prison system. Other prisons do not seem to understand that we are working with volunteers and all the effort we put in supporting and training volunteers can be damaged by the lack of respect/courtesy and co-operation from some Prison Service staff.

As the only voluntary organisation representative in the project’s Heads of Department group, it has sometimes felt like the project has wanted SOVA to replicate the Prison Service instead of appreciating that the voluntary sector is different, with a different culture and approaches to situations. The project has not always capitalised as much as it might have done on using the strengths of the voluntary sector, in being able to look at problems/challenges in a different way. In retrospect the appointment of a Partnership manager might have ensured greater focus on partnership management in its own right as an area of work, and some opportunities that were not prioritised might have been given additional time to be progressed.

For successful partnership working it is important that close attention is given at the outset to developing strong working relationships between the partners, clarity of working conditions and an adequate understanding of the respective organisational cultures. This is particularly important where partners are recruiting personnel for the project from within their own agencies and seconding them into a partnership project. The setting of clear expectations of staff from the beginning; through inductions including all partner agencies, the project itself and - in this case - the Prison Service requires a great deal of thought.

One of the most frustrating obstacles has been the large quantities of paperwork that IMPACT requires both for the statutory sector working, and more specifically for delivering on an ESF funded project. On the positive side, the project has enabled SOVA to work with partners who we would not have had the opportunity to work with otherwise. Network Employment (MerseyCare NHS Trust) for example, has worked with us on developing a Peer Mentoring model for people with mental ill health (an area where we valued their specific knowledge and expertise, and we were able to match with our own organisation’s mentoring specialism).

SOVA has had extensive input into developing the Employers Vacancy database, an IMPACT project that matches known vacancies from employers, to the CV’s of job-ready prisoners as they are released. This innovative project has been a great achievement. In working with Working Ventures (formerly the National Employment Panel), the project has been given a national dimension that is supported by the Department of Work and Pensions. The partnership has been really worthwhile and will give us the opportunity of mainstreaming our database initially across the six job developers areas (Manchester, Liverpool, South Yorkshire, Humberside, Birmingham and London) and then nationally in April 08.

SOVA has also used their strong local contacts to consolidate understanding of housing needs within a particular borough (Rochdale) and the Prison located in this borough (HMP Buckley Hall). This innovative project allowed some key research to take place into the housing needs and gaps in existing provision for accommodation for people coming out of custody.
‘Mentor 2 Work’ is a partnership initiative between IMPACT, HM Prison Service, MerseyCare NHS Trust and the charity SOVA. Its purpose has been to design and deliver peer mentoring training to offenders in custody, who have had mental health problems, to become mentors of other offenders in custody who are currently experiencing mental health difficulties. This project recognises the unique skills and experience of people who have used mental health services and who live in prison – ‘experts by experience’. At the same time it offers support to the mentors to gain employment on release using the Supported Employment model.

The most important partners in Mentor 2 Work were the beneficiaries themselves. They were fully engaged with the initiative being a pilot project and asked to provide feedback on their experience. Without their continuous feedback, commitment and support of the project it would not have developed, for instance the first cohort changed the training programme by adding a mental health module to it, and each time the course is run the participants’ feedback is always developed into the course. The beneficiaries have also continued to support the project on release by voluntarily co-facilitating workshops at conferences.

Building and maintaining relationships at all levels within the prison establishment was paramount to deliver the project. A ‘can do’ attitude was important especially with some of the accommodation and time constraint issues. The management and supervision of mentoring relationships had to be cleverly orchestrated due to lack of commitment by some prison staff. Another fundamental factor in the beginning was the difficulty in shifting some stereotypical attitudes to prisoners with mental health problems…… ‘those nutters can’t think for themselves never mind anyone else’ SOVA has provided help and support in developing accredited peer mentoring material and continued support through delivery of the project. The prison in-reach community mental health team and the criminal justice liaison team was a valuable partnership providing support, information and community links.

Partnership working within this project could have been improved by clearer leadership/communication/feedback from management at IMPACT, whose headquarters were geographically located at some distance. This resulted in operational decisions sometimes being made at IMPACT by staff without full knowledge of the project delivery. These decisions took time and resources to unpick. IMPACT is a large and complicated organisation, it takes time to navigate across the different departments, a prompter response from some departments would have been more beneficial for more effective on the ground delivery, and may have resulted in resolving difficulties more quickly.

Neil D Wallace, Chartered Companion
Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)
www.cipd.co.uk

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development [CIPD] was pleased to contribute advice and guidance to Phase Two of the Impact Project, particularly the Asset and Ascend Themes.

This important research complements the Institute’s own work - which has been ongoing since 2000 – to support and inform Government initiatives designed to improve employment opportunities for ex-offenders by
- reducing re-offending and cutting crime
- helping people with conviction histories to become responsible economically active members of society.
helping employers to access wider tools of talent.

The CIPD has sought to inform this challenging agenda by influencing decision makers at four levels including:

- relevant Government departments about the development of policies and legislation
- employers, regarding diversity policies and practices and corporate social responsibility initiatives
- the Prison and Probation services, through activities aimed at improving the abilities of ex-offenders in connection with relevant social and work skills to become more job-ready and employable

In the CIPD’s view, the IMPACT Project has achieved some notable outcomes that are capable of delivering benefits to both ex-offenders in terms of social and job skills and employers regarding the development of diversity policies.

In the Northwest of England the IMPACT Project produced practical tools and techniques based on robust academic research, which local employers have found extremely helpful when employing or considering employing ex-offenders.

As well as this localised UK focus, the EU EQUAL funded project had a European focus and participative conferences, some attended by a CIPD representative, enabled delegates from a number of member states to exchange information about the research findings and discuss outcomes from both the Asset and Ascend themes.

The CIPD feels it is important to express its observations about the research and how it was carried out, now that this EU Project is completed. These are set out below.

1. Key issues when working with employers

Research was carried out with employers through a detailed questionnaire by the Employer Engagement Working Party, and via direct feedback from employers who were involved in some way with the Project. A few key points emerged:

a. Need for one-to-one contact
   i. The number of agencies working in the field of employer engagement, in both the public and charity sectors, creates confusion for employers which causes their interest to ultimately switch-off.
   ii. Employers would much prefer a single point of contact that can offer suitable candidates for employment, guide the employer during the recruitment and job trial stages, and help with applications for financial or other support as required.

b. Same point of contact for all related issues
   i. Employers tend to seek the route of least complication when recruiting and employing people, and generally view the number of agencies involved in the recruitment of people with criminal records as too complex and bureaucratic. A single point of contact, through a one-stop-shop would be invaluable and help employers understand the issues and how to deal with them.
   ii. There needs to be provision of advice about faith and lifestyle issues particularly in dealing with ex-offenders or employers with BME backgrounds, and this might be most effective if there was someone of the same faith or ethnicity to discuss issues with.

c. Meet employer needs with regard to knowledge, skills, & experience
   i. Research showed that employers were more concerned about ex-offenders having appropriate social and soft skills than technical job skills, but still required them to meet basic abilities in reading and verbal skills so that instructions can be understood
   ii. The use of Portfolios of Achievement, was regarded as helpful, but at the initial stages of considering the employment of an ex-offender, a brief summary of knowledge, skills, and other achievements was essential.
   iii. It is very easy to offer any or all available candidates for an employer to select from, but results are more positive when employers are offered candidates on a pre-selected basis.
   iv. Follow up is important, to ensure the employer is satisfied with the placement. This ensures they
are more likely to take on ex-offenders in the future and to act as advocates.

2. What Went Well

The IMPACT Project focused on research into how and under what circumstances ex-offenders might be made job-ready and what might help persuade employers to take on such people. This led to a number of successful outcomes:

a. Employers
   A wide network of interested employers has been created and their interest needs to be nurtured to avoid backlash and disengagement.

b. Tools and techniques
   i. A selection of useful practical tools and techniques has been developed, mainly aimed at preparing ex-offenders for work or understanding their place in society. These have proved so popular that demand has outstripped IMPACT’s capacity to deliver further roll out.
   ii. The IMPACT research project has produced impressive results including research papers, relationship building with local community groups and employers, and practical tools. Much effort is now being made to ensure that these successes are taken into account by HMPS, NPS and NOMS.

c. Funding
   CIPD saw some issues with the application and interpretation of the EQUAL regulations in some areas, which tended to discourage a ‘can do’ mindset regarding progressing the project. The need to satisfy match funding requirements demanded a great deal of information from the Partners involved and this was an on-going issue. We are not sure how best to avoid this problem but the pressure placed on them can be detrimental to their own work schedules and diminish their interest in involvement.

d. Partners
   There was heavy reliance on developing partnerships within the public sector, charities, and the private sector, and in the main these were very effective in contributing significantly to the overall achievements of the Project. In the Asset theme it proved much more difficult to attract and retain partners. Since all themes required steering groups of key stakeholders, there were often issues about asking the same stakeholders to all of the steering group meetings, it may have been more streamlined to have linked the steering groups to prevent duplication.

e. Mainstreaming
   Mainstreaming is an important and valuable outcome from the Project - discovering insights into how to persuade employers to routinely employ ex-offenders using the business case arguments for rehabilitation and how to prepare ex-offenders for employment and living in society through education and training.
   Because the mainstreaming activity started rather late in the project this added to the time pressures and it is to the credit of staff involved that so much was achieved in the time available.
4. Recommendations for on-going work

It is important to make sure the mainstreaming of the various outcomes of this Project continues. In particular, CIPD recommend focus on the following areas:

a. Senior level support in HMPS, NPS and NOMS and political will is needed to support the outcomes of the IMPACT Project and promote the implementation of the ideas and practical tools it generated.

b. On a general note for the criminal justice sector, it is clear that there are mixed messages going out to employers and un-co-ordinated effort in targeting their support and involvement. There is a danger that this could disengage those employers that are regularly targeted.

The IMPACT Project, in common with other similar projects in England and Wales, has addressed employer engagement issues very well, and created goodwill, interest and support from a growing number of employers.

At the same time other organisations involved with the Project such as universities, third sector providers and professional organisations and agencies, have developed support and advice mechanisms themselves.

This shows the value of using a joined up approach and supports it as a strategy to deliver the objectives of the Reducing Re-offending Plan and the Corporate Alliance.

THORN CROSS FIRE CADET PROJECT
Joseph Allen, Community Cohesion and Youth Engagement Manager, Cheshire Fire and Rescue
www.cheshirefire.co.uk
www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk

In 2005 HMYOI Thorn Cross, Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service and IMPACT developed a partnership project to engage young offenders in a Fire Cadets programme modelled on the fire service in-house activities more usually delivered in the community.

The three partners had a shared vision of positive intervention to help young people achieve social, life and marketable skills. The basic goal was to help prevent re-offending, to help young offenders to regain control of their lives and to realise their potential through attitudinal and behavioural shift.

Though the vision was simple, the logistics of actually making things happen were complex. There were a number of issues that had to be resolved before the project could begin.

- HMYOI Thorn Cross is an open prison and full consideration had to be given to risk issues.
- IMPACT was dependent on European funding and timescales for accessing the funding were uncertain
- Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service (CFRS) had limited resources to put into the project. In addition, the fire service was in the midst of re-organisation for modernisation as per the Government agenda.

Despite these issues the partners agreed to run a pilot project. HMYOI Thorn Cross agreed for its staff to participate in the project. CFRS agreed to second two fire officers to the project along with kit and appliances. Funding was provided by IMPACT, along with resettlement support toolkits to use with young people participating on the Cadet course.
A team of 12 young offenders were selected by the prison staff to participate in a 12 week programme to be delivered inside HMYOI Thorn Cross; with opportunities to work outside the prison as part of the learning process. The 12 week programme culminated with a passing out parade in front of parents, guardians, peers and local dignitaries to celebrate what the young people had achieved. The outcome of the pilot project was seen as a major success as testified by the young offenders, their parents/guardians, the Fire Service and the Prison Service who saw positive change in the behaviour and attitude of the offenders. The Thorn Cross Project has won national acclaim and several criminal justice awards for its pioneering work.

The Project was underpinned by the prison’s rehabilitation programme, the Fire Service Integrated Risk Management Plan; the Government agendas for Respect, and Every Child Matters.

The strengths of the project included:

- The willingness of all agencies to try innovative approaches to supporting young people’s rehabilitative journey
- The willingness of the partners to learn each other’s culture, Code of Conduct and standards to ensure cohesive working amongst the staff, with shared objectives and common goals. This was facilitated by extensive training and preparation between the three partners.
- Clear solid outcomes in terms of training and ETE for the Cadets.
- The visible appreciation of parents, guardians and dignitaries as to what the young people had achieved.

The Thorn Cross Fire Cadet Project has proved that innovative partnerships can work, with impressive and effective successes with young people in custody. The joint effort between Thorn Cross, the CFRS and IMPACT has helped a number of young people regain control over their future; has helped build bridges between broken families prior to the intervention and the positive outcomes.

Reflections on Consultation with Partners

Keith Ingram – former chair of Ascend Steering group.

IMPACT has a history of partnership which goes back to its inception and the work streams in the second phase of IMPACT have, at their heart, partnership with both voluntary and community groups. Consultation with partners at various stages of the project has been varied and has taken place via research questionnaires and through broad based representation at steering groups and focus groups.

The steering groups were planned, right from the start, as vehicles for both consultation and influence. However, the groups were often pulled together in order to develop activity plans and delivery frameworks as outlined in the bid. These groups were often faced with the prospect that while having the funding was positive; they were constrained by the terms of the bid. It is probably well understood by everyone that the later the involvement in the development of an idea or project, the less the opportunity to influence its content and direction. A key lesson learned is to involve or at least consult with partners at earlier stages, including the bid writing stage.

Another key issue to highlight in terms of getting things right for partnership working is to establish early on how much control or decision-making power will be shared by partners in progressing the project. It is right that the lead organisation taking the greatest financial risk should have final control of the project. However, it is essential that any partners invited to join the project know where their contribution is to fit on the continuum of “endorsement - advice - participation - or partnership”. Endorsement at one end of the spectrum is an opportunity to express a view and Partnership at the other end of the spectrum is an opportunity to share decisions. All forms of input across that spectrum are required for a successful project, and there is no better or less valuable type of input. It is however important to differentiate between them to ensure that all stakeholder organisations have clear expectations of their involvement.

The issues around racial discrimination tackled by the Ascend theme within IMPACT gave some particularly insightful learning with regard to consulting with
community groups. In the early stages of coming to grips with addressing institutional racism there was a rush by statutory agencies, and in particular the criminal justice agencies in the light of the MacPherson report (1999) into the death of Stephen Lawrence, to consult with Black and Minority Ethnic people. It became clear that a relatively small number of community groups were being swamped by requests to engage. There was generally an expectation that the advice was free and little thought was given to the impact of those demands on the small number of people and community groups so generous with their time.

Help is available to organisations to make contact with relevant consultees from minority or special needs groups through a wide range of voluntary sector organisations who can facilitate links with these, hard to reach, groups. It is, however, important to recognise that voluntary organisations need financial support to provide these services. In many cases formal organisations need to consult with service users, or undertake an Equality Impact Assessment to meet their legal responsibilities, as such they should make provision in their budgets to pay for it.

Within Ascend there was enormous goodwill from the participants in the steering group but even attendance at meetings, without the additional work that flowed from them, had a significant time and cost demand for those attending and their organisations. Travel is not cheap and the North West area is large. It took time and effort on the behalf of IMPACT to manage to overcome the restrictions within ESF funding in order to make financial contributions to expenses and use of premises.

Voluntary does not mean free! And we have learned that if partnership is to be truly inclusive, it is critical that these arrangements are built into the project design.
Mainstreaming and Dissemination

Alice Williams, Co-ordinating Manager.

Why do we need dedicated mainstreaming and dissemination work?

“I remember that project, it was good. How did they tackle this issue?” This is a question that almost every professional working in the criminal justice arena has said at least once. An all too common scenario is that short term, innovative projects deliver excellent results, but the learning and trail blazing that happened during the delivery cycle has to be re-forged by the next project because not enough focus was placed on sharing the learning and disseminating the good practice through out the life-cycle of the project and in its wake.

Mainstreaming and dissemination have been essential activities for the IMPACT partnership during this round of funding. As part of its Equal bid, IMPACT requested funds that would be allocated specifically to support mainstreaming and dissemination activities. Fortunate enough to secure funds dedicated to this purpose, IMPACT has delivered on a clear mainstreaming and dissemination strategy and work plan.

IMPACT has trialled projects with target groups of offenders that are doubly disadvantaged in the workplace. The action research projects have taken place in prison establishments and community settings all over the North West. In each case the trials have been robustly developed, tested and carefully evaluated. The Mainstreaming/Dissemination team worked with project managers to determine which projects were most effective, and what the key learning has been. The team then set out to promote the good practice and bring the work to the attention of practitioners, decision and policy makers in the criminal justice arena.

IMPACT wants the learning it has developed to be shared widely and the initiatives developed within the research to be replicated, continued and supported at a strategic level. To achieve this, the team identified key projects and products to take forward, and developed a strategy to do this.

DEFINITIONS of Mainstreaming and Dissemination

Dissemination:
Dissemination is the spreading of information across a range of audiences to raise awareness of the findings of research and models of good practice developed.
To maximise the influence and relevance of the disseminated work, IMPACT targeted dissemination at relevant audiences within the criminal justice sector.

**Mainstreaming:**
Mainstreaming is the process by which new ways of working are adopted and become embedded in policy and practice. The new models of work are supported by changes in delivery, policy, political and operational frameworks to resource and facilitate the new working. Mainstreaming is about lobbying for organisational cultural changes in delivery. It should be based on clear rationales with evidence (validity) for promoting the change. Mainstreaming can be horizontal, across the sector, or vertical, focusing on policy.

At the EQUAL Mainstreaming seminar in April 2005, it was stressed that mainstreaming does not have to be done “with a big bang, nor result in huge policy shifts. Many of the EQUAL successes are happening at a local level or in small steps.” (Williams Parnell, Ireland’s ESF Managing Authority). The importance of operational staff embracing and embedding new ways of working should not be underestimated.

**Developing Dissemination and Mainstreaming Strategy**

For both dissemination and mainstreaming, activities were delivered to progress the work both **horizontally** through partner organisations and **vertically** through a local to regional, national and trans-national level.

The strategy addressed to following areas of work:

- Promoting the value of a research and development function in the Prison Service that offers results backed by evidence for the benefit of the wider criminal justice agencies
- Identifying key products/projects and developing marketing materials for these items
- Targeting audiences appropriately; Trans-nationally, nationally, regionally and locally
- Extensive work presenting findings at national conferences
- Delivering our own national conferences
- Lobbying and working with policy makers and strategists
- Asking the IMAPCT steering groups and strategy board to work within their own strategic networks to influence change and learning
- Extending trials of project work into new arenas to develop an evidence base of what works and establish transferability and credibility
- Mainstreaming and cascade plans were developed for key areas of work
- Articles, websites, literature, a media strategy and use of new technologies were all employed to enhance dissemination methods
- Key stakeholders championed elements of the mainstreaming process

**Step One: Clarity about Products and Models that had been Developed**

Dissemination about IMPACT has covered all areas of the project. Using a holistic approach, it created a joined up package combining all the IMPACT themes. Linked to the objectives outlined in the Equal bid, the following products were developed (all presented in detail in previous chapters):

- the Portfolio of Achievement
- the Employer Engagement methodologies
- innovative work with sex offenders enhancing public protection and employment prospects
- progression management through the custodial estate
- the roll out of a number of training courses for staff and offenders to help develop the employability of ex-offenders
- the use of restorative justice approaches
- promoting joint learning from the National Equal Offenders (NEON) Network
- the benefits of diverse approaches to mentoring

**Step Two: Target Audience**

Relevant audiences were identified in key organisations; people were approached through existing networks, by developing new networks and through presentations, meetings and delivering information.

Key audiences included:

- HM Prison Service
- Youth Justice Board
- National Probation Service
- Home Office
Step Three: Awareness Raising and Dissemination

A marketing strategy was developed which recognised the importance of good quality marketing material. A wide range of information was available for each of the key areas of work (Literature, cost-benefit analyses, results, research and evaluation, display material, DVDs). This information was presented through conferences, events, publications, newsletters, targeted mail shots, press releases and a user friendly website.

Information was delivered with clear sector or organisational targets in mind to ensure the most effective use of the material.

Step Four: On-going Mainstreaming

Persistent lobbying and development of further work has been the key to embedding IMPACT’s learning and activities into wider practice in organisations. Mainstreaming funds were used to offer free training for staff to cascade the materials through organisations. This has been an excellent way of establishing credibility and momentum with the Probation and Prison Services in the North West.

Identifying cost effective ways for wider roll out of products has also been essential to encourage establishments and organisations to start to embed elements of work into routine practice. This has been supported by the roll out of IMPACT products (for example the Thinking Skills in the Workplace course) into other relevant arenas – e.g. youth justice, approved premises, work in the community.

Key Achievements to date

At the time of writing the project is drawing to a close and work will continue to be delivered towards mainstreaming right up until the end, however the following gives an indication of the key highlights:

- The Portfolio of Achievement is being delivered with prisoners across most of the North West public sector prisons and some OLASS, youth justice and community based programmes. A toolkit for delivery along with guidance notes and the templates are available on the IMPACT website. OLASS nationally recognise the POA as a model of good practice.

- IMPACT has trained trainers and developed a sustainable cascade plan for the Thinking Skills for the Workplace course and the Motivational Interviewing course for the Prison Service, Probation Service and some Youth Offending Teams. Greater Manchester Probation Service is delivering the course as an integral part of their unpaid work programme. International interest in the programme has come from the US, Canada, Australia, Germany and the Finnish probation service received training in December 2007

- The Employer Engagement strategy has been adopted by the North West Employer Engagement forum and is embedded in the North West Reducing Re-offending Employment pathway delivery plan. On-going work is taking place with the National Employer’s Panel

- There has been extensive interest in the Routes 2 Roots programme for Black and Minority Ethnic offenders. This course develops self esteem, positive cultural identity and resilience for offenders who do not access mainstream provision because of perceived and actual barriers to their participation. Demand for access to this programme has outstripped capacity to deliver and the current challenge is to address this barrier to mainstreaming.

- Negotiations have secured the incorporation of Motivational Interviewing training for Staff into the national training course for all new entrant Prison Officers, as part of their initial basic training package.

This chapter has provided a few highlights of some of the successes to date to ensure a lasting legacy of...
the EQUAL funding and the learning from the IMPACT project.

An equally important message is just how valuable the opportunity to undertake systematic research and development has been. Researching gaps in provision, understanding what the barriers are to employment and to reducing re-offending, then trialling initiatives to confront these issues is essential for any modern day public service charged with addressing crime. Projects like IMPACT offer an excellent opportunity to produce evidence backed results that can be replicated and that offer new understanding to the wider picture of tackling crime.
The following reports are all available on our website: www.equal-impact.com

**IMPACT Employer Consultation**
Part 1 – Employer Consultation Survey: employers’ attitudes towards the employment of ex-offenders  
(by Steven Brown, Ilona Haslewood-Pocsik and Jon Spencer)  

**Barriers to the Employment of Black and Minority Ethnic Offenders**  
(by Emily Smith, Ilona Haslewood-Pocsik and Jon Spencer)

**The Application of National Legislation in Relation to Race and its Application to Prison Service Policy and Practice**  
(by Emily Smith, Ilona Haslewood-Pocsik and Jon Spencer)

**Guidance with Conviction: A Career Guidance Framework**  
(by Susanne Christian)

**Two Qualitative Studies Reviewing the Perspective of Doubly Disadvantaged Adult Prisoners on Pursuing Education, Training or Employment (ETE) Post-Release**  
Part 1 – Female Offenders of Working Age  
Part 2 – Older Male Offenders; 50-65 years  
(by Lorna Brookes)

**Progression Through a Custodial Sentence: Access to Education, training and Employment for Black and Minority Ethnic Ex-Offenders**  
(by Emily Smith, Ilona Haslewood-Pocsik and Jon Spencer)

**A Review of the A-Z Pilot at HMP Wymott 2007**  
-The A-Z is a short motivational programme, which aims to give offenders the opportunity to think about their lives.  
(by Lorna Brookes)

**Mentor 2 Work**  
-An action research project at HMP Liverpool into peer mentoring and employment for offenders with mental health problems.  
(by Sonia Holdsworth, Caroline Thorpe and Linda Hill).

**SAVRY Trial**  
-A Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth.  
(by Zoe Walkington, Ciaren O’Keefe, Sue Thomas and Robert Hesketh)

**Thinking Skills for the Workplace**  
(by Janet McLellan and Emma Preece)

**A Pilot Study of Public Attitudes Towards Sex Offender Reintegration**  
(by Steven Brown, Jo Deakin and Jon Spencer)

**Barriers and Opportunities to Employment for Sex Offenders**  
(by Steven Brown, Jo Deakin and Jon Spencer)

**Getting Off the Merry-Go-Round**  
-Reviewing the barriers to resettlement for female offenders serving short-term sentences.  
(by Lorna Brookes and June Leeming)

**A Model of Case Management**  
(by Jeanette Flynn)

**Through the Gate**  
(by Jeanette Flynn, Janet McLellan, Paul Bedford and Sadie Tutton)

**Investigating the Community Networks of Black and Minority Ethnic Ex-Prisoners: an Exploratory Study.**  
(by Jennifer England, Jo Deakin and Jon Spencer)

**Evaluation of IMPACT: Final report - A report by WM Enterprise 2008**

Please also see the website for a full list of our partners.

www.equal-impact.com
### Glossary of Terms

#### A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anti social behaviour order</strong></td>
<td>a civil order which enables courts to issue orders preventing individuals aged 10 or above from specified activities. This is not a criminal order and can be granted without a person having committed a criminal offence. However breach of an order is a criminal offence, which is arrestable and recordable, and can even result in custody.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ASBO</strong></td>
<td>see anti social behaviour order.</td>
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#### B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bail</strong></td>
<td>release of a defendant from custody, until their next appearance in court, sometimes subject to security being given and/or compliance with certain conditions.</td>
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#### C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Code of Practice</strong></td>
<td>the CRB code setting out the requirements that employers and other bodies must comply with in order to be issued with standard and enhanced disclosures.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Community Sentence</strong></td>
<td>The requirements are as follows:</td>
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<td>1. ‘Supervision’ concerns rehabilitation. The Probation Service will monitor the offender and offer motivational support. A ‘Programme’ or ‘Treatment’ requirement might be combined with this requirement.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. ‘Unpaid work’. The purpose of this requirement is punishment, reparation and rehabilitation. It must be for between 40 and 300 hours and normally be completed within twelve months. An ‘Activity’ requirement might also be attached to address any issues relating to the offenders’ skills.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. ‘Programme’. A specific programme should be named at the point of sentence. Certain programmes are accredited and cover general offending, violence, sex offending, substance misuse and domestic violence and are aimed at rehabilitation.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. ‘Activity’ A range of activities can be considered depending on what is available locally. The maximum attendance is 60 days and may involve attending, for example, courses on basic skills.</td>
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<td>5. ‘Prohibited activity’ can be ordered to prevent offenders from participating in certain activities such as attending football matches or entering licensed premises. The requirement can relate to particular days or be general.</td>
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<td>6. ‘Curfew’ must be accompanied by electronic monitoring unless it is not available. The offender must remain at a specified place for a period of between two and twelve hours per day for up to six months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Sentence</strong></td>
<td>7. ‘Exclusion’ prevents the offender from entering a particular place for a period of up to two years.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Community Sentence</strong></td>
<td>8. ‘Residence’ requires the offender to reside at a certain address, either a private address or a hostel.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9. ‘Mental health treatment’ may be a requirement where there is evidence from a medical practitioner that the offender requires treatment but is not sufficiently ill to warrant the making of a hospital order.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10. ‘Drug rehabilitation’ involves regular testing and review by the courts. It must last for at least six months.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11. ‘Alcohol treatment’ involves treatment to eliminate or reduce alcohol dependency.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12. ‘Attendance centre’ is available for 18-24 year olds only and is a requirement to attend an attendance centre for 12 to 36 hours.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Community penalties</strong></td>
<td>(also known as alternatives to prison, community punishment, non-custodial options or community sentences). Sentences of the court which deal with the offender in the community rather than in prison. These include community punishment, community rehabilitation orders and drug treatment and testing orders. See also generic community sentence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community punishment and rehabilitation order</strong></td>
<td>This was replaced in 2006 with a single community sentence to which requirements can be attached to develop a bespoke order for individual offenders. See community sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community punishment order</strong></td>
<td>This was replaced in 2006 with a single community sentence to which requirements can be attached to develop a bespoke order for individual offenders. See community sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community rehabilitation order</strong></td>
<td>This was replaced in 2006 with a single community sentence to which requirements can be attached to develop a bespoke order for individual offenders. See community sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community service</strong></td>
<td>see community punishment order.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Conditional discharge</strong></td>
<td>a discharge of a convicted defendant without sentence on condition that they do not re-offend within a specified period of time (up to three years). If they re-offend they will be sentenced again for the original offence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conviction</strong></td>
<td>when an offender has pleaded or been found guilty of an offence in court they are said to be convicted. The conviction then appears on the offender’s criminal record.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CRB</strong></td>
<td>Criminal Records Bureau check – a formal check made through the CRB Government agency in to the history of criminal convictions held by an individual. Usually required for employment with the public/volunteering purposes</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Criminal</strong></td>
<td>person who is guilty of a criminal offence.</td>
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<td><strong>Crown court</strong></td>
<td>only indictable crimes can be dealt with by the crown court where cases are heard before a judge and jury. It also deals with some cases transferred by magistrates courts. The crown court also acts as an appeal court for cases heard and dealt with by the magistrates court.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Custodial sentence</strong></td>
<td>sentences where a convicted offender is sent to a prison, young offender institution, secure training centre or Local Authority secure children's home.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Custody to Work</strong></td>
<td>a Prison Service initiative aiming to increase the numbers of prisoners getting jobs or training places after release. £30million has been invested in the scheme.</td>
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D  

| **Detention and training order (DTO)** | a sentence for young people aged between 12 and 17 for between 4 months and 2 years, half of which is served in custody and the remainder in the community under the supervision of the youth offending team. |
| **Disclosure** | A document that lists an individual’s criminal convictions and any other relevant information. |
| **Disorder** | includes anti-social behaviour and youth nuisance. These are not criminal offences but if left unchecked there is a fear they can lead to criminal behaviour. |

E  

| **Extended Sentence for Public Protection (EPP)** | Where a sexual or violent offence committed carries a maximum penalty of 10 years, this sentence is required in the same circumstances as the IPP. The court must set a custodial period and extended licence period. The offender may be released on the Parole Board’s recommendation at any time between the halfway point and the completion of the custodial period. The extended licence period may be up to five years for violent offenders and eight years for sexual offenders. |

I  

<p>| <strong>ICT</strong> | Information Communications Technology. |
| <strong>Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP)</strong> | An indeterminate sentence applied to offenders who are convicted of a serious offence (that is a specified sexual or violent offence carrying a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment or more) and who are considered by the court to pose a “significant risk to members of the public, of serious harm.” On release offenders with an IPP sentence will be subject to supervision on licence but in contrast to life licensees they can apply to the Parole Board to have their licence cancelled after 10 years (and at yearly intervals thereafter). |
| <strong>Indeterminate Detention for Public Protection</strong> | as IPP but for juvenile offenders. |
| <strong>Intensive supervision and surveillance Programme (ISSP)</strong> | rigorous community based programme for young offenders as an alternative to custody, combining measures to address offending behaviour with surveillance. |</p>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Juvenile offender</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Licence</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Life licence</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Life long learning</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Magistrates court</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Ministry of Justice</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Multi-agency public protection arrangements</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>National Offender Management Service (NOMS)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Offender</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Offending behaviour programme</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Offender manager</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Offender supervisor</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Order</strong></td>
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| **Probation** | see community rehabilitation sentence. |
| **Probation service** | the National Probation Service’s work with offenders combines continuous assessment and management of risk with provision of expert supervision programmes designed to reduce re-offending. |
| **Prison Service Plus (PS Plus)** | Prison Service programme part funded by the European Social Fund, which takes a holistic approach towards the problem of employability amongst prisoners. In addition to employment support PS Plus provides specialist support for mental health, substance misuse, housing and other issues which might provide a barrier to employment. |

| **Rehabilitation period** | the period of time after which an individual no longer has to declare a criminal conviction. Some exclusions may apply. |
| **Remand in custody** | the accused person is kept in custody or placed on bail pending further court appearance(s). |
| **Reoffend** | where an offender commits a new crime after being convicted of a previous offence. |
| **Reparation** | helping offenders to understand the consequences of their action by making amends for the crime, either directly to the victim, or to the community. |
Sentence  
the courts can impose four levels of sentence, depending on the seriousness of the offence. These are discharges, fines, community sentences and imprisonment. Fines are the most common sentencing option used by the courts.

Sex offender order  
A civil order that can be applied for by the police against any sex offender whose behaviour in the community gives the police reasonable cause for concern that an order is necessary to protect the public from serious harm from them. The orders are intended to fill a gap in the provisions available to protect the public from risk from sex offenders. Breach of an order without reasonable excuse is a criminal offence with a maximum penalty of 5 years in prison.

Sex offender register  
those convicted or cautioned for relevant sex offences since 1997 must notify the police of their name and address and any subsequent changes to them and must re-register annually. This enables police across the country to know who is a ‘registered’ sex offender and to check their details with the local police force if required. Failing to comply with the notification requirements is a criminal offence with a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment.

Spent conviction  
a conviction that no longer has to be declared by an individual as the rehabilitation period has expired. Some exclusions may apply.

Summary offence  
a criminal offence that can only be tried in a magistrates court.

Supervision  
time spent under the supervision of the probation service on a community sentence or after a period in custody.

Unspent conviction  
a conviction for which the rehabilitation period has not ended. An individual must declare if asked if they have a criminal record.

Young offender  
people aged between 10 and 17 who commit offences. These young people are generally dealt with by youth courts and are sentenced under a separate range of orders to adults. 16 and 17 year olds can be sentenced to orders generally reserved for adults.

Young offender institution (YOI)  
a prison for young people between the ages of 15 (16 for girls) and 21. Young offenders have to be kept separately from adults, and juveniles (under 18) separately from young adults (18-21).

Youth offending team (YOT)  
a multi-agency team made up of local representatives from the police, probation service, social services, health, education, drugs and alcohol misuse and housing officers. YOTs are responsible for the supervision of young offenders and identify suitable programmes to address the needs of the young person to prevent further offending.