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Resettlement of young people leaving custody: Lessons from the literature

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Beyond
YOUTH CUSTODY

**RESETTLEMENT
OF YOUNG PEOPLE
LEAVING CUSTODY
LESSONS FROM THE LITERATURE**



LOTTERY FUNDED

This review has been produced by the Beyond Youth Custody partnership, consisting of:

Nacro, the crime reduction charity

ARCS (UK) Ltd

The Centre for Social Research at the University of Salford

The Vauxhall Centre for the Study of Crime at the University of Bedfordshire

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For more information on the Beyond Youth Custody programme, please visit www.beyondyouthcustody.net or contact the programme manager at sarah.richardson@nacro.org.uk

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Executive summary

This literature review presents the findings of an analysis of research literature about resettlement services for young people when they leave custody. The review has been produced as part of the Beyond Youth Custody programme funded under the Big Lottery Fund's Youth in Focus programme.

The aim of the current review is to pull together the evidence base of what is currently known in relation to youth resettlement and highlight key problems which remain unaddressed.

The headlines from the review in relation to resettlement are as follows:

- The importance of the resettlement of young people after custody (or aftercare) has increased significantly in both policy and practice terms over the last 15 years.
- Although resettlement in England and Wales has focused on the youth justice system's statutory primary aim of reducing reoffending, alternative aims in other jurisdictions may result in a different emphasis, such as promoting social inclusion or engagement.
- The welcome reduction in the number of young people in custody brings with it its own challenges. Those remaining tend to be older with more entrenched offending behaviour and even more vulnerable, with cumulative disadvantages and disruptions in their lives. The closure of some institutions as a result of the drop in custodial numbers increases the distances between placement and home, hampering resettlement preparation.
- Custodial sentences have the worst reconviction rates of any criminal justice disposal. This reflects in part the vulnerable nature of the custodial population and the entrenched nature of their offending. However, the custodial experience itself can exacerbate problems, severing positive ties with the family and wider community and bringing additional trauma.
- Various pilot schemes testing enhanced resettlement activities have suggested that there are potentially considerable gains from such interventions, including significant reductions in offending.
- Policymakers have recognised that effective resettlement requires "co-ordinated and holistic" resettlement to address the complex needs of young people. However this is difficult to implement, with the Youth Justice Board describing the necessary multi-agency delivery in resettlement as "complicated".
- The period of transition from custody to the community provides a window of opportunity when young people are enthusiastic to change, however this is impeded by a lack of sufficient, relevant and timely support, leading to disillusionment and a return to offending. In particular, plans for suitable accommodation and education, training or employment are often not established by the time of release.
- Resettlement provision problems are partly due to a failure in joint working between custody and community agencies, and a lack of sufficient partnership work between agencies in the community. Priorities for custodial institutions may militate against preparation for release, and information flow through the prison gates has been limited. Once in the community, problems with inadequate resources are exacerbated by the difficulties youth justice professionals experience in engaging the necessary stakeholders across the statutory, private and third sectors.
- There are particular problems in service provision consistency for those who turn 18 during their sentence, when statutory responsibility for resettlement shifts between agencies.

- There is a dearth of literature on the resettlement needs of, and effective provision for, those aged between 18 and 25. Research with adults more broadly stresses the importance of multi-modal and holistic interventions.
- Adult desistance is associated with offenders perceiving themselves as taking control of a positive shift in their lives, suggesting that agencies should promote this sort of proactive narrative and personal resources. Fostering motivated engagement is critical.
- There have been a number of key projects in recent years exploring, developing and piloting practice in resettlement with some showing promising results. These have included innovations such as embedding resettlement key workers in prisons, interventions lasting beyond the licence period, employing resettlement workers as partnership co-ordinators rather than caseworkers, sharing services between local authority areas, multi-agency case reviews, and employers' schemes that begin while inside.

Some of the key principles to inform effective practice that have emerged from the research and practice literature include the following:

- **Continuous service:** Ensuring that there is a continuous service between custody and the community, with sentence planning focused on resettlement throughout. A seamless sentence should see the work undertaken in custody continued into the community, and even beyond the end of the licence period.
- **Preparation for release:** This should begin at the point of entering custody, including ensuring that community based opportunities (including accommodation) are available on release. Release on temporary licence schemes can help with preparation for transition into the community.
- **Supporting the key transition period at release with enhanced supervision:** As well as presenting an opportunity for positive engagement, the period immediately after release is a flashpoint for trauma, disorientation and reoffending. The young person should be prepared for it, their expectations managed, with immediate implementation of support plans.
- **Engagement in the resettlement process:** Ensuring that the young person is engaged in the resettlement process will improve their motivation to comply. This involves the development of relationships where the practitioner and young person work together to achieve positive change.
- **Co-ordinating services and the 'brokerage' of multiple stakeholders:** This is crucial to meeting the complex needs of vulnerable young people. The wrap-around package of support requires resettlement staff to broker the engagement of partners across sectors, involving high-level buy-in, joint planning and information sharing.

The review of literature highlighted a number of key under-researched issues and unanswered questions in need of urgent exploration in order to develop the evidence base for policy and practice. These include the following areas:

- **Transition to adulthood:** This is problematic for resettlement because it involves a change of legislative provision, responsible agencies and relevant stakeholders. How can this transition be made more seamless? What implications would this bring for service providers? What would be the best model of service provision? Do young adults have different needs and require different service content and delivery methods?
- **Sustained engagement:** Although young people are co-operative and enthusiastic on release, sustained engagement in constructive activities is more problematic.

- Enhanced support without increased risk of breach: There is a challenge of providing enhanced support without increasing the risk of breach for non-compliance. There is a lack of evidence on whether the third sector's focus on voluntary engagement can be married with statutory compliance, and whether increased interventions actually reduce non-compliance.
- Diversity issues: Diversity issues and their relationship with needs have not been fully explored. How might services for young females take account of gender? Do black and minority young people require specific provision?
- Sudden termination of resettlement support: Ending resettlement support suddenly at the completion of the licence period may diminish its benefits. Questions remain about how provision beyond statutory obligations can best be resourced and managed and what options there are for a tapered exit strategy.
- Inclusion of the remand population in resettlement provision: This population is neglected when it comes to resettlement provision, despite having apparently similar needs. Inclusion will bring challenges, and questions remain on how provision would be best resourced.
- Resettlement aims: Little critical focus has been given to considering what the aims of resettlement are and how success is measured. Crucially, does designing provision to ensure short-term prevention of offending provide the best long-term outcomes? Consideration is yet to be given to the implications of planning resettlement across other social policy areas.

The literature confirms that resettlement is a complex task where young people are faced with barriers that can make the transition to the community a difficult journey. Nonetheless, the evidence is clear that where resettlement provision is given the requisite priority and adequate resources are deployed in accordance with the range of principles outlined in this review, it is possible to improve recidivism outcomes and make significant savings for the public purse.

Over the next five years, Beyond Youth Custody will explore the issues highlighted in this review, and the questions they raise by conducting a whole programme evaluation of 15 innovative Youth in Focus service delivery projects across England. The programme will build on existing promising initiatives to develop practice that will enhance the prospects of young people beyond youth custody.

Introduction

This literature review presents the findings of an analysis of research literature about resettlement services for young people when they leave custody. The review has been produced as part of the Beyond Youth Custody (BYC) programme funded under the Big Lottery Fund's Youth in Focus (YIF) programme. The YIF programme aims to engender positive change in the lives of vulnerable young people with a particular focus on young people leaving custody, young people leaving care and young carers. BYC is one of three England-wide learning and awareness projects that are working to develop best practice in policy and service delivery in each of the three YIF strands. Focusing on the young offenders' strand, BYC exists to advance knowledge and promote better policy and practice for young people making the transition from custody to the community and beyond in order to improve outcomes. There are 15 service delivery projects funded through YIF that provide services to young people leaving custody. These projects offer a range of innovative models of resettlement service delivery that, over the course of the next five years, will provide invaluable lessons for future policy and practice in this field.

BYC is being delivered through a partnership between four organisations: Nacro, ARCS (UK) Ltd, the Centre for Social Research at the University of Salford, and the Vauxhall Centre for the Study of Crime at the University of Bedfordshire. The partnership draws together the considerable experience of the organisations in the areas of criminal justice, youth and adult resettlement, research and policy development, communications, and project management.

Purpose of the review

Over the last decade there has been a decline in the number of young people in custody but the hard work is far from over. Reoffending rates remain extremely high, in particular for young offenders. According to the latest Ministry of Justice statistics, 73% of those under 18 go on to reoffend within a year of being released from custody (Ministry of Justice, 2012a). Effective resettlement services for young people leaving custody are essential to enable young people to leave the cycle of crime and reduce reoffending.

The aim of this review is to examine the evidence base of what is currently known in relation to youth resettlement. Distilling that knowledge at this particular time provides a baseline that will enable BYC to demonstrate where, and in what respects, the work of the YIF projects has advanced our understanding of what works in facilitating the transition from youth custody to the community and beyond. At the same time, it is hoped that it will constitute a helpful resource that will allow practitioners to:

- ascertain how their model of service delivery accords with the existing evidence base
- identify ways in which their model may be testing approaches which have not been subject to formal evaluation
- establish where their methods of working might challenge existing presumptions as to effective practice.

Scope of the review

This review aims to provide a comprehensive overview and analysis of the existing literature on youth resettlement. This literature is growing, but it remains underdeveloped in comparison to that which exists for adults, in relation to whom considerably more research has been undertaken. The main focus of the review is on the younger age range, particularly those below the age of 18. This is an inevitable consequence of the fact that, despite an increasing awareness of the distinct needs of young adults and the additional challenges posed by transitioning from youth to adult services, very little has been written specifically on this age group. It should not of course be assumed that what is effective with children will work equally well with those who are slightly older. The statutory arrangements for the provision of

resettlement services vary with age, the responsibilities for service delivery lie with different agencies, and the range of stakeholders with an interest in resettlement shifts correspondingly. More significantly perhaps, the social, economic and personal circumstances of young people change significantly as they mature, take on additional responsibilities, begin to think in different ways, and make the transition to adulthood. It is anticipated that an increased evidence base in relation to the resettlement of young adults will be one of the outcomes of the BYC programme and developing that knowledge will be a key focus.

If the literature as regards children does not automatically apply to young adults, it is equally true that findings from research on adult resettlement cannot automatically be applied to the intermediate group. It is nonetheless important to consider what lessons might potentially be drawn from each. A brief overview of the evidence base on adults is accordingly also provided.

Methodology

The methods used in the desk-based review were very similar to those developed successfully in recent scoping projects. Searches were made both of existing academic studies and of policy and practice documents focusing on key areas of interest. The primary combinations of terms used to search resettlement literature are listed in the table below. Searches on key areas of interest were much more subject specific.

Table 1: Primary search terms used for resettlement literature

Term 1:	and Term 2:	and Term 3:
Juvenile	Custody	Resettlement
<i>or</i>	<i>or</i>	<i>Or</i>
youth	prison	after*
<i>or</i>	<i>or</i>	<i>Or</i>
young	custodial	through*
<i>or</i>	<i>Or</i>	<i>Or</i>
child	secure	wraparound
<i>or</i>	<i>Or</i>	<i>Or</i>
minor	delinquent*	through
<i>or</i>	<i>Or</i>	<i>Or</i>
young adult	offend*	rehabil*

The search for relevant literature and ongoing projects involved four main sources:

1. Literature database and web searches, involving systematic searches of the following type of databases:
 - Academic library databases (including the University of Salford SOLAR, University of Bedfordshire) in addition to overall mapping of the field using the British Library database
 - Academic journal and book databases
 - Academic networks (including Academia.edu)
 - Academic open access repositories
 - Internet search engines (including Google, Webcrawler, Google Scholar) and subject specialist websites (including Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse [US])
 - Research council and research funder websites from the UK and overseas (e.g. Economic and Social Research Council, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Nuffield Foundation in the UK)

2. Government literature: The review included government reports from evaluations, inquiries, white and green papers etc from both European governments and beyond. This also included a search for any public guidelines or 'what works' literature in this area. Particular use was made of the Youth Justice Board's and Ministry of Justice's publications databases and the Youth Justice Board's effective practice repository.
3. Review of authors' previous reviews and/or studies: The authors have written scoping and 'what works' reviews on aspects of youth justice previously, including on resettlement. The texts used in these were re-examined.
4. Reference trails: Reference lists and bibliographies from each collected text were examined, and where relevant, traced.

The review focused on more than 100 texts and guidance documents produced in the last 20 years. For reasons of policy and practice relevance, there was an emphasis in analysis on texts that were more recent and from England and Wales. However, strict criteria for inclusion were deliberately not set. While being mindful of the problems of direct comparison (Hazel, 2008) it is important to recognise that it is appropriate for a literature review with a scoping remit to look beyond the current and local policy context. The decision to widen the search historically ensures that lessons from the past are not lost (there is a tendency for policymakers to try to reinvent the wheel and to repeat the same mistakes [Hagell and Hazel, 2001]). The decision to widen the search geographically helps to challenge localised policy discourses, and both illuminates the uniqueness of home policies and suggests more alternatives (Hazel, 2008; Muncie and Goldson, 2006). Although the search was not limited to English language studies (and databases searched included foreign language papers), all studies eventually cited in this report were written in English.

The resettlement landscape

While the types of activities that come under the heading of resettlement have a long history (see for instance Lewis et al 2007; Bain, 2004), the expression itself is of relatively recent origin. It appeared for the first time in 1998 in a Home Office consultation paper (1998) as the preferred term for what had previously been called 'throughcare' or 'aftercare' – a reflection, it has been argued, of a hardening attitude towards those who broke the law since 'care' of those sentenced to custody was no longer to be seen as a primary function of criminal justice professionals (see for instance, Raynor, 2004a). The new term did, however, have the advantage of drawing attention to the disruptive nature of the custodial experience, emphasising the importance of readjustment for those returning to the community after a period of incarceration (Lewis et al, 2007).

The change in terminology perhaps also contributed to a renewed emphasis on developing rehabilitative forms of intervention during and after custody in the light of evidence that the priority afforded to the provision of throughcare and aftercare services (particularly for short-term adult prisoners for whom such services were – and remain – voluntary) had declined substantially (Maguire et al, 1997; Nacro, 2000). Such concerns were heightened by a recognition that imprisonment continued to be associated with poor outcomes. The resettlement agenda received a significant impetus in 2002 with the publication of a major report on reoffending by ex-prisoners, published by the Social Exclusion Unit (2002).

By contrast with the voluntary nature of post-custodial services for adult short-term prisoners, resettlement of young people below the age of 20 has been a statutory requirement, irrespective of the length of sentence, for many years. Nonetheless, the issue of resettlement really came to the fore in 1998 with the introduction of the secure training order for 12-14 year olds which introduced a more structured licence period after release from custody with specified supervision requirements, failure to comply with which could result in recall. The disposal effectively emphasised the statutory responsibility of youth justice workers in relation to resettlement for this younger age group (Hagell et al 2000).

This sentence framework provided the blueprint for the detention and training order introduced in April 2000 as the only custodial sentence available in the youth court. The structured licence period based on a training plan developed while in custody is intended to provide a seamless 'custody-community' sentence that would allow continuity of intervention from the secure estate into the community (Hazel et al, 2002). Young people subject to a detention and training order are by default released at the halfway stage (with potential for early or late release depending on progress against the training plan) and remain subject to statutory supervision in the community for the duration of the order (Nacro, 2007a). The detention and training order can be for a term of between four months and two years, providing for a maximum supervised resettlement period of 14 months (where the young person receives a sentence of 24 months and is released early after eight months). Children sentenced in the Crown Court to longer periods of imprisonment are subject to the same provisions as those which apply to adult custodial sentences of 12 months or more: they are automatically released once half the sentence is served but are required to comply with licence conditions until the order expires (Nacro, 2007b).¹

Young adults aged 18-20 who are sentenced to custody are subject to detention in a young offender institution (DYOI), a disposal that is available for that age group alone. The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 contained provision to abolish DYOI but the amendment has yet to be implemented (Farrant, 2005). As a consequence, the detention of young adults is still effected through this distinct

¹ There are two exceptions. Firstly, children sentenced to life imprisonment, or 'Detention at Her Majesty's Pleasure' for murder under section 90 of the Powers of the Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000, are released at the discretion of the parole board once they have served a tariff set by the court. They remain subject to statutory supervision for life. Secondly, children considered to be 'dangerous' by the court may be given an extended sentence. They are released at the two thirds stage and may then be subject to statutory supervision for up to a maximum of five years in the case of a violent offence or eight years where the offence is a sexual one.

sentence, and the legislation governing resettlement remains unchanged. Young people serving sentences of DYOI of less than 12 months are subject to a period of three months statutory supervision on release. In the case of sentences longer than one year, the arrangements for resettlement are the same as those applying to older adults.

It has been argued that young adults in custody have been “left languishing in a political and policy vacuum” (Farrant, 2005: 2) with a corresponding lack of focus on what happens to them at the point of release. They are, in the words of the title of an influential report, “lost in transition” (Barrow Cadbury Trust, 2005). For some years, the Transition to Adulthood Alliance (T2A) has accordingly advocated a distinct approach for young people aged 18-24 across the criminal justice system and including at the point of resettlement (Barrow Cadbury Trust, 2005; T2A, 2009). The *Young Adult Manifesto* argues that the particular needs of this age group cannot be met by standard probation supervision, since existing caseloads necessitate “a focus on risk management, rather than long-term rehabilitation” (T2A, 2009). The Barrow Cadbury Trust has established three pilots to test different approaches to provision for young adults in the criminal justice system, described in more detail later in the review, but such initiatives remain the exception rather than the rule.

By contrast, the changes in the resettlement framework for children and the inherent difficulties of delivering effective aftercare (Hagell et al 2000) have ensured that the resettlement of young people below the age of 18 has continued to receive policy attention in recent years. In 2006, the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales published a ‘framework for action’ setting out what needed to be done by secure establishments, youth offending teams and other services “to develop further resettlement capability nationally, and the approaches to be taken, regionally, by regional reducing reoffending partnerships” (Youth Justice Board, 2006: 4). The *Youth Crime Action Plan*, issued two years later, committed the government to expanding resettlement support for young people leaving custody (HM Government, 2008). In fulfilment of that plan, the Youth Justice Board has, in the period since, established a range of pilot initiatives and innovations under a Resettlement Programme Board (Hazel and Liddle, 2012).

This programme began with the development of 59 Integrated Resettlement Support services across England and Wales (Youth Justice Board, 2010a) developed from the Resettlement and Aftercare Provision Project (Galahad SMS 2010). Other initiatives since have included pilot resettlement consortia (Hazel et al, 2012; Wright et al 2012; Ellis et al 2012), resettlement support panels in Wales (Phillips et al, 2012), and the Daedalus project at Feltham Young Offender Institution (Powell et al, 2012). The evaluations from these initiatives are described in more detail in the section on principles of effective practice.

Raynor (2004a) argues that the purpose of resettlement is potentially ambiguous and that resettlement has a range of aims, some of which are in tension with one another. It might, among other things, imply: restoration to a social environment roughly equivalent to that existing prior to the custodial episode; the renewal of social contacts; or action to identify and address needs. Ironically, perhaps, it might be thought to suggest that people were settled prior to the custodial episode, which in many cases is unlikely. Youth Justice Board case management guidance on resettlement does not specify the purpose of such activity (Youth Justice Board, 2010a). National standards for youth justice indicate that the desired outcome of service provision is that the needs of young people sentenced to custody “are addressed in a co-ordinated and holistic way to enable effective resettlement” (Youth Justice Board, 2010b:107; 2012: 35) and, in the case of children subject to longer terms of imprisonment, that risk is handled effectively.

Despite this lack of clarity, implicit in such statements is a focus on reducing reoffending. The statutory aim of the youth justice system, to which all those working within it must have regard, is to prevent offending and reoffending by children and young people (section 37 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998). Guidance produced for the implementation of Integrated Resettlement Support services lists a broad range of objectives as listed below, but the reduction of offending is situated at the very top of the list:

- Reducing reoffending
- Addressing substance misuse issues
- Addressing other needs and vulnerabilities, for example, those around accommodation, mental health, education, training and employment
- Working with parents, carers, families and peers
- Working on safeguarding issues with young people who are parents themselves
- Developing better use of leisure time by identifying – and encouraging young people’s participation in – positive leisure pursuits
- Developing young people’s life skills, such as budget management, maintaining healthy living/a healthy diet, improving self-esteem and building the confidence to make positive decisions (Youth Justice Board, 2010a: 16)

In this context, it is little surprise that resettlement provision is generally evaluated largely in terms of its impact on recidivism (see for instance, Galahad SMS, 2010). Indeed, from the perspective of policymakers, the other objectives listed by the Youth Justice Board can be seen as elements of good resettlement practice precisely because of their potential contribution to reducing reoffending. Furthermore, the Youth Justice Board has made explicit its view that “effective practice” in youth justice specifically means “any practice or programme that can be proven through evidence to reduce offending” (Youth Justice Board, 2012: 5).

In this context, it is important to recognise that other jurisdictions may well have different aims for youth justice more generally (and by implication for young adults in trouble with the law), which would affect their approach to the evaluation of ‘what works’ for resettlement (Hazel, 2008; Council of Europe, 2003). Although these may not contradict the desirability of reduced reoffending, they would introduce alternative and complementary measures of effectiveness. For instance, the most dominant aim across jurisdictions (in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) is the best interests of the child, which might result in measures of success across a spectrum of child-centred needs (such as self-esteem, engagement and family relationship bonding). In some European countries, like Germany, Belgium and France, the focus has been more on education and integration with an emphasis on restoring broken relations and promoting social inclusion (Hazel, 2008).

The evidence base

The resettlement challenge

Rates of reoffending following imprisonment have historically been high which demonstrates the challenge of resettlement for all people leaving custody. For young people below the age of 18, the rates of reoffending are higher still and this pattern has prevailed across a range of different regime types and different points in time (Hagell and Hazel, 2001). The current period is no exception: of those released from custody during 2010/11, 72.6% were reconvicted within 12 months (Youth Justice Board/Ministry of Justice, 2013: supplementary table 9.9) compared with an equivalent figure of 47.2% for adults (Ministry of Justice, 2012a: supplementary table 18a). No separate information is available for young adults, although earlier figures suggest that reoffending rates for 18-20 year olds are slightly higher than those for older adults (T2A, 2009). Although data are limited, it would appear that these findings are a manifestation of a broader pattern of an inverse correlation between age and recidivism post-incarceration, with younger children being particularly prone to reoffending. Children aged 13 released from custody in 2006 committed an average of 5.3 new offences in the following year, whereas the equivalent figure for 17 year olds was 3.5 (Hanson, 2008). Such a pattern was also identified in the evaluation of the secure training order (a custodial disposal for younger children aged 12-14 replaced by the detention and training order in April 2000). Sixty per cent of children subject to the disposal had committed an offence leading to arrest within 10 weeks of release (Hagell et al, 2000). Moreover, it seems clear that children of this age also reoffend more quickly than their older peers on their return to the community (Hazel et al, 2002).

One would, of course, expect non-custodial sentences to be associated with better outcomes than imprisonment: higher levels of recidivism would be anticipated for those young people whose criminal behaviour is sufficiently serious or entrenched to warrant deprivation of liberty. For example, the cohort in the resettlement consortia pilots had a median average of six previous convictions, with about a quarter having 10 or more (Hazel et al, 2012; Wright et al, 2012). Preventing further offending by this group would clearly mean effecting a significant change in established behaviour. However, analysis also suggests that this task is made even harder by the impact of the custodial sentence itself. When young people are matched for relevant characteristics, high level community sentences perform significantly better than custodial disposals (Ministry of Justice, 2012b). Such figures might be thought to indicate that there is considerable scope for developing effective policy and practice in resettlement that will impact positively on levels of youth crime and enhance the prospects for young people who are detained in the secure estate.

The poor performance of custody is explained at least in part by the extreme vulnerability of the young people who experience it (Hazel et al, 2010b; Farrant, 2006), many of whom may never have been particularly "settled" before custody (HM Inspectorates of Prisons and Probation, 2001). An analysis of all children and young people in the secure estate conducted during 2008 established that more than half (51%) lived in a deprived household and/or unsuitable accommodation, almost half (47%) had run away from home at some point, and more than a quarter (27%) had previously been in care. More than three in four of the sample (76%) had absent fathers and 39% had previously been on the child protection register. Twelve per cent had experienced the death of parents or siblings compared with four per cent in the general population. In summary, "around three-quarters of the sample are known to have three or more indicators of home/family disadvantage, and more than two-fifths to have five or more" (Jacobson et al, 2010: 52). Almost half (48%) had been excluded from school, one in five had self-harmed and 11% had attempted suicide (Jacobson et al, 2010). Most young people had experienced interlocking, or cumulative, disadvantage with 80% suffering five or more 'disadvantage factors' (Jacobson et al, 2010). Young people serving a custodial sentence are then "not just bad kids, but complex individuals with multiple difficulties" (Hazel et al, 2010a: 174).

A similar picture of social exclusion and vulnerability emerges in respect of young adults, although there are differences, reflecting the increase in age. One quarter of 18-20 year olds in custody report having previously been in local authority care, 43% indicate that they have problems of mental ill health, one in five were homeless at the point of incarceration, 40% have no formal qualifications, one third are fathers, and the majority have family members who have been in prison (Farrant, 2005). Young adults with mental ill health are over-represented in the custodial population (T2A, 2009).

However, vulnerability does not fully account for the extent of disappointing outcomes associated with imprisonment. The custodial experience itself tends to compound existing disadvantage by severing any positive links with the community and interfering with processes generally thought to promote desistance (Nacro, 2003; Bracken 2000; Mears and Travis, 2004; Nurse, 2001; Farrant, 2006). One study of adult prisoners, for instance, which included young adults, found that while unemployment and unstable accommodation were significant problems at the point of incarceration, a higher proportion of respondents considered that they would have difficulties with those issues on release (Lewis et al, 2007). Five out of the six custodial establishments for young adults fail one of the four tests of a healthy prison (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2012). Evaluation of the resettlement consortia confirms that young people's accommodation status is frequently worsened as a consequence of the disruption associated with the custodial period (Hazel et al, 2012; Ellis et al, 2012).

Moreover, the experience of incarceration represents an interruption to the important developmental processes associated with adolescence that naturally foster desistance (Rutherford, 2002). It also disrupts family ties at just the point when these are beginning to attenuate in any event, exacerbating the risk that children will lose elements of familial support that may be crucial to a successful move to independence. As the Youth Justice Board (2005a) notes, the custodial episode is likely to cause distress within the family, have an impact on family relations, and generate further upheaval when the child returns. From the young person's perspective, removal from home inevitably produces anxiety and fears for personal safety (Murray, 2012). The limited evidence in relation to young adults highlights similar themes: in one study, three of the five most frequently mentioned issues raised by young men in prison as key to their resettlement concerned personal or family relationships (Farrant, 2005). Thirty eight per cent of young adults have felt unsafe at some point during their sentence (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2012).

Less frequently recognised is the traumatic impact of returning to the community. Many children interviewed for the evaluation of the detention and training order described release as a disorientating experience as they had to learn to adapt to "a non-institutional environment that was less regulated than in custody" (Hazel et al, 2002:68). For some young people, the transition was clearly traumatic and they responded by withdrawing (Hazel et al, 2002).

It is apparent that young people themselves are aware of the range of problems that need to be addressed if they are to stay out of trouble. Consultation designed to elicit the views of young people on the Youth Justice Board's proposals for developing a strategy for the secure estate, for instance, found that more than half were concerned about whether they would have sufficient income to survive on release (54%) and whether they would have somewhere suitable to live (52%). Forty five per cent were worried about whether they would be able to access education, and more than one third reported that it was important for them to have someone to turn to for support (Glover et al, 2012).

Perhaps unsurprisingly in this context an overwhelming majority of respondents (more than 90%) thought that young people should be given support to find somewhere to live on release and almost all of those consulted considered that assistance should be provided in accessing education, training and employment. Almost three quarters (74%) regarded maintaining links with their family as very important. When asked what could be done to prepare them for release, most young people highlighted access to education,

vocational training and accommodation. Similarly, the most common responses to the question of what should be done to support young people leaving custody referred to financial support, legitimate income and accommodation. A considerable number of young people also indicated that it was not easy to be explicit about their support needs in advance of release when they would better understand their circumstances (Glover et al, 2012). For young adults, finding employment is the most commonly mentioned resettlement need (55%), followed by having stable housing (26%) (Farrant, 2005). Research conducted with women prisoners indicates that young adult females report the highest levels of unmet need (Hamlyn and Lewis, 2000).

Against this background, it is clear that successful youth resettlement requires finding solutions to a wide range of problems. If young people are to be engaged in the process, maintaining a particular focus on the issues that they themselves identify as barriers to desistance in order to foster “a sense of programme ownership” (Youth Justice Board, 2010a: 18) is essential.

Youth resettlement is, accordingly, a complex undertaking, and intervention directed solely at addressing offending behaviour will not be sufficient by itself to lower recidivism (Hagell, 2004). It involves “a significant commitment over a long period taking substantial resources” (Hazel et al, 2010a: 174). At the same time, the potential gains of effective intervention are considerable. Some approaches, described in more detail below, have achieved promising results, and these are consistent with the findings from literature about enhanced resettlement from overseas (Altschuler et al, 1999; James et al, 2013; Hagell, 2004). Cost benefit analysis of one particular initiative in a youth justice setting has suggested that on the “modest assumption” that good quality resettlement could lead to a 35% reduction in frequency of offending and a 10% reduction in the seriousness of the offences, a financial saving of £20,407 would be achieved per young person per annum (Renshaw, 2007). According to calculations based on the number of young people in custody at the time of the analysis, rolling out equivalent services across the secure estate would yield annual savings of more than £80 million (*ibid*). While the potential savings would need to be reduced in line with the fall in the custodial population, it is clear that provision of effective resettlement is cost effective.

Decline in the number of young people in custody

For much of the last 20 years, the level of child imprisonment in England and Wales was regarded, by international standards, as extremely high, drawing – as recently as 2008 – criticism from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2008) that custody was not always used as a last resort, in contravention of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. On one estimate, made in that year, the rate of child incarceration was higher in England and Wales than in any other Western European jurisdiction with the exception of the Netherlands (Muncie, 2009). From 2008 onwards, however, the number of young people below the age of 18 deprived of their liberty has fallen sharply (Allen, 2011; Bateman, 2012). At December 2012, 1,372 children below the age of 18 were detained within the secure estate – a 49% reduction compared to the equivalent month in 2008 (Ministry of Justice, 2013). The young adult prison population has also fallen over the same period but by a much smaller margin, from 8,825 in 2008 to 7,443 in 2012 – a decline of 16% (Ministry of Justice/Youth Justice Board, 2013: supplementary table 11.16).

While these falls have been welcomed, they also pose a number of additional challenges from the perspective of resettlement. Firstly, the reduction has been most pronounced among children under 15, with the consequence that the average age of the detained population has risen and the space for changing behaviour prior to adulthood is more limited. In addition, those children who are imprisoned tend to be more entrenched in their offending: in 2011/12, for instance, 26.6% of those sentenced to custody had 11 or more previous convictions compared with 13% in 2000/1 (Youth Justice Board/Ministry of Justice, 2013). Distinct data are not available for young adults, but one might anticipate that the reduction in the use of custody for this age group will have led to similar changes in the imprisoned population. Inspection data confirm that young adults are more likely to experience segregation and physical restraint than their older counterparts (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2012).

As the custodial population has fallen, the government has taken the opportunity to close establishments, with the consequence that the distance between home and where young people are detained has increased. Such long distances between custodial placements and the young person's home area are known to hamper resettlement preparation (Wright et al, 2012). In March 2010, 24% of children held in the secure estate were accommodated more than 50 miles from their home with 7% more than 100 miles away. By March 2011, those figures had increased to 30% and 10% respectively (Summerfield, 2011). The problem is particularly acute in London and the South East. The Youth Justice Board has been forced to shelve a target to place 90% of children within 50 miles of home (Standing Committee for Youth Justice, 2010). The situation is likely to be made worse in the South West and South East with the 're-role' of HMYOI Ashfield near Bristol away from the juvenile secure estate, announced in January 2013 (Wright, 2013).

The same process of closure has led to relatively fewer children being accommodated in secure children's homes which are smaller and have higher staffing ratios than both secure training centres and, in particular, young offender institutions (Howard League, 2012). The only published research on the topic (albeit quite old) suggests that, when children are matched for relevant variables, the reoffending rate for those leaving secure children's homes is lower than that associated with young offender institutions (Ditchfield and Catan, 1992). Moreover, in a recent survey of children in the secure estate, 65% of those placed in secure children's homes considered that the establishment was the best type of custodial unit for them, compared with 32% in secure training centres and 28% in young offender institutions (Glover et al, 2012).

The decline in custody has not been experienced equally by all ethnic groups, leading to a rise in the proportion of the juvenile secure population who are from a black or ethnic minority background, from 33% in 2009/10 to 42% in 2011/12 (Murray, 2012). At the same time, there is evidence that the contracting custodial population is one that is more vulnerable on a range of indicators. During 2010/11, for instance, 42% of boys and 55% of girls in young offender institutions reported being 14 or younger when they last attended school, compared with 38% and 31% in 2006-2008. Over the same period, there has been a rise in the proportion of young women in young offender institutions who are themselves parents from 9% to 24% (Summerfield, 2011; Parke, 2009).

Barriers to effective resettlement

Professionals in resettlement are faced with trying to reduce offending by young people with multiple needs and entrenched offending patterns. This is made more challenging as the young people are going through a custodial process that exacerbates problems and are being held within a custodial estate which, from a demographic and logistical perspective, makes the task more difficult.

However, the transition to the community can also be seen as a window of opportunity to make a difference. There is evidence that many children leaving custody are committed to moving away from an offending lifestyle (Hazel and Liddle, 2012), with three quarters of supervisors considering that the young people they supervise are potentially more co-operative at the point of release than at the point of confinement (Hazel et al, 2002). There is a similar, though differently nuanced, window with young adults, many of whom regard their offending career as 'kid's stuff' that they would prefer to leave behind them if they are given the appropriate support (Farrant, 2005: 4).

The difficulty here is that without timely and effective enhanced resettlement support, this opportunity tends to be wasted. Less than one in four (23%) young people in a recent survey thought that they received sufficient help with the problems that led to them to offend in the first instance (Glover et al, 2012). Moreover, such self-reports are consistent with studies showing that young people often find that support services post-release are "irrelevant, tedious and repetitive", tending to focus on risk rather than opportunity (Gray, 2010: 25). Even worse, the young people may find themselves let down by promised support not being put into place, leading to disillusionment, the loss of commitment and a return to offending (Hazel et al, 2002; Hazel and Liddle, 2012).

Even in a project focused on enhanced resettlement (RESET), each area of need identified was only tackled in a minority of cases (Hazel et al, 2010a).

Such problems are evident in each of the areas of need for young people. For example, despite clear evidence of the importance of education, training and employment, the evaluation of the detention and training order found that only 40% of young people leaving custody were engaged in any form of education or training during the custodial element of their sentence (Hazel et al, 2002). A survey conducted in 2001 noted that most youth offending teams thought that insufficient alternative education provision was available (Renshaw and Powell, 2001). More recent research has established that even where young people are in education, training and employment programmes, the outcomes are relatively poor, with just two in five accessing longer term employment or further education upon completion (Cooper et al, 2007). In addition, agencies have historically been slow to put education, training and employment support in place, with a large proportion of young people having no provision arranged by the time of release (Hazel et al 2002). As recently as 2010, a review of arrangements for learning in custody and on release found that children frequently did not have personal education plans when they arrived in custody and that arrangements to continue education when they returned to the community were unsatisfactory (Ofsted, 2010). For young adults, the position is likely to be at least as problematic, since this group has been the hardest hit by the economic recession, with levels of unemployment particularly high, making it particularly difficult for those whose criminal record includes a custodial episode to obtain work (Devitt, 2011: 7).

In the absence of enhanced resettlement support, a similar picture exists for accommodation. A recent thematic inspection of the resettlement of children found that even where difficulties were identified early in the young person's sentence, little was done to address the issue until close to release: 17 out of the 24 young people in the survey who said that it would not be possible to live with their families on their return to the community did not know what accommodation would be available for them, including five who were due to be released within the next 10 days. Moreover, these figures were considered an understatement of the extent of the problem since in some cases where it was intended that children should return home, it was far from clear that this would be the best environment for them. None of the custodial establishments visited were monitoring the nature of the accommodation to which young people were released and whether it was suitable and sustainable. The inspectors considered that failure to address the issue of where young people would reside, in a more systematic fashion, was a consequence of the logistical difficulties in identifying appropriate alternative accommodation (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2011). Again the position with regards to young adults is comparable. The evaluation of the T2A pilots found that only six of the 29 case study participants in the sample did not require assistance with finding suitable stable accommodation (Burnett and Hanley Santos, 2011).

Such difficulties clearly impact on each other. A lack of suitable accommodation, for instance, constrains young people's capacity to maximise opportunities for training or employment (Ofsted, 2010). When these needs are looked at together, less than one third of young people in custody have both suitable accommodation and an education, training or employment placement arranged for them at the point of release (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2011). An evaluation of the RESET project (described later in the review) found that although staff frequently made an appropriate assessment of young people's needs, accessing resources to deal with them proved problematic. On average staff managed to involve just half of the agencies that they had planned to engage in order to meet assessed difficulties: substance misuse problems were tackled in just 46% of cases where this was identified as an issue; less than a third of cases of unemployment were addressed; and just 10% of young people whose mental health was a concern were able to access appropriate provision (Hazel et al, 2010a).

Research has indicated that these poor figures are, in part, a function of a failure to engage in joint working between institutions and those responsible for community supervision, and a lack of partnership work

between agencies in the community. The original evaluation of the detention and training order showed that, within custodial establishments, the Prison Service ethos that prioritised incapacitation did not help to focus on the transition to the community (Hazel et al, 2002). While there may have been improvements in the interim period, other research at that time similarly found that the understanding of staff in custodial institutions in relation to effective practice was patchy, opportunities for working with young people in an holistic fashion were frequently missed, and limited attention was paid to maintaining links with the young person's family (Hobbs and Hook, 2001). There is more recent evidence that priorities for custodial institutions may continue to work in a way that militates against preparation for release: for instance, a risk averse assessment process tends to erect barriers to release on temporary licence in order to arrange accommodation, education, training or employment (Hazel et al, 2012). In addition, problems with information flow between custody and community settings have generated difficulties in providing a co-ordinated or continuous programme of support across this transition (Hazel et al, 2010b). While equivalent evidence for young adults is lacking, it seems unlikely that partnership working is any better developed, given the lower profile accorded to resettlement initiatives for the older age group.

In the community, barriers to resettlement have been identified primarily as a lack of opportunities or resources, or problems with interagency working (Hazel et al, 2010b). On the resources front, there have been consistent difficulties securing appropriate accommodation and employment (Hazel and Liddle, 2012). In addition, the options offered have not always been suitable given the circumstances of the resettlement population, such as education provision that children can only join at certain times of the year (Hazel et al, 2010a).

The multiple needs of the young people involved cannot be met by criminal justice professionals alone, even if caseworker resources are enhanced (Hazel et al, 2010a), and the detention and training order has been less successful where addressing needs relies on engaging agencies beyond the youth justice system (Hazel et al, 2002). However, it is not easy to achieve 'sign-up' from other agencies within or beyond the state sector, and "resettlement support fails because of a lack of engagement with stakeholders" (Hazel et al, 2010b: 8). Even when engagement is achieved, there may be problematic differences in aims or cultures. For instance, a recent resettlement consortia evaluation suggested difficulties arising from an ethos in some agencies – similar to that identified historically in the prison service – which was focused on compliance rather than the provision of support and encouraging engagement (Hazel et al, 2012). Recent research also highlighted considerable inconsistency in service provision for those who turn 18 during their sentence, when statutory responsibility for resettlement moves from youth offending teams to the probation service (Wright et al, 2012).

The Youth Justice Board's resettlement framework acknowledges the complexity of the challenge and outlines five pathways that underpin effective provision: accommodation, education, training and employment, health, substance misuse, the involvement of families, and financial stability. The framework also notes the importance of case management that cuts across each of the pathways whilst ensuring engagement of a broad range of partners and providing the requisite focus on transition. In somewhat of an understatement, it described multi-agency delivery in resettlement as "complicated" (Youth Justice Board, 2005a: 5).

Transferable principles from the literature on adult resettlement

There is a growing evidence base in regard to effective resettlement practice with young people (Hagell, 2004; Hazel and Liddle, 2012; James et al, 2013), but it remains underdeveloped by comparison with the literature on adults (Hobbs and Hook, 2001; Shapland et al, 2012). While it should not be assumed that findings in relation to older prisoners will necessarily transfer to the younger age group, it seems likely that at least some of the same general principles will be relevant to all forms of resettlement (Lipsey, 1995; Nacro, 2007c; Ministry of Justice, 2010). Moreover, given the dearth of literature specific to young adults whose circumstances bridge the differences between children in custody and the older adult population, an understanding of the literature in relation to the latter group provides a useful starting point. Indeed, much

of the research on adult resettlement includes young people below the age of 21, even if they are not separated out for the purposes of analysis (see for instance, Edgar et al, 2012).

There is a general consensus that punishment and interventions based on deterrence are ineffective (Priestley and McGuire, 1995; Sherman et al, 1997). Research conducted on behalf of the Home Office, for instance, has found that while the certainty of being caught can lead to a reduction in crime, increasing the severity of sentencing has no demonstrable effect on patterns of offending (von Hirsch et al, 1999). Indeed, Sherman (1993) has argued that punitive forms of sanction are more likely to engender anger and defiance than compliance, particularly if they are perceived as unfair, excessive or imposed by an authority not considered legitimate by the offender.

Lewis et al (2007) identify two general approaches to resettlement work that do not rely on deterrence: those that focus on addressing the practical, social and welfare needs of people leaving custody and those that aim to challenge anti-social attitudes and provide supervisees with improved thinking skills. Their evaluation of the Home Office resettlement pathfinder projects (Lewis et al, 2003) suggests that a combination of both approaches is more effective than either in isolation. This is consistent with more general evidence that multi-modal interventions, which adopt a more holistic understanding of how to reduce offending, are associated with better outcomes (Gaes et al, 1999).

Interventions based on a clear research based rationale as to how the activities involved will have a positive impact on offending tend to be more effective than those which do not have an articulated theoretical foundation (Hollin, 1995). At the same time, the level of intervention should reflect the needs of, and the risks posed by, those at whom it is targeted (an idea sometimes known as the 'risk principle') (McGuire and Priestley, 1995). As indicated above, the large majority of young people in custody have extensive needs, and will therefore require sufficient input to address the multiple range of disadvantages that they manifest (McGuire, 2002). Conversely, some young people are imprisoned for a single serious offence which is unlikely to be repeated (Nacro, 2002) and, in this context, it is important to recognise that overly intrusive intervention can be counterproductive and may increase the risk of reoffending (McIvor, 1990; Raynor and Miles, 2001).

Qualitative interviews with prisoners indicate that an individual approach which focuses on housing, employment and maintaining links with families, facilitated through an increased use of open conditions and release on temporary licence, would be most likely to have a positive impact on recidivism (Emmet et al, 2012). There is some evidence (from research on women prisoners) that work experience within the custodial establishment might be considered more useful by young adults: 60% of 18-20 year olds reported that employment within the prison had helped them to learn to work regular hours, and this perceived benefit declined with age (Hamlyn and Lewis, 2000).

Perhaps one of the most important lessons to emerge from the adult literature is that the prospects for desistance are influenced by subjective considerations as well as objective, external factors (McNeill, 2006). Maruna's (2000) research suggests that those who continue to offend are more likely to regard themselves as victims of circumstance, and feel they have little choice over the future direction of their lives. Conversely, those who successfully desist – a process rather than a once and for all cessation of offending – are considerably more optimistic, tend to see themselves as in control of their own destinies and have a sense of hope as to what the future holds, even if that optimism may, on occasion, understate the obstacles that they face in leaving offending behind them (Burnett and Maruna, 2004). In this context, focusing on (past) risk factors and deficits may be less effective than promoting strengths that are associated with the (future) process of desistance. Resettlement services therefore should not just aim to broker access to opportunities such as education, employment and accommodation, but should simultaneously work to encourage plausible narratives of desistance, promote personal resources, and provide strategies that will better enable ex-prisoners to surmount the obstacles that might prevent them from taking advantage of such opportunities as exist (Raynor, 2004a).

It follows from the above that engagement is fundamental to resettlement – a principle that has also been identified as crucial in a youth justice context (Prior and Mason, 2010). Rather than a particular programme, effective resettlement is a dynamic, interactive process, based around high quality relationships between staff and those whom they supervise who are not: “objects of ‘treatment’ or ‘intervention’, characterised by needs and deficits and presenting risks, but as active participants in their own rehabilitation, with strengths, skills and potential as contributors to their communities” (Raynor, 2004b: 221).

Closely allied to such considerations is the issue of motivation: interventions will be effective only to the extent that those who are expected to participate in them are persuaded of the benefits of engagement for themselves (McMurrin, 2002). As a prisoner participating in one study put it: “It’s all about inspiring people” (Edgar, 2012: 84). The Focus on Resettlement pathfinder projects, which aim to increase the motivation of those in prison, provide some recent evidence of reduced reoffending rates (Ministry of Justice, 2010; Clancy et al, 2006). The prospects that such motivation will develop are enhanced where offenders regard the authority of practitioners delivering the service as legitimate (Robinson and McNeill, 2008). Behavioural change is more likely where participants develop a sense of loyalty based on their perceptions that staff have a genuine interest in their well-being (Rex, 1999). By the same token, efforts to rehabilitate should start from the individual’s own understanding of his or her difficulties and wherever possible involve participants directly in the planning of the intervention (LeBel et al, 2008).

Developments in practice

In spite of the evident challenges, experience suggests that where the necessary priority and dedicated resources are given to resettlement, promising results can be achieved. As noted earlier, such interventions can also be associated with considerable savings to the public purse (Renshaw, 2007).

There are a number of programmes that show evidence of promising practice in effective resettlement of young people leaving custody. One such example is the Youth Justice Board's Resettlement and Aftercare Provision (RAP) initiative. RAP was originally targeted at young people leaving custody with high levels of substance misuse needs (tiers 3 and 4) but was subsequently extended to encompass young people in the community who had identified problems with substance misuse and dual mental health and substance misuse difficulties.

For those subject to custodial orders, engagement with RAP was intended to commence while they were in the secure estate (although this did not always happen), with the core provision of an agreed plan kicking in on the day of release. Intervention did not necessarily terminate with the end of the licence period, but could continue for up to a further six months.

Significantly, although compliance with licence conditions is a statutory requirement, RAP was a voluntary service, enhancing the potential that young people would see it as a genuinely supportive initiative rather than as part of their punishment (Galahad SMS, 2010). At the same time, RAP guidance made it clear that an initial lack of interest on the part of the young person ought not to lead to withdrawal of the service since "non-compliance should be seen as a potential indicator of need and so tend to increase the priority of the candidate" (Youth Justice Board, 2006b). Frequency of contact was not determined by the court order but by the individual circumstances of the young person and the nature of the agreed intervention. Some of the schemes accordingly adopted a motivational approach, working on the assumption that even if young people indicated that they were not yet ready to address substance misuse issues, engaging them in other forms of activities would provide future opportunities for addressing more deep-seated problem areas (Galahad SMS, 2010).

Most RAP projects did not provide their own substance misuse services (although some delivered drug awareness programmes) but operated rather as a gateway for accessing specialist provision and co-ordinating a package of intervention. Direct intervention from project staff was therefore focused largely on developing relationships and generating action plans that offered opportunities for constructive diversionary activities, including sport, cultural pursuits and vocational activities, as well as interventions more directly associated with a rehabilitative impact (Galahad, 2010).

An evaluation, conducted on behalf of the Youth Justice Board, yielded encouraging findings. Levels of retention on the scheme were high and young people on the programme reported that they enjoyed good relationships with RAP staff and appreciated the brokerage role that they fulfilled. By comparison with matched young people on youth offending team caseloads who did not have RAP involvement, participants in the scheme were more likely to show reduced severity in their substance misuse on a range of different measures, and to have fewer unmet needs (Galahad, 2010). One year reoffending rates remained high at 78%. However, the sample group consisted of young people whose offending was serious, persistent and entrenched, and who had very high level needs. Recidivism accordingly compared favourably with outcomes for matched young people not on RAP, 86% of whom were reconvicted within 12 months, although the difference between the groups was not statistically significant. Further analysis confirmed that, for children whose use of drugs and alcohol was less problematic, the reduction in offending for those participating in RAP was significantly greater than for those with youth offending team input alone (Galahad SMS, 2010).

The RESET (Resettlement, Education, Support, Employment and Training) initiative also showed encouraging results. Led by a large consortium, with Rainer (now Catch 22) as the managing agency, and the Youth

Justice Board as one of the partners, the scheme ran in three pilot areas between 2005 and 2007. Each area adopted a different model: one approach involved RESET staff being institution based in a young offender institution accommodating girls, providing support during the period of detention and outreach work on release; one project adopted a model of case management in which RESET staff joined local youth offending teams and took on primary responsibility for managing custodial cases; the third approach involved RESET practitioners focusing on co-ordination of service provision, arranging packages of multi-agency support (Hazel et al, 2010a).

Levels of engagement were impressive: young people worked with RESET for an average of seven months, and three quarters of participants continued their involvement once their sentence was complete. Overall, young people benefiting from RESET intervention reoffended at levels significantly below the national average. Less than one third of participants (30%) were arrested during their period of community supervision. However, recidivism varied considerably between the three pilot sites. Young people in the institution based scheme had a reoffending rate of just 5%, but the numbers were small, and given that they were all young women, the group demonstrated a very different demographic profile, making any comparative analysis difficult. Of the remaining two pilots, the area focusing on partnership co-ordination achieved considerably better results than the case management model, with a reoffending rate of 22% compared to 41%. The evaluation team acknowledges that further research is required to explore the relationship between the nature of the intervention and outcomes, but suggest that the results indicate the significant benefits that accrue from resettlement activities providing 'additionality', focusing on the co-ordination of packages of care that help to provide continuity between the two phases of the sentence and beyond (Hazel et al, 2010a).

The Youth Justice Board's resettlement consortia were established in 2009 as an attempt to build on some of the learning from the evaluations of RAP and RESET, and were evaluated in three pilot areas. In particular, they took the partnership co-ordination model from RESET, employing a project manager in each pilot area, and extended their co-ordination across agencies in several neighbouring local authority areas. Each consortium signed up a mix of statutory agencies, third sector agencies and employers to provide an enhanced offer to juveniles released into their area in an attempt at wrap-around provision. Interesting features of this initiative included co-operation across local authority boundaries, the involvement of custodial institutions in the consortia and, in one area, joint working at the operational level (where any inter-agency blocks were sorted out by bringing cases to a joint forum).

The evaluations showed that the benefits of extending provision across local authority areas included more services being available, cost savings by pooling, easier engagement with third sector agencies, and the ability to move young people to accommodation away from their offending peers (Hazel et al, 2012; Wright et al, 2012; Ellis et al, 2012). Partnerships at a strategic level, with senior level buy-in, brought shared aims and targets and a more widespread awareness of needs around resettlement, including in the custodial institution. Such partnerships could help improve communication between agencies, although this was more problematic with children's services and probation. Additional partnership at the operational level helped develop a sense of shared ownership and delivery focused on the multiple needs of clients, resulting in contributions from a wider range of agencies and meeting more of the needs of young people than has been identified in previous research. Involving the custodial institutions in the consortia is likely to have led to the improved access of agencies to young people inside and better information flow the other way (Hazel et al, 2012).

Outcome results were promising across all consortium areas with improvements in levels of engagement with education, training and employment, provision of suitable accommodation and reductions in risk of offending by comparison with pre-consortium levels. Although a full conviction analysis has yet to be undertaken, figures for arrests, reconvictions and recalls to custody during the licence period showed that one area (North West Resettlement Consortia) produced the best results (Hazel et al, 2012). The difference

seemed to be due to its emphasis on operational partnership and the strength of relations between custody and community agencies developed as a consequence of young people serving time in just one custodial institution. However, there was some evidence that reoffending would quickly get worse if support was simply withdrawn at the end of the licence period.

The research also provided an important warning for the development of resettlement provision. Cases of non-compliance with the terms of the licence did not show any improvement since young people were required to co-operate with a wider range of partner agencies, thereby increasing the potential for missed appointments. Unless compliance requirements are handled carefully, increasing support provision and the number of agencies involved can be counterproductive and set young people up to fail (Hazel et al, 2012).

Project Daedalus provided an enhanced regime in the Heron Unit at Feltham Young Offender Institution for young people towards the end of the custodial element of their sentence. Higher staff ratios permitted a greater focus on activities aimed at improving skills in preparation for the transition to the community, with a particular emphasis on job readiness. The project relied heavily on voluntary mentors, whose role was to build a relationship with young people while in the custodial institution and provide a consistent point of contact for the transition from custody and beyond. In some instances, the relationship extended beyond the end of the sentence. However, the intensity of contact varied: a third of young people reported seeing their resettlement broker once a week, while 16% indicated that frequency of contact was less than once a month (Powell et al, 2012).

The increased range of activities available within the unit was associated with a reported reduction in behavioural problems. Ninety-three per cent of those surveyed indicated that “their time on the unit helped them to learn how to take responsibility for their own development” (Powell et al, 2012:103). More than half of young people were engaged in education, training or employment on release, with just over a third sustaining that involvement for more than six months. This compared favourably with research conducted by HM Inspectorate of Prisons which found that a third of young people had an education, training or employment placement at the point of leaving custody and only half of these were still attending their placement a month later (2011). The 12 month rate of detected reoffending was also encouraging: 53% compared to a Feltham-wide figure of 72%. However, there was no comparison group and young people were selected for the programme on the basis of being motivated to ‘go straight’. As a consequence, it was not possible to “attribute change to the intervention” as some of the young people may have desisted in any event (Powell et al, 2012:107).

Resettlement support panel schemes were established in 2009 in six pilot areas in Wales to co-ordinate the provision of multi-agency resettlement support. In some areas the panels focused on resettlement alone, while others had a broader remit. Similarly, some youth offending teams deployed part of the funding to employ dedicated resettlement staff, others brought in services to meet needs, and some focused primarily on a brokerage role. An evaluation of the initiative suggested some possible improved outcomes in terms of access to education, training and employment, accommodation, reduced substance abuse, engagement in constructive leisure pursuits and better family relationships. It affirmed the importance of achieving senior level buy-in at agencies to ensure that decisions are taken and resources committed (Phillips et al, 2012).

Each of the above initiatives has involved children below the age of 18, reflecting the renewed interest in resettlement for that age group. Evidence of promising practice in relation to young adults is scarce. Three T2A pilots were launched in 2009 in South London, West Mercia and Birmingham (T2A, 2009). The pilot projects focus on providing appropriate specialist services for young adults in the criminal justice system, recognising the distinct needs of young adults making the transition between child and adult services. The pilots provide a wider range of services than those that pertain specifically to resettlement, with involvement in resettlement work varying across the areas. For example, the Worcestershire pilot received no resettlement referrals for 12 months and instead focused on providing wrap-around support to young adults on

community orders (Burnett and Hanley Santos, 2011). However, the other two pilots have benefited young adults returning from custody. The London T2A pilot, managed by the St Giles Trust, places emphasis on continuity of support from the prison to the community (Burnett and Hanley Santos, 2011: 33). Similarly, the objectives of the Birmingham pilot include the provision of “additional support for young people leaving custody” (Burnett and Hanley Santos, 2011: 34). The projects each adopt different models of delivery, but in each case the support given “is a combination of mentoring and connecting them to services, training and the practical steps they need to take to make progress. All of the pilots employ a person-led, task-focused (or solution-focused) model for working with the service users” (Burnett and Hanley Santos, 2011).

The formative evaluation of the pilots does not include a formal analysis of reconviction, but 76% of a case sample of 29 were either known, or believed, to be ‘going straight’ by their caseworkers. The large majority of those interviewed were very positive about the services they received through T2A and most reported improvements in their lives and were confident that they could end their involvement in crime (Burnett and Hanley Santos, 2011).

A ‘distance travelled map’, designed by the evaluators and completed by project staff for young adults in the case sample, indicated considerable progress on a range of measures. For example, 64% of those requiring help with accommodation were recorded as showing “slight or significant improvement”; 66% showed improvement in terms of employment, training and education; and 68% demonstrated positive changes in attitudes and behaviour. The highest level of improvements (76%) was those associated with participants’ relationships with their family (Burnett and Hanley Santos, 2011). The user perspective on the pilots was “overwhelmingly positive” and the evaluators identify emerging lessons from the initiative as follows:

- Young adults valued the person centred relationship with their T2A worker.
- The brokerage function to assist service users to access appropriate services was crucial.
- An holistic approach that encourages attitudinal change alongside practical and emotional support is integral to success (Burnett and Hanley Santos, 2011).

While such findings are clearly encouraging and provide indicative learning, there is no matched control group. Moreover, since it is not clear from the evaluation what proportion of the sample were resettlement cases, it is difficult to draw conclusions as to the specific impact on young adults leaving custody.

A project based at HMYOI Swinfen Hall aims to enhance the engagement of young adult prisoners in their own resettlement by providing all individuals with their own personal resettlement handbook at the beginning of their sentence. The intention is that each young person will develop their own action plan as they work through the book, setting their own goals and determining how they will achieve them. One of the innovative features of the *Road to Resettlement Handbook*, as it is known, is that it was “written by young adults who’ve experienced the challenges firsthand and who have a vital perspective on what is needed” (Moseley, undated, foreword). The project is supported by a mentoring scheme but has yet to be evaluated.

The National Grid Young Offender programme provides young adults with a pre-release programme in partnership with National Grid’s contractors who provide employment opportunities and support for successful trainees on their return to the community. More than 2,000 young people have participated in the programme to date which claims a reoffending rate of 7%. As the Ministry of Justice (2010) has pointed out, however, programme participants are likely to have higher levels of motivation than the general young adult custodial population. While the reported rate of recidivism is encouraging, comparison with other groups of young adult offenders is accordingly problematic and the outcomes may not be attributable solely to the impact of the programme.

Emerging principles of effective practice

The evidence base accordingly suggests a number of principles that inform effective resettlement practice.

Ensuring a continuous service

The multiple disadvantages that young people in custody face rarely commence either at the point of sentence or release into the community, but will be long-standing and deep-seated. This implies that effective resettlement should commence at the earliest opportunity. Planning within secure establishments should be focused from the outset on what needs to change to reduce the risk of reoffending when the young person is released and should ensure that the transition to the community is as seamless as possible (Altschuler and Armstrong, 1994; Altschuler et al, 1999). Training plans should accordingly take a long-term view rather than simply emphasising what programmes will be undertaken within the institution and how behaviour might best be managed. Conversely, services provided post-custody should be consistent with, and represent a development of, interventions within the secure estate (Hazel, 2004). By the same token, a young person may continue to experience difficulty beyond the end of the sentence. Resettlement provision should accordingly include making arrangements for continued support in required areas of the young person's life once the statutory involvement of the youth justice system has come to an end (Hazel, 2004). Ensuring such co-ordinated provision is likely to require joint planning of the whole resettlement process between agencies with responsibility for service provision in custody and those delivering support in the community (Hazel and Liddle, 2012).

Preparing for release

The process of preparing young people for release should commence at the point of entry to the secure estate. Education, training and vocational programmes should be available immediately and tailored to the individual's previous experience and levels of attainment in order to improve the prospects of access to education, training and employment on release, and to equip the young person with the confidence they need to successfully engage with it.

A more creative use of release on temporary licence can help to ensure that the requisite arrangements are in place for the young person's return to the community while also allowing a graduated return to the family, and mitigating against the worst effects of disorientation and trauma (Hazel and Liddle, 2012).

Supporting transition

While it is frequently recognised that the transition to custody is both traumatic and can result in disruption in the delivery of services and key relationships, it is less often acknowledged that the transition back into the community can also be a difficult, disorientating experience for young people as they have to adjust to a less regimented and more pressured environment, re-establish relationships and reconstruct their previous lives (Youth Justice Board, 2006a). Research has consistently found that reoffending, or breach, are both more likely in the critical period immediately after release (Hagell et al, 2000; Hazel et al, 2002; Hazel et al, 2010a). In this context, it is important that the young person is prepared for this difficult period while still in custody, with significant effort devoted to ensuring high levels of contact with families and other significant adults in the weeks leading up to release. Support for the young person should be in place and relationships with those responsible for resettlement services should be established prior to release, the young person should be given clear information about plans for their future, and arrangements for implementing those plans should come into force as soon as the young person returns to the community (Hazel, 2004).

Ensuring engagement

Reference has already been made to the importance of engaging young people in the resettlement process; they should be motivated to comply because they recognise that the intervention has clear benefits for them and because they perceive that those delivering the service have a genuine commitment to their well-

being (McNeill, 2009). Effective engagement requires the development of relationships that support change (McNeill et al, 2005). This in turn necessitates highly skilled practitioners able to: demonstrate empathy; show respect; exhibit a commitment to social justice that recognises the social and material hardship the young person may have endured; promote individual responsibility for actions and behaviour; and involve the young person in planning for their future (Mason and Prior, 2008). In particular, it is important that engagement is not seen as a passive process focused on the activities of staff, but as a collaborative endeavour whose aim is to promote opportunities for young people to exercise their autonomy in achieving agreed outcomes that they have had an active role in developing (Hart and Thompson, 2009). In many instances, this may involve staff attempting to help young people to identify any discrepancy between their current behaviour and where they would like to be in the future, so that they articulate the need for change themselves (Batchelor and McNeill, 2005).

Effective resettlement is, then, a child-centred practice that approaches young people as children (or young adults) first rather than young offenders, albeit children or young adults who may have more than their share of difficulties (Batchelor and McNeill, 2005). From this perspective, practice is also likely to benefit from a clear commitment to a children's rights based approach (Gray, 2011). Indeed, it has been suggested that one possible key to successful work with young people in custody, and beyond, would entail according them similar rights to those enjoyed by care leavers (Hollingsworth, 2012).

Co-ordinating services and brokerage

Given the complex and multiple difficulties that resettlement has to address, partnership working is key to ensuring that young people have access to the services that they require while in detention and beyond it (Youth Justice Board, 2006a; 2010a; Carney and Buttell, 2003; Hazel et al, 2010b). Resettlement providers will not, in isolation, be able to meet the range of needs exhibited by young people with whom they work, and will need to engage mainstream and specialist agencies able to facilitate access to accommodation, education, training and employment, mental health services and support with substance misuse problems (Local Government Association, 2011). The ability to co-ordinate a wrap-around package of support from such providers also enhances the potential that young people will continue to receive the services they need when their statutory involvement with the youth justice system comes to an end. For this reason too, partnership arrangements should extend beyond service providers to include the engagement of the family, representatives of the community, and employers from the area in which the young person will reside.

The input of a wide range of agencies, in itself, is not necessarily sufficient: provision from different partners must also be properly co-ordinated – inside custodial facilities and in the community – and necessary information must be shared appropriately between them (Hazel et al, 2010b). Such co-ordination does not necessarily happen naturally and must be regarded as a priority by those responsible for resettlement; sustainable resources should be made available to ensure that engagement of key stakeholders is maintained over time (Hazel et al, 2010b). Joint planning of the whole resettlement process accordingly requires the involvement of senior managers, with agreed shared aims and the ability to commit resources, on both sides of the prison gate (Hazel and Liddle, 2012). Such planning should also build in better access for families and providers of community services to young people while they are still in the secure estate.

The literature suggests that a partnership co-ordination (or 'brokerage') model is effective. Each youth offending team (or local authority partnership in the case of the recent consortia initiatives) should allocate a manager whose role is to champion resettlement and act as the key contact for all partner agencies. Resettlement staff should focus on ensuring co-ordination of packages of care and maintaining relationships with the wide range of partners (Hazel et al, 2010b).

Gaps in the literature

While the emerging evidence offers a range of lessons in relation to youth resettlement, it also leaves a number of questions unanswered. Considering how these gaps in the literature might be addressed to further develop the evidence base for resettlement practice and policy is a key focus of the Beyond Youth Custody programme.

Transition to adulthood

The notion of transition is extremely important for effective practice. Understandably, the most frequent focus is on the point of release from custody into the community but there are other pertinent transitions about which less is known. As adolescents involved with the criminal justice system make the transition to adulthood, they are also moved between agencies. The legislative provisions in relation to resettlement, but also in regard to obligations and entitlements more broadly, change. The range of stakeholders and partners with an interest in resettlement shifts correspondingly. The importance of this process of transition from juvenile to young adult to adult has been recognised recently by the government and organisations like the T2A Alliance (Youth Justice Board/Ministry of Justice, 2012). However, this transition is under-researched and is important if understanding of resettlement processes is to move beyond its current state. It is as yet unclear how such a provision could best be met, for instance by agencies spanning this age range or by better co-operation between agencies specialising by age. Similarly, we do not know what issues might arise should a more seamless service be achieved potentially having a broader age range mixing together in shared provision.

By the same token, there is a dearth of evidence in relation to effective resettlement practice for young adults as a distinct group. There is a lack of research on the specific needs of this population, and the extent to which they would require a different type of service content or model of delivery.

Sustained engagement

Engaging some young people in constructive activities during a sentence is recognised as a challenge (Mason and Prior, 2008), with specific barriers to engagement in education, training or employment (ECOTEC, 2006). The problem is especially acute with this particularly vulnerable custody group. We noted above that youth justice professionals consider that most young people are co-operative when they leave custody (Hazel et al, 2002), suggesting an opportunity to engage. Indeed, in the resettlement consortia pilot areas, almost all young people attended education, training or employment activities at some point where they were arranged (whether prior to and after establishing the consortia). But the problem is sustaining that engagement. For whatever reason, about half of the young people were no longer attending at the end of the sentence, let alone beyond that point (Hazel et al, 2012; Wright et al, 2012). More research and innovation is needed to explore why engagement drops off, and how to ensure more sustainable engagement through the licence and beyond.

Support without an increased risk of breach

One of the challenges for resettlement practice is the prevalence of breach of licence conditions, leading to significant numbers of children being recalled to custody as a consequence of their non-engagement with provision designed to assist with their reintegration into the community (Hagell et al, 2000; Hazel et al, 2002). Given the extensive range of support needs, there is a tension between providing the enhanced range of services required and the implications of non-compliance leading to an increased risk of breach (Hazel et al, 2012). There is also a tension between the third sector's focus on voluntary engagement and the state sector's requirement for compulsory compliance. Is the former under an obligation to inform the latter of non-compliance? If so, does that change its relationship with the service user? If not, how can youth justice agencies ensure that needs are being met? The voluntary nature of RAP provision, over and above licence requirements, offers one potential model for resolving the paradox, but more work is required to understand how the incidence of non-compliance can be reduced as the level of supportive interventions expand.

Diversity issues

There is a relative lack of knowledge as to how young people experience the resettlement process. Given the importance of subjective factors in determining whether a young person will desist from offending or not (as well as whether they comply with the programme), this is a significant lacuna. More specifically, very little is known about the resettlement of girls and young women and how services might best be delivered to take account of gender. Similarly, black and minority young people are over-represented among the custodial population (May et al, 2010) and display higher rates of recidivism (Youth Justice Board/Ministry of Justice, 2012a: supplementary table 9.9) but so far research in this country has not specifically considered the resettlement needs of this group or how to respond to them. Research in other jurisdictions has suggested that minority ethnic groups may respond to resettlement programmes differently to the white offender population (James et al, 2013).

Ending resettlement support

There is some evidence that the benefits of enhanced resettlement diminish as statutory support declines at the end of the licence period. Although there is a need for more reconviction studies in this area, recent research has suggested that arrests may rise quickly once support is withdrawn (Hazel et al, 2012). More work is needed to investigate how to manage an exit plan, or to resource and co-ordinate continued provision beyond statutory obligations.

Including the remand population

Resettlement practice (and hence research) has tended to focus almost exclusively on sentenced young people, with little attention given to those on remand. This is in large part, no doubt, a consequence of the legislative provisions which require that sentenced young people are subject to statutory supervision on release, thereby ensuring deployment of resources to this area of work. In addition, planning for the return of remanded young people to the community is complicated by the fact that release dates are frequently uncertain. Yet it is clear that young people remanded to the secure estate share many of the characteristics of those serving custodial sentences (Gibbs and Hickson, 2009). The disruption associated with deprivation of liberty is equally tangible and the disorientation experienced on release is likely to be similarly distressing. A comprehensive strategy for resettlement would accordingly require significant adjustment to include the remand population and further work to ascertain how practice with this group can be improved.

Considering the aims of resettlement

Little consideration has been given to the discourse within which youth resettlement policy is developed and the goals by which youth resettlement practice is measured. There is no evidence as to whether an uncritical focus on the short-term prevention of reoffending, which is characteristic of youth justice practice in England and Wales, yields better outcomes than a longer-term commitment to young people's development and well-being found in work with young people in trouble in some other jurisdictions (Hazel, 2008; Muncie and Goldson, 2006). Viewing resettlement from a broader international perspective might provide a context in which to reassess how resettlement activities are conceived.

Conclusion

The literature confirms that resettlement is a complex task with young people who face significant disadvantage and manifest an extensive range of interlinked needs. Provision of effective services to this vulnerable group is made more difficult by the considerable barriers that impede the engagement of both participants and partner agencies able to address the problems that lead to offending in the first instance. Nonetheless, the evidence is clear that where resettlement provision is afforded the necessary priority and dedicated resources are deployed in accordance with the range of principles outlined in this review, it is possible to achieve impressive results that improve recidivism outcomes and make significant savings for the public purse.

Since the development of the secure training order and the detention and training order in England and Wales, research has consistently noted the challenges of ensuring effective resettlement for a group with such multiple needs. It has revealed the problems of providing continuity of service delivery for sentences that span custody and the community, and of providing reliable and comprehensive multi-agency support that delivers on its promise to young people. In recent years, there have been a number of innovations and pilot initiatives aimed at addressing these issues. The associated experience and evaluations have produced a growing body of knowledge of promising practice. This literature has also pointed to key principles that can inform effective practice. These can be summed up as: effective co-operation between custody and the community for a smooth transition; and widespread partnership co-ordination to address multiple needs.

However, within this framework of principles and promising practice, there are a number of questions and issues that remain unanswered by the literature, as highlighted above. They are questions that take us beyond existing practice, existing limitations and existing discourse. At present, the outcomes for this group are a concern to policymakers and professionals, but building on current promising initiatives and exploring the answers to these questions will ensure that we develop practice that will significantly enhance the prospects for young people beyond youth custody.

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