

THE IMPACT OF ENHANCED RESETTLEMENT PROVISION ON SHORT-TERM PRISONERS - A RECIDIVISM STUDY

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Abstract

This paper draws on previously unpublished data of a short-term prisoner resettlement initiative (Step-On) in two large prisons in the north of England in the United Kingdom (UK). A quasi-experimental design was used to compare a sample of 192 prisoners who underwent enhanced resettlement assistance with a matched sample of offenders who did not. The purpose was to examine whether the enhanced resettlement support across five 'resettlement pathways' led to lower levels of recidivism following release from prison. The analysis found that the experimental group with enhanced resettlement support was significantly less likely to reoffend compared with the matched control group, however, this positive effect only held during the 90 day post-release support period, after which there was no significant difference between groups. In addition to delayed reoffending, other benefits of the project saw a reduced severity of offence for those who did reoffend. These findings have policy and practice implications for the resourcing of resettlement provision in the UK and other jurisdictions.

Keywords

Short-term prisoners; resettlement; rehabilitation; reconviction study; Transforming Rehabilitation.

Introduction

In the United Kingdom (UK) short term prisoners (sentenced for less than 12 months) make up the majority of the prison population - 58% in 2015.¹⁶ They are more likely to reoffend than other prisoners: 60% of adult short term prisoners were reconvicted within 12 months of release compared to 33.4% of those who served determinate sentences of 12 months or more (Ministry of Justice, 2016).

The most recent Government initiative to address the high rate of recidivism among short term prisoners has been the requirement for Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) to provide "through the gate" resettlement support for this prisoner cohort under the Transforming Rehabilitation changes (Ministry of Justice, 2013).

Given concerns about the level of resources that CRCs are deploying for resettlement support for this cohort (HM Inspectorate, 2016), this timely paper draws on previously unpublished data from the evaluation of a resettlement initiative (Step-On) to provide learning about the dosage of resettlement support that may be required to prevent reoffending among short term automatic release (AUR) prisoners. This has useful implications for practice and policy in the UK and other jurisdictions.

This paper examines the impact of the enhanced resettlement support provided by the Step-On project on reoffending rates. The hypothesis is that, as a result of receiving support from the Step-On project, reconviction rates will be significantly lower. The null hypothesis is that there will be no significant difference in reconviction rates between the experimental cohort (those who received enhanced resettlement support from the Step-On project) and the control cohort (who received the standard level of resettlement support available).

The link between resettlement support and reoffending

It has long been recognised that resettlement and reintegration support can contribute to reducing reoffending. Government initiatives trialling this approach have included: the resettlement pathfinders (Lewis et al., 2007); Integrated Offender Management (IOM) pioneer projects (Senior et al., 2011); and more recently, the Payment by Results (PbR)-commissioned HMP/YOI Peterborough Social Impact Bond pilot (Disley et al., 2015) and HMP/YOI Doncaster pilot (Pearce et al., 2015).

Much of this support has focused on addressing the high levels of resettlement need and multiple difficulties faced by people released from prison (Crow, 2006; Maguire et al., 2003; HMP Inspectorate of Prisons, 2001; National Prison Survey, 1991; SEU, 2002). The highly influential Social Exclusion Unit Report (SEU, 2002: 10, 6) found that many prisoners had '*poor skills and little experience of employment, few positive social networks, severe housing problems, and all of this is often severely complicated by drug, alcohol and mental health problems*'. Some 10 years later from the SEU report, 12% of prisoners released from custody were without settled accommodation, and only 12% of employers in a

survey said they had employed somebody with a criminal record in the last three years.¹⁷ This is despite a clear acknowledgement of the range of offenders' needs and commitment to ensuring adequate provision as set out in the Government's commissioning intentions (NHS England, 2015; National Offender Management Service, 2014).

The corrective to these widely acknowledged deficiencies is helping prisoners to address their practical resettlement and social and personal problems through referrals to specialist and voluntary agencies as well as receiving individual support from their offender managers prior to and after release from prison.

The Step-On resettlement project

The Step-On project ran from 2005 to 2007 in two prisons in Northern England. It aimed to reduce reoffending by providing short-term prisoners with practical help across five resettlement pathways, enabling them to: secure accommodation; desist from drug and alcohol abuse; maintain contact with their families; engage in employment or educational/training provision; and improve their financial position. This was accomplished through referrals to specialist agencies, along with individual input from project staff who provide ongoing help and support to project clients. Most resettlement work was undertaken during the later stages of an inmate's sentence and through the gate for a follow-up period of approximately 90 days in the community. This was underpinned by a 'needs based' opportunity deficit model (Maruna & LeBel, 2002) that has guided much resettlement practice in the UK.

Project staffing levels broadly reflected the different recruitment targets (a 2:1 ratio) with three Probation Officers and one Prison Officer at East-side Prison A and one Probation Officer and one Prison Officer at West-side Prison B. The two local authority areas where the majority of inmates returned to from both prisons had comparable high levels of deprivation (when ranked across 355 Local Authority areas in England), notably for housing, unemployment and health. For most categories of crime, the East-side Prison area had higher levels than other parts of the country, including the West-side Prison area.

Entrance on to the project was voluntary and prisoners were assessed by project workers at each prison site. In general, inclusion required the presence of a sufficient level of presenting need in one or more welfare areas: (1) education: failing to complete their compulsory education, and/or having no educational credentials (2) employment: not in education, employment or training (NEET) during the month prior to imprisonment (3) financial situation: problems meeting any recurrent expenses (rent arrears), accumulation of debts or those committing offences to obtain a cash (4) housing: not owning property or having a tenancy or whose partners lacked this (5) and family relations: being single or estranged from partners during their last year at liberty, and who rarely associated with parents or siblings. Project clients also needed a minimum of three prior imprisonments¹⁸ (in the UK), have a connection to the local prison areas and *not* be considered potentially dangerous persons.

¹⁶ HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2016.

¹⁷ Prison Reform Trust Website

¹⁸ This being inclusive of custodial sentences at Youth Offending Institutions.

Methodology

The evaluation design compared reconviction rates for short term prisoners who received enhanced resettlement support (the experimental group) with a control group who did not. This was calculated using incidents of any standard list offence, conviction or technical violations of an Order as documented on the Police National Computer (PNC). In addition, qualitative interviews were conducted with a small number of project clients to identify perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Project. Given the size and representativeness of the sample, the findings from this element have not been included in this paper.

One of the main approaches to this evaluation was introducing a distinction, including in the modeling process between 'Need' factors defined in terms of welfare deficits and/or personal/social problems faced by an offender, and, 'Dosage' factors describing the type and number of referrals conducted in response to clients' needs. The latter provided a measure of the amount of assistance that the project participant received.

The evaluation constructed needs profiles for inmates, consisting of the (above) five welfare deficit areas (coded dichotomously) for each Step-On client along with a composite welfare deficit variable combining all five. In addition, information was analysed on five dynamic factors (drug misuse, alcohol misuse, gambling problems, physical health, and mental health) along with one static factor (being a victim of child abuse). Again, all six variables were coded dichotomously and gleaned from initial assessment sheets and case files.

The methodological approach sits between Level 3 and Level 4 in Harper and Chitty's (2005) scientific methods scale design for reconviction studies (see Table 1 below). The comparison group was matched to the intervention group on the projects inclusion criteria from management and official information systems and case records with two differences; (1) the group was historical (i.e. non-concurrent with the project start date¹⁹) which was problematic because the evolving policy and service environment may have acted as a confounding variable, and; (2) a high rate of attrition meant selecting many (85%) comparators who returned to live in adjacent areas rather than either of the prison discharge areas. Whilst it may not have skewed the results it did introduce another potentially confounding variable.

Further analysis was conducted on the level of change in offence seriousness, as well as project dosage and welfare and social needs levels, and the influence that these factors on reoffending.

¹⁹ It did not prove possible to construct a comparison group on a 'waiting list' basis for the study due to inadequate numbers of throughput, or to use OASys assessments as a means of predicting recidivism as too few completed assessments were available for the project cohort.

Table 1: Scientific Methods Scale adapted for reconviction studies

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

Source: Based on Table 1.2 in Harper and Chitty (2005)

Results

Profile of the experimental group

East-side Prison inmates had greater numbers of social and welfare problems than their West-side Prison counterparts and consequently had a higher incidence of need as measured by referral activity. As a consequence, the two prison sites were treated as separate entities in the reconviction study.

All of the 192 project clients were male due to both prison sites exclusively having adult male intakes. Project participants in West-side Prison were marginally younger than East-side Prison, with a lower median age of 15 months (Table 2). Minority ethnic group clients were under represented in both prison sites in relation to the host prison population, which was 14.2% for East-side Prison and West-side Prison prisons combined in 2003,²⁰ (and 16% nationally in 2002).²¹ This did not necessarily imply any adverse selection effects as 30.7% of data on ethnic origin was missing from project assessment forms which may account for the under representation. Furthermore, reports from project staff during the evaluation period showed that inmates were favourable to the projects aims and staff did not raise any concerns about ethnic minority inmates declining this service.

Table 2: Age and ethnic grouping of prisoners, by site

	Age at time of release (n=172)*			Ethnic group (n=140)*		
	Under 25 (%)	Over 35 (%)	Median age	White (%)	Black (%)	Asian (%)
East-side	20.1	35	32.2	96	4	0
West-side	24.1	27.6	30.7	98.4	1.6	0

*n excludes cases which did not take part in the project.

²⁰ Data supplied by personal correspondence from Mark Judd; Offender Management Analysis Section, NOMS Statistics and Analysis, RDS NOMS London.

²¹ Office for National Statistics, <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/ssdataset.asp?vlnk=7363>

Profiles of the project group²² (n=192) were constructed across a range of welfare and living problems all of which acts, as an index for criminogenic need. Table 3 (below) summarises these problems and needs across both sites and offers figures from a Home Office study which provided comparative data for the general UK prison population as opposed to the Project's focus of medium to high risk of reoffending short-term prisoners. East-side Prison inmates had a higher distribution of problems than their West-side Prison counterparts (with the lone exception of reported child abuse).

Compared with the national picture from the OASys custodial or community sentence sample, the Step-On project clients experienced a higher distribution of problems, particularly so in drug use (with nearly 20% more of East-side Prison inmates self-reporting this problem, and 30% more than for the national sample of all inmates) as well as housing need and employment need. Conversely, there was a lower level of mental health needs and family relations needs for both prison sites in comparison to the national picture. The larger disparities for financial problems likely reflected different definitions in how this was assessed through OASys and the Step-On assessment process.

Table 3: Comparison of Step-On project group and Home Office OASys data on criminogenic need factors

No.	Criminogenic needs factors across studies		Percentage of offenders assessed as having a problem			
			East-side Prison	West-side Prison	OASys Assessment Custodial Sentence	OASys Assessment Community Sentence
1	Welfare Deficits	Education	66.3	50.9	65.5**	53.5**
2		Financial	97.9	92	29	22
3		Housing	64.7	52.5	43	31
4		Family Relations	28.7	23.2	42	36
5		Employment	92.2	75.8	65.5**	53.5**
6	Social and personal problems	Alcohol	42	29.1	33	34
7		Drugs (illicit)	69.2	50.8	39	27
8		Mental health	20.4	14.3	38*	40*
9		Physical health	21.4	13.4	-	-
10		Personal Safety	20.5	23.3	-	-

*Home Office classification denotes emotional well-being

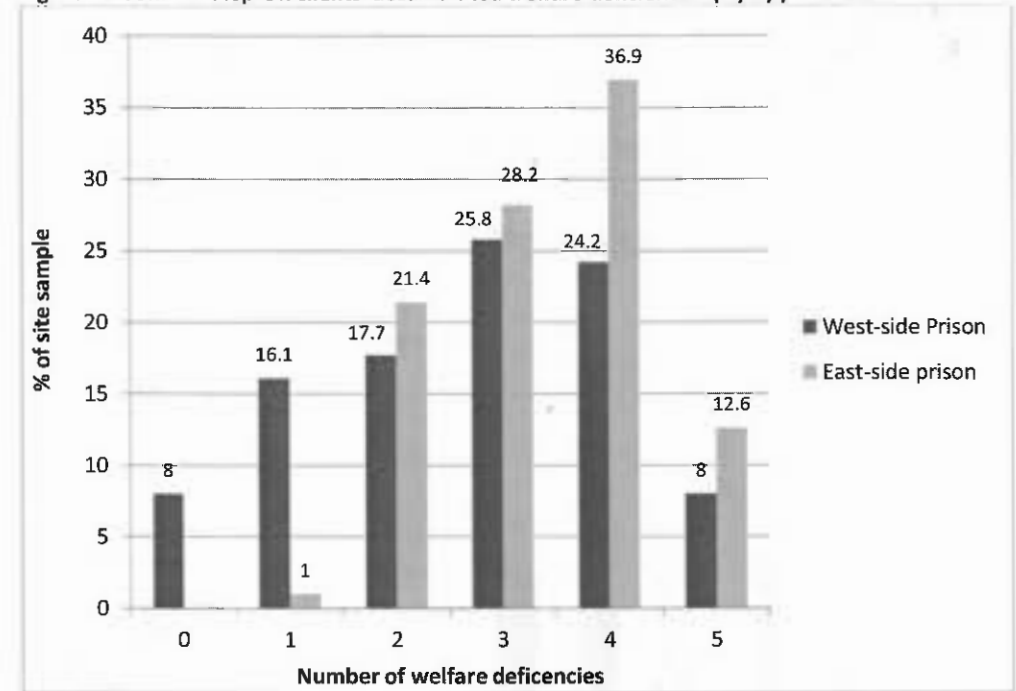
** Home Office study combined criminogenic factors 1 and 5

Source: Home Office (2005) Research Study 291

A similar story existed between the two prison sites in the distribution of *accumulated* welfare deficiencies (Figure 1). Inmates at East-side Prison showed a greater preponderance of criminogenic needs than those at West-side Prison when examining inmates who had 3, 4, or 5 welfare deficiencies. Notably, all East-side Prison inmates had at least one welfare problem.

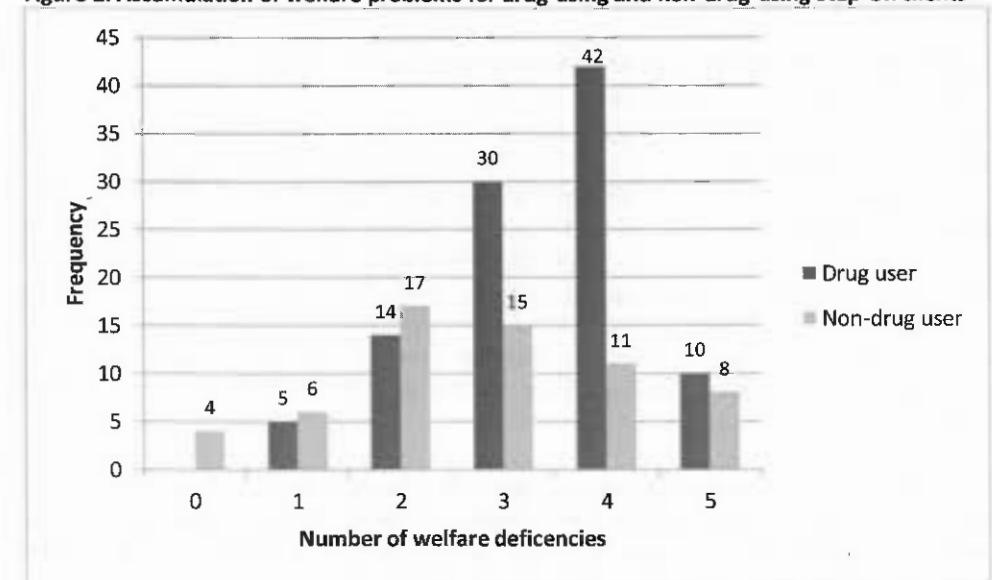
²² Archival records and interview assessment forms were analysed to construct profiles of the project group to identify all relevant welfare deficits and social problems for each project participant.

Figure 1: Profile of Step-On clients' accumulated welfare deficiencies (%) by prison site



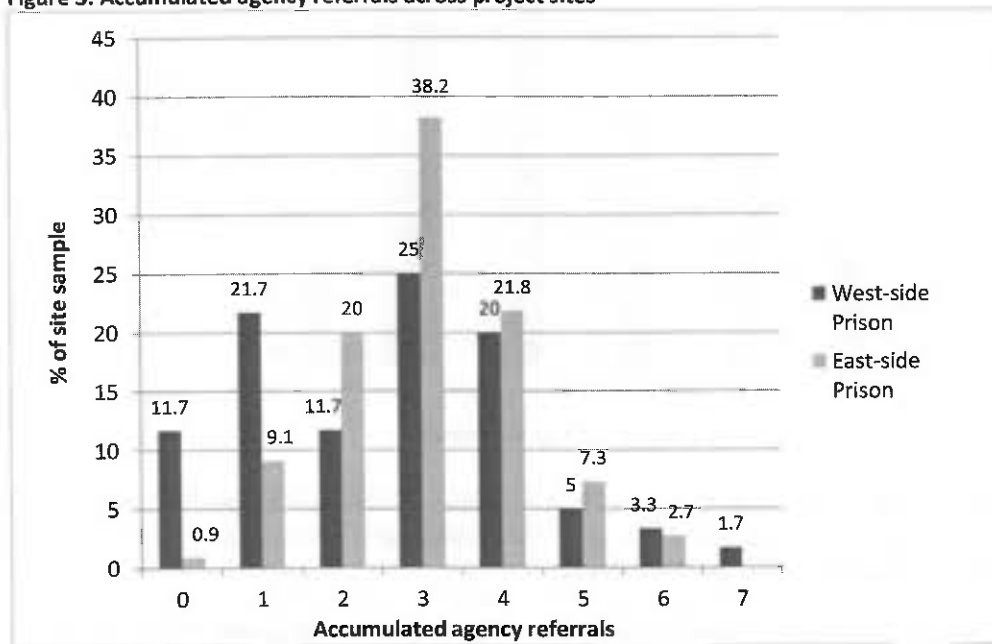
Project clients who were drug users had significantly more welfare needs than non-drug users (Figure 2 below) and made up a more challenging sub-section of the short-term prisoner population for the Step-On project.

Figure 2: Accumulation of welfare problems for drug-using and non-drug-using Step-On clients



Not surprisingly, this pattern was reflected in the number and type of agency referrals made on behalf of inmates by the project staff across the two sites. The dosage profile in Figure 3 (below) shows that inmates at West-side Prison required fewer referrals compared with East-side Prison, although, in the former, there were inmates who had complex needs. It should be noted that the number of referrals made on behalf of inmates only acted as an approximate dosage measure as no data were available to reliably act as an intensity measure (i.e. duration of contact, work progressed, etc.).

Figure 3: Accumulated agency referrals across project sites



Does the enhanced resettlement intervention reduce reoffending?

A survival analysis was undertaken to compare the time to reconviction for the experimental groups and their control groups. This has the advantage of examining the dynamics of reoffending over time, rather than treating reconviction as a static event. Recidivism has been used as the outcome variable and refers to the number of days post-release to the commission of the next reported offence. All recidivism measures were collected from day of release up until the censoring day (project clients were phased onto the project over time). Subtracting the date of release from the date of first notifiable offence during the follow-up period studied provided the: ratio level of measurement of recidivism of days survived at liberty (survival time); or for those cases that were censored, those offenders who survived to the end of the study period without reoffending.

If the enhanced resettlement intervention had been effective, the number of criminogenic needs would have reduced, and the experimental groups would have survived longer, i.e. remained unconvicted for longer than the control groups who did not receive the enhanced resettlement service.

West-side prison

Figure 4 below compares the cumulative survival for West-side prison project participants and the comparator group over a period of 400 and 100 days after release from prison. A much higher proportion of West-side prison Step-On inmates (58.3%) desisted from reoffending compared to 10.9% in the comparator group during the same period. The West-side prison project group also desisted from offending for longer than the control group over the follow-up period (Log Rank²³ 13.43, $P > 0.0002$ with 1 df.).

Figure 4: Survival function to first offence post-release for West-side prison over project follow-up period

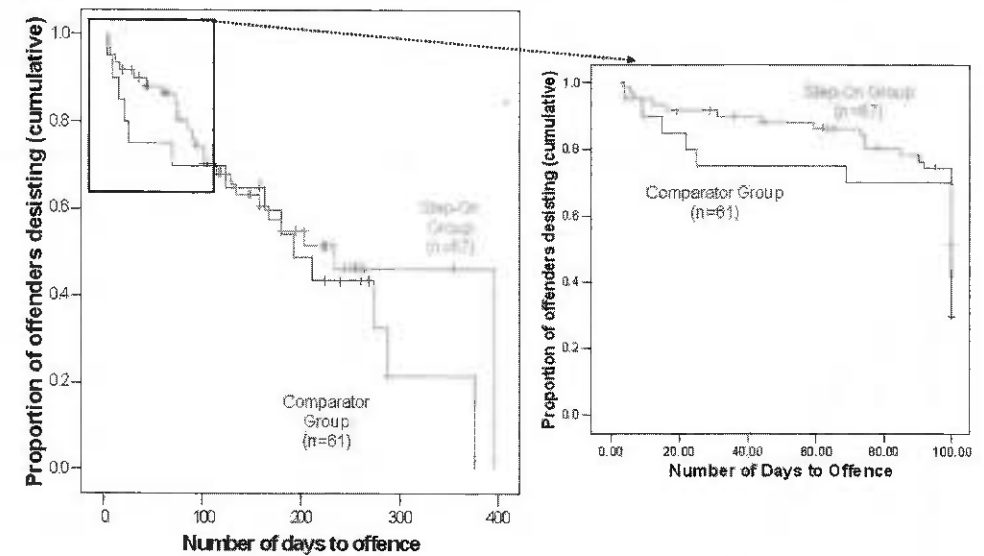


Figure 4 shows that for the first few days the comparator group is doing marginally better than the project group (as indicated by the blue line being *above* the green).²⁴ This is then reversed, with the project group pulling away during the rest of the follow-up period indicated by the growing distance between the two Kaplan Meier survival curves.²⁵ However there is a crucial caveat to this finding. The desistance from offending (survival rate) between the two groups is not maintained much beyond the 90 day follow-up period when tested statistically. However, the benefit from the enhanced resettlement support should not be dismissed despite it being short-lived as it represents a delay in reoffending. There was no significant difference in cumulative survival between the project and

²³ The Log Rank test statistic is used here as we are comparing two groups, the project and comparator group.

²⁴ This is not statistically significant though, and thus may be due to chance factors.

²⁵ The crosses on all Kaplan Meier survival curves indicate a 'censored case' i.e. surviving to that point without having reoffended.

comparator groups across any of the individual age groups tested (Log Rank 0.07, $p > 0.7904$ with 1 df.).²⁶

East-side prison

The East-side Step-On cohort results were similar to that of West-side shown in Figure 5. The East-side prison experimental groups were less likely to reoffend: 37.2% compared with 25.9% for the control group during the follow-up period. They also desisted from offending longer than the control group. However this was only maintained during the follow-up period. Furthermore, the East-side prison cumulative survival between the experimental and control groups is only *nearly* significant at the higher $p > 0.10$ level (Log Rank 1.66, $P > 0.0978$ with 1 df). The stringency of the accepted level of significance varies depending upon the type of data one is dealing with. The generally accepted standard is $p > 0.05$ level, however, if data is fuzzy,²⁷ as it was in this case, one can justify using a higher level of significance such as $p > 0.10$.

Figure 5: Survival function to first offence post-release for East-side prison over project follow-up period

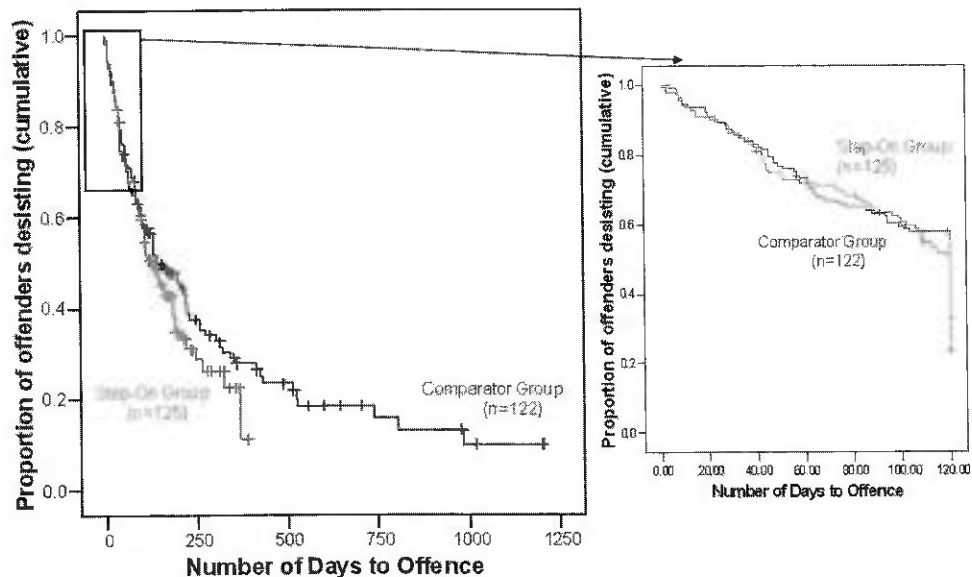


Figure 5 shows a near identical cumulative survival rate for the experimental and control group up until the 60 day period, after which the experimental group begin to pull away from the control group indicating greater survival time.

²⁶ This is likely due to the reduction in the sample sizes for each of the respective age groupings assessed in the analysis, and hence the reduced chance of finding a statistically significant difference.

²⁷ The different units had very similar observed characteristics with close proximity to either side of the threshold, so change in reoffending between the two groups was not sharp, but it was still possible to exploit the discontinuity and identify a treatment effect that was a *nearly* significant result.

The same procedure was conducted to examine different age groupings in the East-side prison data regards cumulative survival between the project and comparator groups, but there was no significance across the different age groups tested. Whilst these results are interesting, the results change markedly when we examine survival times over the *entire project period* which extended beyond the 90 days follow-up support of the project (400 days for the first entrant). Here we find that the gains made by both project groups are *not* maintained past this project follow-up period (West-side prison: Log Rank 2.25, $p > 0.1337$, with 1 df.; East-side prison: Log Rank 1.06, $p > 0.3042$, with 1 df.). It was found that 40.3% of West-side prison project inmates reoffended, with a median survival time of 233 days and 68.2% of East-side prison project inmates reoffended, with a median survival time of 131.30 days.

When using both project sites such that each acted as a comparator group over the course of the evaluation period, there was a significant difference between them at the $p > 0.05$ level (Log Rank 5.05, $p > 0.0246$, 1 df.). This was not unexpected taking in to consideration the greater level of needs and deficits typical of the East-side prison project participants identified in the profiling (see above).

The relationship between recidivism and welfare deficits

There was a significant difference in reconviction between those with a small and those with a large number of welfare problems ($t = 27.775$; $p < 0.001$). Individuals with higher numbers of welfare problems reoffended more than those with lower levels of recorded welfare deficits,²⁸ a result which accords with much previous research (Mair & May, 1997; Stewart & Stewart, 1993; Kyvsgaard, 1989, 1990; Skardhamar, 2002 in Nilsson, 2003). Table 4 shows the proportion of the experimental group which were reconvicted by the numbers of welfare deficiencies that they faced. Offenders with more needs were reoffending in higher numbers, *despite* the higher dosages of support that they received.

Table 4: Recidivism and accumulated welfare deficits

Number of welfare problems recorded	Percentage reconvicted	n
0	0	0
1	30	3
2	48.2	14
3	62.7	27
4	57.4	27
5	56.2	9
All cases	54	80

Changes in offence severity

Do reoffending Step-On clients commit less serious offences compared to previous offences and compared to those of the comparator group? The analysis found that Step-On clients who reoffended committed less serious offences compared to their previous offences, and these were less serious compared to offences committed by the comparator

²⁸ This proved not to be significant when we looked at number of welfare deficits and *time to reoffending* in the earlier survival analysis.

group.²⁹ So there was a systematic change in the level of seriousness of offences committed after exposure to enhanced resettlement support for those participants who do go on to reoffend, with reoffending being less serious as measured by χ^2 test. The index offence refers to the offence for which the offender received their prison sentence. Table 5 examines the nine possible permutations of taking these three measures of pre-index offence, index offence and post-index offence scores and the resulting percentages of the sample for either less or more ranking in seriousness of offence.³⁰

Table 5: Changes in Severity Measure in Offending for Reconvicted Step-On Clients

	(1) Recon < index offence	(2) Recon > index offence	(3) Recon = index offence	(4) Recon < Pre- con	(5) Recon > Pre- con	(6) Recon = Pre- con	(7) Index < Pre- con	(8) Index > Pre- con	(9) Index = Pre- con
n	31	10	28	20	15	34	19	22	28
%	45	14.4	40.6	29	22	49	27.5	31.9	40.6

< less serious, > more serious

Table 5 shows that 45% of those who reoffended after receiving the enhanced resettlement support committed *less serious* offences than their index offence. This result is significant at the $p > 0.05$ level ($\chi^2=36.987$, 2 df., $p > 0.05$). Furthermore, 40% showed no appreciable increase in severity from their original index offence, despite a trajectory of increased severity from the averaged score of three pre-convictions to the index offence.³¹

In short, flowing from the enhanced resettlement intervention is a combination of both delayed offending *and* a reduced severity in subsequent reoffending. These results suggest that the project had a stabilising effect on the criminal careers of the experimental group.³²

Concluding discussion - Implications for policy and practice

This study expands upon previous resettlement research by examining how social problems and resource deficiencies typically addressed by opportunity deficit models affect the risk of recidivism. The weight of evidence from this study is broadly in line with the current tenor of existing research literature, in that resettlement initiatives can have a positive impact on offenders' lives and can support a re/habilitation process. Overall the

²⁹ Ideally we should have liked to conduct the severity measure element of the study informed by results from the comparator group and contrasted the two, but lack of available criminal history data prevented this.

³⁰ Each offence in this series was ranked for seriousness using the 2007 Youth Justice Board's own ranking criteria (which rates offence seriousness from 1-8, with 1 indicating a the most minor offence, i.e. a breach of an order, and 8 indicating the most serious offence, i.e. murder/manslaughter). In an attempt to ensure that post-index offences were not atypical to the index and post-index offence, we took the mean of the 3 preceding offence scores in order to provide a more robust analysis.

³¹ Ideally we should have liked to conduct the severity measure study informed by results from the comparator group and contrasted the two, but lack of available criminal history data prevented this.

³² Obviously the validity of these conclusions rests upon the validity of measures of offence seriousness. Our calculations are based on the UK's Youth Justice Board own ranking criteria, and this research team has no prior methodological objection to its integrity.

study found evidence of success for a needs-based approach to resettlement and community re-entry. However, with regard to the recidivism analysis there was a crucial caveat to this finding, that the statistically significant initial gains appear for the project cohort were not sustained much beyond the 90 day follow-up period of case manager support in the community. This implies the need to extend this period beyond the 90 day limit. Other research in the USA has also stressed the need to address longer-term transitional needs to facilitate successful prisoner resettlement (MnDOC, 2006).

In relation to the UK, the importance of providing extended resettlement support reinforces concerns that have arisen about the financial viability of the CRC contracts in England and Wales since they became operational in 2015. The National Audit Office found that CRC business volumes were much lower than the Ministry of Justice modelled during the procurement and commented that income shortfalls would affect CRCs' capacity to bring in new ways of rehabilitating offenders (NAO, 2016). The challenge of the above finding to CRC providers and their sub-contractors is in ensuring that sufficient resources are available to provide a level of supervision and support in the community, to adequately prevent this cohort of offenders from reoffending and financially for the CRCs to avoid adversely affecting their PbR reoffending targets and the additional income that they might receive if they meet their target.

The higher level of recidivism associated with higher welfare needs poses a further resource and capacity challenge. Short term prisoners with higher welfare needs were reoffending in higher numbers despite receiving higher dosages of support. This finding suggests that these offenders needed more support than was available. Any resettlement provision which has as its end goal something as complex and ambitious as 'seamless' transitional through-care will be constrained and influenced by the existence and accessibility to services in the prison sites and wider community. In relation to the provision of resettlement support for short term prisoners provided by CRCs and their sub-contractors they will need to be able to: accurately identify the interventions that will address the welfare needs of individual offenders; calibrate the level of resource required; and have sufficient regular contact with the offender to be able to respond to changes in need.

However, their ability to effect this is likely to be constrained by the current structure of offender management provision following the Transforming Rehabilitation changes. Previously, through the gate Integrated Offender Management (IOM) arrangements between agencies (focused on under-12 months sentenced prisoners) were intended to galvanise agencies into working more effectively together and facilitate seamless through-care (Senior et al., 2011; Wong et al., 2012). Perversely, the fragmentation of service provision, (and of responsibility) arising from the contracting and sub-contracting arrangements across the CRC contract package areas is likely to have the opposite effect. While it has yet to be independently assessed the recent examination of resettlement provision does not augur well. The National Audit Office found that the CRCs delivery of resettlement services in prisons had been focused on commencing services and meeting contractual measures (based on completing processes), rather than on service quality which was understood to vary significantly between prisons (NAO, 2016). The Joint Inspection of Resettlement Services for short term prisoners by the Probation and Prison

Inspectorates was more damning (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2016). They found that the strategic vision for through the gate services had not been realised, the individual needs of prisoners were not properly identified and planned for and not enough was being done to help prisoners get ready for release and manage risk.

The vision set out in an earlier *Through the Prison Gate* report (HM Inspectorates of Probation and Prison, 2001) advocated a *case management approach* which involved assessing the risks and needs of each individual whilst ensuring regular contact through a dedicated staff member. This was to ensure that the needs provided for were progressed and regularly reviewed along with the provision of adequate time and resources as a baseline requirement. While the projects which this article has focused on also recognised the importance of effective case management for successful resettlement, the original vision appears to have been lost in the recent government policy initiatives and may need to be painfully relearnt at the detriment to offenders and society more generally.

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