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Centre for Abuse
and Trauma Studies

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Department
for Business
Innovation & Skills



National Offender
Management Service

**Parenting and relationship support
programmes for offenders and their families**
Volume Two: Best practice in commissioning
and service provision

Final Report

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8.0 CHAPTER EIGHT. BEST PRACTICE MODELS COMMISSIONING

This chapter brings together the insights and lessons arising from the mapping of the family services landscape, the interviews undertaken with commissioners, service providers, offenders and their families and the review of the available evidence on outcomes to provide an overview of what best practice looks like for both commissioners and service providers.

It sets out suggestions for best practice on family interventions for offenders and their families but seeks also, against a background of austerity and the realities of the commissioning landscape described in chapter 3, to be pragmatic. It seeks therefore to be directional in describing a best practice vision but to provide useful insight and guidance also for those for whom scope and budgets are relatively limited and where focus and prioritisation will necessarily dictate the activities that can be implemented.

8.1 Core principles of family interventions to reduce re-offending

We first describe the core principles and thinking behind family-based intervention for both offenders and their families.

Family based interventions are conceived as seeking to “break the cycle” of offending and the inter-generational transmission of offending behaviour

Family and relationship support for offenders and their families is conceived as being a critical component of the effort to “break the cycle” of re-offending. Critically, however, family intervention and the effort to reduce re-offending is in this context inextricably linked to the drive to prevent the inter-generational transmission of offending.

The family is seen as intimately connected to all aspects of the offending and re-offending cycle and as key also to desistance

This necessarily means that the offender is not thought of in isolation but rather as part of his or her family. The family is seen as intimately connected to all aspects of the offending and re-offending cycle. Thus a dysfunctional family environment is a driver for offending while a strong family bond and positive family relationships act as protective factors.

A lack of connect with family, family breakdown or not having a family to return to on resettlement facilitates the cycle of re-offending. Conversely, maintaining meaningful relationships with family members, acquiring parenting and relationship skills, re-shaping negative patterns of thinking and behaviour in interaction with the family and having a supportive family to return to on resettlement are seen to be protective factors not only in reducing re-offending but also in preventing the inter-generational transmission of offending.

Families are acknowledged as impacted by the punishment of the offender

Similarly the families of offenders are acknowledged as impacted by punishment of the offender. Families and children are recognised as subject to the “hidden sentence” alongside the punishment given to the offender. This is not only a matter of recognising that offenders’ families may suffer in terms of emotional distress or physical hardship, but also that anti-social and criminal role models and the fall-out

from parents' imprisonment in turn sets up the next generation for low attainment, reduced life-chances and greater likelihood of offending.

Promoting pro-social and strong family relationships is seen as integral to the rehabilitative effort

The drive to reduce re-offending through family intervention is predicated on the view that strong families, pro-social thinking on family responsibilities, the development of enhanced parental skills and a structured and stable family environment will lay the foundations of desistance from crime and constructive engagement with society.

An integrated “whole family” approach which involves families on the outside as well as offenders on the inside

This conception of family intervention and its role in the effort to reduce-re-offending and inter-generational transmission of offending in turn requires a holistic perspective on interventions and a “whole family” approach.

The rehabilitative effort is seen as involving the whole family, the world outside the walls as well as within. Family interventions seek to actively involve families not only in maintaining relationships but also in enhancing parenting skills and building a joint version of the future which does not include offending and which provides a more positive environment for children.

The cycle of re-offending is broken when offending behaviour and entrenched disadvantage are not transmitted to the next generation

Rehabilitation of the offender however is only part of the goal of “breaking the cycle”. The cycle is broken more completely when offending behaviour is not transmitted to the next generation. Families are supported to cope with both the practical implications of the “hidden sentence” and the emotional and psychological impact of separation, with a view to minimising detriment for children. Where families are dysfunctional or at risk of failing they are supported to create a family environment which is conducive to children engaging with opportunity, presents positive role models and which is supportive of desistance.

Key characteristics of family intervention best practice

A number of key characteristics of best practice in family intervention then follow on from these principles. These refer to the overall context in which family intervention services are commissioned.

- Holistic – offenders and families
- Multi-dimensional – practical and emotional, short and long term
- Outward facing – links between prison / probation and wider community
- Embedded in and integral to offender management
- Engaging – to maximise motivation and appeal
- Inclusive – but also prioritised and focused
- Credible – to prison staff and external stakeholders
- Evidence-driven

Holistic

The approach to family intervention takes an holistic view of both offenders and their families and, as far as is possible within the constraints of the focus of community orders or a custodial environment, takes an integrated approach to addressing the issues faced by offenders and their families. This may require working in partnership with external agencies or that family support workers work with both offender and the family or liaise between them.

Multi-dimensional

Needs are complex and challenges inter-linked and over-lapping. Family intervention programmes would seek to address a range of needs, possibly through a mix of interventions or through case work addressing multiple dimensions of need. Needs can be practical (support to sort out housing problems, finances and debt, for example), emotional (potentially addressed by counselling, therapy, courses etc.) and both short and long term.

Outward facing

Effective delivery of holistic family intervention that integrates or links interventions with offenders with those undertaken with their families requires that prisons and probation services become more outward facing. There is a need to establish links with local authorities, statutory and voluntary agencies and schools dealing with offenders' families or responsible for addressing different aspects of anti-social or offending behaviour. The need is for commissioners within the CJS to make common ground with commissioners and service providers in the wider community.

Embedded

The family intervention and children and family thinking needs to become embedded in offender management process and practice, so that family needs are considered in sentence planning, education and training and the family dimensions of offenders' lives are considered and embedded in day to day offender management and communications and monitoring practice.

Engaging

One of the strengths of the family approach is that family is inherently motivating to offenders who might not otherwise engage with desistance, abstinence or learning propositions, in that families and relationships are important and valued by a high proportion of offenders.

Credible and relevant

A number of commissioners and practitioners stressed the importance of credibility in being able to progress the family intervention agenda and win support from staff, management and other stakeholders, internal and external. They pointed both to the importance of buy-in from officers and Governors within the walls and to support from external agencies and executives in local authorities. Credibility rested in part on hygiene factors, such as safety and child protection issues, and in part on relevance to a shared agenda (such as reduced anti-social behaviour in communities or improvements in children's behaviour or attainment, for example) or shared interests (cost savings, for example) but also, and most importantly, on outcomes.

Evidence-driven

This then links to interventions being evidence-driven, selected as proven or promising approaches, with interventions monitored and evaluated against agreed measures of performance and outcomes.

8.2 Family and relationship needs

The interviews with commissioners, offenders and their families and service providers suggest that there are four broad categories of family and relationship needs and that it is important that family and relationship needs are considered and services matched to need both at all stages in the offender journey and as family circumstances change during the course of the offender's sentence.

The core family and relationship needs are:

- Maintaining ongoing relationships with family
- Developing parental and relationship skills with a limited focus or discrete goals
- Transformational family interventions designed to address entrenched patterns of criminogenic thinking and behaviour through a family and relationships lens
- Family support – practical and emotional support to address a range of complex and multi-dimensional needs

Effective commissioning of service provision would consider and then seek to address these needs at different points in the end to end offender journey, placing differing emphasis on different elements at different stages of the offender journey.

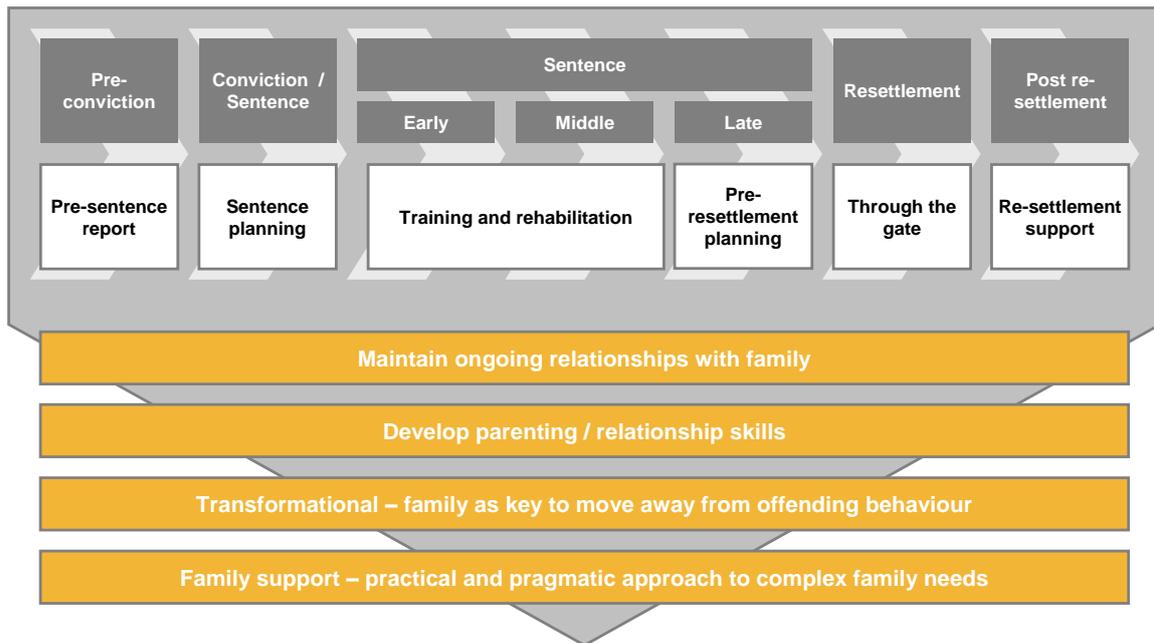
The key points for intervention are identified as

- Pre-conviction – at the sentence report stage to inform sentencing
- On conviction and sentence – to inform sentence planning
- Throughout the sentence – in the evolution and sequencing of training and rehabilitation effort through the education, training and employment process

- Prior to re-settlement – to inform re-settlement planning
- Through the gate – to support the transition from life inside to outside the walls
- Post resettlement – to optimise the chances of productive re-integration into family and community and minimise the likelihood of re-offending

These needs at the different stages of the offender journey are represented diagrammatically below in Figure 8.1:

Figure 8.1: Family and relationship needs over the offender life-cycle

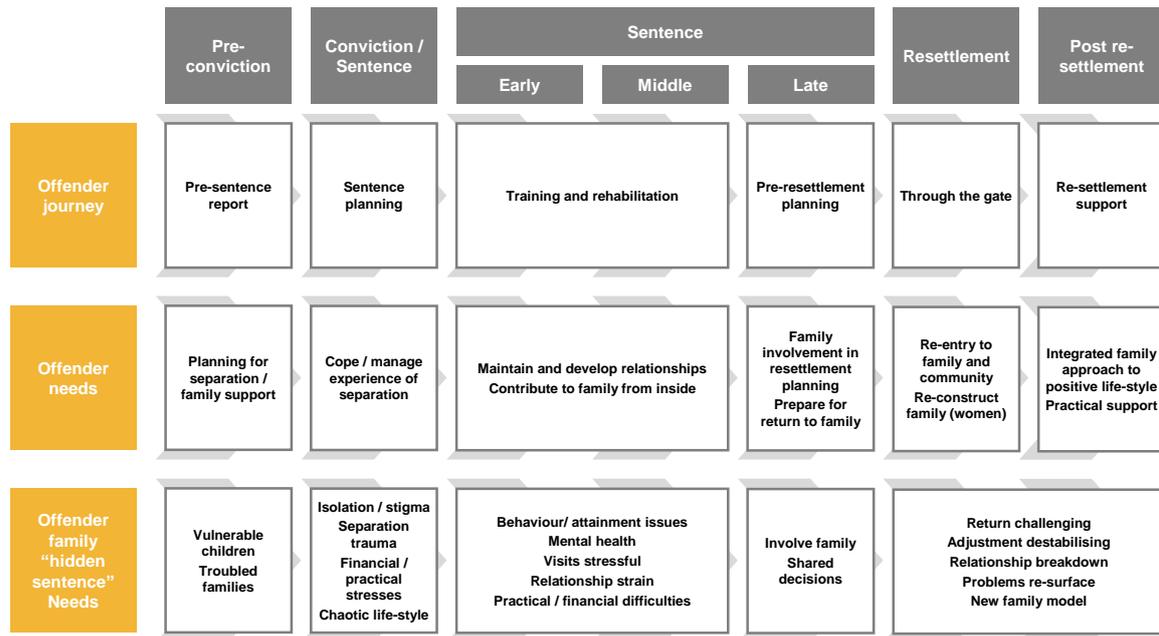


We discuss each of these areas in detail in sections following but first move on to discuss how needs and opportunities to match family intervention to need arise throughout the offender journey, for both offenders and their families

8.3 Matching provision to offender needs throughout the offender journey

Offenders and their families have a series of family related needs at each stage of the offender journey as illustrated in Figure 8.2 following:

Figure 8.2: Matching provision to offender needs throughout the offender journey



8.3.1 Pre-conviction and sentence – the early intervention approach

Consider offenders' family needs at the pre-sentence stage

In line with the broad ethos of early intervention and a preventative action that characterises the social justice strategy, family intervention within the criminal justice system should take place at the earliest possible stage of the offender journey, prior to sentence.

At the pre-sentencing stage, probation services should consider the family needs and family circumstances of the offender (and any existing family intervention activity) in putting together pre-sentence reports, to inform not only sentencing but also later sentence planning and the framing of rehabilitative effort.

Support offenders and their families to plan for separation

There are also opportunities at this stage to support offenders and their families where a custodial sentence is a possibility to prepare for the experience and consequences of imprisonment. The interviews undertaken for this report indicated that those families which had planned for separation, thought through the practical and financial consequences, prepared children for separation and planned for a relationship maintenance strategy that minimised impact on their children were both better able to cope with separation and better able to maintain a meaningful relationship, with the impact on children mitigated to a greater extent than for those where this had not been the case.

Signpost to appropriate resources

Support for offenders and their families would, at a minimum, include sign-posting to appropriate resources¹ which would help families facing the imprisonment of a family member explain the situation to children² and develop coping and relationship maintenance strategies.

Information, practical advice and support for offenders who will lose care and control of their children

Practical advice and support which helped families to take positive steps to minimise the impact of separation and imprisonment would take this an important step further. For single parents, primarily women, who may have to make alternative arrangements for care of children or whose children will be fostered or enter the care system, children's services and child protection thinking has typically focused exclusively on the welfare and needs of the children and on child protection issues. The interviews with both offenders and family support workers in prisons indicated that parents can feel not only excluded from the process but effectively invisible to the system once they had lost control of their children.

Links between children's services and family support services for offenders

Family support services focused on the offender's needs as a parent serving a custodial sentence could usefully make links to children's services at this stage and, where appropriate, facilitate contact and the flow of information, thus lessening the trauma of separation. For families where responsibilities for children will pass to another family member, typically a grandmother, support could usefully focus on the challenges likely to be faced by all parties, the development of coping strategies to deal with these and planning, where appropriate, for how meaningful parent:child relationships can be maintained over the course of the sentence to minimise damage to children and lay the ground for eventual reintegration of the family unit. For those who face the permanent loss of their children, information on process and outcomes and support to cope with the prospect of loss and the associated guilt and grief could be introduced at an early stage.

Build awareness of the "hidden sentence" at all likely touch points with offenders' families

It will be important to raise awareness of the "hidden sentence" at all of the potential touch-points with offenders' families, including schools, health and mental health services and any agencies that interact with the family. The "Whole Family" approach within the CJS could usefully be introduced at the earliest possible stage in the offender journey, including at pre-sentence stage to support early interventions and a preventative approach to "breaking the cycle".

¹ Action for Prisoners Families provide excellent resources to support families and children prepare for and cope with separation and imprisonment of family members.

http://www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk/Publications_and_Resources/Home_page_Publications_and_Resources_Action_for_Prisoners_Families.aspx

² http://www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk/uploadedFiles/2010_Publications_And_Resources/The_Outsiders_Telling_the_children.pdf

Build family resilience to the impact of separation and plan for management of on-going relationships

Support should take a tailored needs-led approach in order to deal with the range of inter-linked issues that may arise and set up the offender and their family so as to be as resilient as possible to the experience of separation and imprisonment. In so doing early intervention will also aim to lay the foundations for maintaining family relationships during the sentence and to create a positive context for family based interventions as the basis for the effort to break the offending cycle.

Practical and emotional support for families

Practical support might involve, for example, working with offenders and their families on informing children's schools, so that staff can be alert to the reasons for any changes in children's performance or behaviour, be ready to offer extra support and to be vigilant in combating bullying. On an emotional level, support might involve working with parents on communicating with children about what is happening to their parent and how most effectively to provide children with reassurance.

Alternatively, some of the potential problems may be practical and financial. If families face an income shock through the loss of the major earner for example, they may rapidly fall into unmanageable debt. Support to engage creditors at an early stage and agree a repayment plan or moratorium on payments would be an important preventative step in avoiding the build-up of debt and financial distress.

Introduce Common Assessment Framework approaches where appropriate and agree data sharing protocols where possible

Introduction of a CAF approach to assessing the needs of the offender and their family prior to sentence will facilitate the delivery of tailored and integrated support. Negotiating agreement to data sharing between the relevant agencies, including, in due course, the custodial establishment, would then lay the foundations for a holistic approach to family intervention. It would also support work around minimising the impact of imprisonment on children.

Be mindful of offenders' and their families' fears around the potential loss of their children – build needs-led relationship of trust from early stage

In interviews both offenders and service providers flagged offenders and their families' fear of losing children to child protection services if they admitted to having children or having a problematic family environment or chaotic life-style. This is a key barrier to engaging offenders or their families with family interventions. If offenders and their families are to have sufficient trust to discuss their family needs at this early stage and agree to data sharing and joint agency support, it will be critical to develop a needs-led and trust-based relationship, most likely to be effectively established with a case worker from a voluntary sector agency who is not employed directly by social services and which is not part of the criminal justice system.

8.3.2 At the entry point to custody and for sentence planning

Capture needs-led data on family circumstances at point of entry and develop systems process and practice to support data capture

At a minimum it is critical to identify parents at the entry point to custody or community sentences. It will be important also to capture a fuller picture of family needs and circumstances than can be gathered from OASys. This should include any existing family intervention activity that was underway prior to reception and can then be used to inform sentence planning and interventions within the children and families pathway. This will need to be updated over time to take account of changing circumstances, such as relationship breakdown or the birth of a child.

The CJS will need to develop process and practice to support effective data capture and updating of records over time

This requires that the criminal justice system develop processes and practices to support such data capture and to enable records of family needs to be updated and to travel with prisoners where they change institutions.

Provide support and information on the facilities available for keeping in touch with family and contributing to family life

At this stage offenders, and particularly first time offenders, will need support to cope with separation and to put in place strategies for managing their relationships with their families. The interviews with offenders and their families indicated that it is at this early stage that much of the damage to relationships occurs and that offenders frequently take some time to identify the range of services available to them to support on-going relationships with their families. It also indicates that where relationships can be effectively maintained from the beginning of the sentence, the trauma of separation for both offenders and their families is reduced.

The entry point to custody a key opportunity to set up relationship maintenance as a protective factor in reducing re-offending

A life-cycle approach to the offender journey would frame the entry point to custody as a key opportunity for intervention to support the maintenance of healthy family relationships and reinforce protective factors in reducing re-offending.

Signpost to resources to support the management of separation and understanding and coping with feelings

At a minimum, offenders and their families would be provided with information on visiting and contact arrangements and the available relationship support services, including sign-posting to appropriate resources³ around ways in which to reduce the stress associated with visits and coping with and managing separation and the imprisonment of a family member.

³ <http://insidenout.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Comms-Guide.pdf>,
http://www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk/uploadedFiles/2010_Publications_And_Resources/The_Outsiders_Living_with_separation.pdf,
http://www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk/uploadedFiles/2010_Publications_And_Resources/The_Outsiders_Sent_to_prison.pdf

Build communication skills and empower as a parent

A creative approach would also seek to provide offenders with the skills to make the most of the communication opportunities they do have, for example in developing phone conversation skills and techniques for engaging the interest of children. Short induction courses of this type could also usefully build a sense among offenders coming into custody that imprisoned parents can contribute to the family and still be an active parent from the inside.

Families with a newly imprisoned parent are likely to need both practical and emotional support and will need signposting to resources

The family needs of offenders at the entry point to the system are relatively finite and straightforward compared to those of their families on the outside who are likely to be facing a whole new raft of problems, practical and emotional. For some families, support may be needed to minimise the impact on children, for example through partnership working with children's schools, support for parents coping on their own on a reduced income to gain access to benefits or employment and training opportunities, to deal with financial stresses, difficulties in managing challenging behaviour in children or in accessing mental health support.

Where family circumstances are criminogenic, links with community services focused on Troubled Families could be put in place

Where families are themselves dysfunctional, where, for example, the remaining parent is a drug user, life-styles are chaotic and / or children of the family are already engaged with anti-social peer networks, are exhibiting anti-social behaviour or offending, a more transformational approach may be required. Supporting such families to turn their lives around and create an environment which is less conducive to the transmission of offending behaviour and more likely to support reduced re-offending or desistance when the offender returns to it will be a highly challenging and resource-intensive exercise. Such initiatives will need to focus on those families where offending behaviour is most entrenched and the risk of inter-generational transmission of offending behaviour highest. Such cases are likely to require close working relationships with agencies in the community and links to the Troubled Families programme as part of a planned multi-agency approach. This will itself throw up issues around data sharing and data confidentiality. It will be important to obtain informed consent from both offenders and family members at the earliest possible opportunity to support effective data sharing, an holistic approach to the offender and their families and multi-agency working.

Women losing their children will need support to obtain information and liaise with Children's Services and support to deal with their loss

Women whose children are entering the "looked after" system or whose children are to be adopted face significant trauma, as do their children. Staff should be trained to support women facing the loss of their children and should be familiar with the structure and working of Children's Services and Care Proceedings and be able to offer support to women who need information from, or to liaise with, external agencies involved in decisions about their children. By the same token, the damage to children and the risk of inter-generational transmission of offending behaviour is likely to be mitigated by minimising the time that looked-after children must wait for an adoptive family.

8.3.3 Through the sentence

As the offender works their way through the sentence, the core family needs to be addressed as part of the training and rehabilitative effort are for support to maintain and develop family relationships and to empower the offender to contribute to their family from the inside. As the offender move towards release, in the latter phase of the sentence, planning for release will both involve the family and in part be focused on re-integration with the family.

8.3.3.1 Maintaining relationships

Maintaining relationships, as discussed in previous chapters, has been shown to be a protective factor in reducing re-offending.

Monitor contacts to enable identification of need and support pro-active response to change

Those institutions which had the most developed approach to family-based intervention monitored family interactions and the incidence and frequency of visits, and phone calls, including any changes or breakdown in patterns of contact in order to identify difficulties or periods of stress or changes in circumstances which enables officers to respond pro-actively to change, engage prisoners in discussion about relationship issues and offer support or intervention where required. In some cases, these activities and interactions between offenders and staff were an important source of referrals to family intervention.

Best practice in identifying and monitoring family needs

Case study: HMP Earlstoke

- Training prison offering range of intensive interventions
- Supportive governor committed to family dimension and investing in family work in partnership with Barnardos
- Awareness of importance and role of family / relationships built into ongoing management of offenders
- Thread of family and maintaining relationships through rehabilitative effort:
 - Induction period effort made to identify offenders with family and family issues and to encourage contact
 - Case reviews and sentence planning
 - Offending behaviour programmes emphasise role of family
 - Family contact behaviour monitored
 - Incidence and frequency in visits
 - Purchase of phone credits etc
 - Officers pro-actively respond to changes
- Focus in parenting skills is on period leading up to re-settlement where governor believes intervention will make greatest difference to re-offending

Pro-actively address the barriers to maintaining relationships and facilitate repair of fractured relationships where appropriate

For some offenders, including those with learning disability or numeracy and literacy issues, there is a need to offer support to negotiate the visiting order process and provide equal access to facilities such as family days.

In other cases, particularly where families lived at some distance, there may be a need to address the financial barriers to long-distance visits, where these are cost-prohibitive.

There may also be a need for support to re-establish relationships or contact with family members or to negotiate issues around access to children where relationships have broken down.

Best Practice – Maintaining relationships

- Identify need at point of entry
- Maintaining relationships:
 - Minimise disruption to relationships
 - Facilitate ongoing relationships / parenting
 - Address barriers
 - Build bridges / rebuild relationships
- Create awareness of family support / parenting service:
 - Offenders – stimulate self referrals
 - Staff – awareness of role of family dimension in offender behaviour / “Hidden Sentence” for families
- Empower and facilitate:
 - First step communication skills as appropriate
 - Provide information / channel for participation in key decisions where appropriate
- Monitor ongoing / changing need:
 - Monitor patterns / changes to patterns of contact
 - Build family awareness into staff interactions with offenders
- Respond to changing / evolving need:
 - Changes in circumstances
 - Growing family
 - Relationship fracture
- Link to external family services

8.3.3.2 Visits and Family Days

Visits should be central to family intervention strategy and regarded as a powerful intervention in themselves

Maintaining relationships is also about creating opportunities for natural interaction with families, and particularly with children. Visits are central to family intervention and can themselves be viewed as a powerful intervention and one that can be extended to a relatively large proportion of prisoners. This requires that visits are viewed not through the prism of security but through that of offender management. In some prisons which have committed most strongly to family based intervention, responsibility for visits has been removed from security and placed with offender management for this reason.

“Visits are the only place where inside meets outside. You've got this catalyst for change which is the children and families work. Now you can concentrate that on a parenting group, and you can get some nice outcomes. For me it's about taking that catalyst and amplifying it in as many different ways as possible to reach as many different offenders and families as possible”.

Provide child-friendly visiting facilities and manage visits with a view to maximising the potential to cement family bonds and apply parenting skills

The provision of child and family-friendly visitors' centres⁴ is important in making visits less stressful for families, and especially for children. They should ideally have facilities to engage both younger and older children. The provision of extended “Family Days”⁵ is key to maximising the effort to sustain and enhance relationships. Family days offer a range of facilities for children and, most importantly, allow for natural interaction between family members, with family members able to touch each other and the offender to move around – to get down on the floor to play with children, for example.

Offenders and their children are also not placed in a position where the constraints of the normal visit undermine their role in the family as a parent, providing reassurance also to children who may otherwise worry about the restrictions to which their parents are subject.

Establish Family Days as a key component of maintaining relationships and make these as widely accessible as possible

It is important that access to family days is made as accessible and inclusive as possible. Access should not be confined to those who are deemed to have earned it as a reward. Care needs to be taken also to extend access to those who may have a need but who are not necessarily first in line with a request. Similarly it will be important to seek to include those for whom there may be significant barriers to getting together with their family. Barriers might include access or financial issues for example but may also rest on the breakdown of a relationship which, with work, could potentially be repaired.

⁴ See Kids VIP Children Visiting Prison Good Practice 2011 www.kidsvip.co.uk

⁵ See Kids VIP Family Day Toolkit www.kidsvip.co.uk

Family days present an opportunity to apply parental learning

Family visits are not only important for maintaining family bonds. They also enable offenders to apply the parenting and communication skills which they may have acquired in other family based interventions and thus to reinforce learnings.

Make family days a hub for access to wider family support provision by inviting a range of community agencies into the prison

Family Days can be effectively supported by the involvement of a volunteer programme which itself acts as a bridge to the local community (see later discussion in this chapter). Volunteers may, for example, facilitate transport for families or provide refreshments on the day. Family Days also provide the opportunity for a range of service providers offering support to offenders and their families to attend on the day so that they can make offenders and their families aware of the provision and of the support that is available.

Piggy back family interventions onto Family Visits to take advantage of the whole family being together

By getting the family together, family days also create the opportunity for piggy-backing family interventions onto the visit element of the day. Offenders can, for example, take part in parenting classes together with their partners or the family, including the children, can work together on plans for resettlement and how reintegration into the family will be managed.

Engage prison staff in delivering Family Days to provide another perspective on the offender

Family visits also provide the opportunity for offenders to play a role other than that of offender so that prison officers get a perspective on the offender as a parent or family member and are able to interact with the offender as part of a family unit. For this reason, it is helpful to ensure that prison officers with day to day responsibility for managing offenders – as distinct from family intervention staff – are present at and participate in the organisation and delivery of family days. Commissioners report that this works to engage prison staff with the culture and ethos of children and family work but also to see the offenders that they manage in a different light.

“I think it works on three levels. It works on engaging the family together, you know, and it works on engaging the prisoner with his children and his family. It also works on the level of engaging the family with the prison as such, with the culture of the prison and with the staff. But is also, thirdly, works on the level that the staff we drag into that intervention it...It's about the prison, it's about the culture of the staff and how they perceive family work”

“You know, I need those officers to be there and to see, probably for the first time, what this man is like when he's not having to sit at a table wearing a bib.. when he's walking around with his baby or when he's on the floor with his toddler or when he's walking hand in hand with his wife. You know, I need the officers to see that. And the prisoner needs also to know that the officer has seen that”

Case study: Family day visits at HMP and YOI Parc

- Visits seen as strategic intervention
- Run by offender management and family intervention unit
- 6,000 domestic visitors and 2,000 children every four weeks
- Maximise accessibility and rotate Family Days between wings
- Wing staff plan and deliver – supported by family interventions unit
- Ages and stages play areas with facilities for children from babies to teenagers
- Sensory facility for special needs children
- Family Interventions Lounge within visit facility
- Service provider presence to offer range of support services to families
- Security cleared volunteers support family days
- Volunteers run 24/7 complementary help-line for families taking 1,000 calls a month

Provide for a range of special visits to meet specific needs such as “New Dads” or “Fathers Only” visits to build confidence and parental bonds

For fathers, particularly fathers of young children and those new to parenting, “Fathers only” visits in which the father spends time alone with the children without the mother present can play an important role in building confidence in being with and caring for babies and bonding with the children. Fathers-only visits, work best when preceded with short parenting courses which provide the knowledge and skills to handle babies safely and with confidence and to engage with small children. Similarly extended “new dads” visits – ideally preceded by a new dads skills course – will allow new and first time fathers to bond with the new baby and should be delivered as soon as is practicable after the birth of a new baby.

Final visits should be facilitated for parents facing the loss of their children where this is appropriate, safe and in the best interests of the child

Parents who are losing their children to adoption should, where possible and appropriate, safe and in the best interests of the child, be offered a final visit to say goodbye to their child. Parents should be informed well beforehand of the purpose of the visit, and be provided with appropriate counselling and support both before and after the visit. Parents should be given a photograph to keep of the child. Prison staff or family support workers who are involved with such occasions will need specific training on how to handle such visits and the associated grief, and may require support also for their own distress.

Clearly this will require partnership working with the responsible local authority to determine the suitability of this service based on the assessed individual needs of the child and parent in each case. There will be some individual circumstances where such an approach will not be either appropriate or safe or in the best interests of the child.

8.3.3.3 Contributing as a parent from the inside

Work to create a sense that offenders can be good parents from inside the walls and support the development of parenting and communication skills

As noted earlier in section 8.3.2, it is important that at the entry point to the system parents are encouraged to feel that they can be a good and active parent when they are in prison. As discussed in that section, short communications and parenting skills courses have an important role to play in setting up parents to make the most of their interactions with children.

Provide a range of opportunities for parents to keep in touch with and become involved in children's lives

Initiatives which allow imprisoned parents to have greater involvement in the lives of their children, such as story reading services and Homework Clubs are also important in enabling parents to contribute to their children's lives and provide children also with meaningful engagement with their parent and a source of comfort and reassurance that the absent parent still cares and is thinking about them. In both cases, such initiatives work most effectively when they are set up with some skills training, coaching skills, for example, in the case of the homework club.

Case study: Being a good parent from the inside “Storybook Dads”

- Simple, discrete concept which is easy to communicate and sell in
- Meets clear need with clear benefits for offender and family
- Storybook concept – DVD of parent reading story for child:
 - Enabling facilitation of those with literacy issues
 - No barriers to inclusion (other than child protection / risk based)
 - Empowers – positive presentation of parent
 - Tailored, personalised
 - Makes powerful connect between parent and especially young children
 - Other communications concepts adapt for older children
- Packaged to overcome barriers and resistance, bureaucracy in prisons
 - Training to use simple concepts and tools
 - All technical / editing skills and administrative support provided centrally
 - Package for participating prisons includes all components required so no need to find additional resource / time / budget
 - Support for deliverers
- Provides work and builds skills / qualifications for offenders who provide resource
- Scalable – now in 100 prisons
- Cost effective – run on budget of £135K p.a.

Longer parenting courses which involve both offender and their family members will help to build positive – and shared – parenting models

Thereafter relationship and parenting skills classes⁶ can be focused on developing a wider and deeper understanding of children’s needs and what good parenting looks like. Such courses can focus both on the immediate parenting issues that arise for prisoners and their families – children’s response to separation or problems arising at school for example – but also more widely addressing key concepts such as consistency and discipline, choices and consequences, keeping children safe and so on. Wherever possible, parenting courses delivered to prisoners should involve offenders’ families so that the family develop a shared understanding and families understand the way in which the offender may be changing his thinking. Courses could either be mirrored with linked units completed remotely or through external agencies working directly with families in the community.

⁶ Examples might include Triple P <http://www.triplep.org> or The Nurturing programme www.familylinks.org.uk/nurturing-programme

8.3.3.4 Case work-based family support / family engagement work

Family engagement workers can both add significant value to parenting interventions and play a key role in liaising with external agencies

Supporting and maintaining links with families and improving outcomes for the children of offenders can benefit significantly from the work of a family support worker or family engagement workers⁷. The family engagement worker may take on a variety of roles, liaising between offenders and their families and providing case work support to offenders and their families. A key part of their role will be to liaise with external agencies in the community and with local authorities to put in an integrated service offering to families where this is required. Partnership working can then coordinate and link interventions focused on the family and work being done with the offender.

Such an approach can be relatively small scale and focused on a specific sub set of offenders, such as those with drugs issues, or be open to a wider group of offenders. Alternatively, where links to the community and wider family services have become established, family support interventions can be ambitious in seeking to develop a truly integrated service to both offenders and their families (see following box on the Invisible Walls project in Wales for an example).

8.3.3.5 Transformational Interventions

Intensive courses intended to re-frame attitudes and thinking and change offending behaviour will require more intensive intervention

Family interventions which make the connection most explicitly to desistance and to breaking the cycle of offending across generations rest on transformational interventions intended to challenge and change entrenched criminogenic patterns of thought and criminal behaviour. These interventions, working through the prism of the family, are intended to move offenders towards pro-social patterns of thought and more empathetic ways of relating to others and thus to change behaviour and create both desistance and protective factors against the inter-generational transmission of offending behaviour. An example of such a programme would be Safeground's "Fathers Inside" or "Family Man" programmes⁸.

Intensive courses to develop self-awareness and understanding of the impact of offending on families and children's life-chances

Here the intention is to build self awareness and the individual's understanding of the drivers of their offending behaviour and to understand also the impact of their offending on their families. Such interventions are intended not simply to develop relationship and parenting skills but rather to reframe the concept of what constitutes a good parent and parental role model. Building on this base, the intention is to then work with the offender to develop new ways of thinking and coping strategies that work to reduce the drivers of offending behaviour.

⁷ Between 2009 – 2012 Family support workers were supported by NOMS in a pilot project at Belmarsh, Wandsworth, Bristol, Eastwood Park, Maidstone, Frankland, Deerbolt, Swansea and Pentonville. The evaluation pointed to increased parent:child and prison-family contact and reduced self harm. NOMS is currently tendering for the provision of family engagement worker services

⁸ <http://www.safeground.org.uk/>

Engage both offenders and their families in transformational initiatives

The aim is to set offenders up not only to return to the family on resettlement and for more positive family relationships but also for desistance and productive engagement with society. Such programmes optimally involve both offenders and their families working together, either directly, with family members coming into the prison, or with family members undertaking parallel courses in the community.

Case study: Safeguard – Fathers Inside

- Structured, quality assured, well supervised, train the trainer model
- Intensive course over seven to nine weeks
- Prisoners are seen as “Parents first”
- Delivered in peer to peer context (including peer mentors)
- Involves family as “supporters” who work in parallel
- Builds self-awareness and awareness of impact of behaviour on others, needs of others
- Focuses on the now and what can do to be positive parent on the inside
- Practice skills and apply growing understanding in interactions with families
- Challenging and stretching
- Goal led – realistic, achievable steps towards desistance and positive life-style, enhanced family relationships
- Course culminates in presentation to families and family day
- Seeks to be transformational – change the thinking, thus the behaviour and drivers of re-offending – and ultimately life-chances

An alternative to the dedicated offender-specific approach illustrated with the preceding case study is where family learning programmes deployed in the wider community are adapted to, and delivered within, a custodial context. This can be, either on an “inclusive” basis, in which activities which target offenders and their families are integrated into a wider local authority approach to parenting support, or, more commonly, where a method developed for the wider community is delivered within a prison on an ad hoc basis. Examples of such programmes would be Triple P⁹, widely used internationally, or the “Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities”¹⁰ programme. The deployment by Glasgow Council of “Triple P” parenting support on the basis of a broader “Public Health” approach to parenting, which includes delivery within HMP Barlinnie, provides a, still rare, example of services targeting offenders within a broader programme of wider parental learning and family support.

⁹ <http://www.triplep.net/glo-en/home>

¹⁰ <http://www.education.gov.uk/commissioning-toolkit/Programme/Detail/28>

Case study: “Triple P” in HMP Barlinnie as part of a wider Public Health approach to parental learning and family support services in Glasgow.

The model

- “Triple P” a suite of evidence-driven, structured parenting programmes with 30 year history, licensed for use in 24 countries on the “train the trainer” model
- Programme aims to improve the quality of parenting and outcomes for children; - encourage positive, consistent parenting practice.
- Flexible programme with varying levels of intensity and modules aimed at parents and children in varying age ranges and circumstances.
- Takes “public health” approach embracing whole population of parents who may have concerns about their child development or with a desire to improve parenting skills
- Blends universal and targeted programmes which can be implemented concurrently on multiple levels, on both group or individual / family basis
- 5 broad levels of intensity; range from relatively light-touch intervention over short course to more resource-intensive, longer programmes.
- Levels most likely to offer fit with needs of offender population:
 - Level 4 targeted at c 10% of family population with relatively high needs
 - Level 5 targeted high-risk population c 2% of population

Most developed application of Triple P as “public health” approach in UK that adopted by NHS in Greater Glasgow and Clyde

- City-wide application, multi-agency support
- Local parent coordinators
- Media and awareness raising
- Evaluation

Triple P programme delivered with partners

- Schools inc early years and nursery schools
- Health workers
- Workplaces
- Voluntary sector

Integrated and inclusive partnership working to focus on most vulnerable families, including offenders and their families

- **Glasgow Housing Associations**
 - Engaging “just coping” and “troubled” families
- **Social work services**
 - Families on child protection register
 - Foster / kinship carers
 - Families receiving intensive services
- **HMP Barlinnie**
 - Courses involving both prisoners and families on outside
 - Integrated approach to family support outside and parental learning on inside

Following success of Barlinnie programme, Triple P interventions being rolled out to other custodial establishments

8.3.4 Pre and post resettlement

One of the most important elements in the children and families pathway effort on reducing re-offending is the process of planning for resettlement and resettlement report.

8.3.4.1 Planning for resettlement

Involve families in planning for resettlement

As described in Chapter 6, the evidence is that involving families in planning for resettlement is more likely to lead to a positive outcome, both in terms of more positive family and relationship outcomes but also in terms of reduced re-offending.

Those returning to live with families and remain part of an integrated family unit are less likely to reoffend. Resettlement and re-integration into the family is nonetheless challenging and throws up a range of tensions and difficulties. All parties can have unrealistic – or different – expectations. Values may have shifted over time and people may be very different after an interval of some years. Relationships can be hard to re-establish. Offenders may find it very difficult to adjust to the changes that have occurred in family dynamics while families may resent the disruption to those dynamics occasioned by the return home of the offender. Families may also fear a resurgence of problems – such as drinking or drug abuse or aggressive behaviour – which were part of the pattern of offending.

All of these difficulties are mitigated and the shock of return and risk of relationship breakdown – and the likelihood of reoffending – minimised where strong relationships can be developed or maintained throughout the sentence. Similarly work undertaken with the family during the period when a parent is in prison will aim to stabilise the family, increase resilience to risk and engage family members. This should in turn create an environment more conducive to resettlement and desistance.

Support families to identify and prepare for challenges and to develop shared plans and goals

The evidence described in Chapter six suggests that if families are involved in the process of thinking through and planning for resettlement and the challenges that will arise they have better outcomes. In the interviews with offenders and their families undertaken to inform this study, people explained that having formulated shared aims and together set specific achievable goals and developed strategies for reaching them had been key to their ability to move forward as a family. Strong family relationships and a stable environment had in turn been a motivating factor in abstinence, reduced drinking and desistance.

Resettlement planning in a children and families context will thus involve families, including children, in planning for the practicalities of both ROTL and ultimate release. Work with offenders and their families will need to focus on the challenges and tensions associated with the return home of the offender and the emotional issues that may arise. Pre-resettlement work should also support families to articulate their vision for the future – including desistance from crime and a move away from criminogenic factors in their lifestyle or environment – and formulate sequenced goals for the short and medium term. This process should also articulate how the plans for resettlement and the changes envisaged to the family dynamic will impact children, both in the short term and longer term.

8.3.4.2 Through the gate services

Where there are identified risks for re-offending “through the gate” services and links made to external agencies may be critical to mitigation

Where there are specific risks for re-offending or for children to repeat the cycle of re-offending, it will be important to identify through the gate strategies for handing over support and to establish partnerships with agencies in the community who can support the offender and their family to mitigate these risks.

Where risks are identified in the pre-resettlement planning process, it will be important to provide through the gate support to connect offenders and their families with services in the community.

Examples of such support might include, for example, providing housing and benefit support to mothers seeking to re-establish a family unit, peer mentoring support for teenage children at risk of getting involved in gang crime or sign-posting offenders leaving prison with a history of drug or alcohol abuse to twelve step fellowship support groups.

Establishing structures and forums which link community services with the local criminal justice infrastructure to support planning for resettlement and the transition of the offender from the custodial environment to the community will be critical to the success of these ventures. The mapping work suggests, however, that this is one of the areas of weakness within current provision with such provision as is available, fragmented, patchy and inconsistent, with relatively little joined-up working between agencies. In an era of budget cuts, services have also been cut back or have closed. Funding has often been short term and has become increasingly dependent on sponsorship.

Against the background of the new policy emphasis on “through the gate” support this would seem an important area for development if family support services

Case Study: St Giles Trust

The St Giles Trust aims to break the cycle of disadvantage, crime, prison and re-offending and to create safer communities by supporting ex-offenders to change their lives.

Ex offenders are supported to develop life and employment skills with the model placing an emphasis on peer support from ex offenders who have turned their lives around. A third of St Giles Staff are ex-offenders.

The Trust aims to provide those leaving prison with “somewhere to live”, “something to live for”, help to develop positive relationship and “support from those who have been there”

The Trust provides a range of offender-centred and needs-led services including:

- Support in the community for prison leavers
- Skills and employment support
- Children and families services (CAFÉ (children and Family’s Enterprise), now focused on Tower Hamlets and Southwark, currently funded by Barclays
- Housing services
- Women’s services (WIRE intensive support for female prison leavers))

CAFE

- Intensive, hands- on support for offenders and their families, those at risk of offending on a needs-led basis for those with complex multiple needs
- Case-work based, whole-family model
- Support covers wide range of needs from housing, financial management, employment skills and training, positive parenting and whole family working, mental and physical health, substance misuse, domestic violence, debt
- Close partnership working with health and social services professionals, probation services and specialist support agencies.

8.3.4.3 Post resettlement support

Partnership working between the criminal justice system and community agencies will be key to effective resettlement support

“Breaking the cycle” of re-offending and the effectiveness of the “whole family” approach depends critically on the effort to join up mainstream and criminal justice family services. Partnership working between criminal justice and mainstream agencies and co-commissioning will be key to effective post re-settlement support and

building on the family interventions undertaken in custody and during the sentence. In the short term, there is a need to address the immediate practical and emotional difficulties associated with return to family and community, housing, finance and reintegration into the family. Thereafter the need becomes rebuilding family life so that it becomes the cornerstone not only of sustainable and positive family relationships but also of enhanced life-chances more widely.

Resettlement support will need to rest on connecting family focused and parental learning interventions with those focused on enhancing life-chances and opportunity more widely. Support could focus on building alternatives to criminogenic and anti-social networks and facilitating positive pro-social activities, such as volunteering. Work with offenders and their families will need to focus also not just on interventions to mitigate criminogenic factors but also those designed to offer an alternative to a the cycle of offending by actively helping offenders into work. Family interventions will thus have to establish links with, or incorporate into their own propositions, services focused on education, employment and skills training.

“Those resettlement pursuits, housing, and education, training, employment, substance misuse, counselling, all those kind of resettlement pursuits, they all fit inside the children and families approach, they’re all part of it.”

These various strands of work are brought together in Figures 8.3 and 8.4, which describe the service needs of offenders and their families at each stage of the offender journey.

The service needs of offenders and their families through the offender journey

Figure 8.3: The offenders services needs

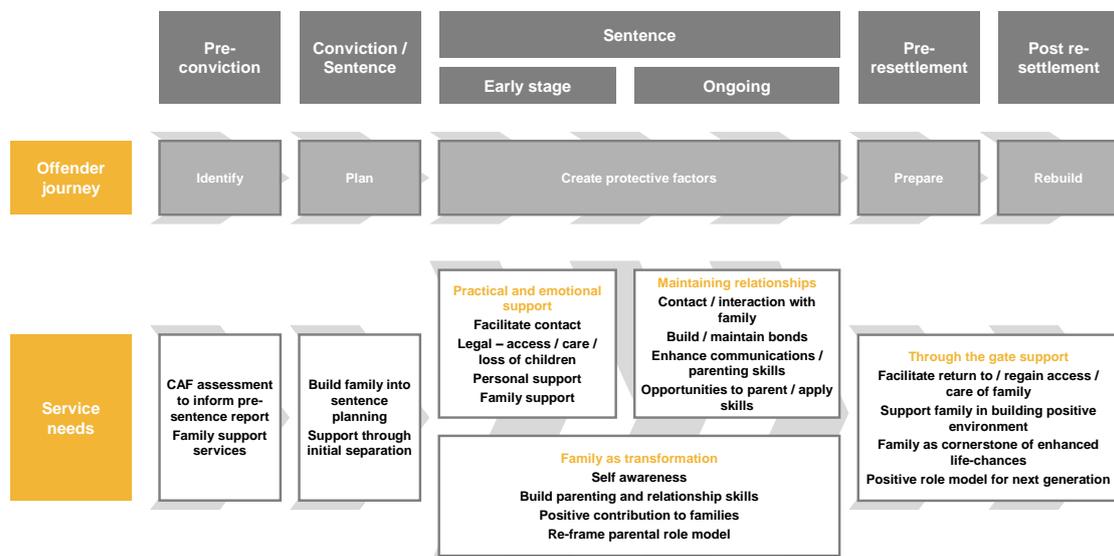
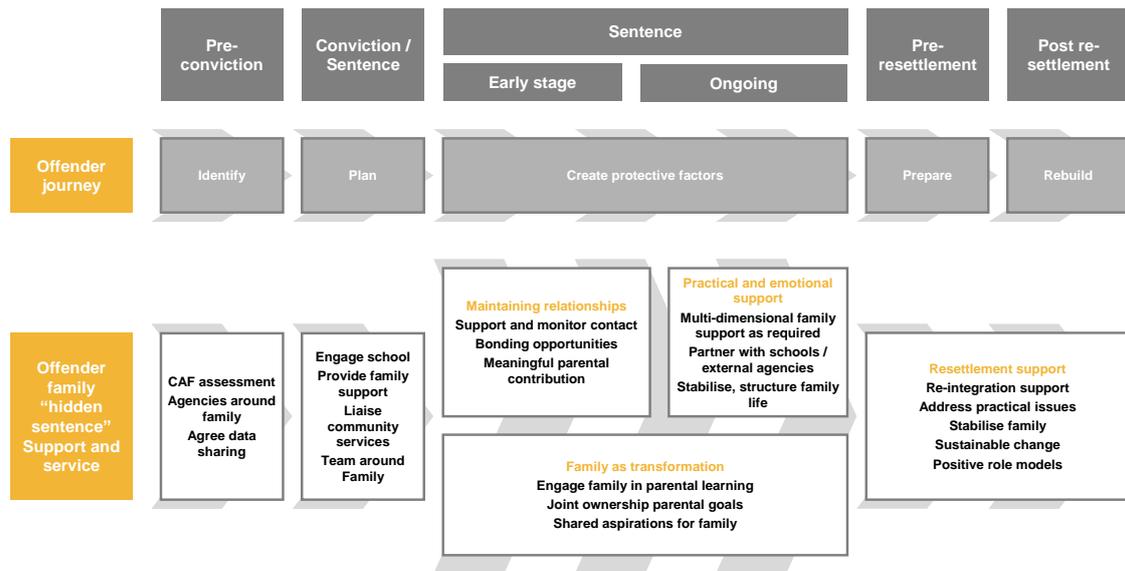


Figure 8.4: Family service needs



The diagrams in Figures 8.5 and 8.6 provides illustrative examples of how various existing services map against the needs described in figures 8.3 and 8.4.

Figure 8.5: Examples of existing family services interventions mapped against needs and offender journey

Family Services	Sentence			
	Early stage		Ongoing	
Maintaining relationships	✓ Example: StoryBook Dads	✓ Example: VIP Kids	✓ Example: Family visits	✓ Example: Family input
Practical family support	✓ Example: FSW facilitate contacts	✓ Example: FSW family casework	✓ Example: FSW family casework	✓ Example: External agency casework
Skills and awareness building	✓ Example: "How to play with your child"	✓ Example: Parenting classes	✓ Example: Homework clubs	✓ Example: Mentor
Transformational interventions			✓ Example: MPACT / Family Man	✓ Example: NEPACs "Pre RTL"

Figure 8.6: Examples of existing family services interventions mapped against needs and offender journey

Family Services	Sentence			
	Early stage		Ongoing	
	<u>Maintaining relationships</u> Support and monitor contact Bonding opportunities Meaningful parental contribution	<u>Practical and emotional support</u> Multi-dimensional family support as required Partner with schools / external agencies Stabilise, structure family life	<u>Family as transformation</u> Engage family in parental learning Joint ownership parental goals Shared aspirations for family	<u>Resettlement support</u> Re-integration support Address practical issues Stabilise family Sustainable change Positive role models
✓ Example: StoryBook Dads	✓ Example: VIP Kids	✓ Example: Family visits	✓ Example: Family input	
<u>Practical family support</u>	✓ Example: FSW facilitate contacts	✓ Example: FSW family casework	✓ Example: External agency casework	
<u>Skills and awareness building</u>	✓ Example: "How to play with your child"	✓ Example: Parenting classes	✓ Example: Mentor	
<u>Transformational interventions</u>		✓ Example: MPACT / Family Man	✓ Example: NEPACs "Pre RTL"	

8.4 Defining needs and targeting

8.4.1 Family and relationship needs through the life-cycle

Clearly different sub-sets of the offender population will have differing needs in relation to their family relationships. These will vary, for example, by life-stage and the age of children, by gender, by whether offenders are in a stable relationship with a partner and by whether they have access to, or would ordinarily have care and control of their children. Family needs are likely to differ also for those serving longer and shorter sentences as well as where they are in the offender journey, as discussed in 8.4 preceding.

Tables 8.3 and 8.4 Lays out the family and relationship needs of men and women respectively at different stages of the family life-cycle.

Table 8.3: The family and relationship needs and appropriate service provision for female offenders at different stages of the family life-cycle

Segment	Needs	Service
No children – single	Maintain / rebuild family ties Reframe peer-group	Facilitate contact with family Positive role models
No children – partnered	Appropriate relationships Relationship skills	Facilitate contact Build self-awareness / esteem Address DV where appropriate
Pregnant mother	Ante natal Birth support Bonding Mothering skills Separation support	Birth planning and facilitation Parenting classes Bonding time Managed separation

Mother and baby	Bonding Parenting skills Family support	Mother and baby place where available Parenting classes Managed access Family visits Managed separation Multi-dimensional resettlement support
Mother with children	Appropriate relationships Relationship / Parenting skills Maintain family relationship Contribute to family	Facilitate contact Managed access Support involvement with children (Storybook Mums/ Homework club) Family visits Parenting classes Multi-dimensional resettlement support
Grandmother	Maintain family relationship	Facilitate contact Support involvement with children (Storybook Mums/ Homework club) Family visits
Mother without control or access	Information Access Contribute where appropriate	Facilitate contact where appropriate Facilitate news of children's welfare Negotiated / managed access
Mother lost or losing children	Information Grief support	Update on process and outcomes Final visit Photographs Counselling

Table 8.4: The family and relationship needs and appropriate service provision for male offenders at different stages of the family life-cycle

Segment	Needs	Service
No children – single	Maintain family ties Re-frame peer group	Facilitate contact with family Positive role models
No children – partnered	Maintain partner relationship Manage relationship breakdown	Facilitate contact Relationship skills
Expectant first time father	Bonding Parenting skills Family support	New dad's basic skills Bonding visit Family visits Parenting course
Father with children	Relationship / Parenting skills Maintain family relationship Contribute to family	Facilitate contact Support involvement with children (Storybook Dads/ Homework club) Family visits Parenting classes

Grandfather	Maintain family relationship Contribute to family	Facilitate contact involvement with children (Storybook Dads Homework club) Family visits
Father without control or access	Communication skills Maintain family relationship Contribute to family	Facilitate contact where appropriate Facilitate news of children's welfare Negotiated / managed access
Father lost or losing children	Information Grief support	Update on process and outcomes Final visit Photographs Counselling

8.4.2 Family needs and the NOMS identified risk factors for re-offending

The family intervention approach seeks to address all of the NOMS identified protective and risk factors for re-offending through the single prism of family.

As discussed in chapter two research has demonstrated that nine factors appear to have the strongest links to reoffending, (see 2.3 for overview and detail of those risk factors specific to families and relationships and Appendix F for full details for all nine re-offending risk factors) The NOMS Commissioning Intentions for 2013/14 document (7/2012) states that services should focus on delivering positive outcomes in these nine areas, being anti-social thinking and behaviour, pro-criminal attitudes, anti-social associates, drug and alcohol misuse, poor performance at work (including persistent worklessness), poor or no family relationships and homelessness. Similarly chapter two (see 2.3.2) also described the key protective factors in desistance, being maturing, forming intimate relationships and strong family bonds, recovery from addiction, a move into employment and a move away from a criminal peer group, a sense of social capital and connection with non-criminal others. The ability to empathise with others and the development of pro-social thinking are also key. These latter link to the seven NOMS pathways to reducing re-offending (see 2.3.2), of which children and families is one.

Family interventions can seek to address the full range of risk and protective factors within a family intervention framework

The NOMS commissioning intentions document asks commissioners to avoid giving individual offenders multiple interventions which target the same needs, instead focusing on increasing the number of offenders able to access interventions. A family intervention approach seeks to address all of the identified risk and protective factors for offenders through the single prism of the family. It thus avoids replication of interventions and many of the sequencing issues that would otherwise arise. By nature, since a large majority of offenders want to maintain close relationships with family (74%) and 54% receive visits, family based interventions can thus reach and are relevant to a large number of offenders.

Some examples of family intervention oriented service providers which address the various identified risk factors are provided in Table 8.5 following.

Table 8.5: Offender Segment & Illustrative Provision

Adult male offenders	Key risk factors	Agencies addressing all/some (illustrative examples)
Violence	Employment Homelessness Anger control DV – relationship problems Higher risk lack stable Relationship	NEPACS Freedom Programme (DV only) CAFE Parc Supporting families Family Seal POP Relate Inside-Out Families First You and Your Child Ormiston
Robbery	Employment Difficulties with problem solving Pro-crime attitude Criminal lifestyle & intergenerational Some alcohol abuse Some relationship problems	PACT CAFE Parenting 2000 Story Book Dads POP Relate Inside-Out
Drugs	Employment Alcohol & drug abuse Relationship difficulties	Moving PACT (specific focus) PATCHED (specific focus) POP NEPACS Relate Inside-Out Families First You and Your Child Ormiston
Young adult male offenders	Key risk factors	Agencies addressing all/some (illustrative examples)
Violence	Temper control problem Problem with relationships Some drug and alcohol related Employment & accommodation Poor problem solving Attitudes support offending	Being Dad Family Matters Parenting Matters Building Bridges NEPACS Family Seal
Robbery	Employment Difficulties with problem solving Pro-crime attitudes Temper control	NEPACS Building Bridges Family Seal
Drugs	Employment Drug and alcohol abuse Attitudes that support offend	M PACT Building Bridges NEPACS Family Seal
Women offenders	Key risk factors	Agencies addressing all/some (illustrative examples)

All (violent, robbery & drugs)	Poor problem solving Employment Impulsivity Lack suitable accommodation Alcohol abuse (a third particularly violence related) Some relationship problems	Evolve Willow Tree (pregnant women) Parenting 2000 Birth Companions Storybook Mums NEPACS Family Matters Building Stronger Families Nurturing Project Inspire Women's project Family Seal
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Examples of services which are specifically focused on addressing the drivers of offending within the children and families pathway are provided in Table 8.6 below.

Table 8.6: Family and relationship drivers of re-offending, risk factors, desired intermediate outcomes and fit with service providers

Drivers of re-offending	Risk factors	Desired intermediate outcomes	Illustrative fit with selected services
Family /marital relationships	Poor family relationships; no current relationship, no previous experience of close relationships, manipulative lifestyle	Conflict reduced, positive relationships, enhanced warmth and caring; reintegration into (non-criminal) social and family groups Strengthened family ties, improving family and intimate relationships, improving parenting behaviours, and increasing acceptance into communities and social networks	(Relationship coaching interventions Family visits to Prisoners) You & your child Ormiston Family Matters Building stronger families Home together Family man Fathers inside Home start parenting Inspire women's project Story time learning Triple P PACT NEPACS Partners of prisoners Park

For women offenders women's centres can provide a resource that addresses a range of complex needs

For women offenders, NOMS states that it is particularly keen to see interventions that are specific to women's reoffending and to see Women's centres figure in solutions in the reducing re-offending space. Again family interventions would seem to be a good fit with women's needs and are widely available through a dedicated network of almost fifty women's centres focused on services for women offenders¹¹.

8.4.3 Targeting and generating referrals

Those who self-select for family interventions tend to be those with stronger family relationships and most motivated to change

There is long-standing practice within the CJS of selecting candidates for transformational interventions who are motivated to achieve change, and in particular motivated to reduce their re-offending.

As noted in previous chapters there is a tendency for those who are already most family oriented to self-select for family intervention programmes because of the opportunities they provide to see more of family members or make the most of communication opportunities. In some sense this is helpful for the dynamic of group interventions that participants are motivated to engage with the subject matter and to change their behaviour.

Family also provides the hook to reach out to those who may not be motivated to change

However, it is also clear from the interviews with offenders who had been through interventions that had proved transformational that even among those who achieved desistance and underwent a profound change in their thinking and behaviour over time, some had not originally been motivated to change but simply to see more of their family. Selection criteria should not therefore exclude such individuals, who may in fact be difficult to otherwise involve in cognitive skills or behaviour change programmes through any other route.

Targeting offender sub-groups where the impact on re-offending could be greater will require some focus on those with dysfunctional parenting models

NOMS policy is for commissioners to focus interventions on those groups where the impact on re-offending is likely to be greatest. Those with strong family ties are also those less likely to re-offend. Similarly those who receive visits are less likely to reoffend than those who do not. Targeting those offender types where the impact of family intervention on re-offending may be greater requires therefore also seeking out those who have disengaged from their feelings or their families and who are not receiving visits. It will also involve reaching out to offenders whose families are most chaotic and those who do not have positive parenting models. Such individuals are more likely to lack empathy with others. They may also lack the basic communication and relationship skills to nurture and sustain a relationship over a period of separation. These offenders will often also be those more likely to re-offend.

¹¹ <http://www.womensbreakout.org.uk/projects/>

Where the family environment is itself criminogenic this will likely require complementary work with families on the outside

In the same way, addressing re-offending through family interventions with offenders where families are dysfunctional or chaotic will likely require complementary interventions undertaken with offenders' families to work towards creating an environment which is more conducive to desistance and reduced inter-generational transmission of offending behaviour. Here links will need to be made to external partners and the Troubled Families programme.

A pro-active targeting and referral strategy is required focused on offender need

Targeting these offenders and their families requires a pro-active strategy for generating referrals. This requires, on the inside, that prison staff who have day to day contact with offenders both monitor family contacts and are trained more broadly to understand the family dimension and to be aware of and to identify family and relationship issues through their contacts with offenders. Prison staff can thus become sources of intelligence on need and of referrals to family interventions and, indeed advocates for family intervention initiatives in their discussions with offenders. Where family engagement or support workers are in place these can be an important source of referrals both to services being delivered by or in prisons but also to agencies dealing with families and children in the community.

Work towards a two-way referral between the criminal justice system and mainstream family services

The more difficult challenge but one that is the most likely to bring the greatest reward in terms of reducing the inter-generational transmission of offending behaviour is to develop a two way referrals process in which the criminal justice system works with external partners to obtain support and services for offenders' families from mainstream children and family services. Mainstream agencies working in the community with challenging individuals and families where there is a family member involved in the criminal justice system can then also make referrals to family interventions in prisons or probation.

A multi-disciplinary selection process that involves a range of departments and ideally both internal and external representatives to qualify referrals

A multi-disciplinary, inter-departmental approach to qualifying referrals and selecting individuals for inclusion in interventions is also helpful in targeting interventions and providing services to those most likely to benefit and where intervention is most likely to have an impact on re-offending. This would ideally involve staff with a range of responsibilities within the prison, offender management and those responsible for the reducing re-offending and education and training role, family support workers where these are engaged, chaplaincy and so on, but also external partners.

8.4.4 Sequencing and timing

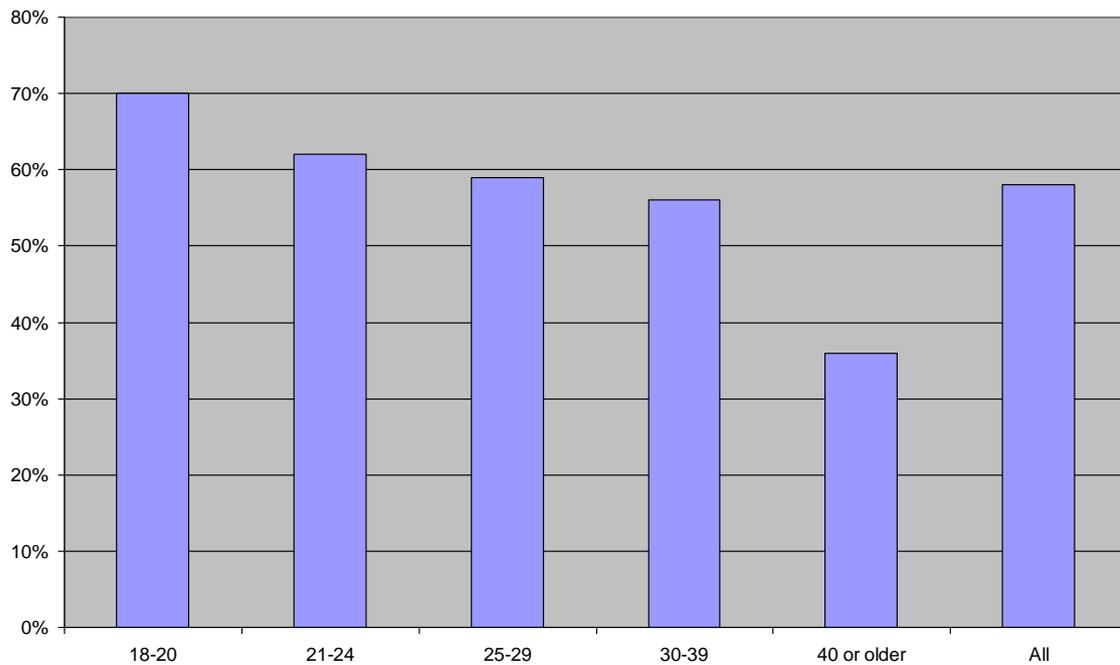
Relationship maintenance services should be widely available at an early stage in the offender journey and as early as possible in the criminal career

The timing and sequencing of interventions is also important. There is a strong argument to be made for introducing interventions around maintaining relationships

and building parental and communications skills from as early as possible in the sentence and for targeting young parents particularly. This approach would support offenders in managing their separation from their families more productively, mitigate distress arising for offenders' children and act as a protective factor against relationship breakdown.

Chart 1: Argument to be made for engagement with relationship agenda at early stage in cycle of offending

One-year reoffending rate by age



Source: May, Sharma and Stewart, 2008. Factors linked to reoffending. MoJ

More transformational interventions may be better introduced closer to re-settlement or prior to ROTL

Interventions which are more transformational in intent – and tend to be more cost and resource intensive – may be more effectively introduced closer to resettlement or prior to ROTL, when they can be most directly linked to behaviour change on re-offending and the agenda on the inter-generational transmission of offending behaviour. Alternatively, where offenders' families are themselves the focus of intervention in the community, as in the Troubled Families programme, it would seem important to engage the offender in transformational intervention at the same time as community agencies are working with the family. Ideally this would be achieved in a co-ordinated and integrated way. This could be particularly important for individuals whose offending behaviour or a home environment which is conducive to serial offending is driven by addiction.

8.5 Prioritisation of activities

NOMS focus on higher risk segments represents a good fit with the family interventions approach

The NOMS segmentation (described in 2.3.5 in chapter 2 earlier) classifies the offender population into a matrix with five bands of risk (being defined as greater or lesser risk of re-offending on the basis of their OGRS score) and 7 different categories of criminal activity (Sexual, Violent, Robbery, Acquisitive, Drugs, Motoring, Other). For the purposes of this study, and provision of family and relationship services, sexual and domestic violence related offenders are out of scope, requiring more specialist focused interventions.

The NOMS commissioning intentions documents suggest commissioners should disinvest in interventions with offenders with low risk of offending and focusing effort on those where there is the greatest potential for improvement in re-offending rates. It also suggests that interventions around enhancing cognitive skills appear less effective for the highest risk most frequent offenders and from acquisitive crime and robbery offenders.

This focus speaks to the strengths of family interventions and can help target case work based support and transformational interventions on those offenders with higher risk of re-offending, or most likely to be responsive when used alongside information about family circumstances obtained from partnership and co-commissioning approaches.

The evidence from the interviews with offenders and their families suggests that family intervention can be effective in changing thinking and behaviour among the young (the most likely re-offenders – see chart 1), those with entrenched offending behaviour and many years of serial stints in custody, those committing drugs and violent crime and with addicts of many years standing. The wider evidence from the literature reviewed in section 6 has highlighted the importance of the family context in reducing reoffending.

Family Days and visit-led interventions should be structured to reach as large as possible a proportion of the offender population

In a family context, and against the background of austerity and the reality of shrinking budgets, it would seem important to prioritise and focus family interventions. In line with the stated NOMS intention of seeking to reach the largest possible number of offenders with proven interventions, support for maintaining strong and stable relationships would seem a key priority. The foundation of family interventions would seem to be the relationship maintenance piece – of which visits and Family Days are the corner-stone. Family Day interventions have the potential to touch the more than half of offenders who receive visits. They also enable prisons to reach out to and engage offenders' families, in a relatively cost effective and efficient way.

“Storybook Dads” style services should be actively promoted and accessible

Facilities which provide opportunities for parents to keep in touch with children and be involved in their children's lives – such as StoryBook Dads – would seem obvious and highly relevant as a family services offering, to which offenders should be directed at an early stage in their sentence so as to minimise disruption to relationships. Such services are not only cheap to deliver but also simple to execute, requiring little diversion of resource.

Short relationship and communication skills courses add value to other interventions and should be widely available

Short courses focused on a limited goal – aspects of communication and relationship skills – would also seem to play an important role in maintaining positive family relationships and supporting offenders to make a meaningful contribution to family life and managing the stresses of separation. Such interventions could also impact a large body of offenders.

Focus case work based support and transformational intervention on those segments with higher risk of re-offending or most likely to be responsive

More transformational interventions, case work undertaken by family support workers and transformational interventions focused on achieving behavioural change can then be focused on offenders where intervention can be expected to have the greatest impact. In targeting those with the higher risk of re-offending for more intensive and transformational family interventions and focusing to a greater extent on the harder to reach who may have greatest need.

It will be important to strike a balance so that group-based interventions include those who are motivated to change and have strong family bonds

However, it will be important also to strike a balance and include also those who self-select and who do have strong family bonds. Commissioners, service providers and service users all talked about the importance of the group dynamic, with motivation for change and engagement with family issues being a key part of a positive dynamic that lends itself to reframing thinking and effecting lasting behavioural change.

8.6 Scale

Family Intervention models have been developed and executed at scale featuring integrated working between prison and community services

The scale of family intervention and parental learning provision varied significantly across the institutions that were considered within the review. HMP and YOI Parc, a privately operated prison¹² run by G4S in Wales, provides an example of a highly integrated family interventions unit which had placed family intervention at the centre of the effort on preventing re-offending. As was discussed in Chapter 4, HMP Parc runs a 60 bed family interventions unit with family intervention the pivot for a wide range of activities aimed at reducing re-offending and enhancing the life-chances of the next generation. Elements of the HMP Parc model are being replicated at some other prisons¹³.

An intervention-led visit model and a wide range of family interventions within a dedicated family interventions unit as the focus for rehabilitative effort

The Family interventions Unit offers an integrated mix of wide-ranging family interventions across the whole spectrum of need. The model focuses heavily on partnership working, with circa fifty partnerships established with external agencies

¹² <http://www.hmpparc.co.uk/>

¹³ Examples include HMP Oakwood, HMP Altcourse and HMP Maghaberry

and a series of links into the wider community and mainstream family services. The family interventions unit is led by a core family intervention team of specialist officers, who, working with the local authority, have been trained to acquire a range of children and family, learning and development and family support skills.

Families and children are the major focus of the effort on reducing re-offending with the visit centre run as an intervention-led complex. The team at HM Parc feels that a dedicated focus on a specific area of the prison as a family interventions area is a critical component of the model.

“I think also wherever possible a prison, big or small, should move towards having a specific area of the prison, you know, that they can concentrate a kind of a bigger dosage of this work. So a family interventions unit, a family interventions wing, or even a family interventions landing, depending on the size of the place, you know, children and families as a pathway if you like is relevant to pretty much all prisoners, as it is pretty much to all humans”

Interventions are largely delivered in house on the “train the trainer” model

This team largely, but not exclusively, delivers family interventions in-house, having been trained to do so by the service providers from which programmes, such as Safeground’s Family Man or Fathers Inside for example, have been licensed. In the view of the Family Intervention Unit management, this approach, and in house delivery, has the advantage of being cheaper than bought in provision but also enables the team to scale up provision and to ensure consistency and quality control

“I think I favour that because it's cheaper, but that's not the main reason. That would be reason number two, is that it's cheaper. Reason number one would be that I've got excellent staff in the team who are very experienced and I know that they can turn their hands to all sorts of different delivery. And they're all very well known to me. We all know each other. We've all worked together for a long time. And it's an element of control there and trust about the integrity of what's being delivered.”

The HMP Parc team also make the point, however, that the success of this approach hinges critically on being delivered by a cohesive, highly trained and motivated team with long experience of family interventions delivery. Some service providers also advocated for the “train the trainer” approach because it supported replication and building scale. They too, however, also made the point that the success of the approach depended on an effective quality control and supervisory process, the development of tested, proven and replicable training modules, models and processes, which were well documented and supported.

Prisons have tended to start small and build around a dedicated team who then develop internal buy in and partnerships with external agencies

Few prisons would have the funding, resources or skills to replicate the Parc model. Even the largest, most integrated and longest established programmes considered in the review, including Parc had however started small and gradually built up the profile and scale of family interventions inside the prison at the same time forging links with external agencies.

The family support workers we spoke to in a number of prisons who had been funded through the NOMS pilot project had largely had to establish connections inside the prison and in the community, identify needs and solutions and deliver classes and case work from a standing start. They, and commissioning Governors, pointed to getting the right people together, providing them with appropriate support, establishing

key partnerships and building from there as the way forward in setting up smaller scale family intervention operations.

“The keystone of the work for me isn't about the interventions, it's not about the fancy programmes, or any money you can chuck at it, or anything else. For me the keystone of the work is the personalities of the particular people that are involved in it. And those have to be protected, you've got to gravitate them towards each other, you've got to connect them, you've got to build those partnerships.”

8.7 Advocacy, partnership working and co-commissioning

Family intervention necessitates an outward looking stance

Children and family interventions that address the whole family or which seek to connect services and interventions delivered within the prison with those provided to the offenders' families or problematic families more widely requires that commissioners in both the custodial estate and the probation service become more outward looking and reach out to potential partners and those who share common interests in the outcomes.

8.7.1 Advocacy and engagement

Advocacy lays the foundation for links to wider family services and for the development of shared goals

Awareness raising and profile building and advocacy for the inclusion and consideration of offenders and their families in the design and execution of family services is a key first step in creating referrals and cross-referrals and in establishing partnerships and joint endeavours.

There are a number of models and much will depend on the resource and budget available. Advocacy may rest on a team leader or manager allocating part of their time to advocacy and building links with external partners. It might also form part of the remit of a contracted service provider, with a view to promoting the “hidden sentence” agenda, for example, by building awareness in schools. Dedicated advocacy workers may also combine this work with a fund-raising role.

Custodial and probation services will need to link to local authorities and statutory and voluntary agencies at strategic level

A key element in effective engagement and building links between family-focused activities in prisons and those in the community is to build relationships with senior executives in local authorities, children and family services, particularly in Troubled Families, and with community policing. Probation services and prisons should play an active role in, and seek representation on, local forums and strategic boards focused on parental learning and family and children issues.

8.7.2 Partnership working and co-commissioning

Addressing the risk of inter-generational transmission of offending behaviour requires a partnership approach

A “whole family” approach requires that the criminal justice system and external agencies work together to support the offender and their family to move towards desistance and a productive non-criminal lifestyle for the offender and a pro-social path and enhanced life-chances for the next generation. This in turn requires building links to the community, and the partnership working.

Partnership working may rest simply on participating in strategic forums, as earlier discussed. Alternatively, family support or engagement workers working within prison or probation services may take a liaison role in co-ordinating or linking in with mainstream family services or community organisations.

Exchanging and seconding staff and funding posts in community organisations supports the CJS and external agencies to work together

Some prisons have taken partnership working further by funding posts in service providers to undertake work with offenders’ families or seconding prison staff to charities working with offenders’ families.

Co-commissioning delivers both value for money and a more integrated approach to family intervention

Co-commissioning family services with partners, such as local authorities or statutory agencies who share similar goals on outcomes takes partnership a step further, delivering not only a more integrated approach but also better value for money.

8.7.3 Volunteer support

Building a cadre of trained and committed volunteers can add significant and high quality resource at relatively low cost

Building links to the community can extend also to creating a volunteer body which itself can provide a significant resource to family interventions and services for offenders and their families.

Volunteers can cover a range of services which can make an important difference to offenders and their families. On a practical level, transport services for families who might otherwise struggle to get to prisons can be delivered by volunteer drivers, particularly important where prisons are relatively inaccessible or for women, who are more likely to be imprisoned at a distance from family. Volunteers can help families also with information and sign-posting to services, running a telephone advice or helpline, for example. Volunteers can also staff visitor centres and play an important role in delivering Family Days. They can also play a key role in fund-raising to support family posts or family facilities.

Volunteers can both deliver interventions and act as pro-social role models and mentors

Equally, however, when appropriately supported, volunteers can deliver or support family interventions. Some offenders do not have family sufficiently close to work with them as supporters in transformational programmes. Alternatively, relationships with family may have broken down or family members may be the victims of the crime for which the offender is being punished. In these situations a volunteer can play the supporting role. Volunteers can also offer alternative and pro-social role models in a mentoring or teaching capacity. Ex-offenders working as volunteers can be among the most powerful role models in this respect, whether volunteering in custody and acting as peer mentors in transformational interventions or in the community with young people at risk of offending or entering re-settlement.

High quality training of volunteers appears to be a critical success factor

Clearly appropriate security clearance for volunteers is essential. The critical success factors in building a powerful volunteer force, however, appear to be effective training and the creation of a culture, ethos and shared values in the volunteer team.

“We’ve currently got over 200 volunteers who are all at the same level of security clearance that I do. We train them all ourselves, and they provide a huge range of interventions in our provision. We get on average about 500 hours a month of volunteer support...we have a 24/7 support line that they man, which takes over 1,000 calls a month, each one of which is recorded and actioned. They work on the family programmes as well. There are prisoners who have families who don't want to support them often for good reason. And they work in the play areas, and they support our big family day events, which we had one this afternoon. So our volunteers are an important part of what we do”.

8.8 Monitoring and Evaluation

Commissioner’s guide for what need to look for in evaluation of service and how to set up effective monitoring

As discussed in section 6, the evidence base for family-orientated programmes is evolving. Within that context, there are clearly opportunities for improvement in the approach to evaluating such programmes.

The counterfactual. Evaluations need to pay more attention to considering what would have happened in the absence of the programme or service that is being scrutinised. In a well-designed impact study, the counterfactual can be estimated from the outcomes observed for the control or comparison group. Where such a design is not feasible, and reliance must be placed on self-reported changes attributed to programme participation or service use, attention needs to be paid to ensuring the availability of baseline information. This highlights the need to plan evaluations at an early stage in the life-cycle of a programme or service.

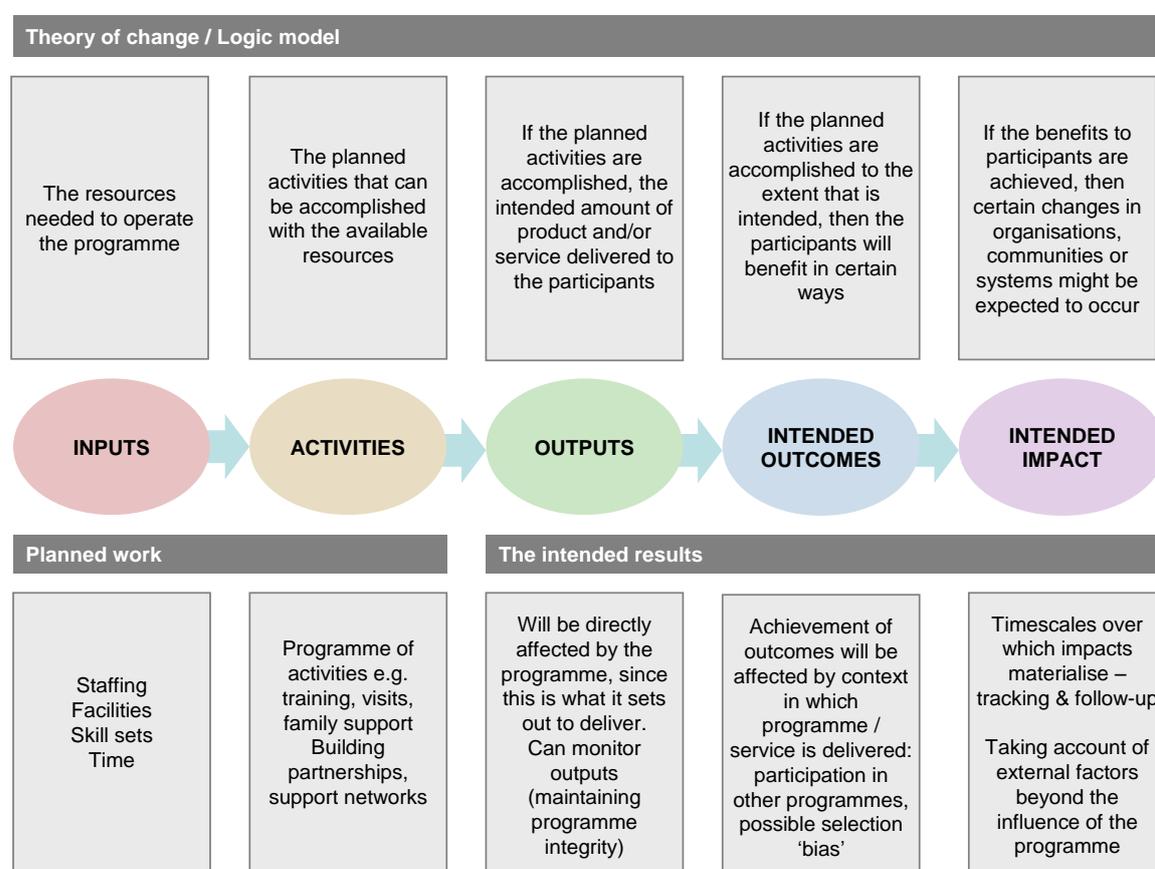
Sample selection. It can be appreciated that the exigencies of conducting research and evaluation with offenders will limit the extent to which a random and representative sample of participants can be drawn. Indeed, in a qualitative research design, it may be appropriate to select particular types of cases for analysis e.g. participants with a particular set of problems or attributes. In either event, the representativeness of the sample needs to be made explicit, by comparing the

characteristics of the sample with the population from which it is drawn. Again, this emphasises the need to plan the collection of baseline information on participants e.g. demographic attributes.

Evaluation design. The logic model approach to setting out the relationship between objectives and intended outcomes is a standard methodological framework in evaluation¹⁴.

As illustrated in Figure 8.7, a programme logic model is based around a theory of change linking inputs and activities to intended outcomes for participants and wider, perhaps longer term impacts. The intended outcomes and impacts must be relevant to the policy context within which resources are allocated to purchase the requisite inputs and undertake the planned schedule of work e.g. the Children and Families Pathway within the overall approach to reducing re-offending.

Figure 8.7: Illustrative programme logic model



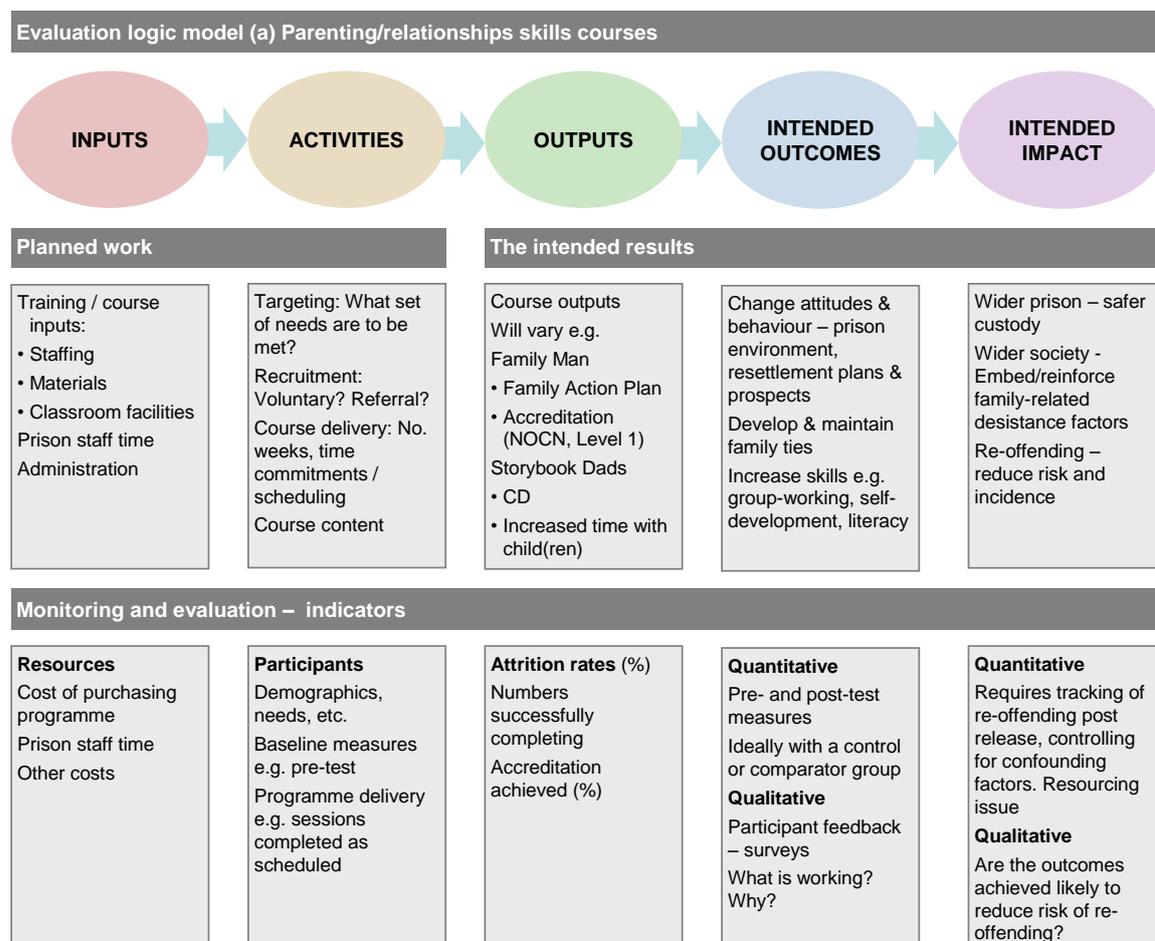
Source: Adapted from HMT, 2011.

Figure 8.8 presents an illustrative outline application of the logic model approach to monitoring and evaluation of parenting/relationships skills courses. The following points can be noted.

¹⁴ For example, the HMT Treasury guidance on evaluation – *The Magenta Book* – illustrates the logic model approach (HMT, 2011). The evaluation resource for fatherhood programmes produced by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is framed around the logic model approach (Office of Family Assistance, 2010). McGuire (2001) sets out a logic model approach to evaluation within the prison context.

The outputs refer to the services provided directly to participants as a result of the planned programme of activities. Intended outcomes refer to the expected changes in participants, which may occur over the short or medium term. The intended impacts are generally longer-term in nature; for example, the impact on reduced re-offending may not be apparent for some time after the participant has completed the relevant programme. The varying timescales over which the intended results materialise have important implications for monitoring and evaluation.

Figure 8.8: Illustrative logic model (a) Parenting relationships/skills courses



So long as systems are put in place, outputs can be monitored over the life-cycle of a programme e.g. programme participation or attrition rates. The collection of such data on a regular basis provides important information, both in checking the progress of a programme and in any subsequent evaluation. A programme may exhibit high rates of attrition for a variety of reasons e.g. participants' expectations are not met, or there is some mismatch between the referral process and the programme objectives (Cortoni, 2005). In addition, the accumulation of monitoring data is important for evaluation in helping to set the scale of an intervention

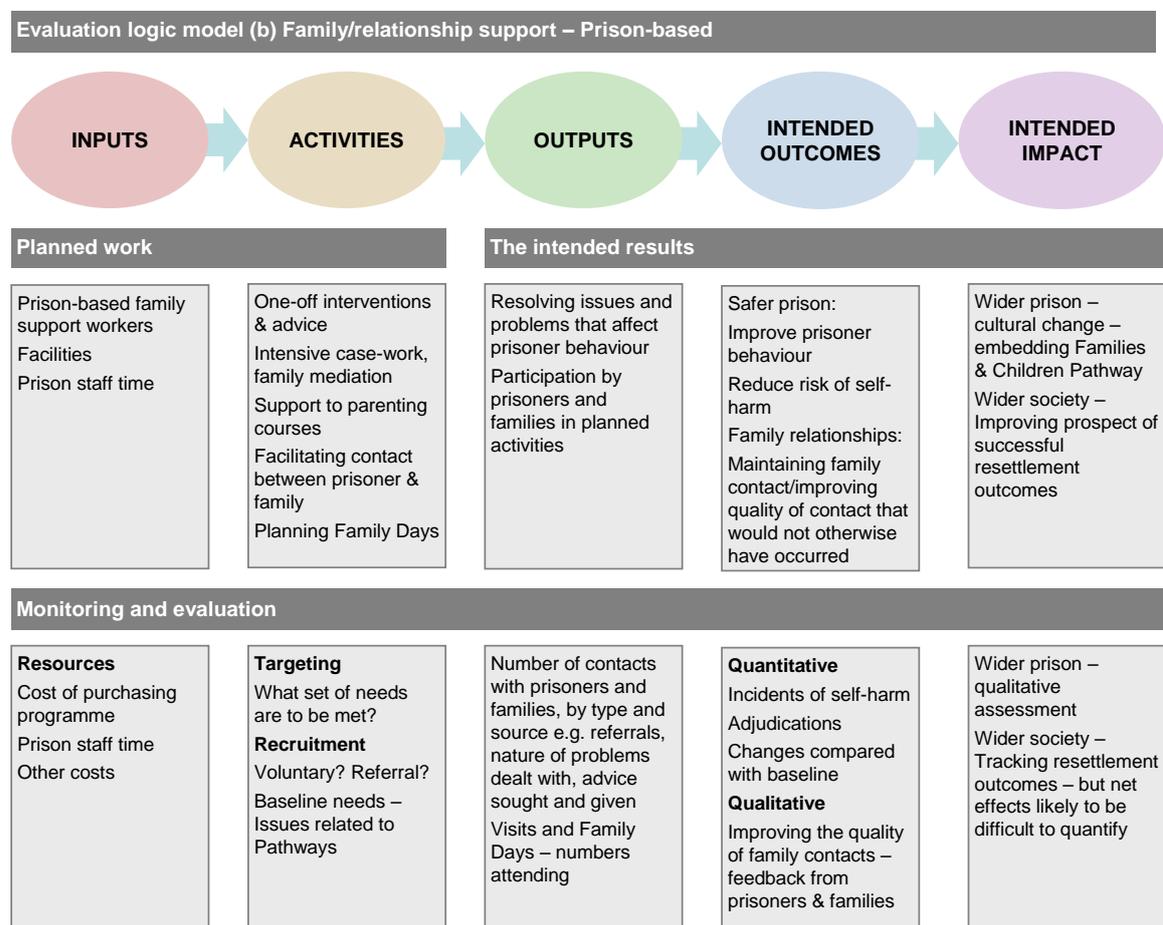
Depending on the nature of the programme, the achievement of intended outcomes may be measured in a variety of ways. Pre-test and post-test measures can be used to gauge the outcomes from programmes intended to induce changes in behaviour or attitudes or promote some form of learning. Positive changes in such tests provide one type of evidence that the programme is effective in achieving the intended outcomes.

Assessing the longer-term impacts of a programme which it is hoped will contribute to reducing re-offending is considerably more challenging. The difficulties involved in

establishing comparison groups have already been discussed. In addition, offenders may participate in a variety of programmes during a spell of imprisonment. In that context, the impact of a specific programme will be more difficult to disentangle and account may need to be taken of participation in other programmes (Lösel, 2001). Longer-term re-offending studies with a comparison or control group are also resource-intensive. For all of the above reasons, commissioners will need to take a practical and proportionate approach to expectations regarding the evidence that can be supplied by the bespoke programme-specific evaluations discussed in section 6. Indeed, it would seem more appropriate that research into the wider impacts of family-orientated programmes on re-offending behaviour would best be carried out or commissioned by Government.

The dedicated family relationship/support model is the second broad type of intervention aimed at offenders and their families. An illustrative logic model for that type of service is shown in Figure 8.9. At this juncture, the logic model for family/relationship support services is less well-developed than is the case for parenting/relationship skills courses.

Figure 8.9: Illustrative logic model (b) Family/relationship support



By their nature, family/relationship support services will tend to be more context-specific. For example, the range of prisoner needs to be met will vary according to the type of establishment. Within a given establishment, the assistance that is provided to individual prisoners may vary greatly, from one-off advice sessions to more intensive case-work. Similarly, the requirements in relation to facilitating contact between prisoners and their families will tend to reflect the state of the existing 'infrastructure' within an establishment e.g. facilities for visits. In addition, support services must pay

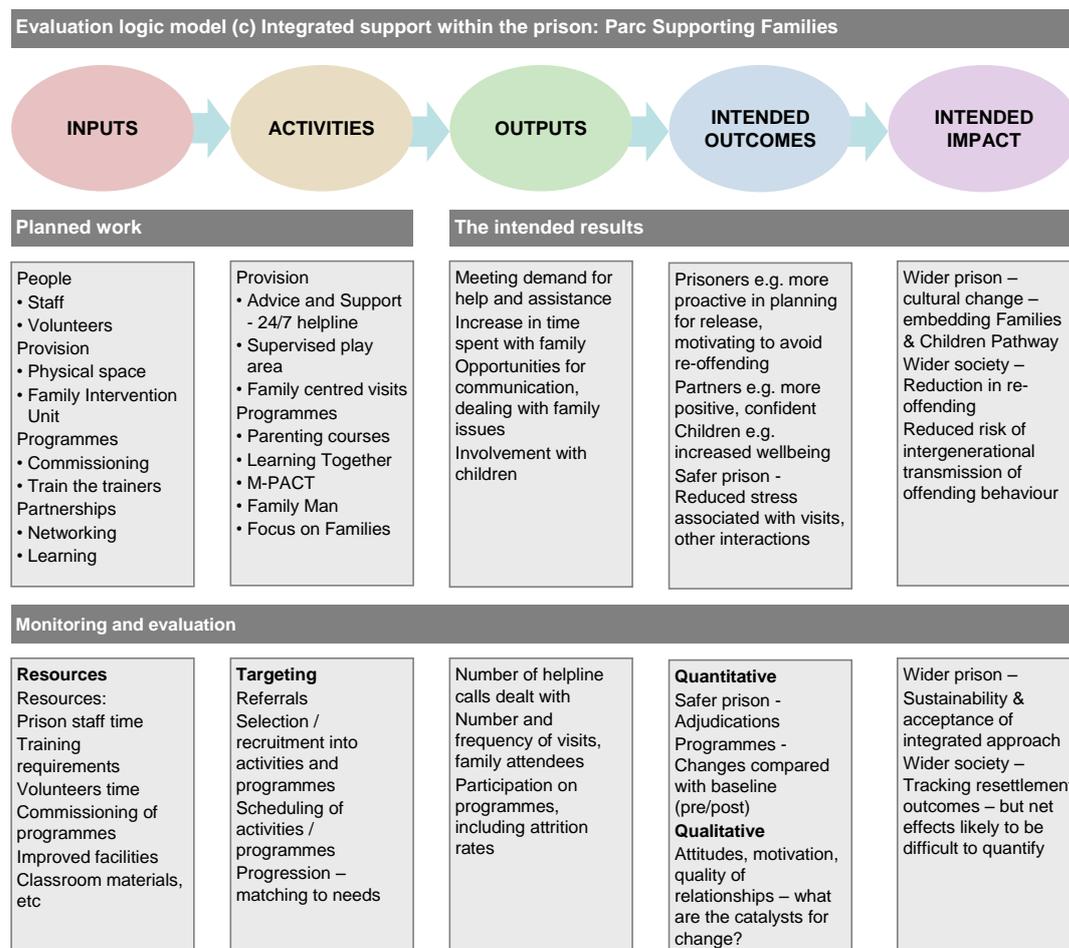
attention to processes around building relationships within and outside the prison. Such considerations point to the on-going importance of the qualitative dimension in evaluation of family-oriented services.

The Parc Supporting Families (PSF) initiative represents an evolving model of support built around the integration of a range of supports and interventions within the prison, as opposed to discrete programmes or services commissioned for a specific purpose. The PSF differs also in that the initiative is implemented by a dedicated unit working within HMP Parc. In summer 2010, the PSF team proposed running the visits provision within the prison as an intervention, in order to work with prisoners, their children and families in a different and more engaging manner.

As illustrated in Figure 6.4, the PSF initiative is built around the integration of four inter-related building blocks, as follows:

- **People.** PSF selected 18 Prison Custody Officers who were identified as the most suitable for assisting in running the visits provision as an intervention. Staff receive extensive training around working with families and children. The initiative has also built a network of volunteers to provide support in areas such as Family Centred Visits and the provision of a 24/7 telephone support line.
- **Provision.** The physical space within which visits take place has been adapted to present a more family-friendly atmosphere. In addition, a 60-bed living unit within the prison has been transformed into the first ever Family Interventions Unit (FIU), where the focus is on parenting and family relationships.

Figure 8.10:



- **Programmes.** The PSF offers a range of family engagement programmes. These are delivered both by commissioning providers and through a ‘train-the-trainers’ model. An important feature of the programmes is that they are not viewed as operating in isolation, but as part of a continuum of support which is mutually reinforcing (Sullivan, 2012).
- **Partnerships.** Collaborative working, both with internal and external partners, is viewed as an important ingredient in the PSF initiative.

Effective commissioning in the family intervention arena would appear to rest as much on a shift in culture and thinking and new ways of working with external partners as it does on the selection of individuals services.

Best practice commissioning models for family intervention will rest critically on partnership working, but ultimately, for the future, with co-commissioning.

Best practice family interventions will be commissioned so as to be clearly targeted on those groups most likely to repay investment with reduced re-offending and effectively sequenced so as to maximise impact.

Effective planning for family interventions and the optimal deployment of family interventions in reducing re-offending will require better data and the more effective use of intelligence if interventions are to have maximum impact and reach those whose offending behaviour is most entrenched.

Family interventions need to be evidence-driven and rigorously evaluated, with effective evaluation planned from the outset.

As with other aspects of the effort to tackle re-offending, and indeed, social disadvantage more widely, early intervention and an emphasis on prevention will be key. So too will be the effort to link offenders inside the walls with the community on the outside, throughout the sentence, but most critically at the point of resettlement and the delivery of post resettlement support.

9.0 CHAPTER NINE. BEST PRACTICE MODELS SERVICE PROVIDERS

This chapter brings together the insights and lessons arising from the interviews with commissioners, service providers, offenders and their families and the review of the available evidence on outcomes to provide an overview of what best practice in family interventions and parental learning looks like for service providers. There is necessarily some over-lap with aspects of best practice for commissioning described in chapter eight.

9.1 Advocacy

Best practice service providers tended to share a number of characteristics, one of the most telling of which was effective advocacy.

Effective advocacy and engagement with stakeholders was one of the hall marks of the best service providers

Advocacy was not only key to engagement with custodial establishments and probation services but also to engagement with the wider community, local authorities, schools, children's services and other stakeholders. Advocacy not only built momentum and support behind individual services but also worked to raise the profile of family intervention and family services more widely. For the service providers the associated visibility was also important for fund-raising and thus the financial stability of voluntary organisations and their ability to offer continuity of services and develop new service concepts.

Case study – Effective advocacy

NEPACs – “Hidden Sentence” agenda

- Dedicated advocate posts
 - Build awareness of “Hidden Sentence” and of the impact of imprisonment on offenders families
 - Promote awareness of needs of offenders and their families within mainstream family services and “Troubled Families” agenda
- Advocates deliver “Hidden Sentence” training to wide range of stakeholders, at range of touch-points with troubled families:
 - Education services / schools
 - Children’s services
 - Local authorities
 - CJS
- Advocates line-manage family support workers in the various prisons and YOIs in which NEPACs works
 - Close to front line delivery
 - Two-way flow of information
- Participate in range of strategic boards around family services and linking initiatives around the family dimensions of offending

9.2 Multi-agency partnership working

A commitment to partnership working underpinned delivery models

Best practice service providers, often seeking to meet a variety of complex needs, tended to be committed to partnership working. Service providers had sought to establish a partnership working approach with organisations within the criminal justice system, with prisons, probation services, NOMS or Youth Offending Teams. Partnership working relationships had also been established with statutory services such as Primary Care Trusts social services, drug and alcohol agencies and schools and a wide range of voluntary sector and community agencies.

Partnership working was key both to a holistic approach to needs and “whole family” working but also to bridging the world inside the wall with that beyond

Service providers could be providing practical support to offenders and their families across multiple dimensions of need. Partnership working was key to their ability to ensure holistic and complete coverage of service user needs. In some cases partnership working focused separately on the needs of the offender or their family, with a degree of liaison between agencies. In others the approach was rather that of taking on the family as a ‘whole unit’, dealing with their issues both inside and outside of the criminal justice system.

The most effective partnerships sought to bring resources, knowledge and experience together in strategic forums

The nature of partnership working arrangements, the extent to which they were developed and the degree of involvement with criminal justice agencies appeared to vary significantly between local authority areas. Where partnership working appeared to be most effective and developed, partners had come together in some form of strategic forum focused on the needs of families with complex problems.

Partnership working appears most effective when each partner has a distinctive role and partnership working is supported by clear management protocols

Some partnership working arrangements were formalised and structured with partners actively working together to meet a range of needs for service users. Others were more a matter of signposting and referrals. In those partnerships which appeared to be working most effectively together, each partner had a clear role and brought complementary strengths and skills to the partnership. Working arrangements between partners were supported by clear management and governance protocols for working together.

Case study: Partnership working

“Inspire” Brighton Women’s Centre

- A women’s community project for women offenders based in Brighton Sussex
- Part of the “Women’s Breakout” network of circa 50 Women’s Centres offering community alternatives to custodial sentences for women offenders
- A partnership of the women’s voluntary sector in Brighton and Hove with the partners each offering a range of specialist support services
 - Brighton Oasis Project –support for women with substance misuse issues
 - Threshold (Brighton Housing Trust) – focused on addressing housing, homelessness, poverty and social exclusion issues
 - Rise – support for women facing domestic abuse
 - Survivors Network – support for survivors of rape and sexual abuse
- The Centre and the partners together seek to reduce offending and re-offending through a holistic and women-centred approach.
- Women referred to the service to complete Community Orders are able to access a range of services addressing unemployment and skills, housing and benefits, finances and debt and legal advice as well as support for women with mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence or sexual abuse issues.

9.3 Management and governance

Best practice providers had inspirational leaders, clarity on mission and focus, a strategic perspective and strong relationships with stakeholders and funders

It was clear from the work with both service providers and governors that management and government were key to effective delivery. This in turn rested on the leadership of the senior management team, which at its best was visionary and inspirational but also tenacious, particularly important in austerity conditions and in an area where achieving behaviour change is inherently challenging. Those organisations which had survived and thrived in difficult conditions and over a period of considerable change were clear on their mission and focus and tended to have a strong strategic perspective in terms of their future development. Such organisations tended also, however, to be pragmatic and politically aware, linked in to local stakeholders and at strategic level, with well managed funder relationships and a systematic approach to fund-raising.

The service models which had thrived through difficult times had a focus on developing and demonstrating domain expertise and evidencing outcomes

The ability to survive and thrive through difficult times rested in part on an appreciation of the importance of evidence and outcome driven models and on delivering outcomes that were desired by commissioners and funders and which could be evidenced.

Dedicated fundraisers and a focus on research and development formed quintessential components of the best practice projects. Without the development of a core body of knowledge, and evidenced expertise in their area of focus and the constant search for future funding, many of the projects would not be able to sustain their provision. This activity typically sat alongside the advocacy and engagement activity described earlier.

Support for front-line workers and active performance management was key to effective delivery and continual service improvement

Generally the best practice organisations tended to have a flat but hierarchical structure which ensured that the front line was supported and that staff within the organisations were not over-burdened. These projects tended to have a structured system which employees functioned within. Practitioners formed the bulk of employees, and came from a variety of backgrounds (i.e. Social Work, Youth Work, Counselling, Probation, etc.). These workers tended to be the primary points of contact with service users. In the best practice organisations, these workers, although to a large extent self-directed and self-starters by nature and having a high degree of autonomy in their day to day interactions with service users, nonetheless worked within a framework which both provided line management support and required structured reporting and performance monitoring. Effective line management support was particularly key for staff who were exposed to highly challenging or distressing situations in the course of their work.

Best practice organisations invested in training volunteers and aligning roles to volunteers' skill sets and strengths

Volunteers often formed the scaffold of service providers. Nonetheless in the best practice institutions and service providers there was an emphasis on a high level of training and skill building for the volunteer body and on placing volunteers in roles that represented a good fit with their skills.

Best practice: management and governance

- Leadership (inspirational / tenacious / pragmatic / politically aware)
- Clarity on mission and focus
- Structured management hierarchy
- Delivered as designed
- Delivery quality assured
- Front-line effectively supported
- Performance managed
- Evidence led
- Focused on outcomes
- Close partnership working
- Linked-in to local stakeholders and strategic / operational bodies
- Well managed funder relationships
- Sustainable

9.4 Best practice client interaction – the core characteristics

The service providers we interviewed had varying service and delivery models, varying aims and skills and focused on a variety of target groups and different areas of family intervention and parental learning practice. Taken together, however, the best practice service providers shared a number of key characteristics in their interactions with clients.

Best practice: key service characteristics – the services that made a difference appeared to be doing some / all of these things

- Trust / relationship based
- Needs-led:
 - Tailored
 - Flexible
- Empowering:
- Non-judgemental
- Emphasise ID as Parents / People first
- Positive stance / new possibilities
- Can influence events / destiny / have voice
- Challenging:
 - Attitudes
 - Impact of offending behaviour on family
 - To change behaviour
- Positive role models:
- Whole person / whole family

Trust / relationships

The emphasis on trust and relationships was fundamental. Trust between those delivering the intervention and the service user was critical, whether in the context of a one to one therapeutic or case work relationship or between course leaders and students. Trust gave offenders or family members the confidence to open up and share critical information about themselves, their history, relationships or circumstances, which would otherwise not have come to light within the formal risk assessment process. It was also key to being able to move forward and learn. Critically, for group work, particularly for interventions with transformational intent, developing trust between within the student group was also an important element in students' willingness to engage and their learning.

Needs-led

The best practice service provider models were strongly needs-led, tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of the individual offender or family. Even where courses followed a highly specified format, best practice service providers sought to tailor and adapt presentation and delivery to the needs of an individual. In a therapeutic or case work context, a series of interventions, potentially involving a number of specialist partners, might need to be put together to meet complex needs.

Whole person / whole family

Service providers worked with both individuals and families but best practice provision took a holistic approach. Individuals were considered in the round, with family and relationship needs approached in the context of a wider set of needs and drivers for re-offending. Equally, offenders were seen in the wider context of their family.

Empowering

Best practice family interventions and parental learning sought to empower offenders and their families by creating a non judgemental peer to peer learning environment in which they were respected and treated as individuals and parents first. The emphasis was placed on the positive; what offenders could contribute as parents in the present and what they could do to change their lives and those of their families for the future.

Challenging

Best practice interventions typically challenged entrenched patterns of thinking and behaviour in order to effect change. As such they were often tough in terms of challenging individuals to examine uncomfortable and difficult aspects of their lives, to look at the drivers and consequences of their actions from a new perspective and to understand and then implement the change required to move forward or alter the trajectory of their lives.

Supportive

The process of challenge takes place however in a context that is also supportive, sometimes intensely so. Support may be highly practical and hands on, particularly in a family case-work context, or, alternatively may be emotional or psychological.

Positive role models

Positive role models and connections with pro-social peers are important for a client group which often lacked positive models for parenting or intimate relationships, whose influences and associates were frequently pro-criminal and anti-social and for whom the boundaries of their world could be very narrowly drawn.

Linked in / Joined up

Meeting complex needs across multiple dimensions rests heavily on a joined up approach and partnership working, with multiple agencies seeking to work together in an appropriate sequence for best fit with needs and the most efficient delivery.

Case study: Best practice – key service characteristics

Safeguard – Fathers Inside

- Structured, quality assured, well supervised, train the trainer model
- Intensive course over seven to nine weeks
- Parents first
- Delivered in peer to peer context (including peer mentors)
- Involves family as “supporters” who work in parallel
- Builds self awareness and awareness of impact of behaviour on others, needs of others
- Focuses on the now and what can do to be positive parent on the inside
- Practice skills and apply growing understanding in interactions with families
- Challenging and stretching
- Goal led – realistic, achievable etc
- Course culminates in presentation to families and family day
- Seeks to be transformational – change the thinking, thus the behaviour and drivers of re-offending – and ultimately life-chances

A Therapeutic Alliance between practitioners and service users

The extent to which an intervention is likely to feature all of these characteristics depends in part on the nature of the service being provided. For transformational interventions, the key characteristics came together in what might be described as a “Therapeutic Alliance”¹⁵ between practitioners and service users.

The therapeutic alliance centres on an axis of Bond-Tasks-Goals:

¹⁵ Following Bordin’s (1979) model as well as loosely in line with the National Probation Service,

Bonds assist in practitioner and service user developing a working and meaningful relationship; developing rapport; and establishing a functioning partnership based on equality, authority and respect

Tasks: These are mutually agreed upon activities that the service users and practitioners develop together in order to reach desired outcomes. They provide a mutually inclusive activity in which both parties can engage. It also provides empowerment to the service user as they are able to track their progress on specific activities. By agreeing on tasks and developing them together, it also utilises fundamental theories of motivation and change. Within any client-practitioner model within the CJS (and related fields) motivation by the user needs to be sincere and desired in order for progress to be made.

Goals: These are the desired outcomes of intervention/provision for the service user. Again, these are discussed at length together (with the practitioner) and the aforementioned tasks are used in order to reach these outcomes. These need to be realistic and obtainable and are case-dependant. The bond between the two parties, allows discussion of the context and realism of these goals.

Against this background, developing trust is of the utmost importance and allows the creation of a bond between both parties. Although there will be a slight power differential between the service user and practitioner, it is a question of establishing empowerment, equality and self-esteem in the user so that they are able to gauge the activities of the 'professional' as honest and in their own best interest.

9.5 Service design and set up

9.5.1 Partnership working in framing and planning for family intervention

A best practice model would see service providers involved in planning to meet needs within the children and families pathway from an early stage

Service providers reported that they had found it difficult to engage with the criminal justice system at the early stages of sentence planning. They also felt that offenders' family needs were not systematically captured at pre sentence report stage and in sentence planning, with the result that individual needs tended to be addressed within silos with insufficient consideration either for the individual's needs as a whole or for the family as a whole. A best practice model would be one in which both the CJS and voluntary sector service providers were involved in service design from an early stage and who worked together to address needs on a holistic basis.

Best practice – set up and service design

- Create awareness of importance of children and families in breaking offending cycle:
 - Effective advocacy for service
 - Achieve buy in from key stakeholders (especially prison governors / local authority heads of children services etc)
- Understand need:
 - Identify parents in prisons
 - Identify families in community where parent offender
- Common framework for assessment, planning, implementation and monitoring / quality control (CAF/ TAF etc)
- Shared data and intelligence
- Tailor service to need
- Integrated services and holistic planning – avoid silos:
 - Parenting / family as part of sentence planning
 - Services for offenders and their families
 - Services inside / outside walls
 - Offenders and mainstream services for vulnerable families
- Involve families:
 - Whole family not just offender (be alive to “Hidden Sentence”)
 - Addressing re-offending / inter-generational transmission two sides of same coin

9.5.2 Service design and quality management

Best practice service design was both rooted in the evidence of what works and subject to critical assessment and refinement

Best practice service design was rooted in needs and evidence around “what works”. It was also systematically designed, piloted and trialled in order to refine and optimise the design of interventions. This would then sit alongside a process of continual enhancement and improvement through a feed-back loop involving service users and deliverers.

“So we were trialling the material, gauging the men’s response to activities, and approaches, we then wrote a draft of the teaching materials, and then we then trained staff to deliver them in their own establishments, and then we would go up and get their feedback and talk to the students, and then talk to the students and the tutors, about what worked and what didn’t work, and then we would amend the material accordingly”

Organisations seeking to engage commissioners or scale their offer had packaged their propositions to work with grain of CJS

One of the factors that set best practice organisations apart was the extent to which they had structured their offer so as to make it a package which was relatively easy for commissioners to buy into. The logic for the intervention / service package was clear and was linked directly to the outcome required, with supporting evidence. Providers also sought to package their propositions so as to work with the grain of the CJS infrastructure and practice so as to overcome resistance and administrative or security barriers.

For example, a service such as “Storybook Dads”, which had succeeded in establishing services in more than a 100 prisons had achieved scale not only by providing a much valued service which clearly benefitted both offenders and their families but also by minimised the burden on participating prisons. This was in part achieved by providing training and, in most cases, processing all the material generated by participating prisons centrally. They also went as far as, where necessary, paying for postage and providing stamped addressed envelopes so as to minimise barriers to take up where participating prisons would struggle to find the necessary budget or resource.

Quality standards and effective quality management was key to ability to scale and effectiveness of delivery

For parenting skills courses or more intensive transformational interventions, delivered on the “train the trainer” model, best practice service providers had built quality standards and systematic quality and performance management into service design in order to ensure that services were delivered as intended.

“They’re very detailed manuals and they come with recruitment guidelines, so we work with senior management teams and delivery teams in each establishment, saying How do you want to recruit the men? Who do you specifically want to target? And we set standards and we have agreements with the prisons, you know, that men will not be moved while they are on the course.”

9.6 Recruitment

Recruitment needs to be targeted, needs-driven and inclusive of those who are harder to reach and help and requires a move away from the reward culture

The service providers in the study took the view that recruitment and targeted referrals was one of the critical success factors in effective intervention. Here it was felt important that referrals were targeted to need and included some of those who were harder to reach and whose relationships and family circumstances were more problematic. The culture of incentives and privileges was felt to be acting as a barrier to access and engagement in some prisons, with “difficult” offenders who might benefit most from intervention sometimes blocked from participation.

Optimising recruitment and timing requires a dynamic understanding of offenders’ needs as these develop through the offender journey

A best practice model would utilise data on family needs captured at entry and updated via monitoring of ongoing relationships to identify needs and which offenders

would be likely to benefit most from family based interventions at different points in their individual offender journey. It would also see custodial establishments and probation services working together with service providers at key points in the offender journey, such as sentence planning, to identify suitable subjects for referral and to tailor interventions to the needs of individuals.

Pre-selection interviews and screening have a role to play in identifying needs but lack of motivation to change should not act as an absolute bar to inclusion

Pre-selection interviews and systematic screening and assessment of applications can be useful in understanding offenders' needs and, for transformational interventions, understanding how far individuals appear genuinely motivated to change. However, care needs to be taken not to exclude those for whom increased self awareness and greater appreciation of the reality of the needs of others and the consequences of their actions must precede the motivation to change. The interviews with offenders made clear that some of those who had turned their lives around as a result of family intervention and who had gone on to address other aspects of their behaviour in further interventions had not originally been motivated to change in engaging with family interventions. Motivation had rather arisen in the context of a shift in attitudes and thinking following on increased self awareness.

Group interventions requires careful attention to the overall dynamic and composition of the group

Where offenders are participating in group interventions, it will be important also for officers working within the CJS to work with service providers to create an optimal mix of offenders in different circumstances within any group participating in an intervention. The dynamic within the group can be key to changing attitudes and behaviour. A group dynamic will, for example, benefit from the inclusion of a balanced mix of older and younger offenders, those with differing levels of skills and with more or less close relationships with their families. Similarly, it is helpful to include within a group a core of individuals who are genuinely motivated to change their behaviour and the direction of their life.

"The older guys, who have maybe come to realise they don't want to do this anymore, and they're quite good at naturally peer mentoring the younger lads, who are still in it, and you know, potentially going to come back again, quite good at saying, no. This is it, I've just wasted 20 years of my life by coming in and out, and that's a lovely dynamic, and that happens naturally"

A desire simply to see more of or communicate more effectively with family members can be an important first step on a pathway to desistance

Family and children are relevant and motivating to a high proportion of offenders so that family interventions can represent an important first step in a series of interventions which together build resilience against re-offending. A desire to communicate with family may, for example, act as a hook for engagement with numeracy and literacy programmes, which in turn will act as a precursor to the acquisition of wider work-skills. As was evidenced in the chapter on the experience of offenders and their families, the development of a greater appreciation of parental and personal responsibility and the potential consequences for the inter-generational transmission of disadvantage can be a powerful motivator for acquiring work-skills and the desire to act as a positive role model for children. Similarly programmes which approach problems such as problematic drug or alcohol use through the prism of the whole

family experience can act as a powerful agent in moving long term alcohol or drug users towards abstinence or reduced use.

9.7 Timing, sequencing and progression

The timing and sequencing of interventions is key to the sense of progression which underpins sustained change in thinking and behaviour

Both the offenders and the service providers considered in the review pointed to the importance of a sense of progression in the journey towards desistance. Offenders sometimes described “light bulb” damascene moments as a key trigger in a process of change but others spoke of building incremental insights and understanding and of a gradual realisation of alternative possibilities and a hardening of resolve to change direction over time. Interventions and experiences built on those that had gone before, with reinforcement and positive experiences key to moving on and maintaining the momentum for change.

Interventions aimed at sustaining family relationships and building relationship skills need be introduced at an early stage

Clearly the timing and sequencing of interventions is important in maximising the potential impact. As discussed in the previous chapters, for services aimed at keeping families close, maintaining relationships and building basic communication skills, service provision should be at as early a stage as possible if the greatest benefit is to be obtained and avoidable damage to relationships prevented. Sustained and close relationships is of itself a protective factor in re-offending. Equally, however, strong ongoing family relationships are helpful in the development of a mind-set that is more orientated towards desistance and playing a more productive role in society. Being able to play a positive and active role in family life inside prison is likely to be more conducive to positive engagement with society on release.

The timing of interventions intended to be more transformational is more personal and needs to be assessed on an individual basis

More intensive interventions, with more transformational intent, may be better timed towards the middle or end of the sentence when minds are more focused on resettlement and the future on the outside. This timing fits well with the conceptual model for the delivery of prison learning interventions. The interviews with both offenders and service providers suggest that the optimal timing and sequencing of interventions is likely to be highly personal to the individual. Planning for the timing of interventions thus needs to be tailored to the needs of an individual not only in terms of their family circumstances but also the drivers of their offending behaviour and the length of their sentence. The offender’s mind set will also be key.

The offender’s psychological or emotional state and their mind-set can be key optimal timing

Indeed for those serving longer sentences, the optimal timing for transformational family interventions may rest critically on the offender’s psychological or emotional state. Some individuals may not be receptive to intervention at an early stage. They may have drugs issues and be unable to move forward until these are resolved. Others, faced with the prospect of a long sentence may be too distressed, depressed

or angry to engage. Those coming into prison for the first time can be too preoccupied with the immediate challenges of adapting to an unfamiliar and often intimidating new world.

Whether transformational interventions are most effectively offered at an early or mid-stage point in the offender journey will vary from individual to individual

Others, on the other hand, particular older offenders who have served a number of sentences, may experience the start of a further custodial sentence as a key trigger for a determined effort to stay out of prison and move away from a criminal life-style. In this case, the introduction of transformational intervention at an early stage can capitalise on a motivation which may otherwise ebb as the outside world recedes and individuals become more acclimatised to life in custody.

“For some men, when they first come into prison, they are distraught. They want to know how they can carry on some kind of life with their families. For some men, they want to get onto an educational course straight away, so it works really well for them. For others, they’re just totally not in the right place, they’re on drugs, they’re maybe very vulnerable, they may be very angry, so it’s not right, so the middle sentence is much better. For others by the time they get to the end, that’s when they’re beginning to realise they don’t want to come back to prison. They’ve got to take some responsibility.”

It is important to make links between and sequence interventions so as to reinforce and build on changing thinking and create a sense of progression

Sequencing of interventions and the effective combination of interventions is also important in addressing complex problems with multiple dimensions. It is key also to the critical sense of progression. The experience of both offenders and service providers suggests that linkages between programmes, reinforcement of learning and providing opportunities to build on insights gained and lessons learned is an important element in building resilience to offending behaviour. In this respect peer mentoring to reinforce lessons and course graduate involvement in course delivery appears to have been important for both mentor and mentee.

“I think that things need to be done in collaboration with each other, because if anything is done in isolation, yes, it could have an impact, but it’s that progressiveness that’s important, and that support to do that”

“The 12 step drugs programme, they would always come to the “what next?” session (at the end of an intense family-focused course) and they would always recruit about three or four men, so they found it a really useful recruitment tool, because the guys were in the right place to address their drug and alcohol issues, and were ready to go onto the next programme, and that is strategic, when you’re making those links”.

One of the conclusions drawn from the evaluation of the M-PACT programme (a whole family approach which supports families affected by parental substance abuse) in a prison setting is that such a programme cannot be delivered in isolation, but needs to be part of a broader family focused agenda¹⁶.

¹⁶ Templeton, 2012.

Planning for re-settlement is a key opportunity to work with offenders and their families to translate changing attitudes and thinking to changed behaviour

Planning for resettlement is one of the key opportunities to work with offenders and their families so that learning and changes in attitudes and thinking that have arisen from family interventions during the sentence translate into new ways of relating to others, sustained behaviour change and reduced re-offending on the outside.

Here service providers reported that one of the key needs was to help offenders and their families have realistic expectations about release, the pressures and tensions that would arise in relationships and the challenges involved in re-integrating into the community and establishing a pro-social life-style.

"I would say the major need is expectation management, because if you've been in prison for ten years' plus, you know, you've built up that release date to, you know, there's wonderful kind of, it's all going to be so fantastic and lovey dovey and it's just going to be great, and it really really is not. ...So what we're trying to do is work with people before their first home leave. It is a kind of phased, very managed progression back into the community, getting people to think about, what is it really going to be like"

"I think it's how do you get the men to, yes, be excited about getting out, but be very realistic about what they can achieve? I think there's work to be done."

One of the key issues raised by service providers was the importance of reinforcing learning and supporting sustained behaviour change not only in planning for resettlement but also on a "Through the Gate" basis. This was however also identified by agencies one of the key weaknesses of the current system.

The new resettlement prisons and post-custody supervisory regime envisaged under the "Transforming Rehabilitation" agenda will address this gap. A best practice model for the future as the resettlement prisons envisaged under the Transforming Rehabilitation agenda are developed would see continuous assistance and support for both the family and the individual in the prison system in working towards successful re-integration/re-settlement both prior to release and thereafter in post release supervision.

It can be difficult to engage those close to resettlement if family interventions are focused only towards the end of the offender journey

In thinking through the new concept of "resettlement prisons" envisaged under the "Transforming Rehabilitation" reforms, it will be important also to recognise that it can be difficult to engage offenders at the end of a long sentence. Clearly it is important to plan for resettlement but for those serving long term sentences transformative family intervention will need to have begun earlier in the sentence.

"You get a lot of guys who talk about being gate happy, so three months before release, that's it. They're going to be fine, they're getting out, they are very difficult to engage with."

New supervisory arrangements for short sentence will provide opportunities for family intervention and "through the gate" services

Historically, those serving short sentences have had limited opportunities for developing relationship and parenting skills and even fewer for engaging in transformational family interventions. The new "through the gate" approach to rehabilitation for those serving short sentences will lend itself, however, to family and

relationship work with offenders serving short sentences, among those most likely to re-offend.

Service providers could usefully work with prisons and probation not only the targeting of interventions but also their sequencing and timing

Understanding how best to time interventions thus requires a sensitive appraisal of a range of factors. Service providers may wish to consider how they can work with commissioners and offender managers in prisons and probation services, and especially the resettlement prisons envisaged under the Transforming Rehabilitation reforms, not only to identify offenders most likely to benefit from family intervention and tailor interventions to need but also on how the timing and sequencing of interventions can best be configured to create and sustain a sense of progress and reinforce learning and forward movement, for offenders serving both long and short sentences.

9.8 Changing attitudes and behaviour

Short parenting and skills courses can both improve the quality of family relationships and impact positively on offender behaviour

The interviews with offenders, service providers and prison staff suggests that short interventions designed to improve relationship and parenting skills and support the maintenance and development of stronger and more stable relationships can deliver very real benefits, not just in terms of enhanced family ties but also in the form of enhanced offender behaviour.

Discrete and focused courses can lay the ground for wider change

Discrete, short and focused interventions with limited goals can deliver quick wins in terms of enhanced relationships, represent value for money and can lay the ground for or open the door to wider change. Some of the offenders interviewed for this study had learned parenting and relationship skills on such courses that they were able to apply in the context of their ongoing interactions with their families, on visits but also on phone calls. They had also, in some cases, been introduced to a positive model of parenting that they had not previously conceptualised because so different from their own experience of being parented. For some this itself had been something of an eye-opener and was itself a factor in their thinking about resettlement and creating some motivation for desistance.

Optimally such courses will be allied to opportunities to apply newly acquired skills

Focused short courses intended to support offenders in acquiring specific skills, including basic parenting skills, can thus be highly effective. Optimally these will be timed and co-ordinated with other relationship support activities to maximise the impact and the opportunities to apply new skills. For example, a short course on “playing skills” might precede family visits while “communications skills” courses might support offenders through the difficult and emotionally intense phone calls that arise in the early months of imprisonment as offenders, their partners, family members and children adapt to separation and the changes and stresses attendant on the imprisonment of one member. Better communication skills will, of course, have a

significant, wider impact, helping especially in enabling offenders to address their skills needs and then in securing – and retaining – employment.

More substantive and transformational change is likely to require more intensive intervention over a relatively long period

The consensus among practitioners and indeed among the offenders interviewed for this study, however, is that such short courses are not a substitute for more intensive solutions designed to effect a fundamental change in attitudes and behaviour, particularly in the case of entrenched offending behaviour. More transformational interventions are likely to require a longer time-scale to give individuals the space and time to build self awareness and consider the nature and consequences of their offending behaviour from new angles. For group work, time is also required to build a dynamic of trust between participants who may be unused to sharing feelings or discussing sensitive issues with others.

“I think it takes a certain amount of time to allow the guys to feel so secure that they genuinely can talk about quite complex and sensitive issues, around family relationships and parenting.”

“There is a place for short and sweet, but if you’re dealing with men who have had 20 years worth of a screwed up life, you’re not going to fix it in a three day course, or a five week course, but I think it’s about supporting them through a longer period.”

Time and space is required to re-frame thinking on relationships, parenting and responsibility and to make the connect to offending behaviour

Such interventions require offenders – and in some cases their families also - to re-frame their conceptualisation of parenting and their understanding of their role and impact as a parent. They also need support over time to realise that they can change their lives and their behaviour and move forward in a new and more positive direction.

“Some of them will justify their actions on providing for their families, or you know, that it’s okay, normalising their criminal behaviour, and they’ll say, you know, my child goes to a really good school, or they’ve got the most amazing clothes, or I’ve just bought this brilliant TV for him, and they genuinely feel that they’re being responsible, and also because that often reflects their own experience of being parented, and I think they start to realise the impact their offending behaviour does have on their families, the consequences of the offending behaviour, i.e. being apart, does have an impact, and that they are responsible”.

“They have to take some responsibility and, yes, some of them have had the most horrendous lives but you have to make a decision to not keep blaming that. You have to go, right, I do want to make a difference. It is a chance to have another life”

Targeting and referrals – Best practice – changing behaviour

- **Motivate** / engage
- Space for **self reflection** and self awareness
- **Fit to need**
- Focus on those where benefits greatest
- **Time to maximise impact** for offender and family
- **Sequence** related interventions effectively
- Build **understanding of impact** of behaviour on / **needs of other family members**
- **Opportunity to practice** / use new awareness / skills with family members
- **Follow through** and link in

9.9 The hidden sentence and the “whole family” approach

The new policy focus is on the “whole family” in addressing both offenders’ family needs and the factors driving re-offending

The major shift in policy thinking on children and families, both within the criminal justice system, and more widely,¹⁷ is the move towards a “whole family” approach in tackling the often complex problems of offenders and their families/

New models seek to address the “hidden sentence” needs of the family but also to address factors shaping inter-generational offending

This approach recognises that the family is serving a “hidden sentence” and will themselves need support, not least in the interests of preventing the inter-generational transmission of disadvantage and offending behaviour. This “whole family” approach characterised the approach of a number of the service providers considered in this review.

On one level service providers focus on keeping families together and relationships close

The whole family approach recognises that keeping family connections tight is not only a protective factor for re-offending but also has a positive impacts on offenders well-being and behaviour while in custody. It recognises also that children have needs and seeks to ensure children are able to maintain as ‘nuclear’ a parenting style as possible, considering the circumstances. Measures to support this approach include, for example, family visit days, special visiting sessions for children only and opportunities to develop parenting skills for fathers inside the system.

¹⁷ Examples include DCLG’s Troubled Families Programme, the European Social Fund Families with Multiple Problems programme, administered by DWP and the DOH’s Family Nurse Partnership programme.

Some interventions focused on offenders seek either to involve family members or adopt a whole family approach to factors driving offending behaviour

Service providers sought on one level to facilitate ongoing relationships between families and offenders and to provide practical and other support to families during the time their family member was serving their sentence. To a greater or lesser extent, they also sought to involve families in interventions or in some cases focused interventions on the family as a whole. The MPACT programme which involves the whole family in an intervention aimed at tackling drug and alcohol abuse is an example of such an approach..

A whole family approach will also seek to address criminogenic factors in the family environment

Service providers also went further, however, in undertaking interventions with families on the outside that were themselves designed not only to limit the damage arising from the imprisonment of one family member but rather to enhance the wider opportunities for the family or tackle criminogenic factors within the family environment.

A best practice model would see a CAF approach to the family and agreed data sharing between partners supporting the family in a holistic approach

A best practice model for the future, would see identification of the needs of the family in the community at an early as possible in the offender journey, ideally on the basis of a CAF assessment and supported by data sharing between agencies. Failing that, however, the best practice service providers considered in the review sought to reach out to families at the earliest opportunity, typically the orientation phase of incarceration, where 'first time' families are met in the visiting centre by dedicated staff who offer support, understanding and information and access to services.

In complex cases where families have multiple needs a parallel effort with the family on the outside complements interventions focused on the offender

As the offender moves through the various stages of the sentence and offender journey, the family is supported on the outside, and where the family environment is itself criminogenic, service providers focus on addressing anti-social and pro-crime factors in the family environment. Examples might include, for example, seeking to address chaotic life-styles and non-engagement with schools, peer mentoring of teenage boys, working with family members on drug or alcohol issues, providing support and signposting around mental health issues, working with the family on financial matters or debt or support for a move into training and employment.

Family are involved in the process of change and the re-framing of dysfunctional and anti-social and pro-criminal thinking

As the offender themselves progresses through education and training and through transformational interventions designed to change thinking and behaviour, a whole family approach involves the family in the process of change. This may take the form of actively involving a family member or a whole family in an intervention, as in the "Father's Inside" model where a family member acts as a "supporter" to the offender during the course or the MPACT model which involves the whole family in considering the impact of drug or alcohol abuse on the family.

As offenders go through the process of changing their thinking and developing new ways of conceptualising their world, their relationship with their families and their offending behaviour, it is important also that they take their family members with them on their journey. This is particularly critical for resettlement and re-integration into the family.

“Telling them what they’ve learned and how they’re changing, it gives the family member a chance to be involved, and I think things like a drug and alcohol course, for example, what apparently has happened is the guys are going through this huge change, and being brilliant, and then their partners are like, oh my God, you’ve changed. What’s wrong with you? Why are you talking this language, and talking about drug acronyms, for example? And, the family members didn’t know where this change had come from”

9.10 Service gaps and weaknesses

One of the issues raised consistently by service providers was the difficulties arising in connecting the Troubled Families agenda and children and family services outside the walls with the issues for offenders and their families in custody. In large part these had arisen because of the disconnect between prison populations and the local community. Offenders could not only be held at a great distance from their family, with all the attendant difficulties in visiting and maintaining relationships. Local authorities also have had little interest in offenders serving sentences in local prisons other than those which were originally from the local area. The new resettlement prisons, from which offenders will be released to their local community will go some way to creating a commonality of interest between prisons and local authorities and family services.

This in turn connects to the “through the gate” services, identified as one of the weaknesses of the system by both prisons and service providers and envisioned as a key focus of the “Transforming Rehabilitation” initiative. Service providers focused on reducing re-offending through the children and families pathway will need to work with commissioners to address this key gap.

Other key service gaps centred, as discussed earlier, on the lack of data and intelligence around offenders and their families and the difficulties in connecting and linking services for offenders and their families.

The lack of intelligence on the relationship support needs of offenders and their families makes it very difficult to apply a strategic perspective to family work, to segment the population or potential service users, to target services to address specific needs or optimise the nature and timing of interventions.

More fundamentally, in terms of the reducing re-offending agenda, the lack of data and the lack of connect between services aimed at offenders and families outside makes it very difficult to make the connect to the next generation and address the issues around inter-generational offending, particularly as they arose for young teenage boys at risk of repeating the offending behaviour of their fathers.



There are clearly a number of dedicated and highly experienced service providers delivering family interventions that aim to reduce re-offending while also making a real difference to the quality of life and relationships of offenders and their families.

For the future, a more strategic take on commissioning and service provision in this area would see service providers working with both the criminal justice system and mainstream family services to design and deliver a series of family-based interventions that together build towards desistance by offenders and enhance life-chances and opportunities for their families.

10.0 OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The project team has drawn a number of policy and practical conclusions in relation to the future development of family interventions and parental learning services in the criminal justice system.

The children and family's pathway would appear to hold the key to engaging a relatively large number of offenders with interventions intended to break the destructive and costly cycle of re-offending. A large majority of offenders claim to be close to their families so that family focused interventions would seem likely to be motivating for a relatively high proportion of offenders who might otherwise not engage with re-offending interventions.

There is also a clear rationale for interventions with an offender's family in limiting the damage to families arising from the "hidden sentence" and in increasing the potential for successful resettlement on release. As importantly, however, there is a compelling rationale for intervention with offenders' families in order to truly "break the cycle" by tackling the high levels of transmission of offending behaviour across generations.

The conclusions are as follows:

- It will be important to build the profile of family interventions and actively promote the children and families pathway as a key tool in addressing re-offending and tackling the inter-generational transmission of offending.
- Equally it will be critical to raise the profile of the issues faced by offenders' families and the children of offenders. Advocacy and engagement will be key both within the criminal justice system and to engage stakeholders in the community.
- Relationship support, family intervention and parental learning need to be re-framed as a strategic intervention and embedded in offender management, from the earliest possible stage in the offender journey. Family intervention in whatever form (including, where appropriate, those commissioned via the offender learning arrangements) needs to be seen as a key early and protective intervention, from which other interventions can then be sequenced.
- It will be important that a clear connect is made in engaging the community on the impact of parental imprisonment on children, the impact of re-offending on communities and the inter-generational transmission of offending behaviour in order to create a community of interest between the criminal justice system and wider children and families services. This is particularly important in the context of the Troubled Families agenda, which represents a key opportunity to engage mainstream family services with the needs of offenders and their families.
- The Troubled Families initiative offers a clear opportunity for the Criminal Justice System and NOMS to engage with commissioners of services at local level. As the report has shown prison engagement with Troubled Families services is not well developed and is inconsistent and there is clearly work to be done in establishing links. It is important to say however that the need is for commissioners within the CJS and for prisons to engage with local authorities more widely to support work with a wide range of offenders and their families and not only fitting the Troubled Families criteria or involved with Troubled Families services.
- Commissioning of family services should be undertaken strategically on the basis of required outputs and outcomes and on the basis of the evidence on best practice with service providers and delivery models chosen for best fit with offender needs and the specific outcomes required. Such commissioning cannot be undertaken in isolation from other commissioning decisions being taken as part of the offender management process.

- The way forward in tackling re-offending, meeting the needs of vulnerable children and families in the community and addressing the inter-generational transmission of offending is by means of effective partnership working and, in due course, the co-commissioning of services to achieve maximum efficiency and value for money. This necessarily requires custodial establishments to become more outward looking and to engage with the community in addressing the re-offending and families agenda.
- It will be critical to develop a systematic method to assess offender needs early in the process and to monitor how these change over time, particularly if those offenders currently not engaging with interventions are to be included. The OASys system is ill suited to this task, being focused on risk rather than need. The first key step will be to collect the data, ideally for both offenders and their families, and using a standardised tool, such as the Common Assessment Framework. Wherever possible, informed consent (where statutory gateways do not exist) should be sought for data sharing to enable the linking and joining up of services.
- Family needs and circumstances, and existing family intervention activity, should inform the pre sentence report and be built into sentence planning at all stages of the offender journey. Family need should be monitored on an ongoing basis through interactions with staff and by monitoring the profile of contacts and visits. The CJS will need to set up the necessary systems and processes established to facilitate systematic assessment and data collection.
- Custodial establishments should use their range of commissioning powers to offer a mix of interventions including facilities to support the maintenance of relationships with families, focused parental and relationship skills building to empower offenders to make the most of their interactions with families, case-work based support where required plus transformational interventions designed to address the drivers of offending behaviour. This must depend critically on assessed need, to enable commissioners to match the range and intensity of services offered with need. This should take into account also the need to optimise interventions for maximum impact on re-offending.
- Targeting should reference the NOMS segmentation to help target case work-based support and transformational interventions on those offenders with higher risk of re-offending, or most likely to be responsive to intervention, with the NOMS segmentation used alongside information about family circumstances obtained from partnership and co-commissioning approaches.
- This will require considering not only the nature and intensity of the intervention for best fit with need, but also how best to optimise the timing for maximum impact. A holistic perspective on the issues would consider not only the potential for re-offending but also the impact of intervention on inter-generational transmission of offending behaviour.
- Visits and contact with family should be re-framed as positive, protective interventions in which relationships can be reinforced and parenting and communication skills applied. Interactions with family should be made as natural as possible, with parents able to play a meaningful parenting role in interactions with their family and to hold and touch children.
- Relationship maintenance and support services should be introduced at the earliest possible point in the sentence in order to limit damage to relationships. It will be important to take an intelligent approach to targeting and the timing and sequencing of interventions in order to maximise impact and benefits for offenders, to develop engagement with other pathway activity and, thereby, to achieve clear progression along a pathway to desistance. Targeting for family interventions

should include those who are harder to reach and who may not initially be motivated to change their behaviour. Family interventions should not be regarded as a reward nor should contact or visits be with-held as a punishment.

- Discrete segments of offenders with clusters of similar needs (young parents, for example) should be identified and services developed to meet them. These should be developed with a view to moving individuals through a sequenced series of interventions designed, on the one hand, to build closeness to family and reframe parental and family responsibilities. Equally, these interventions should, through a family lens, address the drivers of offending behaviour and equip individuals with the life, relationship and work skills that will enable them to return to family and the community and work towards a set of realistic and pro-social goals and an alternative to an offending life-style.
- Ultimately effective family intervention requires a holistic approach not only in commissioning services for the individual but also to the family on a “whole family” basis. Over time, efforts need to be made to establish strategic partnerships between institutions in the criminal justice system and a wide range of public and voluntary sector organisations able together to tackle the complex drivers of entrenched disadvantage and offending behaviour.