Improving service transitions for people experiencing multiple disadvantage: Prison release

Evaluation of Fulfilling Lives:
Supporting people experiencing multiple disadvantage

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This report explores the experience of prison release for people affected by multiple forms of disadvantage and how this transition might be improved. It draws on evidence, insights and learning from the Fulfilling Lives programme.

Since 2014, the Fulfilling Lives programme has supported over 4,000 people with experience of multiple forms of disadvantage, including homelessness, alcohol and substance misuse, reoffending, mental ill-health and domestic violence.

Acknowledgements

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Key messages

The experience of prison for people experiencing multiple disadvantage is often a reoccurring series of short sentences, which create huge disruption to their lives with limited benefit in terms of rehabilitation. Among people supported by the Fulfilling Lives programme, there is an association between spending time in prison and having poorer outcomes.

On release from prison, people experiencing multiple disadvantage will often have a long and intimidating list of appointments and tasks to complete to secure accommodation, benefits and medication. Not only is this stressful, but it is often simply not possible to meet all the requirements in the time available.

A smooth prison release requires preparation but there is often insufficient time for this, particularly for those serving short sentences. There are shortcomings in assessments and screening processes that mean people's needs are not identified early enough to get support in place. Poor co-ordination across services and a lack of information sharing means people do not always receive the holistic and joined-up care they need.

As a result, prisoners are still released to no fixed abode or to unsafe, unsuitable or insecure accommodation. With limited funds and without positive support networks, there is an increased risk that prison leavers rapidly resort to reoffending.

Fulfilling Lives' support workers and navigators engage with people while they are in prison to support and prepare them in advance of release. This includes helping to secure suitable housing and, in some cases, advocating with accommodation providers for places to be retained while someone serves a short sentence. They work with people to line up requirements for making a benefit claim as soon as possible on release, offer debt support and provide funds to purchase essential items. Fulfilling Lives, staff help coordinate appointments with drug services, register people with GPs, organise needs assessments and help maintain contact with families while people are in custody.

Meeting prison leavers at the gate and offering support to them throughout this important day is crucial. As well as helping people navigate their myriad

appointments on the day, support works provide critical emotional support and encouragement.

Peer support from someone with lived experience of prison is particularly welcomed by prison leavers. Peers can build trusting relationships based on shared experience and offer a role model for change.

We have identified the key ingredients of effective prison release support for people experiencing multiple disadvantage. Staff need knowledge of different support services, to understand referral processes and criteria and have good working relationships with professionals, including in-prison teams.

Most importantly, support staff need small caseloads and flexible working arrangements that allow them to build relationships and spend the whole day supporting someone when they are released. Dedicated, gender-specific accommodation and support services are needed to meet the needs of women.

Effective sharing of information about prison leavers is necessary to ensure a smooth transition and that people are not expected to retell their story multiple times – something that can be retraumatising. Better information sharing can be supported through building trusting relationships with prison staff, but it remains a challenge. Some partnerships have improved understanding and information sharing between them and probation services through hosting staff secondments.

Key to providing effective support is the relationship between the worker and the prison leaver. All elements needed for an effective transition from prison may be in place but if the prison leaver chooses not to engage with the support, it will not succeed. A trusting relationship is vital for encouraging prison leavers to make positive choices on release and engage with the support on offer. Building a trusting relationship requires face-to-face contact and time. Relationship building needs to begin before someone is released from prison and continue as they transition into the community.

Planning for prison release needs to be undertaken in partnership with the prison leaver and plans co-produced so they meet an individual's personal goals. Persistence and patience are required so that support is available

when someone decides to accept help. The support on offer should be separate from (and additional to) probation and prison services and allow staff to advocate on behalf of prison leavers. Support workers with lived experience can be particularly powerful.

Fulfilling Lives partnerships have also worked to address some of the wider systems challenges that affect the process and experience of prison release. Promising activity includes workforce development programmes, awareness-raising campaigns and networking. These activities help improve understanding of the needs of people affected by multiple disadvantage in the criminal justice system. Multi-agency groups provide a focus for coordinating support across service providers and can also be used as a springboard to more strategic collaborations that provide a focus for addressing silo working and developing systems-wide release pathways.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research and their experience of supporting people affected by multiple disadvantage, the Systems Change Action Network (a group of leaders from across the Fulfilling Lives partnerships) offer the following recommendations. These recommendations are the collective view of the SCAN members and not of CFE Research, The University of Sheffield or The National Lottery Community Fund.

For national government:

- National sentencing guidelines must consider an automatic presumption against custodial sentences of less than six months for non-violent offences.
- This requires continued investment in community-based alternatives, including expansion of the new Community Sentence Treatment Requirements programme to better support people experiencing multiple disadvantage.

For the national probation service:

- Ensure planned reforms to the national probation service (including the emphasis on supporting people through short sentences, creating supportive relationships and new minimum standards of contact) reach people experiencing multiple disadvantage.
- People experiencing multiple disadvantage are at particular risk of recall given the number of issues they are required to address on return to the community and the impact this has on strict probation requirements. Probation should be encouraged to develop flexible responses to prevent unnecessary recall for this group.

For local partnerships:

Communication and coordination pre-release

- For those in prison for less than 12 weeks, including those on remand or recall, resettlement planning should start as soon as they enter the prison estate to allow as much time as possible to get support in place.
- Investment in prison-based coordination roles will bridge the gap between prison and community services and support multi-agency planning. The development of information sharing protocols between community services, prison and probation partners will play a critical role in pre-release coordination.
- People should be active participants in their own release and support planning and are more likely to be successful on their recovery journey where this has been devised with them rather than for them.
- More robust pre-release assessments should be used for people experiencing multiple disadvantage, taking a holistic approach to the ongoing support an individual is likely to require on release.
- There must be a greater focus on simple but effective ways of preparing an individual for the day of release. This includes access to personal ID, charged mobile phones with credit, email addresses, travel warrants and directions to pre-arranged appointments, alongside coordination of appointments to ensure they are realistic and achievable.

Support on the day of release

- Invest in peer mentors who can build relationships with people prior to release, meet them at the gate and offer support until there is established contact with community-based services.
- Building trusting relationships is key to engaging and supporting people experiencing multiple disadvantage. To build relationships with someone in prison will require face-to-face contact before the point of release.
- Peer mentors can offer emotional support, reducing the risk of returning to people or places that may result in missed appointments or reoffending. Those with lived experience deliver a powerful message that recovery and desistence is possible.

Person-led accommodation pathways

- Accommodation should be provided for all prison leavers. No one should be released into homelessness.
- Where an individual has accommodation prior to commencing a short prison sentence, local authority housing teams should work with partners to establish whether existing accommodation could be held.
- There should be an emphasis on person-led accommodation pathways as a route out of reoffending, with due consideration for where the individual believes they are most likely to be successful on their path to recovery and desistance.
- Partners including probation, police and crime commissioners, local authority housing commissioners and others should consider the potential for pooled funding and adoption of approaches such as Housing First to create new accommodation options for people leaving prison.

Meeting the needs of women

- Gender-responsive pathways must be developed for women in the criminal justice system.
- Resettlement planning must consider the risk of violence and exploitation an individual is likely to be exposed to both at the point of release and within any accommodation offered in the days and weeks following. Risk assessments and multi-agency safeguarding measures should be implemented.
- Safe accommodation combined with wrap-around support must be prioritised from the point of release. This should be of particular concern for women released in rural settings with limited transport links who are travelling to probation appointments and accommodation in unfamiliar areas.

Multiple disadvantage and leaving prison

The journey towards a more fulfilling life is full of transitions – from homelessness to being housed, from addiction to recovery, from unemployment to employment, from negative to positive peer networks. A particularly challenging transition for those experiencing multiple disadvantage can be leaving prison.

Evidence suggests that a large proportion of the prison population experience multiple forms of disadvantage. People in prison are more likely to have mental health problems, a history of substance use and experience of trauma than the general population.[1] There has been a rise in recent years in suicide and self-harm in prison.[2] However, there are said to be no reliable and up-to-date estimates of the number of prisoners with mental health issues.[3] Misuse of drugs in prison is also widespread.[4] The HM Inspectorate of Probation reported that in 2018–19, 16 per cent of male prisoners and 19 per cent of female prisoners were released homeless, and around a third of male prisoners and a quarter of female prisoners were released without settled accommodation.[5] And while women remain a minority in the prison population, they often have multiple and complex needs.[6] 60 per cent of women in custody have experienced domestic violence and those with an assessment are twice as likely to have a mental health need than men.[7]

Those with prison experience are less likely to have positive outcomes

80 per cent of people directly supported by Fulfilling Lives have a history of reoffending when they join the programme and 32 per cent of all beneficiaries spend time in prison while with the programme. Those who experience prison spent, on average, 89 days inside during their first year with Fulfilling Lives. Experience of prison while on the programme is more common among younger people (aged 20 to 39). Although only 4 per cent of the prison population in England and Wales is female,[8] 29 per cent of Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries who experience prison during their time with the programme are female. (See tables 1 to 4 on page 58).

Analysis of programme data shows there is a link between spending time in prison and poorer outcomes. People who spend any time in prison during their first nine months with the programme have higher levels of need and risk and lower self-reliance, both when they join the programme and after

a year on the programme. Those who spend time in prison are more likely to have lower levels of engagement with support services, and have worse levels of self-care, living skills, social networks and relationships after a year on the programme than those without prison experience over the same period. People who spent time in prison in the first nine months on the programme are less likely to move on to a positive destination – the likelihood of someone with prison experience leaving to a positive destination is lower, on average, by nearly 9 percentage points, than someone without prison experience. While we can see a link between experience of prison and worse outcomes, we cannot say for sure that prison experience is the direct cause of this. See method notes on pages 53 to 56 and tables 5 to 7 on pages 59 to 63 for further detail of this analysis.

Multiple disadvantage tends to be associated with persistent and low-level offending,[9] such as shoplifting and theft, often driven by addiction. Short-sentence prisoners are often affected by homelessness, substance misuse, poverty and debt.[10] Furthermore, there is growing evidence to suggest that short prison sentences are disruptive, provide little opportunity for rehabilitation and are associated with higher levels of reoffending.[11]

About this report

Improving service transitions is one of five strategic priorities identified by the Systems Change Action Network (SCAN – a group representing all the Fulfilling Lives partnerships).

The purpose of this study is to understand how the process of prison release can be improved so that people experiencing multiple disadvantage receive the support they need to effectively transition from prison into society and a fulfilling life. The report aims to answer the following questions:

- How is prison release experienced by people affected by multiple disadvantage?
- How are Fulfilling Lives partnerships working with individuals and the criminal justice system to improve transition from prison?
- What has been the impact of this work?

- How can learning from Fulfilling Lives be applied to help improve the experience of prison release elsewhere?

In the first part of the report, we explore the challenges of the process of prison release and how this particularly affects people experiencing multiple disadvantage. Much of the evidence in this section has already been well-documented elsewhere. In the second part we provide examples of effective practice from Fulfilling Lives areas and insights into how the process of prison release for people experiencing multiple disadvantage could be improved.

This report will be of interest to:

- senior decision-makers and managers in the prison service and criminal justice system;
- local and national political leaders, particularly those with responsibility for criminal justice; and
- organisations that provide direct support to people affected by multiple disadvantage

Policy context

Since the start of the Fulfilling Lives programme in 2014, there have been major changes in the criminal justice system in England. The Transforming Rehabilitation strategy launched in 2013[12] recognised the need to reform the approach to rehabilitation to address reoffending, particularly for those receiving short sentences. The strategy included fundamental reforms to the criminal justice system, including a flagship 'Through the Gate' resettlement service, extension of rehabilitation services to those who receive sentences of less than 12 months and a greater role for the private and voluntary sectors in providing rehabilitation.

Following the launch of this strategy, major changes were made to the way probation services were organised. Where probation was previously delivered through self-governing probation trusts, the probation service was divided into a public-sector National Probation Service (NPS) and 21 community rehabilitation companies (CRCs). The NPS managed higher-risk offenders,

and CRCs supervised offenders with low and medium risk of harm. From 2015, CRCs were transferred to eight mainly private-sector providers. These CRCs provided resettlement services for people in prison.[13]

While overall reoffending was reduced, CRCs did not achieve their targets, voluntary-sector involvement was said to be patchy and there was limited progress in transforming probation services.[14] In 2019, the Justice Secretary announced that all offender management would be brought back under the NPS from 2021.[15]

Through the Gate (TTG) support, introduced in 2015, was intended to prepare prisoners for release and resettlement and thus reduce reoffending. An inspection report in 2016[16] indicated a disappointing start. The vision had not been realised; individual prisoner needs were neither identified nor met and prisoners were not prepared for release.

From 2019, an enhanced specification and associated funding for TTG support for prison leavers was introduced. Process evaluation of the transition was positive,[17] in particular about the additional resources provided, which enabled greater multi-agency working and more one-to-one time with prison leavers. The value of mentoring was also highlighted in the report. But challenges remain, including communication between TTG and NPS staff, and working with people with short sentences – both these challenges emerged from our research too.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 placed duties on public authorities to refer service users they thought may be homeless or at risk of homelessness to local authority homelessness teams. Public authorities covered by this duty include prisons and probation services, including CRCs.[18] Government guidance on the duty states housing authorities and offender management services should work together and take reasonable steps to prevent people from becoming homeless on release from custody.

Research from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and The Ministry of Justice (MoJ)[19] provides recommendations on local prison release protocols to support this Duty to Refer. These recommendations suggest that protocols include ways to facilitate homelessness applications while someone is in custody, rather than deferring this until release. The research also emphasises the day of release as a critical

intervention point and suggests that protocols include ways to manage housing appointments alongside other release-day obligations leavers have.

In 2017, The Lammy Review[20] highlighted the disproportionate representation of people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds in the criminal justice system. BAME men and women make up 25 per cent of prisoners but only 15 per cent of the wider population.[21] The Review found that in many prisons, relationships between staff and BAME prisoners are poor.

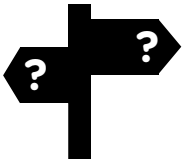
The 2018 Female Offender Strategy seeks to improve outcomes for female offenders. Almost half of all female prisoners said they committed their offence to support the drug use of someone else.[22] BAME women experience even worse outcomes that those for other women – a 'double disadvantage'.[23] A gender-informed and whole-systems approach are critical in effectively addressing the needs of female prisoners. Better Outcomes for Women Offenders[24] provides evidence-based commissioning principles for female offenders. These identify priority needs including mental health, emotion management, improved family contact and building social capital. The Female Offender Strategy acknowledges the fact that short sentences cause huge disruption and can increase offending and indicates a desire for fewer female offenders receiving short custodial sentences. As Clinks have pointed out,[25] plans to increase the number of places in women's prisons do not fit well with the Strategy intentions in this regard.

What is the experience of leaving prison like for people affected by multiple disadvantage?

An intimidating list of things to do on release day

People experiencing multiple disadvantage will often have a long and intimidating list of appointments and tasks to complete on the day of their release. This can often include:

- Visiting the probation office to meet the offender manager – this is essential, as failure to attend can mean being recalled to prison.
- Visiting the local authority housing office to arrange accommodation – people without accommodation are required to present in person on the day of their release.
- Applying for benefits (such as Universal Credit) – claims cannot be made before release and as claims cannot be backdated it is important an application is submitted on the day of release.
- Collecting prescriptions from a pharmacy – this is particularly urgent for those on opioid substitution treatment (OST – such as methadone) as delays can result in relapse and re-offending.
- Attending GP appointment – people experiencing multiple disadvantage often have acute physical and/or mental health needs.



Release day expectations are unrealistic

This makes for a long, stressful and draining day for the prison leaver, and the people supporting them. A case study from Fulfilling Lives partnership Voices of Independence Change and Empowerment in Stoke-on-Trent (VOICES), outlines the release plan and list of appointments a prison leaver was expected to attend on the day of release: six appointments across

two locations in the city, two of which were scheduled at the same time.[26] Expecting prison leavers to achieve all these appointments is unrealistic and is described by staff as 'setting them up to fail'.

Not enough time to get to all essential appointments

Even if the prison leaver is released early in the morning, reaching all appointments in time is often extremely difficult. The relevant venues are rarely located close to each other or the prison and people experiencing multiple disadvantage are often reliant on public transport. Those leaving prisons located in less well-connected areas (women's prisons in particular are often in more remote locations) or released later in the day face additional challenges. Lengthy or delayed appointments can create further difficulties and anxieties. Missing an appointment can result in being discharged from a service or even recalled to prison.

> **Women tell us they have to present to the homeless [office] on day of release. Very often, they're sat in there for hours, and hours, and hours, by which time they've missed their appointment with the CRC, they've missed their appointment picking up their script.**
>
> Stakeholder, voluntary sector

An example from the Fulfilling Lives South East partnership highlights how a Friday release puts even more pressure on meeting all essential appointments in one day, since many services are closed over the weekend.[27] If an individual's release date is scheduled for a weekend, it will be brought forward to the Friday, making it the most common day for release and the busiest day in prisons. These factors mean people released on a Friday may be left with very little support and face increased risk of reoffending.[28]

Assessment procedures fail to effectively identify people's needs

Needs assessments are often a tick box exercise

There are also shortcomings in assessments and screening processes within prison, which can mean that needs are not identified early enough to plan support. A Basic Custody Screening Tool (BCST) should be completed by prison staff when people enter custody, and again (BCST2) by the Through the Gate resettlement team.[29] These tools are essential for understanding the support that people require both inside prison and on release. However, there is often not the time to complete these effectively.[30] There is concern that if assessments are undertaken by staff who do not have a relationship with the prisoner, they can be a tick-box exercise and not used to their full potential. People experiencing multiple disadvantage can see the process as judgmental and intrusive and may not reveal the extent of their needs to a stranger. This may be particularly pertinent for female offenders who do not wish to disclose parts of their history; as a result, issues relating to their safety on release may not be identified.

> A couple of days into being inducted you will have a meeting with an officer, and it will be a checklist of things: have you been a sex worker, have you ever done drugs, did you ever try this. If you answer no, you then receive no support and that's what happened with me... I didn't say anything which meant I didn't get any extra support.
>
> Female with lived experience

Not enough time and resource to prepare and support people

Effectively preparing individuals for release from prison needs as much time as possible. Some tasks need a long lead-in time, for example, finding suitable accommodation, setting up a bank account and obtaining identification documents. Guidelines state that resettlement planning for prisoners on sentences of a year or longer should begin a minimum of 12 weeks prior to release.[31] However, this appears in some cases to be interpreted as the maximum window for support.

> That three months goes really quickly and often that doesn't give you enough time to get things in place for when people are coming out, but that's the red tape of timings. Finding someone housing could take several months, yet you're only given a three-month period to help someone devise a plan, contact all the different services outside.
>
> Fulfilling Lives staff member

Stakeholders report that prisoners (and their keyworkers) often receive short notice of release dates and sometimes the date is brought forward. This makes planning and preparation for release more challenging. Changes to release dates, particularly at the last minute, can add further disruption and mean rearranging any appointments that have been set up.

Probation and resettlement teams also face challenges as they often have large caseloads and limited resources. This restricts the extent they can support people to prepare for prison release well in advance. The staff we spoke to within the criminal justice system highlighted that they often need to concentrate their efforts on supporting the most vulnerable clients and those who are to be released imminently. This reduces the likelihood that people are linked up with all the services they will need on release.

Even where plans are in place, the prisoner is not always aware of this. Some of the people with lived experience who told us their release story did not know prior to, or even on, the day of their release whether they had somewhere to stay that evening.

Released without suitable accommodation

Staff and people with lived experience of multiple disadvantage highlighted that finding suitable accommodation is their highest priority and biggest challenge. People with experience of multiple disadvantage are likely to have unmet accommodation needs before and after their sentence: Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead reported in 2017 that 44 per cent of their clients who had spent time in custody were released to no fixed abode and 71 per cent were released to different accommodation than prior to custody.[32] While referral to housing services for the day of release may be seen by prison

teams as fulfilling their duty of care to a prisoner at risk of homelessness,[33] in reality Fulfilling Lives partnerships have found that an appointment does not guarantee a roof for that evening.[34] A 2020 inspection report found that of sampled cases in 2018-19, 24 per cent of prisoners were released to no fixed abode and 27 per cent went to temporary accommodation. The same report only found evidence of referrals being made in about one-third of relevant cases.[35] Some partnerships (and other charities) step in to cover the cost of emergency accommodation.

Lack of suitable housing increases risk of reoffending

Offenders with accommodation needs are more likely to reoffend: a report from 2012 showed that 79 per cent of prisoners who reported being homeless prior to entering custody were reconvicted within a year of release, compared to 47 per cent of those with accommodation.[36] Those who are released without suitable accommodation may resort to either rough-sleeping or staying with friends and associates from before their prison sentence. These places and people can be related to past offences and increase the risk of reoffending or relapsing into harmful behaviours.

Affordable and safe accommodation is scarce in some areas and demand can outstrip supply. Offers of accommodation are likely to depend on availability rather than the prison leaver's needs and preferences. In some cases, the accommodation offered to prison leavers experiencing multiple disadvantage is unsuitable or dangerous. Hostel accommodation is often said to be unsafe and an unhelpful environment to support recovery and desistence.

> **Most of the guys that I've seen, they would refuse level one hostel accommodation if it came up as an emergency accommodation. They were like, 'No, I'm better off in prison than going to a level one hostel, because it's not as safe, I'm going to be around people that are using'. Drug dealers were waiting outside, and people knew people's paydays and everything else. It just wasn't a safe environment for these guys to make positive change.**
>
> Fulfilling Lives staff member

Women may be forced to return to violent relationships on release from prison

Unsuitable accommodation is a particular challenge for women

Women who have been victims of domestic violence may face particularly dangerous situations upon release from prison. Stakeholders gave examples of women being released to return to live with a perpetrator because the accommodation on file had not been checked for suitability. Women can be forced to return to their perpetrator's residence for lack of any other option. Much of the accommodation available houses both men and women. This may result in women being housed with perpetrators of domestic abuse and other violent offenders.

A lack of appropriate accommodation is also a significant problem for women with children.[37] Emergency accommodation based upon their identified need at the time of release will not be suitable for children, but more appropriate accommodation is unlikely to be provided until they regain access to their children, leaving women in a no-win situation.

A lack of adequate finances and other resources

Upon release, prisoners are provided with a £46 discharge grant (which has been fixed at this amount since 1995 and would equate to £89 today if it had increased in line with inflation).[38] This needs to cover the cost of transport, food and any other essentials on the day of their release. Prisoners may be released with only the possessions they had on their person when they were arrested, and their clothes may not be appropriate for the time of year they are released.

> **You could do with a grant or some payment for clothing. Because some people will go in, like me, from the street, have only got one set of clothing. I am still wearing the same shoes that I got when I left prison. Still the same clothes, exactly the same, and that's a problem.**
>
> Male with lived experience

Ensuring access to welfare benefits is a priority to ensure prison leavers can support themselves and do not have to resort to reoffending to get by. Universal Credit applications, until very recently, had to be made online. This required internet access and could be difficult and time-consuming. Universal Credit applicants also need a bank account, phone number, address and identification, which many people affected by multiple disadvantage do not have. In January 2021, the Department for Work and Pensions launched a telephone service for prison leavers, which allows them to make a claim and apply for an advance payment on the day of release.[39] This is a welcome change as it should improve access to financial support.

Released without positive support networks

Relationships with anti-social peers are important in supporting or maintaining criminal behaviour among offenders on release.[40] People with experience of multiple disadvantage but without positive support networks may find themselves greeted on leaving prison only by people who seek to exploit them. Thoughts of who may be waiting (or not) for them can create anxiety for prisoners in the lead-up to their release.

> **Here, we often have dealers just waiting for them at the gates, so the minute they come out of prison, they've got a dealer stood there … so the temptation the minute they come out is there, and if there's no one there meeting them at the other side, it's going to be extremely difficult to turn that away when you're coming out with so much uncertainty.**
>
> Support staff, voluntary sector

Without opportunities to participate in meaningful activities, prison leavers may struggle on release. Having a sense of purpose is a critical part of recovery from substance misuse and living with mental health problems.[41] Boredom and temptations to return to harmful patterns of behaviour can quickly emerge on release. For example, leavers released early in the day from one prison in a Fulfilling Lives area have a long wait at the station before the first train of the day arrives.

Being met at the gate by a support worker is particularly important for prisoners who have suffered domestic abuse as they can find it difficult to avoid the perpetrators. Unfortunately, dedicated services offering support to victims of domestic violence who also face other forms of multiple disadvantage appear to be scarce.[42]

> A lot of the women we work with also have that added pressure of partners. There's heaps of domestic abuse, and coercion... we've seen the women met on actual release at the gate, by pimps, or drug dealers. Often women, to desist from that lifestyle, have to really disassociate from their previous acquaintances, and that's really difficult again, cutting yourself off from all your connections.
>
> Stakeholder, voluntary sector

Systems-level challenges

Short sentences disrupt lives and offer little rehabilitation

Short sentences

The people that Fulfilling Lives supports tend to experience repeated short-term prison sentences. Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead report that 68 per cent of their clients who spent time in custody were sentenced to three months or less.[43] Recall to prison for breach of probation can also be for a very short period (14 to 28 days, for example). While evidence shows that short sentences of less than 12 months cause major disruption and upheaval in people's lives,[44] they also make it especially difficult to support people for release. Those who serve short sentences often receive no resettlement support and have little time to prepare.[45]

> The ones that have shorter sentences, the prisons sometimes say, 'We haven't got the time to find them accommodation' ... especially recalls and if they're in for fourteen days, that's not enough time for them to find them accommodation so, we do get some slip through the net.
>
> Stakeholder, statutory sector

Many programme staff and stakeholders believe that there is limited benefit in imprisoning individuals for short periods and this is far outweighed by the negative impact. They question whether short sentences have any positive impact on rehabilitation or desistance but only further entrench disadvantage. People with lived experience also felt that short sentences provided no opportunity for support and so had very little impact on their chances of changing their lives.

These perspectives are supported by evidence. Analysis from the Ministry of Justice shows that custodial sentences under 12 months without supervision on release are associated with higher levels of reoffending than sentences served in the community (which can include undertaking unpaid work, attending rehabilitation programmes and curfews).[46]

Service silos and poor coordination

People experiencing multiple disadvantage require the support and services of a wide range of different organisations. VOICES Fulfilling Lives partnership found that many of the challenges around supporting prison release were a result of poor or non-existent information sharing processes, particularly for repeat offenders serving short but frequent sentences.[47] Co-ordination and communication between services supporting people in prison appears to be lacking.

> **You have theoretically all the services you need [in prison], so you have resettlement, you have homeless prevention welfare services, you have a prison liaison team, you have the DART team, for drug and alcohol and addiction. And you have them all there, but completely working separately, so there's no joint system, there's no conversation between them, there's no multi-agency meetings.**
>
> Support staff, voluntary sector

Not only is this inefficient, but it also means people do not receive the holistic care they need. People experiencing multiple disadvantage become frustrated and feel re-traumatised by having to tell their story multiple times to different staff or agencies.[48] Information about prisoner needs is not always shared between support services. Prisons have their own information systems,

and it can be difficult for external support organisations to access these. There can also be a culture of silo working. Some stakeholders suggest this is due to how services are commissioned.

As well as a lack of coordination within prison support, there can often be a disconnect between prison services and external services. Needs identified on entry into prison do not always convert to a support plan on discharge. This can mean referrals are not followed up and there is a lack of continuity of care.

> **It's really disheartening when a customer has mental health issues, they're actually getting anti-psychotic medication, they're being referred to a mental health service in the area, but [the service] haven't accepted the referral, but as far as the prison is concerned the referral has been done. It's a tick box, and whereas this person has no follow-up appointment, hasn't been accepted.**
>
> Fulfilling Lives staff member

If the sentence is long enough, time in prison can be an opportunity to deal with issues that have not previously been addressed. People may begin substance misuse treatment programmes while in prison, and it is important that these continue upon release. One interviewee who had undergone a drug treatment programme in prison described being frustrated about having to start it again in the community.

We know that trusting relationships are key to supporting people experiencing multiple disadvantage. These take time to build and nurture. In some cases, resettlement support involves working firstly with in-prison teams who then hand the case over to community teams after release. In this situation, the client builds a relationship with a worker based in the prison and then must start again with a new support worker on release. This lack of consistency can negatively affect the quality of relationships built and thus the support provided.

What is needed for a positive prison release?

Fulfilling Lives areas are working to support prison leavers experiencing multiple disadvantage: navigators* provide practical and emotional support before and after release, and peer mentors offer empathy and a role model for change. In this section, we draw on the learning from the programme and other voluntary-sector partners to identify the key elements of effective support that help ensure a positive release and increase the chances of resettlement in the community.

Preparation in advance of release

Resettlement planning should start as soon as possible

For people in prison for less than 12 weeks, including those on remand or recall, resettlement planning should start as soon as they enter the prison. This allows as much time as possible to get support in place. Prison leavers working with Fulfilling Lives have support workers who can assist with planning and provide consistency of support. Support staff help prepare leavers for resettlement by ensuring that OST prescriptions are lined up, making appointments with drug support services, advocating for mental health or social care assessments and making appropriate referrals. Registering with a GP ready for release can also help with continuation of health care.

Help to secure suitable accommodation

If a prison leaver will be homeless on release, support staff both within prisons and in the community (such as Fulfilling Lives navigators) will make housing applications and contact accommodation providers to try and ensure that a place is found prior to release day. If contact can be made with the local authority housing office and paperwork completed in advance, this can increase the chances of securing accommodation on the day of release.

* A navigator is a service-neutral staff member who works with people affected by multiple disadvantage and supports them to secure and coordinate a range of services as needed. For further information see tinyurl.com/effectivenavigator

I went straight back to drugs to be honest. The day I got out I went to see [my support worker] and then I thought that day would have been all sorted out, you know like, go see my house, move in... I had nowhere to stay so I ended up staying at another user's house, the only place I could find.

Male with lived experience

A common issue is that places in hostels and other temporary accommodation are not held while people are in prison, increasing the risk of them being released homeless. Support workers advocate for accommodation to be retained. For example, the hostel place of a woman who was working closely with Fulfilling Lives was held during a seven-week prison sentence as the staff member was able to liaise with the hostel and explain the situation. This removed a potential stress in the lead-up to her release. Her worker stated that this contributed to a more positive release day; the woman has not been back to prison since.

> **When I was sent down, I was still in [hostel]. Now, I know they shouldn't have done, but they did. Basically, they kept my room on for me, so literally when I came out, I still had somewhere to go.**
>
> Female with lived experience

Planning for release: Client case study from Fulfilling Lives Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham (LSL)

Darren* has been working with Fulfilling Lives LSL since 2017 after he was referred by his local drug service. He was arrested in April 2019 and remanded in prison after an incident at the assessment centre where he was living. As a result, Darren was evicted from the accommodation while on remand. Fulfilling Lives were informed that he would not be offered accommodation on release due to the eviction.

During his time on remand, Darren was visited by his Fulfilling Lives worker once a month and was given support with his mental health, accessing a prison GP to get his medication, preparing for trial and retrieving and keeping safe his personal belongings including passport, letters, clothes and duvet. This contact was instrumental in keeping Darren engaged with service and as the worker had knowledge of his history and preferences, appropriate planning could be undertaken. Fulfilling Lives were able to appeal the decision

* Not his real name.

to exclude him from the hostel, source and finance temporary hotel accommodation and advocated for him to be accepted in private rented accommodation, which did eventually happen. Darren has said that Fulfilling Lives have helped his situation, and without the support provided he would be in a worse position.

Person-led accommodation pathways are needed

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a concerted effort to house rough sleepers. The 'Everyone In' initiative provided resource for emergency accommodation in hotels and other available places for people who would otherwise be rough sleeping.[49] One interviewee who was released during this time explained how he was driven in a minibus from the prison gates to his emergency accommodation where he stayed until something more permanent was secured. The overall success of this initiative has demonstrated that where there is the political will and the resource, rough sleeping can be dramatically reduced.[50]

Support to organise finances

Fulfilling Lives staff help people to prepare for making benefit claims on their release. This includes making sure leavers have acceptable forms of identification, a bank account and email address. Phone and online communication and applications have become essential during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, people affected by multiple disadvantage may not have the necessary digital skills and access or be confident using the telephone. Having someone to support this process on release, where applications need to be made correctly and as soon as possible to avoid any delay in receiving income, can be crucial.

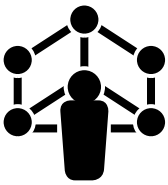
An effective pre-release assessment, whether conducted by prison staff or an external support organisation, should identify if debt is an issue for prisoners, with support offered to manage this. Support staff believe that this is a priority need, as those with debt are more likely to feel the need to resort to illegal or unsafe income sources.

Fulfilling Lives partnerships often provide access to small 'personalisation funds' that can help meet the cost of immediate needs on release, such

as clothing and accommodation (see Anawim case study on page 34). This resource can be extremely helpful.

Coordination of support across multiple organisations

Prison leavers often have multiple support needs, some of which may have become more severe during their sentence. Addressing homelessness, poverty and debt, substance misuse and mental and physical health issues all need planning for if a prisoner is to be effectively resettled on release. A range of different organisations and agencies are often involved, and they may have different priorities and resources. Independent 'navigators', like those used by many Fulfilling Lives partnerships, can play a valuable role in engaging and coordinating support from a range of organisations.



Investment in multi-agency planning is needed

Fulfilling Lives frontline staff are skilled at working with people with experience of multiple disadvantage. Doing this well requires knowledge of and connections with the different sectors and services that people might need.[51] Being able to identify the relevant agencies, understand their referral processes and criteria, and communicate effectively with them them, is essential.

Building relationships with supportive professionals helps with ensuring flexible and positive responses to requests. But this is also a somewhat precarious basis for coordinating and providing support, as staff members change over time.

Coordinating professional input : Client case study from Golden Key (the Bristol Fulfilling Lives partnership)

Bill* is a Fulfilling Lives beneficiary, and the Golden Key team was working with him prior to his release from prison. Because of severe physical health needs following a stroke, Bill's service co-ordinator arranged a social care needs assessment. The assessment was used

* Not his real name.

to ensure that appropriate accommodation was provided on release. The local authority housing provider was informed and made aware that hostel accommodation was not suitable for Bill.

The Fulfilling Lives service coordinator spent a great deal of time liaising with the different agencies involved to ensure that Bill's needs were met. The coordinator's advocacy and persistence were crucial in ensuring Bill had appropriate accommodation and care on release.

> There was a lot of liaising going on between myself, the probation team and council, the housing department and [area] social services and [city] social services as well so I think there was four or five agencies involved.
>
> **Fulfilling Lives staff member**

Although Bill had to spend his first night after release in emergency accommodation, his service coordinator pressed for a further social care visit. It was agreed that his health needs could not be met in the accommodation and he was moved to a care home and eventually to appropriate shared accommodation.

> He stayed [in the care home] while the council assessed him for another appropriate accommodation. I think that took about ten months, so he was really stable, his care needs were being met, and then ten months later he's in shared accommodation, really quite happy.
>
> **Fulfilling Lives staff member**

As well as building relationships with key organisations in the community, supporting prison release requires strong communication with in-prison teams and staff members. It is important that prison staff see the benefit of what Fulfilling Lives workers do and are supportive of this. Partly this is achieved through persistence and ongoing communication – calling regularly, maintaining contact throughout a prisoner's sentence, chasing call-backs and working from the outside to ease the pressure on in-prison teams, thus demonstrating commitment to the prison leaver. Support staff who can access

prisons use this opportunity to make themselves and their services known and build relationships wherever they can.

> **Every time you go into the prison, regardless of if you need to, go into resettlement and just say "Hello, I'm here. This is where I'm going to be going today". All the work that we do is what we've pushed for and what we've made ourselves available for... it has been a lot of self-promotion, yes.**
>
> Support staff, voluntary sector

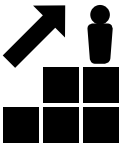
Support staff need access to prisons

Being able to visit prisoners and their in-prison workers prior to release is an important part of effective preparation, although has been very challenging during the pandemic. Joined-up working requires effective communication and staff find that this is most effective when done in person. One Fulfilling Lives navigator gave an example of a pre-release meeting in the prison between herself, the prison resettlement navigator and the probation officer that ensured everything was prepared in advance of release.

Knowledge of how prisons work is important in building effective relationships with in-prison teams. Knowing the different staff roles, routines and systems in prison can help to understand why and where blockages occur, which helps with trying to overcome these. Working with prison teams to achieve shared objectives helps cement relationships. In one example, a prison resettlement worker described how he worked closely with a Fulfilling Lives worker to prevent an eviction. Being in the community and having a smaller caseload, the Fulfilling Lives worker could spend the necessary time finding the information needed and liaising with the local housing authority.

> **After an awful lot of hard work on [Fulfilling Lives worker]'s part, and an awful lot of me bringing the person into the office and putting him on the phone, eventually got them to withdraw [the eviction] and he ended up going out with somewhere to live and he's still there now, as far as I know. So, without [the worker]'s help on that one, we would have had a major problem.**
>
> Support staff, prison resettlement

Support on release day



Practical support provides a foundation for recovery

Community support staff state that meeting prison leavers at the gate and offering personal support for as long as needed throughout the day has the biggest impact on prison leavers. They help leavers attend their appointments, offer emotional support, and provide essentials, such as a mobile phone, toiletries, clothes, and food parcels. Providing practical support with the basics provides a foundation on which people can build and participate in active recovery. Without this support, people with lived experience said they would be much more likely to reoffend.

Having the assistance of a support worker may be the only way prison leavers can meet all their requirements. This can involve driving the prison leaver between locations, liaising with service providers and mitigating delays.

> If we've got a worker sat with [the prison leaver] they're much more liable to wait [when appointments are delayed]. What the worker would do is explain to the housing worker, 'We've got to go and pick up their script, we will be back.' So, she would do all that liaising with the professionals, or ring the CRC and say, 'We're going to be a bit late, but we are going to turn up.' And, doing it that way it was much more likely that the woman was going to comply with everything that she needed to on day of release.
>
> Support staff, voluntary sector

During the pandemic, it has not been possible for support workers to drive clients between appointments. Adaptation has been necessary to allow the vital release-day support to continue. Some workers still meet people at the gate and then use public transport and walk between appointments. Support workers will provide a release pack in advance with a list of things that need to be done on release day, such as who to call and in what order. One support organisation arranged with the CRC to provide people with a mobile phone on release with all the numbers needed already entered. However, it is accepted that this approach is much less successful than being physically present to support leavers.

Small caseloads for Fulfilling Lives navigators means that they have more time available to commit to the people they support than mainstream services.[52] Offender managers may have 50–60 individuals on their caseload so cannot be expected to be able to offer in-depth, personalised support to people. Fulfilling Lives staff believe that to properly support someone on release day, they need to commit a whole day to the process. This can mean a meet at the gate between 8am or 9am or being prepared for the leaver's arrival at probation or other service.

If two staff are available, this can be an additional help; while one is driving between appointments, the other can be online or on the telephone dealing with other needs. This is clearly resource-intensive but is reported to be very effective.

> **When it comes to prison release, if there are two service coordinators, more can be done on the day of release. For example, I've picked up a customer once and while I've been driving the student social worker started doing the UC claim on my iPhone in the car... where there's two of us on it instead of one person, we got double the amount done, very quickly, for that person.**
>
> Fulfilling Lives staff member

Women-specific support

Female prisoners often have differing needs to male prisoners on release, particularly if they have histories of domestic violence and/or children. Housing specific to women and their needs is in short supply and high demand. In recognising this, specific women's services have developed to meet this need. These services work closely with Fulfilling Lives partnerships to offer additional support where appropriate to women. These services are often staffed by women and work closely with female prisons to ensure appropriate release plans are put in place and followed through.

Anawim, Birmingham: Provision of female-specific support

Birmingham charity Anawim supports women from many backgrounds, including women with experience of offending. Anawim has a 'one-stop shop' approach which reduces barriers to access and gives women the best chance of success. The charity works closely with local partners, prisons and the liaison and diversion team to offer women support on release from prison. Birmingham Changing Futures Together (BCFT, the local Fulfilling Lives partnership) refer people to Anawim. The BCFT bridging fund is available to help women purchase essential items.

Anawim offer support to organise appropriate accommodation and will meet women on release from prison. They also have their own accommodation, where women leaving prison can stay for six to nine months, sometimes longer, as a safe place to rebuild their lives. The provision of gender-specific, safe accommodation with wraparound support is particularly crucial for women with experience of domestic violence.

> I think that having a staff member there to pick you up outside the gate and back to [dedicated accommodation] gives people a lot of reassurance and really lessens their anxieties.

Anawim has built relationships with local women's prisons. Its staff go into prison and spend time getting to know the women referred to them, providing emotional support and developing trusting relationships. This is seen as critical in ensuring women continue to access support in the community. Anawim believes it is vital that the support it provides is separate from the prison service as this allows the charity to advocate on women's behalf and tailor support to individual needs.

Anawim also helps women to stay in touch with their children while they are in prison and liaises with legal services to organise representation for applying to regain custody of their children on release.

> I gave [the beneficiary] some stamped addressed envelopes so that she was able to get a couple of letters written to the children, liaised with prison, they set up a couple of calls initially [...] in prison, contact with families is at the bottom of the pile, but it's one of the most important things for those women, and the children.

For more information, visit https://anawim.co.uk

The importance of relationships

Maintaining positive family relationships

Strong and supportive family relationships are widely considered important factors in reducing reoffending.[53] Where appropriate, maintaining or renewing family links can play an important part in providing a positive release experience and helping to divert people away from peers and networks with criminal ties.

> My family was key in it all. They encouraged me when they knew I was rocky... It was a hard time, my first year [out of prison] was the hardest... [Without family support] it would've been totally different. I would've come home, I would've had to find myself accommodation. I would've sofa surfed. I would've gone straight back into criminality.
>
> Male with lived experience

Support staff know how crucial family can be to resettlement and as a result will try to connect clients with their family in advance of release. For women with children, this can mean liaising with social services but also supporting women to meet any requirements they need to fulfil to give them the best chance possible on release.

> We do a lot of work with women to help them get children back, so working very closely with social services. Very often the women have got to prove themselves and their ability to be a good mum, so we will make sure that women have got access to the courses, the counselling and everything else. We will facilitate with social services the telephone calls with the children, and that can be very difficult. We try to improve the relationship.
>
> Support staff, voluntary sector

A trusting relationship with the support worker

However, very often people experiencing multiple disadvantage will not have family members who can provide support. So, it is crucial that support workers can provide emotional as well as practical and navigational support. Knowing in advance of release that they will not have to deal with the demands of the day on their own can provide a prison leaver with much needed reassurance and reduce anxiety.

> I think that having a staff member there to meet you outside the gate and take you back to [accommodation] gives people a lot of reassurance and really lessens their anxieties.
>
> Support staff, voluntary sector

Staff need the time and resource to build trusting relationships

Having someone to provide support and encouragement can reduce the risk of prison leavers returning to people or places that might lead to missing appointments or reoffending. Several workers believe that a crucial part of their role is diverting people from distractions and potentially negative associates, and this is only possible if they are there to greet the leaver in person. This can be challenging, as is maintaining a balance between providing professional advice on the repercussions of missing appointments and allowing people to make positive choices themselves. People with lived experience who received this type of support felt that it was crucial in helping them to navigate all the necessary steps involved in successful prison release.

A trusting relationship between support worker and prison leaver is key. All elements needed for an effective transition from prison may be in place but if the prison leaver chooses not to engage with the support, it will not

succeed. Fulfilling Lives demonstrates how effective relationships can be built – this learning can be used by other organisations and partnerships supporting prison leavers. Small caseloads and no time limits on support allows Fulfilling Lives staff to commit the time needed to building relationships and gaining the trust of the people they support.

To build relationships with someone in prison requires face-to-face contact. Without being able to visit in person prior to release, staff say it is much less likely that people will agree to be met at the gate and supported on release day. Visiting in person demonstrates the commitment of the support worker and gives prisoners the opportunity to experience first-hand the support on offer.

> **[Support worker] was a fantastic support. She would help me, she would come and see me, she would tell me to be positive. And that support was amazing. That was really needed. Because you're in a bad place, you're in a prison, you're on your own, you're sort of down in the dumps and you've got this person coming to see you who is just – she's got your back.**
>
> Male with lived experience

A non-judgmental approach towards all people with experience of multiple disadvantage is crucial,[54] but for those in prison this is particularly important as they are more likely to feel judged by professionals – they are, after all, being punished for their actions.

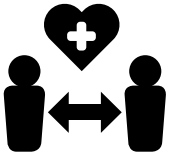
Alongside this, trust can be gained by emphasising that the support on offer is separate from probation; prisoners may have negative perceptions of probation due to their role in enforcing licence conditions. Offering support as optional successfully sets it aside from statutory expectations.

> **When we get to meet the lads in prison, some of them will just say, 'No, that's fine, I don't want no support, I don't want no help,' and we don't force it on them. And we caveat that this is nothing to do with your probation, you don't have to do this and all this type of stuff. We're just saying, 'Would you like some help? Would you like some support?'**
>
> Support staff, statutory sector

People may not take up offers of support straightaway. It is important to be both persistent and available when someone does decide to accept help; one Fulfilling Lives staff member described this as 'planting the seed and waiting for it to grow'. In this way people can engage in their own time and be more likely to feel ownership of the decision to make a positive change in their lives.

Given the time needed to build a trusting relationship, continuity of support worker within and beyond prison is important.

The importance of lived experience



Peer mentors offer emotional support and hope of recovery

Harnessing the value of lived experience of multiple disadvantage is core to the work of Fulfilling Lives. Evidence has shown the effectiveness of peer support schemes within prisons.[55] Peer mentors who are ex-offenders can provide additional support to people being released from prison.

Peer support for transition from prison

The National Expert Citizens Group (NECG), the lived experience representative group for people using services in the Fulfilling Lives programme, undertook a consultation to understand more about how peer mentors can help with the transition from prison. They found that peers can support people on release from prison by using their lived experience to create a trusting relationship through empathy and shared identity. Peer mentors also act as strength-based and inspirational role models. Support provided can include emotional support, helping to create a daily structure, connecting people with

community opportunities and offering an alternative to negative peer influences.

To be effective, the NECG argues that peer support programmes for prison leavers should follow of the following principles:

- Peer supporters must be paid, although additional well-trained, structured and supported volunteer roles, that provide a pathway to paid roles, can increase capacity.
- There must be excellent training and support; peer supporters should be embedded in a team, with a recognition of the risk of burn-out.
- Support must begin before people leave prison.
- Diversity in the peer support workforce is essential, especially the provision of female peer supporters for women leaving prison.

Following the success of the Lead Worker Peer Mentor scheme within Birmingham Changing Futures Together (Fulfilling Lives partnership for Birmingham) a small team of peer mentors now sits within the Liaison and Diversion team, provided by Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust.

> In the community, peer mentors can support people for up to six months [after release], but it can be extended ... And that can be anything, that can be going for a coffee, that could be taking them to meetings, registering with the GP, just anything that person wants. But more importantly, you've got someone who you know has been through exactly the same experience, and you can trust what they're saying.
>
> **Support staff, voluntary sector**

The model in Birmingham and Solihull has been highly commended by NHS England. Read more about the model and its impact here.

Being able to speak to offenders from a position of experience can build empathy into relationships and mitigate some of the power imbalances that exist between a member of staff and a prisoner.

A support worker with lived experience of prison demonstrates that recovery and desistence is possible. They can speak from a position of authority on how change is achievable. This can be a powerful engagement tool.

The impact of support workers with lived experience

Earl has supported clients leaving prison in the Midlands for the last four years and in that time has been able to draw on his own lived experience. Earl was previously a frequent drug user and spent repeated spells in prison. He believes this experience is a vital tool for engaging clients who may distrust support.

Earl feels he can be "brutally honest" with individuals who are in similar situations to where he once was. Prison leavers respond positively to Earl's honesty and ability to understand their perspective. He also shows that recovery is possible.

> [The prisoner has] gone, 'how long are you clean?' I told him, 'Almost eight years' and you can literally see within him the disbelief that there was somebody sitting there in the prison room with him and actually letting him know that there is something different that you can do.

Earl highlights how he uses both his professional and lived experience to shape the support he provides. He sets boundaries for how much he divulges to prison leavers and only shares his experience when it is appropriate. He also recognises the importance of being secure in his own recovery journey.

> Even though I've studied and I've educated myself along the journey, but my lived experience is the important factor of the delivery of the service. I think for it to be successful you have to be in a psychological place, where you can deal with these individuals and that kind of complexity level. But at the

same time retain professional boundaries and try to deliver a service [...] I am not just a lived experience worker.

Earl is also involved in systems change work and believes that his lived experience has helped offer a different perspective to commissioners and policymakers he engages with.

Involving the prison leaver in decision-making

People should be active participants in their release

Staff stressed that people are more likely to engage with support if release planning is carried out with them rather than for them. Working with people to co-produce support plans invests them in the process from the start and ensures that plans are built around their personal goals and priorities.

> **I just lead [support planning] however [the client] wants it, rather than pushing them into a service that they're not ready for... services require them to have a certain level of engagement, so you're setting them up to fail if they're not ready yet.**
>
> Support staff, voluntary sector

A prison-based mental health worker described how important working collaboratively with prisoners is to his work in ensuring mental health support that extends into the community after release.

Realistic expectations of success

Staff who have worked extensively with prisoners, particularly those with long offending histories, believe that it is important to have realistic expectations and to set realistic goals and targets. Lived experience of prison release helps with this – knowing that even with the best of intentions, it can be very challenging to move away from negative associates and familiar patterns of behaviour. Demonstrating to the prison leaver that this is understood and celebrating small achievements (such as longer gaps between reoffending) is important to maintaining engagement with support.

> I suppose a successful outcome for me was that they engaged with us on the day [of release] instead of just going straight to a dealer. Then he's at least got some evidence there for himself that he can do something different, even if it's just for that one day, because, as we all know, we have to do things a step at a time.
>
> Support staff, voluntary sector

Addressing system-wide challenges

The extent to which Fulfilling Lives partnerships can influence the quality of support provided to people prior to their release from prison is constrained by the systems that they work within. Supporting people with prison release is having a positive impact on those individuals, but there is a need to address the disconnects in the system that mean this additional support is required. Systemic change is the ultimate goal for Fulfilling Lives partnerships, to ensure that positive achievements are long-lasting. In this final section, we provide examples of how Fulfilling Lives partnerships are addressing the need for wider systemic change.

Raising awareness of multiple disadvantage and upskilling staff

Through promotional campaigns, communities of practice and other networking opportunities, Fulfilling Lives partnerships have contributed to raising awareness of the needs of people affected by multiple disadvantage within the criminal justice sector, the challenges faced and the need for systemic change. Workforce development programmes have helped to upskill staff working to support prison leavers across a range of different service contexts.

> **We've pulled a lot of the learning in from WY-FI [West Yorkshire Finding Independence] ... And it's changed our challenging behaviour policies. It's changed our access policies. It's changed how staff are grown as workers.**
>
> Stakeholder, voluntary sector

Coordinating support for individuals

Several partnerships have been instrumental in establishing multi-agency groups to review complex cases. These groups provide a forum for pooling information and expertise and developing a cross-agency response to people's support needs. As we have highlighted in other evaluation reports,[56] these groups can also contribute to improved understanding between professionals and sectors of each other's role and expertise, better communication and ultimately coordination of support.

Voices of Independence Change & Empowerment in Stoke-on-Trent (VOICES) Community of Practice and Multi-Agency Review Group

VOICES established an area-wide Community of Practice (CoP) to provide a safe, shared space for discussion and learning and to encourage practitioners to implement change. The CoP brings together experts from a variety of sectors and backgrounds, including people with lived experience, prison and probation staff, social workers, health-care professionals and outreach workers. The CoP held a series of sessions on prison release in response to the significant challenges in supporting people through this transition. Sessions focus on reviewing case studies and other evidence and sharing experiences and learning.

A Multi-Agency Resolution Group (MARG) also supported by VOICES provides a focus to discuss specific cases that have become stuck or stalled in the system, including when people are coming up for release. The group meets monthly to discuss cases and referrals can be made to the group by any professional. The MARG reports to

the Safer Cities Partnership Board, but also seeks to influence other relevant strategic groups, such as the Health and Wellbeing Board, Homelessness Reduction and Safeguarding Adults boards. Through these channels, the MARG can make others aware of cases and make recommendations for their support.

Although initially established independently, the MARG and the CoP now work closely to establish priorities for working with people with experience of multiple disadvantage, which includes those in the criminal justice system. Some professionals sit on both groups. Both groups help to foster greater understanding and positive relationships between professionals in different sectors and are said to have helped improve prison release processes and contributed to more coordinated discharge plans.

> [There is now] increased awareness about the pressures that prisons are facing. But also prisons understanding roles of community services and how they can potentially help, that's improved greatly. There's been a real appetite from prisons to work closely with community services. There's been much better coordination of discharge plans. Prison release locally has improved ... That doesn't mean it's still not a problem but it has greatly reduced.
>
> **Fulfilling Lives staff member**

Read more about the CoP work on prison release here.

Effective information sharing

It is essential that all relevant agencies have the information they need on the prison leaver to ensure a smooth transition. Many staff report that effective information sharing remains a major challenge in working with people in prison, but that this can be helped by building relationships with prison staff as outlined above. Sharing information with offender management services is also vital and has been facilitated by one Fulfilling Lives partnership through staff secondment (see boxed example below).

Information sharing through staff secondments at Blackpool Fulfilling Lives

Blackpool Fulfilling Lives (BFL) has built strong relationships with local teams in the National Probation Service (NPS) and local community rehabilitation company (CRC). Establishing these links has enabled it to create a referral pathway whereby prisoners due for release who would benefit from additional support on release are referred by the NPS and CRC to BFL.

Staff from the police, adult social care and probation have been seconded to the Fulfilling Lives office to help improve communication and collaboration to facilitate this pathway. Alongside this, BFL arranged for NPS and CRC to be given licenses for the BFL client database. This helps to prevent delays that can be caused in trying to share information across different databases. With the consent of individuals, BFL receives client details that allow it to prepare for and deliver the most appropriate care for those referred. Referral is now a more efficient process for all services involved.

Secondments have also been valuable in raising awareness of multiple disadvantage – when seconded workers leave BFL they share learning and best practice with colleagues at their host organisation.

Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead piloted a similar initiative, with a Fulfilling Lives navigator seconded to the Northumbria CRC to support their work with people with experience of multiple disadvantage and embed some of the learning from Fulfilling Lives in the CRC. Read more about the impact of this secondment here.

Strategic collaboration

Multi-agency meetings and practice groups can be used as a springboard from which to grow more strategic collaborations, with broader aims to foster coordination between services and reduce silo-working. As in the case of the West Yorkshire Criminal Justice Network (see example below), these collaborative networks can provide a focus of systems-wide changes

and a mechanism to share experience and good practice. Lived experience involvement in such networks is essential.

West Yorkshire Criminal Justice Network

Partners from the WY-FI network came together in 2016 to start the West Yorkshire Criminal Justice Network. The aim was to increase collaboration across the different localities in the region, share good practice and better support people with experience of multiple disadvantage in the criminal justice system.

Prior to the lockdown of March 2020, the network had 86 members, around half of whom would meet face-to-face every quarter at different services across the region. Members come from a variety of organisations and agencies including prison-based services, probation, police, housing and substance misuse treatment services as well as commissioners and service users from across the region. The WY-FI lived experience team also attend meetings and offer their perspective on services and priorities for change.

A major focus of the network has been prison release pathways, specifically continuing treatment programmes into the community. By sharing learning on how these pathways had been developed in different areas, a successful prison release clinic pilot in Bradford was replicated in other areas. Network members have also reported how useful it is to have a forum to share ideas and experiences and discuss challenges in their locality.

Read more about the West Yorkshire Criminal Justice Network here.

Concluding remarks

People with experience of prison release highlighted the importance of support on leaving prison in encouraging desistence. All involved in this research – people with experience of prison, staff and stakeholders – acknowledged that even with all the support possible in place, individuals can and do reoffend. However, there was also widespread agreement that *without support, the chances of preventing reoffending are significantly reduced.*

> **I think [the support worker] made me settled. Because if [the help] didn't exist, I'd be back on the streets homeless, no medication, having to do stuff to get enough money to get what I need. So, it just goes back around again doesn't it, you just go back to prison again. It just continues that way.**
>
> Male with lived experience

Where people had managed to break the cycle of reoffending, they largely identified four reasons for this: receiving the right support on release, having stability in their life, avoiding negative networks and wanting to change their lives. Even the most effective support cannot control all these factors. What support such as that provided by Fulfilling Lives can do is encourage individuals to want to change and, crucially, be there when they make this decision.

Breaking the offending cycle needs ongoing support

Time in prison can be a window of opportunity to support someone to make a change in their lives. It can provide the opportunity to begin to address some of the drivers behind their offending behaviour. But the support needs to be there when needed and delivered in the right way.

While the days leading up to and following release are crucial, so is ongoing support. Prison life has routine and structure; on release, this structure disappears and a lack of things to do can be difficult to deal with. For people who have been entrenched in a cycle of reoffending for a long time, the transition can involve rebuilding an identity different to all they have ever known. These types of changes will not happen overnight and require continued support.

> **It's more than just sorting out the nuts and bolts on the day of release. ... Often, we'll do all the practical stuff, we'll sort the benefits, we'll put you on this programme, but often we don't deal with how a person actually sees themselves and I think if we don't deal with that, often the other stuff doesn't work.**
>
> Stakeholder, voluntary sector

We began this report by indicating some of the many other transitions that people experience. Fulfilling Lives partnerships have explored some of these in detail, including hospital discharge, the transition from homelessness to stable accommodation and the move from out-of-work benefits into employment. What is clear, however, is that many of the elements of a positive prison release are also relevant to other transitions. This includes continuity of support over the course of the transition, the importance of peer support, coordination and collaboration between different service providers and good understanding of the needs of people experiencing multiple disadvantage by all those involved.

I'd say this is probably the best chance I've ever had at [staying out of prison], I can't think what I'd want more... but it's not easy. I needed a bit of stability, and that's what they've helped me get.

Male with lived experience

About this research

This briefing draws on research undertaken between September 2020 and March 2021. The research involved the following activities:

- Review of policy documentation, academic and other online evidence on the topic.
- Review of evaluation reports and other evidence produced by Fulfilling Lives partnerships.
- Attendance at National Expert Citizens Group (NECG) meetings where members with lived experience of prison release were undertaking a consultation with the Ministry of Justice.
- Qualitative, in-depth interviews with 15 frontline Fulfilling Lives staff; 20 stakeholders from statutory and voluntary sector support organisations, NPS, CRC and prison resettlement teams; and 7 people with lived experience of prison release.

We combined and analysed findings from all activities to identify commonalities and key themes. We shared a draft of the briefing with partnership leads who provided additional insights and interpretation.

Further detail on the method can be found on pages 53 to 57.

About Fulfilling Lives

The National Lottery Community Fund is investing £112 million over 8 years (2014 to 2022) in local partnerships in 12 areas across England, helping people with multiple needs access more joined-up services tailored to their needs. The programme aims to change lives, change systems and involve beneficiaries. The programme is not a preventative programme, but instead aims to better support those with entrenched needs who are not otherwise engaging with services. The programme uses coproduction to put people with lived experience in the lead and builds on their assets to end the revolving

door of disjointed care for adults. The programme also has a strong focus on systems change, so that these new ways of working can become sustainable.

For more information about this report, please contact joanna.welford@cfe.org.uk

For more information about the Fulfilling Lives programme, visit www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/strategic-investments/multiple-needs

For more information about the evaluation of Fulfilling Lives, including partnership-level evaluations, please visit www.fulfillinglivesevaluation.org

Useful resources and further information

Creation and Impact of the West Yorkshire Criminal Justice Network *West Yorkshire Finding Independence (WY-FI) (2019)* https://wy-fi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/West-Yorkshire-Criminal-Justice-Network-Briefing-FINAL.pdf

Entering and leaving prison: A co-constructed research study exploring the experiences of Beneficiaries. *Opportunity Nottingham (2019)* www.opportunitynottingham.co.uk/uploadedfiles/documents/41-1567606346-entering_and_leaving_prison_report._opportunity_nottingham._sep_19.pdf

Evaluation of Northumbria Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) secondment pilot to Fulfilling Lives Newcastle Gateshead. *Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead (2017)* www.fulfillinglives-ng.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/CRC-evaluation-report-2017.pdf

An Improbable Journey: Exploring a prison release plan *VOICES and Expert Citizens (2020)* https://issuu.com/voicesofstoke/docs/39303_20-_20voices_20prison_20release_20case_20stu

Manifesto for Change *Fulfilling Lives South East Partnership (2019)* www.bht.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Fulfilling-Lives-Manifesto-for-Change.pdf

Prison Release Support Stoke-on-Trent Community of Practice *VOICES (2016)* www.voicesofstoke.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Prison-Release-Support_FINAL2.pdf

Surviving in a Revolving Door: A Study of the Evidence about Offending in WY-FI *WY-FI (2020)* www.westyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/surviving_in_a_revolving_door_final.pdf

Understanding the transition between the community and prison for individuals with multiple and complex needs *Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead (2017)* www.fulfillinglives-ng.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Prison-Transition-Executive-Summary.pdf

Appendix 1: Methods

Desk review of documentation

A literature search was undertaken of relevant policy documentation and academic and grey literature. Relevant literature was reviewed for evidence relating to prison release and people with multiple disadvantage and was summarised according to each research question.

We reviewed local evaluation reports and case studies provided by Fulfilling Lives partnerships on the topic of prison release and other types of transition. We used this material to help identify common barriers and the different ways partnerships had responded to these.

Analysis of quantitative beneficiary data

A common data framework (CDF) was developed at the start of the Fulfilling Lives programme to ensure consistent data is collected by all 12 partnership areas. The CDF includes:

- demographic information on beneficiaries, their engagement with the programme and related support services services; and
- six-monthly assessments of need and risk (Homelessness Outcomes Star™ and New Directions Team assessment).

The Homelessness Outcomes Star is a tool for supporting and measuring change in people with multiple needs and is completed by beneficiaries with support from key workers. People agree a score from 1–10 on each of ten areas. A total score is also calculated. An increase in the score indicates progress towards self-reliance (so high scores are good). For more information see www.outcomesstar.org.uk/homelessness

The New Direction Team (NDT) assessment is a tool for assessing beneficiary need, risk and involvement with other services. It is completed by the support worker. The NDT assessment covers ten areas. Each item in the assessment is rated on a 5-point scale with 0 being the lowest possible score and 4 being

the highest. Risk to others and risk from others are double weighted, with a high score of 8. The highest possible NDT score is 48 and the lowest 0. Low scores denote lower needs (so low NDT assessment scores are good). For more information see: www.meam.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/NDT-Assessment-process-summary-April-2008.pdf

For the purposes of the national evaluation, the Homelessness Outcomes Star and NDT should be completed within two months of the start of engagement and then at six-monthly intervals thereafter.

All beneficiaries are asked to provide informed consent for their data to be collected by partnerships and shared with the national evaluation team. Partnerships submit CDF data to us on a quarterly basis. The analysis carried out for this study is based on data collected up to March 2020 and therefore does not take account of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns.

Association between prison experience and NDT and Outcomes Star scores

Multivariate OLS regression was used to explore the association between whether the beneficiary spent time in prison and the NDT assessment and the Homelessness Outcomes Star scores. The dependent variables are the NDT assessment, the Outcomes Star scores and their respective 10 components. We investigated association with the measures at baseline, 12-month follow-up and the change between the 12-month and the baseline readings. The prison experience variable that is included in the regression is a dichotomous variable that indicates whether or not the beneficiary spent any time in prison in the first three quarters from the start of engagement with the programme. As an alternative to this dichotomous variable, we also explored a variable measuring the proportion of time spent in prison during the first 9 months. The results tell essentially the same story as those presented here. We prefer the dichotomous variable since it is less subject to measurement error.

In each of the regressions we control for the following beneficiary characteristics: age, sex, ethnicity and four dummy variables representing the needs of the individual (homelessness, offending, substance misuse, mental health) when they join the programme. The details of these regressions are presented in Tables 5 and 6. Note also that the inclusion of the prison experience variable has little effect on the coefficient estimates for the control variables.

The analysis is based on 618 observations for the sample of the NDT assessment and 544 observations for the Outcomes Star sample. Sample sizes are relatively small, largely due to missing prison information in some quarters for many beneficiaries. The first filtering criteria used in creating these samples is keeping only observations related to usable prison information and usable measures of the NDT and the Outcome Star from the initial sample (3,475 observations). Then only non-missing observations of the control variables are used for each sample.

The analysis in Table 5 shows that experiencing prison in the first three quarters of engagement with the programme is positively associated with the NDT score – being in prison increases the NDT score. Specifically, on average, an individual with a prison experience within the first three quarters of engagement has an overall 12-month follow-up NDT score 2.3 points higher than someone without prison experience. Furthermore, the results show that the baseline NDT score is higher for those who subsequently spend time in prison. The results related to the change in the NDT score are statistically insignificant.

The results related to the individual components of the NDT score regressions are only statistically significant for "Engagement", "Risk to others" and "Impulse control". Specifically, the results show a positive association between being in prison and having frequent and/or severe outbursts/aggressive behaviour, being in prison and posing immediate risk to the physical safety of others. Beneficiaries who spend time in prison during their first nine months are more likely to have lower levels of engagement with frontline services at the 12-month follow-up point and are also more likely to have a worsening score on this measure over time.

Similar results are found in analysing the association between experiencing prison and the Outcomes Star score in Table 6. The analysis shows that experiencing prison in the first three quarters of the engagement is negatively associated with the Outcomes Star score. An individual with a prison experience within the first three quarters of engagement has an overall 12-month follow-up Outcomes Star score 4 points lower than someone without prison experience. As with our analysis of the NDT scores, the results show that the baseline Outcomes Star score is lower for those who subsequently spend time in prison and changes in the Outcomes Star score are statistically insignificant. The association between prison experience and the individual components of the Outcome Star score at the baseline level is statistically significant for most of the components. However, the score at the 12-month follow-up is only statistically significant and always negative for "Self care and living skills", "Social networks and relationships" and "Offending".

Association between prison experience and beneficiary destination

Multivariate probit regression was used to explore the association between whether the beneficiary spent time in prison and their destination. Three different criteria are used in measuring positive destination.

The first measure defines a positive destination to be: "Moved to other support (not funded through this project)" or "No longer requires support". The positive destination dummy is equal to zero for: "Client disengaged from project", "Prison", "Deceased" or "Unknown". We do not include in the analysis observations with the following destination: "Hospital", "Moved out of area", "Other" (these destinations are ambiguous to interpret as they could be positive or negative) or "Not applicable (still engaged with project)".

The other two measures differ from the first measure in the way the "Not applicable (still engaged with project)" is treated. The second measure treats 'still engaged' as a positive destination; the third measure treats it as a negative destination.

The prison experience variable indicates whether the beneficiary spent any time in prison in the first three quarters from the start of engagement with the programme. (Again, as an alternative to this dummy variable, we also explored a variable measuring the proportion of time spent in prison during the first 9 months. The results tell essentially the same story as those presented here.)

The analysis in Table 7 shows that experiencing prison in the first three quarters of engagement decreases the probability of the beneficiary moving to a positive destination. For example, on average, an individual with prison experience within the first three quarters of engagement decreases the probability of a positive destination, using the first measure, by 8.7 percentage points. This result is robust to the three different treatments of 'still engaged with the project'. Using the second measure, table 7 shows that the decrease in the probability of a positive destination is 6.6 percentage points and for the third measure it is 7 percentage points.

Qualitative fieldwork

Primary fieldwork was undertaken with staff, stakeholders and people with lived experience from across the 11 Fulfilling Lives partnerships that were

active between December 2020 and March 2021. Members of the research team attended four National Expert Citizens Group (NECG) meetings, where members discussed how to improve prison release in response to a request from the Ministry of Justice.

Interviews were conducted with:

- 20 stakeholders from NPS, CRCs, prison resettlement teams, statutory community teams, voluntary sector support organisations and Revolving Doors Agency;
- 15 frontline staff from Fulfilling Lives teams; and
- 7 individuals with lived experience of prison release.

Undertaking research during this time while the country was in a strict lockdown due to COVID-19 was challenging and required a change from the planned methodology, particularly the involvement of people with lived experience. We had planned to undertake paired interviews with support workers and Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries who had been released from prison within the last six months. However, limited face-to-face contact between beneficiaries and their workers and a lack of digital access meant that this was challenging. We extended the timeframe to include people with lived experience of prison release within the last three years. This also meant that interviewees were often further on in their recovery journey and were more likely to be willing and able to participate. Given the time that had passed since their release day, however, these interviewees were less able to recall the precise details of their day of release.

All participants in the qualitative fieldwork were provided with plain English information sheets and privacy notices about the research and had the opportunity to ask questions in advance. People with lived experience were invited to take part through their involvement co-ordinators or the National Expert Citizens Group, to include only those who were at a suitable point in their recovery. Involvement co-ordinators were fully briefed on the research and were able to check in with the participant after the interview if necessary.

All interviews were audio-recorded with the participant's consent and transcribed in full. Transcripts were coded using specialist qualitative data analysis software (NVivo). Codes were built around the research questions and data from all respondents synthesised into themes.

Appendix 2: Data Tables

Table 1: Beneficiaries with history of reoffending on joining the programme

	Count	Per cent
Yes	2,785	82.7
No	582	17.3
Total	3,367	100

Table 2: Beneficiaries with experience of prison during time on the programme

	Count	Per cent
Yes	753	32.4
No	1,539	67.6
Total	2,322	100

Table 3: Beneficiaries with experience of prison by age group

	16–19		20–29		30–39		40–49		50–59		60 and over	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
Yes	14	32.6	146	35.0	257	36.3	169	29.1	47	19.8	8	20.0
No	29	67.4	271	65.0	451	63.7	412	70.9	190	80.2	32	80.0

Table 4: Beneficiaries with experience of prison by sex

	Male		Female	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
Yes	463	33.5	188	27.3
No	920	66.5	501	72.7

Table 5: Results of multivariate OLS regression – association between prison experience and NDT scores

The table shows the association coefficients for each variable and, in parentheses, the respective standard error.

Panel A: Total NDT score			
	Baseline	**12-months follow-up**	**Change in the score**
Age	-0.029	-0.076**	-0.047
	(0.027)	(0.038)	(0.041)
Ethnicity	-1.864**	-0.527	1.338
	(0.827)	(1.143)	(1.242)
Sex	1.890***	0.862	-1.029
	(0.555)	(0.767)	(0.834)
Homelessness	-0.448	0.668	1.116
	(0.585)	(0.809)	(0.879)
Substance misuse	4.081**	3.107	-0.975
	(1.595)	(2.203)	(2.394)
Mental health	1.459	1.386	-0.072
	(1.094)	(1.511)	(1.642)
Offending	2.429***	2.711***	0.282
	(0.733)	(1.012)	(1.100)
Experience of prison	1.626**	2.295**	0.669
	(0.715)	(0.988)	(1.074)
Constant	25.575***	18.681***	-6.894*
	(2.504)	(3.460)	(3.760)
Panel B: Components of the NDT score			
(1) Engagement	**Baseline**	**12-months follow-up**	**Change in the score**
Experience of prison	0.004	0.271**	0.267*
	(0.095)	(0.119)	(0.137)
(2) Intentional Self Harm	**Baseline**	**12-months follow-up**	**Change in the score**

Experience of prison	0.136	0.104	-0.033
	(0.118)	(0.107)	(0.133)
(3) Unintentional Self Harm	**Baseline**	**12-months follow-up**	**Change in the score**
Experience of prison	0.053	0.039	-0.014
	(0.104)	(0.125)	(0.146)
(4) Risk to others	**Baseline**	**12-months follow-up**	**Change in the score**
Experience of prison	0.851***	0.579**	-0.272
	(0.224)	(0.241)	(0.268)
(5) Risk from others	**Baseline**	**12-months follow-up**	**Change in the score**
Experience of prison	-0.073	0.311	0.384
	(0.241)	(0.256)	(0.289)
(6) Stress and anxiety	**Baseline**	**12-months follow-up**	**Change in the score**
Experience of prison	0.071	0.143	0.072
	(0.093)	(0.108)	(0.125)
(7) Social effectiveness	**Baseline**	**12-months follow-up**	**Change in the score**
Experience of prison	0.100	0.203*	0.102
	(0.109)	(0.108)	(0.121)
(8) Alcohol/drug abuse	**Baseline**	**12-months follow-up**	**Change in the score**
Experience of prison	0.023	0.102	0.079
	(0.095)	(0.141)	(0.145)
(9) Impulse control	**Baseline**	**12-months follow-up**	**Change in the score**
Experience of prison	0.333**	0.349***	0.016
	(0.129)	(0.127)	(0.152)
(10) Housing	**Baseline**	**12-months follow-up**	**Change in the score**
Experience of prison	0.127	0.194	0.067
	(0.104)	(0.124)	(0.145)
Number of observations	**618**	**618**	**618**

Notes: Asterisks indicate level of significance: * 10%, ** 5% and *** 1%. Each specification in panel B (1 to 10) is a separate model. The dependent variable is the individual component and the control variables are the same as those reported in Panel A. The coefficients of the controls' variables are not reported as they have similar impact to that found in panel A.

Table 6: Results of multivariate OLS regression – association between prison experience and Outcomes Star scores

The table shows the association coefficients for each variable and, in parentheses, the respective standard error.

Panel A: Total Outcomes Star scores			
	Baseline	**12-months follow-up**	**Change in the score**
Age	-0.010	0.204**	0.214***
	(0.065)	(0.082)	(0.079)
Ethnicity	0.856	-2.676	-3.532
	(1.837)	(2.300)	(2.213)
Sex	0.391	0.545	0.154
	(1.292)	(1.618)	(1.557)
Homelessness	-4.319***	-1.119	3.200**
	(1.340)	(1.678)	(1.615)
Substance misuse	-10.445***	-1.810	8.635**
	(3.602)	(4.510)	(4.339)
Mental health	1.204	0.708	-0.495
	(2.725)	(3.413)	(3.283)
Offending	-5.962***	-7.373***	-1.411
	(1.776)	(2.225)	(2.140)
Experience of prison	-4.550***	-4.001*	0.548
	(1.712)	(2.143)	(2.062)
Constant	50.676***	44.076***	-6.601
	(5.641)	(7.064)	(6.796)
Panel B: Components of the Outcomes Star scores			
(1) Motivation & taking responsibility	**Baseline**	**12-months follow-up**	**Change in the score**
Experience of prison	-0.071	-0.328	-0.257
	(0.202)	(0.244)	(0.260)
(2) Self-care & living skills	**Baseline**	**12-months follow-up**	**Change in the score**

Experience of prison	-0.310	-0.544**	-0.235
	(0.258)	(0.272)	(0.289)
(3) Managing money	**Baseline**	**12-months follow-up**	**Change in the score**
Experience of prison	-0.193	-0.190	0.004
	(0.238)	(0.263)	(0.263)
(4) Social networks & relationships	**Baseline**	**12-months follow-up**	**Change in the score**
Experience of prison	-0.333	-0.487**	-0.154
	(0.209)	(0.227)	(0.244)
(5) Drug & alcohol misuse	**Baseline**	**12-months follow-up**	**Change in the score**
Experience of prison	-0.539**	-0.359	0.180
	(0.232)	(0.276)	(0.285)
(6) Physical health	**Baseline**	**12-months follow-up**	**Change in the score**
Experience of prison	-0.545**	-0.325	0.220
	(0.237)	(0.251)	(0.260)
(7) Emotional & mental health	**Baseline**	**12-months follow-up**	**Change in the score**
Experience of prison	-0.385**	-0.168	0.216
	(0.174)	(0.217)	(0.224)
(8) Meaningful use of time	**Baseline**	**12-months follow-up**	**Change in the score**
Experience of prison	-0.494***	-0.222	0.272
	(0.186)	(0.237)	(0.230)
(9) Managing tenancy & accommodation	**Baseline**	**12-months follow-up**	**Change in the score**
Experience of prison	-0.477*	-0.443	0.034
	(0.243)	(0.288)	(0.314)
(10) Offending	**Baseline**	**12-months follow-up**	**Change in the score**
Experience of prison	-1.203***	-0.935***	0.268
	(0.317)	(0.341)	(0.353)
Number of observations	**544**	**544**	**544**

Notes: Asterisks indicate level of significance: * 10%, ** 5% and *** 1%. Each specification in panel B (1 to 10) is a separate model. The dependent variable is the individual component and the control variables are the same as those reported in Panel A. The coefficients of the controls' variables are not reported as they have similar impact to that found in panel A.

Table 7: Results of multivariate probit regression – association between prison experience and leaving the programme to a positive destination

All tables show the association coefficients (marginal effects) for each variable and, in parentheses, the respective standard error.

	Positive destination: first measure	Positive destination: second measure	Positive destination: third measure
Age	0.002	0.001	0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Ethnicity	-0.004	0.036	-0.030
	(0.039)	(0.034)	(0.032)
Sex	-0.024	0.030	-0.058**
	(0.030)	(0.026)	(0.025)
Homelessness	-0.040	-0.012	-0.044*
	(0.030)	(0.027)	(0.026)
Substance misuse	-0.048	0.000	-0.072
	(0.076)	(0.070)	(0.064)
Mental health	0.016	0.065	-0.019
	(0.054)	(0.050)	(0.047)
Offending	-0.069*	-0.029	-0.071**
	(0.037)	(0.034)	(0.031)
Experience of prison	-0.087**	-0.066**	-0.070**
	(0.035)	(0.031)	(0.030)
Number of observations	1286	1643	1643

Notes: Asterisks indicate level of significance: * 10%, ** 5% and *** 1%.

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