

the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies

**Accommodation and offending -
-What Works?**

An international literature review

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1. Introduction

Context

This study starts from the recent identification of an association between offending and accommodation needs through OASys –the standardised assessment system now used by the Probation Service. It reviews available literature in order to discover what light can be shed on this association. In OASys, accommodation needs include ‘no fixed abode’, ‘transient’ or ‘unsuitable’ accommodation, lack of ‘permanent’ accommodation and ‘unsuitable location’ (meaning close to criminal associates or potential victims) –clearly a range of problems that are not necessarily connected or similar. This ‘umbrella’ term makes for a fascinating but somewhat unpredictable journey through a disparate terrain.

The coverage of a review is dependent on its sources. Though a search for international sources has been made, literature on the relationship between accommodation needs and offending is not easy to locate outside North America, Australia and the UK. This review of literature is set in the context of offending and social policy in these countries, which present interesting contrasts as well as shared characteristics.

Recently, policy-related research on the causes and prevention of crime has given limited attention to residence and accommodation needs. This was not true of an older criminology, which viewed crime as a by-product of urbanisation (Shaw and MacKay 1942). Using the example of Chicago, the flow of migration to the city was observed to create zones where traditional social controls were impotent and new controls difficult to establish. This analysis of the city has been succeeded by more specific concerns: a focus on situational crime prevention and on social measures that target families and youth. The location and residence of offenders have been peripheral to these concerns.

Currently a number of major trends are likely to sharpen the attention given to accommodation needs. One such trend is the rise in migration across borders, which in some respects parallels the movements that preoccupied the Chicago criminologists. Another is the rise in custodial sanctions for all age groups and each gender in the USA and the UK. Custody inevitably poses questions about the ex-offender’s re-entry to society and return to settled accommodation. A third is the reconstruction of the social housing market in ways that exclude categories of offenders. All these have the effect of increasing demand for accommodation in an already tight employment and housing market.

Analytical tasks

The identification of trends takes us only a little way down the analytical road that we wish to pursue. We want to find out how such trends might be related-if at all. The association of accommodation need and offending could be generated by social factors that are independent of offending. If a general drought occurred, the finding

that offenders were thirsty would not be very surprising. But if offenders suffered more frequently from the shortage then important questions about their needs would arise. Further crucial questions would certainly be put on the agenda if the water shortage coincided with a rise in offending, whether as assaults on alleged water-hoarders or as illicit water dealing. In the latter case we would want to test out causal theories about the impact of drought. We therefore have to think in terms of stages of analysis that can deliver more sophisticated and more insightful approximations to reality. The review will examine a range of evidence to see which of the interpretations outlined below are best supported.

How might accommodation needs and offending be related?

Relationships

A relationship between offending and accommodation need can be understood in several ways.

- An association that appears inconsistently at different times and places (contingency)
- A consistent association based on a causal process in which one variable influences the other (causal determination)
- A consistent association that can be explained by a third causal factor (codetermination)

Causality

Both causal determination and codetermination require adequate evidence of a causal process.

A causal factor must have a specific identity independent of its outcome. It must be capable of being distinguished from other factors.

A causal theory should propose a mechanism that adequately explains the relevant facts including the mental facts involved in the process. So it should be able to show how action follows from a given starting point and how an offender's state of mind is influenced by the factor in question. It should deal with alternative explanations by offering some form of analysis.

A causal theory should specify the direction of possible causal relationships between two or more variables.

Causal determination

A number of possibilities present themselves in seeking to understand how one variable might influence another. Hypotheses A and B represent opposite directions of influence, though the causal processes differ.

Fig 1.1 Causal hypotheses

A. Cause Housing need Effect Offending

Description

'People develop housing needs and offend more often than otherwise'

Mechanisms

Stress; daily needs unmet; opportunities in transient accommodation

B. Cause Offending Effect Housing need

Description

'People begin to offend and develop housing needs'

Mechanisms

Rejection of offenders by head of household/ housing providers

It is quite conceivable that at certain points causality could operate in either of these directions. Indeed the same individual might go through two different phases, one in which the first causal process occurred and another when the second occurred. Chapter 4 will argue that a model based on the concept of 'life course' can help to make better sense of these relationships in individual cases. A 'life course' approach shows how influences correspond to stages in the individual's biography, as the controls, opportunities and motivations affecting an individual alter during the transition to maturity.

Co-determination

Indeed if there were evidence that housing need and offending co-varied continuously we might speak of co-determination in which a wider process of exclusion was at work: housing would be just part of the story. Codetermination could operate at the level of individuals as well as groups as in the following examples:

- Individuals might possess mental health problems that precluded them from sustaining accommodation and avoiding crime
- Mental health problems can co-determine a range of difficulties that prevent participation in social arrangements.
- In a society that exploited temporary migrant labour by members of a minority ethnic group, housing need and crime might be closely linked. Low-level offending by the impoverished against the majority would then be a manifestation of endemic social conflict.

Where offending appears as a correlative of structural poverty, the link with housing conditions is likely to be one of co-determination. In the slum housing need is not an individual misfortune but a way of life. Analyses of the 'deprived area' have shown how sections of the population are engaged in a competitive struggle for housing and crime becomes a prominent option for survival (e.g. Lambert 1970).

The dynamic development of risk factors

Causal processes in offending are dynamic and not fixed, so it is important to understand how different factors place individuals at risk of offending. Some are closely connected to the individual, affecting emotional reactions, for example, while others are conditioned by the environment. Crime opportunities are structured by the degree to which potential victims are protected and by their abundance in certain settings.

This means that the occurrence of offending is conditioned by combinations of factors, some of which are highly sensitive. They include, for example, opportunities appearing in clusters, stressful situations, and so on. Some experiences (like being abused in childhood) produce critical impacts that have long term consequences and thereby increase future risks. In this way an individual can be subject to progressive risks in the long term as well as the short term. A valid assessment of risk for the individual is based on an appreciation of this dynamic.

Primary and secondary risk factors

Risk is a product of the interaction between individuals and their environments. How society responds to individuals' offending can be a major influence on what they do subsequently. Responses to crime and to housing need have a key role in explaining what happens to offenders.

A useful distinction can be made between primary needs (connected with an individual's behaviour) and secondary needs (resulting from responses to behaviour). As social controls respond to unacceptable behaviour they create important conditions for the next phase of an individual's behaviour. Successful responses work by addressing the roots of behavioural problems and reconnecting the individual positively with the wider society. Inappropriate responses can lead to an amplification of the problems. Imprisonment and other forms of exclusion can produce a range of secondary needs that should be constructively addressed by throughcare and aftercare. The creation of primary and secondary needs will be explored in Chapter 4.

Meeting needs and reducing risks

Needs and causation

'What works' assumes that it is possible to meet needs once these are understood. In principle, there are two aspects of need reviewed here, one to do with accommodation and the other to do with offending. It would be extremely useful if the causal analysis were to inform an analysis of meeting need, so that the causes could be addressed in a preventive fashion. If, for example, we could confirm that housing need and offending were jointly co-determined by mental health problems we would be well placed to incorporate them in a treatment strategy. Similarly, if the limitations of the housing market were identified as a causal factor it would be possible to prescribe policy remedies. However, even if this were true, some of the causes might lie in the past and so not be very amenable to being addressed. In Chapter 5, evidence of practice is

reviewed to see if successful approaches can be identified and whether or not they are related coherently to valid causal pathways. The chapter considers how successfully particular needs can be assessed and met and in what ways. Which approaches work with adolescents? Or women? How do they differ from approaches that work with drug-users emerging from prison?

The variety of needs and the complexity of risk factors are likely to call for a coherent strategy that reaches across agency boundaries. The policy and institutional framework for the provision of services to offenders is composed of various levels, each with a set of objectives and functions. Some agencies are concerned with housing need in its various forms and others offer specialist services to offenders. A clear set of objectives for services will be discussed in Chapter 5.

It is evident that the review will have implications for:

- social policy on housing,
- the treatment of offenders,
- and family links

In seeking a prospectus for a future ‘What works’, there are several promising avenues in the literature that will be given detailed scrutiny including:

- the development of community and neighbourhood strategies,
- the assessment of needs at both strategic and individual level,
- the planning of flexible provision,
- the time limits set for probation or parole aftercare
- and the planning of subsequent re-integration.

In the next chapter the aims and methods of the review will be set out on detail.

2. Aims and methods

The aims of the review

The general aims of the review are

- to investigate associations between accommodation problems and offending, and any causal links
- show evidence of effective ways of helping offenders with housing problems.

Questions to be explored

- How do factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, health, relationships, employment, or offending history affect accommodation problems and likelihood of offending?
- How can the location and type of accommodation influence opportunities to offend?
- How are housing needs assessed and what services are effective in helping which groups of offenders find and keep accommodation?

The search for material

We were asked to collate literature from English-speaking and near-European countries. Contacts with national organisations and experts were made, as well as searches using electronic resources.

National organisations

Using a standard letter, enquiries were made through e-mail, fax, letter or phone with national crime and justice organisations.

Results

The Home Office made available the services of its library, which has accessed a great deal of material published in English, in the UK and abroad. The Bundesministerium of Justice in the Federal Republic of Germany passed on our request to the criminological centre at Wiesbaden. On our behalf a search was made of resources known to the Ministry of Justice in the Netherlands. Helpful responses were received from Aarne Kinnunen, Ministry of Justice, Department of Criminal Policy, Finland; Didier Coeurnelle, Belgian Federal Ministry for Social Affairs, Public Health and the Environment; and from Tore Bjorgo, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs.

Experts

A range of academics in this country and abroad was contacted, including members of The European Society of Criminology. The European Housing Research Network was contacted, as was the National Housing Federation Research Forum.

Results

Professors David Smith (Lancaster University); Peter Raynor (Swansea University); Hans Jorg Albrecht (Max-Planck Institute for Foreign and Criminal Law, Freiburg); Werner Sohn (University of Wiesbaden); Andrzej Adamski (Nicholas Copernicus University, Torun, Poland); Frieder Duenkel (University of Greifswald); and Ms Penny Fraser (NACRO) kindly responded, but we were warned that specific studies are few and not necessarily informative. Professor Gill McIvor (Stirling University) and Peter Maplestone (University of New South Wales) kindly forwarded reviews of services for offenders.

Websites

Several websites were visited and a search has been made of the Web in general.

Search method

Databases

Searches were made through the following databases.

- ASSIA
- COPAC
- ISI Web of Science
- DIALOG
- CAREDATA

Search terms

The key words used in the searches have been deliberately expanded so as not to miss particular categories of offender- ‘delinquent’, for example- or of provision –‘hostel’, ‘foster home’ etc.

The search terms were grouped as follows:

1. General terms for housing, accommodation, etc
2. Terms for accommodation for offenders and the vulnerable - social housing, public housing, hostels, children’s homes, etc.
3. Terms for offenders, and for the homeless
4. Population categories - age groups, gender, minorities, etc

As there are several topics wrapped up under broad headings like ‘housing need’ or ‘housing risk’, the search terms were as specific as possible.

The use of search findings

The studies that have been obtained range widely over the field; it has been challenging to compare and order them, and to relate them to the brief for the review.

Criminological overviews

Some overviews of crime causation and reduction (e.g. Braithwaite 1989; Gendreau et al 1996) have been useful in highlighting significant patterns that shed light on the relationship of housing need to other variables.

Previous reviews

The present study has sought to use previous reviews to identify key sources. For example, reviews of research on residential and foster care and on care leavers have been valuable. The review has concentrated on recent information wherever possible. For example, the most substantial official review of a key part of the field was last undertaken by Kevin Haines (1990) in his review of aftercare services, though the field changed in the 1990s (Herbst 1995).

Computerised search results

Extensive material was identified through a series of searches by the Home Office and National Children's Bureau (NCB) staff. Several different article searches on DIALOG produced approximately 120 references of varying degrees of substance and occasionally overlapping. Over 20 relevant references were uncovered by the NCB. In addition a small number of references have been found on ASSIA, CAREDATA and the ISI Web of Science.

The next section outlines the approach that was adopted in handling the material.

Evaluating literature

The analytical task of the review is to see how far conclusions can be drawn that would support a 'What Works' agenda.

From a research point of view, the 'What Works' agenda is concerned to identify key studies and to see whether collectively the studies support similar conclusions. From a practice perspective it is concerned to produce evidence-based recommendations about effective steps to reduce offending and to meet needs.

Methodology

The investigation of causal patterns and evidence-based solutions makes high demands on studies. They must possess methodological characteristics that sustain valid and reliable conclusions. Studies that qualify for extended attention should include a range of characteristics, particularly in showing the relationships between cause and effect and between interventions and outcome.

Fig 1.2 Characteristics of substantial studies

Coherent concepts translated into operational research categories
Representative samples
Longitudinal design
Comparisons of variables
Manipulation of intervention variables
Outcome data

Valid and reliable methods of data collection
Measurement tools
Comparisons across research settings

After reviewing the available material it can be seen that this was a tall order! Few studies have met all these requirements. Accordingly, the evidence has had to be treated in a more piecemeal way than would have been desirable.

Scope

Studies have tended to focus on needs rather than on solutions. However much of the research on need deals with one particular group of offenders or a single stage in their careers and does not engage with the whole life course. The most powerful studies are longitudinal and these will be given major attention.

Where interventions have been examined the research has tended to focus on particular groups and programmes. The studies have been often descriptive and have failed to examine the impact of the interventions on the targeted needs. While longitudinal studies are valuable, the length of the follow-up in different studies will need to be noted so that the outcomes identified by those studies can be properly compared.

There is also a shortage of international comparisons, with the UK and North America providing far and away the most literature.

Order of discussion

The subsequent chapters are laid out so that the life course provides a guiding thread. Studies that embrace a large portion of the life course will naturally receive substantial attention.

The limited scope and methodological weaknesses of many studies have made it necessary to concentrate on the strongest examples where possible and to point out limitations of the literature on particular topics, even if the importance of the topic by itself would seem to deserve more attention.

Literature classifications

Overviews

Comparative studies

Primary risk factors

Studies of vulnerability and needs

Studies of opportunity and risk

Minority groups

Specific types of offence

- Drugs
- Prostitution

Secondary risk factors

Groups subject to criminal justice sanctions- needs and vulnerability

- Community penalties
- Ex-offenders
- Sex offenders

Strategies

Barriers to meeting need

National strategies

Local community strategies

Services

Assessment

Advice or support

- One-stop resources
- Floating support

Accommodation

- Homes
- Local authority secure accommodation
- Leaving care schemes
- Pre-trial diversion
- Mental health accommodation
- Drug user accommodation

Services for particular groups (women, minority ethnic groups)

3. The ‘What Works’ agenda – opportunities ‘going missing’?

Introduction

This chapter briefly discusses the principles and the current conclusions of ‘What Works’ in order to explain the lack of attention to accommodation needs and interventions. In particular, it focuses on the assumptions of ‘What Works’ about what is and is not good evidence, and shows how these apply to accommodation issues. It argues that accommodation services have been seen as residual and short term, rather than fundamentally about outcomes for the individual. The focus of ‘What Works’ on need and outcome should be re-emphasised and applied if accommodation problems are to be fully understood and addressed.

Competing explanations?

The strongest proponents of ‘What Works’ have argued that crime is caused by psychological processes that arise from dysfunctional relationships. By comparison, the role of social structural factors like gender and class has been seen as ‘minor’ (Andrews 1995). Close analysis of many studies is used to support this conclusion. Accordingly, welfare that is not targeted to the high-risk groups is considered unlikely to be effective in reducing crime.

Critics of the current emphasis in the ‘What Works’ research on psychological explanations of behaviour have argued that it reflects a flight from the philosophy of ‘welfarism’ influencing probation and criminal justice. Instead psychological interventions that focus on decision-making by the offender assume a neo-liberal society that expects a substantial degree of rational choice (Oldfield 2002). Programmes explicitly target the limited rationality of the offender, whose responses to welfare services are implicitly seen as unreliable (Gendreau and Ross 1987). It seems plausible to agree that faith in welfare as an element of rehabilitation has been downsized as the emphasis on personal responsibility has increased.

Research and evaluation

Certainly evidence about interventions has played a part in this rethinking. ‘What Works’ has been founded on a large quantity of studies devoted to professional psychological interventions, compared with the very few rigorous studies of welfare and resettlement services. Despite this uneven concentration of research, the evidence of welfare need among offenders has grown. Hence there is a gap in ‘What Works’ that remains to be filled.

The way in which ‘What Works’ typically evaluates research has restricted the potential for research on welfare, especially in a community context. ‘What Works’ was influenced by a particular medical model of intervention and followed the methodological rules that have been recommended by influential medical researchers. Experiments have been the core method of investigation. This helps explain the popularity of psychological experimentation with offenders. The organisation of controlled experiments is far easier for self-contained specialist programmes in settings that offer few alternatives and where access to services can be controlled. Hence research of this kind has multiplied, giving even more momentum and weight to its conclusions.

Short-term assumptions

Assumptions about the purpose of welfare are another reason for the very limited research base. Resettlement support has been designed as a residual and short-term service supplementing the market. Accessing housing takes place in a less controlled context where there are usually alternatives - including street living. It seems that welfare and resettlement services, in contrast to treatment, have focused on promoting entitlements and been oriented to community integration, where different evaluation standards have applied. Consumer choice means that users can move on and accordingly service evaluation has been short term. However the idea that welfare is residual fails to appreciate the long-term impact of factors that affect social exclusion. A strength of 'What Works' is that it is essentially needs and outcome focused. Research on both needs and outcomes is therefore imperative so as to redress the failings of short-term perspectives.

Public context

'What Works' has been perceived as a recipe book for programmed interventions with individual offenders, on the model of drug treatments or surgery. Yet part of its task is to re-integrate and empower ex-offenders in a wider public context (JPPAP 2000). This means addressing public attitudes as well as offenders' thinking. Andrews (1995) makes the same point when suggesting that, to increase their effectiveness, services should be given support by society.

In fact, medicine has not simply been concerned with small-scale programmed interventions. It enjoys a long and honourable tradition of public health research and programmes that have had demonstrable health impacts. Current health policy in the UK acknowledges social and economic as well as lifestyle factors in health and asserts that better health can emerge by addressing all of these (Dept of Health 1998;Wilkinson 1996).

If we look more closely at the 'What Works' literature there is an appreciation that communities and policy-makers have a part to play. Sherman et al (1997) discuss the localisation of crime patterns in the USA and examine the effect of housing policy in shaping a lethal combination of criminogenic processes in the new urban ghettos. Increasingly a growing population of poor female-headed households has been left to cope with children in housing projects with ineffective schools and declining opportunities. This analysis brings together the social and familial factors in a convincing way. Moreover it shows a path for crime-reduction that addresses individuals and families as well as communities.

Research methods that shed light on community and individual factors highlight the sensitivity of interventions to context. As Sherman et al (1997) point out, the same interventions can produce very different results in different contexts. The influence of context is incorporated in the Realistic Evaluation model, which proposes the investigation of Context –Mechanism-Outcome (CMO) (Pawson and Tilley 1997).

There are no simple guarantees that pursuing any particular methodology will produce a sequence of coherent results (Hope 2002). But the pursuit of alternative methods can be helpful in opening up new evidence in new fields. Strategy formulation should be sensitive to a range of such evidence.

Implications

As in the case of health improvement and family services, strategic interventions likely to be fruitful in preventing and reducing crime will combine attention to individuals and groups, while intervening in both policy and practice (Gordon 1998). The need to think about integrated policy and strategy is supported by the cross-cutting government review of crime reduction in the UK (HM

Treasury 2000). The evidence that crime reduction can be effected through community action underpins the building of local partnerships in the UK.

An effective 'What Works' for accommodation needs should be based on a range of studies that target the stages of the life course and attend to primary and secondary needs, showing how services can ameliorate problems for particular groups at particular periods in their lives. The review will go on to consider how far the literature can provide clear and consistent messages of this kind and can apply them within particular contexts and jurisdictions.

4. Needs and risks

Introduction

This chapter investigates in more depth the ways in which accommodation needs and offending may be related. Trying to explain the relationship between variables involves looking for plausible mechanisms of influence in a variety of contexts. For this reason, in some explanations there may be differences in the ways the variables are defined, and the pathways of influence may be complicated as factors interact. Depending on the context, there may even be reversals of causal influence, as outlined in the Introduction. A key dimension in making this analysis is time –when did the offending take place? Did the accommodation needs arise? Was it after or before the offending? Studies that follow up cases have very useful contributions to make. Time is also a feature of human development and experience. The chapter looks at the connections between accommodation and offending over the life course, examining the needs that emerge at each stage.

First of all, some key definitions of offending and accommodation needs are considered.

Accommodation needs and offending risks

To help bring some clarity to the analysis, the following concepts are discussed: housing needs; proximity risks; status offending; and differential exposure to public controls.

Housing needs

In the literature housing needs can be defined in several objective ways.

- Inadequacy in structure, facilities and furnishing
- Unhealthy conditions
- Overcrowding
- Temporary residence, transience and mobility
- Unsheltered, roofless, or living in public places

However for our purpose these definitions are not very informative. They have to be understood in relation to their social interpretation. In poor countries the same facts would be seen as normal misfortunes, which in affluent countries would mean ‘poverty’ or ‘vulnerability’. In much criminological literature, housing needs are a component of ‘socio-economic status’, in other words, a factor that co-exists with other indicators of poverty. Needs of this kind are interpreted as much through official concerns and policy definitions as through the definitions of the people in need.

Proximity risks

Accommodation needs are not just about quality of accommodation on its own; they can be linked to the risks posed by the proximity of an antisocial influence to individual victims or offenders such as:

- Anti-social risks affecting the individual's relationship with some part of a network of people (parents, partners, cohabiters, neighbours, visitors)
- Anti-social risks affecting the individual's relationship with specific locations (offending opportunities, inducements to crime, vulnerability and defensive behaviour)

Status offences

Reactions to some accommodation needs translate readily into offences. In this sense the unsheltered are particularly at risk of infringing the law in the following ways:

Vagrancy, illegal occupation of premises and travelling

Accommodation needs and offending can be closely intertwined in cases where those in need are disobeying regulations over the use of space or time. It is possible to offend through persistent violations of land, housing and public space regulations that follow from being in need.

Begging

People who are in need of accommodation may beg for money to relieve the pains of their situation.

Consumption of alcohol regulations

The criminalisation of public drinking bears down on the addicted who occupy public spaces.

Differential exposure to public controls

Accommodation needs have implications for social control. In conditions of social transience (and particularly street living) it is possible to consider two processes that increase both the risks of opportunistic offending and of being suspected of it.

- Anonymity (being unknown to social contacts including victims and informal agents of control)
- Visibility (being seen by informal and formal agents of control)

Those in need of accommodation who inhabit public places will be open to police surveillance and attention; if in unsatisfactory accommodation they will be more likely to spend time in public spaces. Offences they commit will come to police notice more readily than if they occupy private spaces predominantly.

Risks and needs over the life course

This section goes on to illustrate a dynamic model of a life course in which processes and interventions operate together to produce risks and outcomes.

An important distinction needs to be made between *primary* risk factors that stem from the individual, the family, the economy and society, and the *secondary* risk factors that arise from interventions and policies, including housing allocations, welfare services, and criminal justice sanctions (Lemert 1967). This distinction highlights the fact that interventions can take several forms, and that some should seek to check or reverse the negative consequences of previous ones.

An illustration of the dynamic model is given below, envisaging a risk amplification spiral through a hypothetical life course. The idea of an amplification spiral was first developed by deviancy theorists interested in the negative impact of social reaction in situations where groups were labelled and excluded (Young 1971). A number of models were developed that were intended to be adapted to the progression of particular offence types and situations. Some of these ideas proved to be problematic in accounting for aspects of the interplay between action and reaction, especially the different responses of individuals, and in explaining the final conclusion. A suitable model must be able to account for 'de-amplification' and for the differential impact of similar social reactions upon individuals at different times and in different contexts. The following model is used as a guiding framework in subsequently examining evidence.

Figure 1. Risk amplification processes

Primary processes

Housing inadequacies/shortages
Family conflict
Behavioural problems/offending
Primary Homelessness
Street life
Immediate offence opportunities in weakly protected settings

Secondary processes

Care system
Placement breakdown
Social exclusion and labelling in care

Contacts with police

Remand
Conviction
Sentencing

Sanctions lead to loss of previous accommodation
'Intentionally' homeless
Exclusion from accommodation
Local crime prevention strategies exclude 'at-risk' groups
Post-release and probation services run out
No fixed address – no employment
Offending cycle resumes

In seeking to explain offending, a distinction is drawn between factors that are static and those that are dynamic, or capable of being changed. A major static factor is the number and seriousness of the offender's preconvictions. It is assumed that there are interactions between static factors (like previous convictions) and dynamic factors (like exclusion from housing). So at a given stage an offender may be excluded from housing precisely for that reason. Also, at different points in their

careers, the same offenders may react in different ways to similar problems. Each stage of the career must then be taken into account in seeking to explain the pattern of reactions. It would be wrong to assume that once embarked on a particular course all individuals must proceed to the bitter end. With this proviso, the following sections look at evidence about the main life stages with reference to specific groups.

Primary Processes

Housing in childhood and youth

In this section a series of primary risk factors that impact on children and youth will be examined, some concerned with the household and others with the neighbourhood.

Various large studies indicate that risks of delinquency are enhanced by housing deprivation in childhood (Loeber and Farrington 1998; Kolvin et al 1988). Such problems can be linked to offending before as well as after the age of 15. Conversely, having more living space in childhood acted as a protective factor (Kolvin et al 1990). Poor housing in childhood has also been found to correlate with adult convictions (Farrington 1992). A typical measure employed in these studies has been overcrowding, which varies in prevalence over time. Like other poverty measures, the measurement of housing deprivation is usually relative and not absolute, so what may be counted as deprivation is affected by historical trends. Future research will need to take such changes into account.

Other family risk factors that have been shown to lead to offending are abuse, neglect and conflict. It is striking how far poverty overlaps with family factors: in their study Kolvin et al 1990 report that 71 per cent of deprived young children who received 'poor' care became officially delinquent compared with 39 per cent of those who received 'good care'. According to that study, the strains of poverty induce despair and frustration that impacts on child care and damages relationships.

Neighbourhood factors appear in the literature in several forms, which may differ in their causal significance (Reiss 1986; Bottoms 1994). Several components related to housing appear in the studies. Housing deprivation in itself may be a factor that makes the street an important focus for socialising. Street life becomes the scene of unsupervised play that explores the possibilities of offending (Riley and Shaw 1985). In the early half of the last century, the Chicago school attributed local crime rates to residential mobility that reduced community controls, a factor still incorporated in more recent criminological theory (Braithwaite 1989). Much literature has been devoted to design and security features (Coleman 1985; Graham and Bennett 1995), recognising that poor neighbourhoods contain weakly defended properties. Research on targeting by offenders has shown that multiple victimisations can vastly increase such risks. Other literature focuses on the population composition of neighbourhoods, suggesting that groups at risk of offending account significantly for local crime rates (Bottoms Mawby and Xanthos 1989). Study of local interventions has revealed how such high-risk groups as care leavers, homeless youth and runaways can have a disproportionately adverse impact on crime if they are not adequately supported (Foster and Hope 1993). A profile of Scampia in Naples notes the high rate of street crime and the large population of young people in a public housing area also containing illegal lodgings (Solito 1994). These interactions of need, opportunity and offending predisposition are evidently complex. For example, groups predominantly responsible for offending can be minorities not representative of the area population.

Like Sherman et al (1997), Bottoms (1994) has argued that the housing market plays a major role in allocating individuals and groups to places that contain opportunities, creating in certain areas highly combustible mixtures. Child socialisation is from the outset influenced by this housing context.

Accommodation instability in childhood

Running away

Children may run away for periods of time or seek alternatives, particularly if there are difficulties at home. Browne and Falshaw (1998) review the international evidence. In the US it was estimated that one in eight 12-18 year-olds runs away at least once (Young et al 1983). Figures from England and Scotland suggest a high number of incidents- as many as 102,000 in a year – in which 43,000 children were involved (Abrahams and Mungall 1992). While some can be regarded as explorers or thrill-seekers, a proportion is described as having been pushed out or escaping from difficult situations.

In a large UK self report study, there was a strong correlation between running away from home and offending. Graham and Bowling (1995) reported that 71 per cent of male runaways and 46 per cent of female runaways had committed offences. However, cross-sectional studies simply show how prevalent the association is and do not explain it. Whether offending and running away coincided is harder to investigate.

Attention has focused on the repeat runaway who is more likely to get in trouble with the police (Janus et al 1987; Stein et al 1999). Reviewing the studies, the SEU (2001) has pointed to evidence that 1/14 runaways survive through offending. According to Stein et al (1999), who surveyed 13,000 young people and interviewed 200, nine per cent of those who ran away for two nights or more survived by stealing while a small number used sex or sold drugs. 16-17 year-olds in unstable living situations were particularly likely to offend while running. In a national study serial runaways were found to have higher than normal rates of drug misuse (Goulden and Sondhi 2001).

Homeless

Homelessness is known to be a considerable problem: in the US, McCarthy and Hagan (1992) cite information suggesting that one in 20 youth have been homeless; Carlen (1996) quotes an estimate of 156,000 for the UK in 1991. A cycle of homelessness and offending has been identified but few studies have unpicked a causal mechanism with any success. The most significant recent studies that have sought to isolate the impact of homelessness on offending have been conducted in Toronto and Vancouver, where Hagan and McCarthy (1997) have carried out similar studies. In Toronto they found a significant increase in offending by homeless young people since leaving home (McCarthy and Hagan 1991). McCarthy and Hagan (1992) compared 390 homeless 13-19 year-olds with a normal population of 562. Situational variables-hunger, transient street living, length of time on the street, arrest of street friends –were strongly related to street crime. This held true even when background variables were taken into account. In a further study Hagan and McCarthy (1997) compared homeless youth in the two cities. A three-wave panel study including a sample of 376, aged 16-24 years, confirmed the specific impact on crime of ‘sociogenic’ factors associated with the cities’ street life.

Accommodation outcomes for homeless 16-21 year-olds living in shelters were identified in a year-long follow up study in the UK (Craig et al 1996; Craig and Hodson 2000). A high proportion

(51/107) had poor outcomes compared with 33/107 who had a stable outcome and 23/107 with intermediate outcomes. Better-educated, black and London-based young people had better outcomes. Offending patterns were particularly interesting: a similar but domiciled group was compared, 93 per cent of which had never offended in the past compared with 52 per cent of the homeless. A fifth had been in a custodial institution. Two-thirds of the homeless reported criminal activity during the follow-up year and for a third this occurred several times in the year. Twenty admitted some form of 'one-off' violence.

Stockley et al (1993) were relatively less successful in a similar study managing to follow up only 59 out of 315 cases, and failing to follow up the most disruptive.

Qualitative research reveals a similar pattern through the analysis of young people's accounts:

'The stories revealed the cyclical link between committing crime and becoming homeless, and once homeless committing crime.' (Day et al 1997)

Studies by Carlen (1996) and Wardhaugh (2000) have shown how the street teaches a code of survival that enables young people to get by in conditions of extreme stress. Hagan and McCarthy (1997) show how street living develops criminal contacts, which disseminate offending techniques. The street families observed in Canada facilitate this process as well as helping to protect young people's safety.

Abuse has been identified in several studies as a factor in running away (Browne and Falshaw 1998). In an international review based on a study in five countries, household risk factors were identified for 'high risk behaviours' among street children: marginalisation; low sense of competence; low resistance to peer influence; and anti-social behaviour. Among the risk factors for children living on their own were migration, loss of supports, and diminished sense of belonging, as well as evidence of abuse, violence and poor health (Szanton Blanc 1994).

Situational variables are apparent in the studies by McCarthy and Hagan (1992) and Stein et al (1999). Rough sleepers commit public order and petty theft offences that reflect two influences: their exposure to police action on the street; and their daily need to get by on a minimal income (Ballintyne 1999). In a national study of young people, rough sleepers were found to have higher than normal rates of drug misuse (Goulden and Sondhi 2001).

The situational stresses of the street can bring long- term effects, reducing trust and sociability (Carlen 1996). Public stigmatisation adds to the estrangement of the individual from normal social intercourse and from caring relationships. It is this progressive estrangement that seems to be deepened by social reaction. Evidence about the impact of social reaction is discussed in a later section.

Gender

Feminist criminologists point to evidence that gender is a fundamental factor in determining pathways in and out of crime. Gender differences structure the experiences that lead to forms of behaviour problem. Girls are more likely to suffer sexual abuse than boys while rates for physical abuse are similar (Cawson et al 2000).

Responses to abuse can initially be similar: in the Denver Youth Survey (Daly 1998) for example girls were reported to have slightly higher rates of running away from home. However, girls are

more likely than boys to be arrested and sent to court for running away (Chesney Lind 1989; Sheldon et al 1989). Subsequent to this process, gendered differences in pathways to crime emerge. Sexual abuse experience among female runaways was associated with a greater likelihood of delinquency (Janus et al 1987).

In an international review, resort to the street is described as ‘the leading feminist scenario’ of women’s lawbreaking. Petty hustling or prostitution is followed by drug misuse that drives further offending (Daly 1994). In recent explanations, a focus on elements of choice by the individual is combined with recognition of the constraints placed on women’s lives. Life on the streets brings insecurity and heightens the risk of rape. Moreover there are proximity risks arising from contact with the populations that seek to exploit women by offering drugs or purchasing sex (Janus et al 1987; Carlen 1996; Maher and Daly 1996). McCarthy and Hagan (1992) noted that young women offenders specialised in prostitution. They found 30 per cent prevalence of prostitution since the women had started living on the street. The women had had higher rates of prostitution while at home compared with the comparison group.

Secondary processes

Youth

Court processing for running away does not necessarily escalate risk. In the USA, where running away is a status offence, it has been shown that an incident is often a ‘one-off’ event that does not lead to further court appearances. However, male runaways were much more likely than females to end up with a felony record (Sheldon et al 1989). In addition runaways are liable to being processed for new status offences crystallised in legislation like the *Criminal Justice and Public Order Act* (UK) 1994 (Wardhaugh 2000).

An international review of running away makes several relevant points (Biehal 1998). Problems in the home associated with instability may mean that the child leaves home or enter the care system. Evidence about risk among the population of care placements is analysed below.

There is evidence of a high risk of running away from residential placements. Runaways from residential care have been found to be especially likely to have criminal convictions (Abrahams and Mungall 1992; Wade and Biehal 1998).

In the US, recent studies of the consequences of care placements show increased likelihood of future involvement in the criminal justice system. Jonson-Reid (2000) followed up almost 80,000 Californian children placed in foster and group care. Some were offenders on probation while in care. Entrants to care aged 11-14 were at greatest risk of later going to prison. African-American children were at higher risk than Whites, a finding related by the authors to poverty in the family and neighbourhood. Multiple placements and periods in care were associated with youth imprisonment. A study of 1550, mostly African-American, young offenders in residential placements in Michigan revealed a very high rate of future incarceration- 82 per cent over seven years (Collins et al 1995). Two accommodation factors were found to be significant in this outcome, over and above the inmates’ delinquency records: the residential placement itself and a further residential placement on release. Even more worryingly, the non-delinquents placed in the programmes were at similar risk of going to prison. The challenges to young people leaving care placements are therefore substantial.

Institutional experience of the young homeless

The flow of young people through institutional settings, including penal ones, is evident in studies of homelessness. Anderson et al (1993) present evidence from a large representative survey of single homeless people in the UK. As well as showing that a large proportion of young people had had criminal justice contacts, it showed an even higher proportion in the 18-24 year-old group than among 16-17 year-olds. The following table refers to the proportions of young people staying in temporary accommodation who had had institutional experiences.

Hostels and bed and breakfast – young adults, by experience of institutions (%) From Anderson et al (1993) table 8.2		
	16-17 yrs	18-24 yrs
Any institution	54	39
Children's home	39	18
Foster care	32	11
Young Offender Institution	7	15
Prison /remand centre	8	23

In addition to this evidence about institutional experience, Stewart et al (1994) noted the significant housing needs of young people under supervision.

Hagan and McCarthy (1997) identify evidence of amplification following police action against the homeless. After careful analysis they conclude that police charges interact with previous abusive experiences to amplify offending by the young homeless.

It is clear from reviews that young offenders' needs are multiple (Audit Commission 1996). It has been also shown that peak ages for offending are increasing (Graham and Bowling 1995). Desistance is delayed by a number of factors. There is evidence that services and policies for volatile and distressed young people are not responding to the complex and prolonged needs that have emerged.

From community to custody

There is clear evidence among those sanctioned by the criminal justice system that offending and accommodation needs are related. Indeed some evidence that accommodation needs may be causal can be found. For example, Humphrey et al (1992) examined the usefulness of accommodation as a predictor of reconviction among probationers. A careful study has shown that accommodation needs are associated with reconvictions among the population receiving community penalties (May 1999). However the root of the problems remains elusive.

Studies of prison inmates have also revealed that there is a significant relationship between prior homelessness and a range of needs, including mental health problems. However in the studies the patterns of offending histories among ex-homeless inmates differ, so it is not clear how to interpret the causes of their offending (Vitelli 1993; DeLisi 2000; Zapf et al 1996).

A regional survey of the UK prison population studied prisoners' levels of homelessness and their relation to social integration and re-offending (Banks 1978). It found that one in three prisoners and four out of ten petty offenders had been homeless on arrest. Homelessness was associated with having a higher number of convictions. The social isolation of their living arrangements prior to arrest was linked to their offending more generally.

Corden, Kuipers and Wilson (1978) followed up a sample of male prisoners eligible for voluntary aftercare, of whom 26 per cent had been homeless on entry to prison, and many others had been in temporary accommodation.

In a sample of 123 sentenced women, Wilkinson (1988) found that 14 per cent of women were homeless at the time of imprisonment and a further 18 per cent were 'guests' in others' homes. The single women included a proportion of homeless.

In 1991 the National Prison Survey collected data on prisoners' previous accommodation showing that 8 per cent of remand prisoners and 4 per cent of the sentenced population had been 'homeless' by official standards. Five per cent had been in a hostel and two per cent has been living on the streets. It was judged that much higher proportions had no permanent residence- 16 per cent of the remanded and 12 per cent of the sentenced. This increased proportion was partly attributed to people arrested upon entering the country (Walmsley et al 1992).

The higher figures for remands than for the sentenced indicate that housing needs may be a factor in granting bail. In a study of psychiatrically disturbed defendants Kennedy et al (1997) showed that 84 per cent of those with stable housing were bailed compared with only 47 per cent without. Having a hostel address did not assist the defendant to obtain bail.

The measurement of need has proved to be difficult. For example, May's study (1999) was limited by the extent of data recording in files. Baldry et al (2002) reported that retrospective data about the status of accommodation prior to imprisonment in New South Wales drawn from a prisoner survey indicated that only 7-8% of male and 11% of female prisoners at that time were homeless or in highly insecure accommodation. Citing anecdotal information from Parole officers, Baldry et al (2002) conclude that the figures may well mask intermittent homelessness or unstable housing. Evidence from a later survey of services showed much higher figures of ex-prisoner homelessness, with up to 50% of their clients being ex-prisoners in need of and using those services (SAAP 2000), than what would have been expected from the original survey.

From this evidence the homeless do seem to be contributing to the profile of need that characterises the prison population. Methods of study seem to be limiting the analytic quality of results, with prediction methods producing only associations and not causes, while cross-sectional studies encounter problems in ordering variables that go back in time.

Custody

Evidence from several studies, some quite old but others more recent, has been collated in various reviews (Haines 1990; Paylor 1995; Baldry et al 2002; McIvor and Taylor 2000). There is a consensus that housing needs escalate for many prisoners while in prison and at the point of release. For a variety of age groups, custody rates are increasing, so enlarging the population that faces the disruption caused by periods of imprisonment.

Accommodation loss

In 1991 the National Prison Survey showed that 19 per cent of prisoners had lost their tenancy or had to sell their property. Ten per cent would not be allowed back into their property (Walmsley et al 1992). Carlisle (1996) followed the housing careers of 61 prisoners from six men's and two women's prisons. Over half (38/61) the cases lost accommodation held previously (including 8/19 women and 10/15 from ethnic minorities). Most on short sentences lost their accommodation. Paylor (1995) interviewed 68 prisoners who had served a sentence of less than 18 months. After

release over 50 per cent experienced a deterioration in their housing standards compared to their situation before imprisonment.

Ex-prisoners may lose their homes for various reasons including housing and benefit regulations (Wilkinson 1988). Returning to the subsidised housing they may have held prior to imprisonment has been made problematic by rules restricting access to the relevant benefits beyond a short period of imprisonment. In the UK, prisoners' eligibility for housing benefit is time-limited (Griffiths 1997; Paylor 1995). In Australia, the opportunity to reduce rents for prisoners is frequently not taken up through ignorance, and eviction can result (Victorian Department of Human Services 2001).

Expectations, needs and pre -release preparation

In 1991 the National Prison Survey showed that only two thirds of owner-occupiers expected to be so on release and 9 per cent of them expected to live in a hostel compared with 16 per cent of those previously occupying rented accommodation, some of whom feared that they would have nowhere to go at all. Ten per cent of young prisoners expected to go to a hostel (Walmsley et al 1992)

In a recent UK survey of almost 400 prisoners, only 56 percent of men and 47 percent of women within a month of discharge knew where they would live on release. Recidivists (those with five or more previous prison sentences) were significantly more likely to have no accommodation than repeat offenders (those with between one and four previous prison sentences). Prisoners were found to be discouraged and unwilling to take effective action to address accommodation difficulties (HMIPP 2001). Women in accommodation difficulties may find themselves constrained to live with unsuitable or violent men (Eaton 1993; Wilkinson 1988).

Services for prisoners are failing to match the need. Prisoners are known to have a range of needs including drug misuse and mental health problems that will impact on their needs for resettlement services (HMIPP 2001; Travis et al 2001). The development of services is hampered by weaknesses in liaison between prison and community-based agencies in matters of healthcare (HMIPP 2001 para 6.4).

Baldry et al (2002) cite a recent study in Victoria (Australia), which found that pre-release preparation was highly variable across the system and that community-based agencies had not been funded to provide adequate levels of transitional support. Those not on parole were said to fall through the gaps, with no one in the correctional system responsible for assisting them with their housing needs. On the other hand, in the UK, difficulties in accessing suitable places have forced women on parole into unsatisfactory accommodation (Eaton 1993).

According to a NACRO (1992) survey, a majority of ex-prisoners who responded received no resettlement information or assistance prior to release. The National Prison Survey in 1991 (Walmsley et al 1992) found that that just half of those near release expected to return to their accommodation and six per cent had nowhere to go. Echoing a local study by Stanton (1982), thirteen per cent of prisoners nominated help in finding accommodation as the most useful service that they needed. In the recent HMIPP Joint Thematic survey only 14 per cent of men and 11 per cent of women indicated they had received any help with housing during their time in custody. Without appropriate and systematic support, black and minority ethnic groups tended to rely on family contacts (Carlisle 1996).

Housing outcomes of imprisonment

Assessment of outcome has been problematic for previous research, in that objective scales fail to take into sufficient account people's perceptions. Corden et al 1979 judged that overall, 25 per cent of prisoners experienced a decline in their previous standard of accommodation, and 12 per cent saw an improvement. Baldry et al (2002) note that this 'improvement' was challenged by many of the ex-prisoners, as the researcher's judgement of accommodation quality was based on an objective housing scale.

Evidence about the criminal justice experience of the homeless points to a strong association. A review of evidence in the US concluded that 41 per cent of the homeless had been in a penal institution (Jencks 1994). Similar findings had been made by a large UK government survey (Drake et al 1982). Retrospective research by Anderson et al (1993) found high rates of criminal justice contacts in an all-age national UK sample of the homeless.

Single homeless in a range of settings, by experience of criminal justice contacts (%) From Anderson et al 1993			
	Temporary accom.	Day centre	Soup run
YOI	9	18	21
Prison/remand centre	25	49	46

Recidivism among homeless ex-offenders

Banks and Fairhead (1976) in a study of short-term prisoners found that 66 per cent of homeless ex-prisoners were likely to be reconvicted within one year of release compared with 26 per cent of those who had found accommodation. A high level of drug and alcohol problems and mental disorders was discovered in the sample.

Corden, Kuipers and Wilson (1978) followed the housing careers of 107 male prisoners eligible for voluntary aftercare, finding that 39 per cent were homeless on release. The study found highly significant relationships between the standard of post-release accommodation and overall social isolation, and also between deterioration in quality of accommodation post release and levels of re-offending.

Running counter to the consensus, Baldry et al (2002) cite a study by Broadhurst and Maller (1990) analysing the correlates of recidivism among ex-prisoners in Western Australia who had been released following their first offence. Here, better quality of accommodation following release was not found to be associated with non-recidivism, except perhaps for indigenous offenders. However, housing was not a prime focus of the study.

Proximity risks

If ex-offenders return to locations from whence they came, this can re-ignite drug habits and offending (Travis et al 2001). In Carnaby's (1998) study of women ex-prisoners, drug problems were a factor in relation to housing; women wanted sole occupancy housing away from former associates. Such locations can be weakly defended against crime, thus increasing offending opportunities, and they become meeting points for offenders with similar experiences. The problems associated with particular locations are taken up by 'street clearing' campaigns that call for new exclusionary 'clean-ups' (Duneier 1999).

Women

Despite rising numbers in prison, research on the needs of women has been scarce (Paylor 1995). A review of women's offending has concluded that where men's arrest rates are high so too will be women's (Daly 1998). The forces that operate on men will have a proportionate effect on women. Thus rates of imprisonment for women will tend to rise if men's rise. Accordingly the accommodation needs of women offenders are set to increase in volume.

Wilkinson (1988) found that many women prisoners had been homeless upon entering prison or were in unstable housing arrangements. Women with no partners found it difficult to retain housing. Many women were constrained to return to situations of domestic violence to avoid homelessness.

Moreover, half of the women faced homelessness on release and several women who were homeless prior to their last sentence were re-imprisoned within months. Less than half the women could recall a post-sentence interview and such interviews were described by women as limited.

Baldry et al (2002) refer to a number of Australian studies that report the difficulties faced by women in achieving social reintegration, with accommodation very much at the centre of these concerns (Fabb 1991; Robson and Nancarrow 1991; Lewis and Hayes 1997; Carnaby 1998).

A number of studies implicate accommodation difficulties in drug-related fatalities. Shewan et al (2000) found that many female drug-related fatalities in a region in Scotland were ex-prisoners who had been released in the previous 12 months. Baldry et al (2002) cite similar findings in Victoria (Australia) by Davies and Cook (1998) indicating that most of the women who died shortly after release died of drug-related causes. Of these women, almost four in ten died in temporary accommodation such as the home of a friend, or a boarding house. The question is therefore whether better accommodation and support could have saved these lives.

Policies towards accommodating women offenders may be influenced by attitudes to motherhood. Exclusionary rules may be partly offset by policies towards women as mothers, which give some female offenders greater consideration and recognition. However, childless women are by definition unable to enjoy this relief.

Anderson et al (1993) give the following rates of criminal justice contacts for single homeless women.

Single homeless women, by experience of criminal justice contacts (%)			
	Hostels/B&B	Day centre	Soup run
YOI	5	8	10
Prison/remand centre	13	36	15

Sex offenders

Recent legislation on sex offenders in the US and the UK has contradictory elements: while registration requirements have demanded that offenders report their addresses, permission has been given for housing providers to exclude sex offenders from provision. Simply having a personal address can be problematic, never mind reporting it! Research has found that (Cowan et al 1999 and 2001; Cobley 2000):

- Faced by exclusion from other sectors, access to social housing has become a major issue for sex offenders.
- The priority accorded to children in social housing allocations means general shortages of accommodation can impact adversely on applications by those single tenants who are judged to be unsuitable for allocation to mixed population estates.
- The rise of vigilante action against alleged offenders adds to the pressure on agencies to exclude.

Implications

The research has a number of implications for understanding the structural and policy context.

Structural

One obstacle to preventing crime and accommodating offenders is a shortage of provision in a developing housing market. The needs of children and young people require priority attention. Historic changes in provision for mentally ill people have put pressure on accommodation in the community. Changes to the housing market in the US and UK have eliminated cheap (and historically not very salubrious) provision and increased competition for the residual accommodation available (Jencks 1994). Evidence suggests that poor quality housing absorbs a population that might otherwise be forced onto the street.

Policy

It is clear that an integrated policy on housing need is lacking in many countries with offenders encountering systematic obstacles and discrimination (Cowan and Fionda 1994). Services are not provided in sufficient quantity or quality to overcome the obstacles. Proximity risks have been given too little concerted attention and thought.

Baldry et al (2002, p.3) summarise the picture of needs as follows.

‘What has emerged consistently across time and continents, is that:

- a large minority of people being released from prison does not have suitable accommodation to which to go;
- pre-release information and support in securing accommodation are grossly inadequate;
- ex-prisoners and recidivists who are re-incarcerated point to lack of suitable housing as a key factor in their unsuccessful transition to outside life;
-
- there are particular subgroups amongst ex-prisoners, such as those with a mental illness; young unattached males serving short sentences, single women with children, who are more vulnerable and more likely to end up without adequate housing;
- social isolation is a core experience for many ex-prisoners who end up homeless or with unstable, unsuitable housing..’

Conclusion

It appears from a wide, if not very voluminous literature that offending and accommodation needs are consistently related. This association appears at a number of life stages; inevitably it takes a number of forms, when a child in poor housing, for example, is compared with an older ex-prisoner. The nature of the variables and the direction of apparent causation can alter, with housing seeming to have a causal effect in childhood and youth while for the older offender the fact of having offended affects subsequent access to housing.

There are glimpses of studies that demonstrate evidence of a causal mechanism with some degree of conviction (for example: Kolvin 1990, and Hagan and McCarthy 1997). Even here the picture is complex, as other variables are considered necessary to secure the final effect. For example, housing in childhood cannot be divorced from quality of parenting.

An amplification cycle was proposed as a way of interpreting the consecutive interplay of action and reaction over the life course. The question is whether the evidence is systematic enough to support that conclusion, particularly if it were argued in a strong sense (ie: that reaction is actually more powerful than action). There seem to be points at which amplification occurs, in the transition from prison, for example. However without further longitudinal studies it is not possible to do more than suggest that future research should be alert to processes of escalation as well as de-escalation.

Amplification is a useful concept that enables us to think about the effects of unsuccessful responses and interventions. In the next chapter promising or successful ones will be the subjects of discussion.

5. Meeting needs and reducing risks

Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the relationship between accommodation needs and offending suggesting that there are some causal links, not necessarily in one direction only, but sufficient to argue for targeted interventions that seek to improve accommodation outcomes and reduce specific risks.

This chapter reviews ways of addressing need and risk through the development of strategies that are sensitive to specific needs and can ensure that objectives are met.

The literature is not developed sufficiently to offer a firm guide either to strategists or to practitioners, apart from some work on specific provision, which in itself may be of limited scope. The following discussion concentrates instead on clearing some of the ground and establishing principles that may prove valuable for the future.

Aims of interventions

If risk reduction is a general aim, the aim of social integration is very much bound up with it. Having a place to call your own is part of social integration. One effect of transient accommodation or homelessness is an exclusion from services and activities that form basic, often unnoticed or overlooked parts of normal living, such as having a postal address. The homeless and poorly housed also have a range of needs that mark a further distance from social norms, in terms of addictions, mental and physical health problems and employment needs. Adding the proximity risks to the equation means having to consider yet another potential risk: through protective exclusions offenders are made to exist precariously on the social margins without any prospect of integration. The following list of aims is an attempt to stake out a territory for positive interventions.

Figure 5.1 The aims of accommodation interventions for offenders and at-risk groups

- To reduce risks of offending
- To improve accommodation outcomes
- To protect and restore socially integrative processes

Objectives

While aims should be a constant reference point, objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, related to the goal and time-limited. The aim should be to install effective preventive as well as interventionist measures at critical points in the life course. The threats posed by amplification can only be countered by a specific choice of objectives that meet the needs documented in the last chapter. A range of objectives for accommodation interventions can be suggested, some of which are oriented to social care, and others to specific risk management. Barry (1991) observed that the welfare goals of provision were being supplemented by an increasing emphasis on risk management. The figure below shows how such a range of objectives could be defined.

Figure 5.2. Objectives of accommodation interventions for offenders and at-risk groups

1. Promote access to and stability in suitable accommodation
2. Advise and support individuals and their networks
3. Facilitate care, education, training, or treatment (including services for mental health disorders and addictions)
4. Facilitate criminal justice programmes for offenders (reparation, offending behaviour, etc)
5. Distance likely offenders from opportunity
6. Distance likely offenders from anti-social influences
7. Promote appropriate surveillance
8. Develop participative methods that engage likely offenders and communities

A major question surrounds how to make the objectives compatible. Indeed it is possible to envisage potential conflicts between objectives that, for example, will mean providing help but also minimising all risks. The logic of offender registration schemes, for example, could have a definite impact on accommodation provision –but how would it mix with the other goals of provision, such as reintegration?

In addition, the time dimension is crucial: should objectives be long term, or short term - or both? What is the point at which support should be finally withdrawn? How can plans for finding settled ‘move-on’ accommodation be incorporated into strategies?

Strategies

This section analyses the policy and institutional context for accommodation interventions, such as the development of national, community and neighbourhood strategies. It argues that factors such as the housing market, housing allocations, benefits, community care, and regulations of public space are all important elements to be considered in a comprehensive strategy.

The strategic context

Strategic interventions should be designed not simply to plan direct services or to institute controls on offenders but to influence several agencies’ decision-making frameworks. A number of strategic elements have been closely considered in the literature.

Housing markets

The role of housing markets in shaping provision for vulnerable groups and offenders is generally accepted, though there are points for debate. As for example in parts of southern Europe, a supply of low-cost and low-standard housing may reduce overt homelessness but such conditions are far from helpful for the families who should be the targets of intervention- families with young children, women ex-prisoners, and so on (Burton et al 1989). A reduction in private rented accommodation has been blamed for a rise in homelessness in the US (Jencks 1994; Wittman 1993) while in the UK restructuring and rent rises in the private sector have been significantly linked to homelessness (Dowding and King 2000; Cowan 1997).

It is not fully clear how far levels of investment in public housing are a factor: in the US expenditure on public housing is said to have risen at a time when homelessness was increasing (Jencks 1994); in the UK certainly there are claims that the decline of public housing has fuelled homelessness (Dowding and King 2000; Eaton 1993) while turning the sector into a residual provision.

Though the interaction of market sectors is complex, strategic interventions to promote offender accommodation will need to be able to assess and if necessary influence the supply of accommodation.

Housing allocations

Segregated housing policies in the US have been found to create criminogenic conditions by allocating the needy to public housing projects (Sherman et al 1997). Community studies reviewed by Sherman and colleagues (1997) confirmed that impoverishment in the new urban ghettos reduced the stock of marriageable males, leaving unsupported mothers to care for children in areas with inadequate schools (Wilson 1987). Nor is this process confined to the US. The localisation of provision in the UK has failed to prevent marginalisation of the very needy. The wholesale export of 'problem families' by certain inner London boroughs, placing them in other areas, is an example of such exclusion (Dowding and King 2000; Daly 1996). Single parents, for example, have, in the recent past, been officially given a lesser priority for accommodation than married couples (Cowan 1997).

There is evidence that better allocation policies can reduce crime. In Baltimore an experimental housing project called *Moving to Opportunity* sought to address criminogenic needs by finding more suitable locations for poor families. The project evaluation showed that adolescent males in families that moved to low- or middle- poverty areas were significantly less likely to be arrested for violent crimes than those who stayed in public housing (Ludwig et al 2001). Other neighbourhood interventions have been shown to have positive outcomes in terms of stopping the decline of property values and maintaining population balances (Bottoms 1994).

Allocation policies that are sensitive to criminogenic need will avoid clustering needy families and individuals in undesirable accommodation.

Supporting access to housing

Once accommodation is lost, the likelihood of accessing housing on grounds of homelessness has been found to be bleak. In a UK study in 1991 (Prescott-Clarke et al 1994) only 2 per cent of new council tenants reporting homelessness stated that they had no previous accommodation in the area of application because they had been discharged from an institution. Paylor (1995) noted that access to council housing was a theme in his sample of local accommodation strategies. Prisoners on short sentences are vulnerable to a cycle of poor support, poor housing outcomes and recidivism (Carlisle 1996). A clear priority is to support the retention of accommodation wherever possible starting right from the moment of reception into prison.

Retention of accommodation

Yanetta and Third (1999) identified local examples of good practice in Scotland: agreements that single people who have been sentenced to over one year in prison and who give up their homes will be offered similar accommodation on release (Aberdeen City); agreements that offenders who give up tenancies will be guaranteed re-housing when they are released (East Renfrewshire).

Other jurisdictions have sought to grapple with these issues. For example, Baldry et al (2002, p.12) refer to policy in New South Wales (Australia):

'Public Housing policy of particular relevance to prisoners includes:

- the provisions for tenants to be absent for 3 months;
- the provision for a tenancy to be transferred to other household members if eligible ;
- the relinquishment of tenancy.....
- Public Housing policy specific to prisoners includes:
- the provision for reapplication for housing while in prison (but there is no datum on this)
- the provision for consideration for priority housing if public housing was relinquished while in prison.'

Accessing new accommodation

Many prisoners will want to access the normal housing market in preference to the supported housing sector and the role of housing advice centres is to build up contacts and to advise a whole range of offenders; Carlisle (1996) recommends the appointment of housing officers who can work specifically with prisoners. The recent HMIPP Joint Thematic report (2001) has shown how far there still is to go in providing a service that can overcome obstacles to accommodating ex-offenders, accessing local authority housing, for example.

Benefits

The design of benefits has been the subject of critical comment (SEU 1998). In the UK the exclusion of young people from access to benefits has been implicated in the rise of homelessness. The subsidisation of housing costs for the needy through benefits, in place of rent control, has led to housing fraud that enriches unscrupulous landlords (Dowding and King 2000). Prisoners have time-limited access to such housing benefit so that after a period they risk losing their previous accommodation. The impact of housing benefit changes in the 1990s was to reduce access to supported housing and to limit users to the restrictive option of high dependency care (Cheston 1996; Griffiths 1997).

It appears that cuts and exclusions can be short-sighted. Though benefit exclusions are aimed at reducing particular expenditures they can lead to unwanted outcomes if this means that costs are transferred to other parts of the system – temporary ‘last resort’ services, the criminal justice system and so on (for similar evidence, see SEU 2002). The lesson seems to be that benefit exclusions bring risks and unforeseen consequences. In contrast there are advantages to be expected from controlled benefits and advice services that provide a minimum income for all and encourage people to adjust their behaviour in order to raise their standard of living.

Zero tolerance and ‘street clearing’

The situational factors pressing the homeless towards criminal involvement have been analysed by researchers such as McCarthy and Hagan (1992). How can such criminogenic processes be checked? Though an evaluation of zero tolerance policing is beyond the scope of this review, the principle of clearing the street through closer regulation and active enforcement has had its advocates, who pointed to the lessons of ‘Broken Windows’ implying that signs of disorder prompt more disorder (Wilson and Kelling 1982). The question is how far such regulation provides a means to break up patterns of crime in ‘hot spots’, or how far it diminishes the capacity of the informal economy to act as a buffer against criminality (Duneier 1999). Enforcement against crime has been shown to amplify offending (Hagan and McCarthy 1997). The prosecution of status offending also

carries the risk of amplification if the only result is to send the offender back on the street with a motive to re-offend –as in the case of fines for begging (Anderson et al 1993). More seriously, if the strategy were to be escalated to expel or incarcerate the status offender, there would be a risk of disproportionate and self-defeating consequences.

Some tough policies in the US have also sought to set limits upon shelter use (Neuman 1994). Yet by taking youth off the street, welfare provision reduces situational pressures towards offending (Hagan and McCarthy 1997). Targeting needs-based services at the visibly homeless (as demonstrated by The Rough Sleepers Initiative in the UK) has been informed by needs assessments that uncovered the link between homelessness and imprisonment, but even so a circumscribed focus on the public unsheltered population may address symptoms rather than causes (Wardhaugh 2000).

Community care

The consequences of the closure of mental health institutions have been widely considered. The passing of the old asylum has created a vacuum which social provision has struggled to fill; hostels for this population have also suffered decline (Craig and Timms 1992; SEU 1998). One consequence has been a rise in the homeless population (Jencks 1994). Service provision has been problematic if local community budgets have been insufficient to meet need - as in London where until recently there was no central coordinating authority (Dowding and King 2000).

Another consequence has been the rise in mentally ill people in the prison population (Gunn 2000). Very high rates of mental disorder are reported in the US prison population (Peters and Steinberg 2000). It is suggested that 'self-medication' through drug misuse accounts for the significant rates of 'dual diagnosis' found among prisoners, which presents real difficulties for treatment.

It is apparent that a policy of providing accommodation for the homeless or ex-prisoners must be informed by a full appreciation of their mental health needs, and the availability of placements and services in the health sector will be a factor in determining how best to organise the supply of services to the vulnerable and at-risk.

Proximity risks and protective controls

Controlling proximity risks has risen up the legislative agenda as the needs of victims have been increasingly acknowledged. It is clear that the homelessness legislation, for example, failed to offer a remedy to victims of racial harassment (Cowan 1997). The welfare and protection of the offender's family is also a salient consideration (Paylor 1995).

There is already a literature on registration of offenders that will not be discussed here in any detail. In addition controls on movement and place have been strengthened by the introduction in the UK of Antisocial Behaviour Orders in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and boundary controls on offenders' movements in the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000. Plans for accommodation will be increasingly based on assessments of proximity risks that should be objective and proportionate to the risk of harm. More fundamentally, there is a question about how crucial accommodation location is in the context of other risks that are based on mobility and communication such as employment location, travel and holidays, socialising, and internet access. Brantingham and Brantingham (1984) observed that a major guide to risk lies in the offender's mental map of different places that contain opportunities. It is this map above all that should be the target of risk assessment.

The extension of risk assessment on an objective basis could inform public education that seeks to outflank the fundamental opposition that has long been found to community placements for offenders (Rolph 1970; Piat 2000).

National initiatives

The development of highly managed and targeted public services can mean that people who have multiple needs fall between the stools (SEU 1998). Poorly coordinated services will fail the needy (Carlen 1996). National initiatives, examples of which are more visible in the UK than the US, represent a way of attacking major problems in a coordinated manner. However the lesson of experience seems to be that initiatives should be comprehensive and sustained if they are to avoid dealing only with symptoms and failing to address causes.

The Rough Sleepers Initiative has been managed by the Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions. It was set up in response to the high number of people sleeping rough in the early 90s. It funded hostel spaces, a Winter Shelter Programme, move-on accommodation, outreach workers to work with people on the streets, and resettlement services. It began in London and was later extended to other cities that were required to bid for inclusion in the initiative.

Evaluation revealed that it faced a challenge in managing hostel provision and resettlement so that people move on and create spaces in hostels for new cases. In the first phase one third of hostel leavers went into insecure housing arrangements.

In the second phase, consortia were set up to coordinate work across geographical zones, including police, local authorities and mental health services. It succeeded in finding accommodation for many rough sleepers and lowering the street homeless tally, resettling 4500 hostel residents (Randall and Brown 1993; SEU 1998). However, evidence from a study in London on tenancy outcomes for rough sleepers showed that 13 per cent were successfully and 16 percent were unsuccessfully resettled (Kennett 1999 p52; Dane 1998). The high rate of tenancy breakdown was acknowledged by the Social Exclusion Unit (1998). The need for support and specialist help to achieve successful resettlement for rough sleepers came through clearly from the studies.

The complexity of national initiatives for the homeless has been highlighted by the Social Exclusion Unit (1998), which identified four other schemes run by a total of three departments. An important lesson was to consider how this division of responsibility could be better handled in future so that services were coordinated more effectively. Interdepartmental coordination is an important feature of the new policies foreshadowed by the Social Exclusion Unit (2002) in its report on the needs of ex-prisoners.

Local strategies

The advantages of local coordination to address the needs of offenders have been widely recognised (Conway 1999). However the strength of local arrangements is conditioned by central and national support for them.

Joint agency accommodation forums have been in existence in the UK for some time, though in the 1990s they became optional. Yanetta and Third (1999) reported local examples in Scotland, including Glasgow, where a joint police, housing and social work protocol covers the work of a prison-based housing caseworker attached to the local prison social work unit. A structured approach to planning will ensure that key agencies are all included: though representation was wide, Paylor (1995) discovered that some prisons were not involved in forums!

It is clear that the significance of local forums is determined by central policy. After there was a devolution of control to the localities in the mid-90s it was found that thirty-three probation services in England and Wales took part in a local accommodation forum, leaving seven without representation (Grimshaw and Salmon 1999). In some areas there were multiple forums with local or particular interests. Forums were reported to meet mainly on a quarterly basis. Significant topics of discussion included:

Service 3. Finalised accommodation strategy; developing practice guidelines for substance misusers and for tenant participation; allocation of Local Authority stock for hostel move-on; multi-agency recording of unmet need; development bids and proposals.

Service 13. *Supporting People*, homelessness statistics (and lobbying DETR about them), identifying the total district revenue for supported housing.

Service 15. Housing and Community Case Development Officer; Capital Allocation project bids; bids for money to research housing and employment needs of young people.

From the accommodation provider's perspective, forums can be perceived as effective where probation services look to engage partners in their forward planning. However, a number of responses indicated that they were mainly about information sharing, rather than strategic or managerial functions. In fact only 18 services reported that the probation service actually took a lead role in a forum.

While schemes of this kind can promote communication, significant changes will be based on strategic assessment and planning that can successfully negotiate access to joint funding. It is not clear that such an approach has been tried before the advent of the *Supporting People* programme in the UK, which will create a local pool of funding for housing the vulnerable, including offenders.

Nonetheless, some key principles have emerged from a study of multi-agency services for single homeless people in Bristol (Pannell and Parry 1999):

Strategic forums

Mutual understanding among agencies

Adequate and reliable flow of resources

Adequate supply of accommodation

Inclusive approach to work with the voluntary sector

Avoidance of reliance on key individuals

Appropriate benefit policies

User choice

Integration of national organisations into projects (even if their performance results differ from national norms as a consequence of their participation)

International experience suggests that the trend towards liberalisation of markets is widespread, creating public service 'quasi-markets' and stimulating the growth of larger agencies. There is a risk that the resulting structures could stifle innovation and flexibility (Edgar et al 1999). In contrast it should be the aim of strategies to encourage innovation and to ensure that the service packages actually needed by offender groups are delivered.

Service provision

In this section the principles underlying practice in the field of service provision will be explored. It will look at the assessment of needs at both strategic and individual level, pre-court provision, the significance of risk, the planning of flexible provision, and the time limits set for probation or parole aftercare. Available outcome data will also be discussed but it should be noted that this evidence is uneven (McIvor and Taylor 2000).

Assessment and referral

Assessments of individual need should be done systematically and the user encouraged to give a subjective assessment (May 1999). In the absence of standard tools, a housing needs assessment tool has been developed by the National Probation Service. It is being used by a number of local authorities and supported housing providers as the basis for referrals from criminal justice agencies. It seeks to establish a common language to promote communication across the housing and criminal justice systems (see contents below).

Housing needs assessment – outline (taken from NPS, 2001)

Housing history
Current housing
Behaviour – including offending and impact on victims
Personal profile-age, gender, etc.
Emotional state and mental health
Physical health –addictions, etc.
Other vulnerabilities- care history, etc.
Financial circumstances
Self/public protection-triggers and profile
Skill/abilities/potential-independent living skills

The list of topics shows how needs and risks form a combined agenda that must enter into a coherent plan. In addition, Wincup (2002) recommends that standardised assessments of risk should be applied in the hostel sector, a point endorsed by the HMIP (2001) report on voluntary sector provision.

Local planning would benefit from the collation of information about needs and referrals that has hitherto been patchy or non-existent (Fraser et al. 1992; Grimshaw and Salmon 1999). McIvor and Taylor (1995, p.53) concluded that:

‘Simple but rigorous systems should be developed to collect information about the levels of homelessness among discharged prisoners and offenders subject to supervision by the social work department. This should be augmented by careful monitoring of referrals to the projects to improve local analysis of need and demand and facilitate planning.’

The link between need assessment and referral should be clarified. Minority ethnic groups have been found to rely on their families and a proportion encounter difficulties in accessing accommodation (Carlisle 1996). In a specific study Todd (1996) found that referrals of such groups

to local provision fell below expectations based on case numbers. Only investigations of need can uncover the real stories behind the numbers.

Pre-court provision and community penalties

The association of remands with accommodation difficulties is well –established (McIvor and Taylor 2000). Intervention while a case is pending presents opportunities for constructive change.

The use of remand foster care schemes has produced encouraging results (Fry 1993).

In a small experimental study the Homeless Release Project in California has been shown to reduce recidivism in number and seriousness of offences. The care plan agreed with the offender included accommodation, medical and drug-related needs (Castellano and Riker 2000).

Bail support offers a way of stabilising accommodation that is valued by offenders and welcomed by the courts. Valued services added to the accommodation and surveillance package include advice on benefits and employment, family contact, drug services, and move-on accommodation (Robinson 1997).

Schemes that offer access to a range of supervised accommodation are a promising way forward.

Meeting need for different risk groups

Studies of provision for those on parole or probation have inevitably focused on the risk posed by these offenders. ‘Halfway houses’, as they are called in the US, may also deal with a variety of offenders with different statuses such as prisoners about to be released or on prison leave. Working out how effective they have been has posed difficult questions. For example, characteristics of the residents such as prior legal record, older age, employment record and education have been associated with successful completion of the residential programmes. Building on such findings a study of provision specifically for probationers involving a programme of support addressed to needs such as employment, drug misuse and life skills showed that just less than a third of 156 subjects were successfully discharged (Hartmann et al 1994). Compared with the unsuccessful discharges, the successful group were less likely to be arrested in the next seven years. Worryingly African-Americans were more likely to be re-arrested regardless of how successfully they completed the programme. This careful study points out how difficult it is to tease out effectiveness when clients and programme characteristics are so diverse. It also implies that ethnicity should be a feature of the needs and outcome assessments undertaken by accommodation strategists, who should modify the provision where appropriate.

A review of studies of community-based correctional treatment centres in the US revealed that positive effects were not being consistently achieved. In a comparative study based on this finding, house arrest was cheaper and apparently produced better results in a one-year follow-up (Sandhu et al 1993). Not surprisingly, another broad review has stated that there is inconclusive evidence about the effectiveness of the ‘half-way house’ (Sherman et al 1997).

If offenders present a range of risks, it follows that risk considerations will be an element in the design of resources. The probation hostel in the UK serves the needs of those on orders and those on bail. According to recent information from the Home Office, there are currently 100 approved hostels in England and Wales. These provide a total of about 2,260 beds. About 55 per cent of these beds are for people on bail, that is, people who are waiting for their case to come to court or who have been convicted and are awaiting sentence. There are 67 male only hostels, five female only

hostels, and 28 hostels that provide mixed accommodation. Hostels can impose supervised night-time curfews. The curfew can be made to cover other times of the day if that is a requirement of the court or it is a licence condition for offenders on release from prison. It provides 24 hour staff cover, with always at least two staff on duty. National Standards published in 2000 emphasise the hostels' responsibilities for addressing offending behaviour and for public protection. However, cases from some categories of offender risk, such as those who have committed offences against children, may still in fact be excluded (Wincup 2002).

Wincup (2002) comments that, despite being in existence for over a century, hostels for offenders have received little academic, political or media attention. Historically, there have been differences in hostel provision, in matters such as the extent of restriction of liberty and the various programmes provided by hostels (HMIP 1998). Nonetheless, inspection findings suggest that hostel provision managed in accordance with national standards achieves the objectives of completing orders successfully and preventing re-offending (HMIP 1998). High levels of staff contact combined with surveillance technology address the need for supervision. There is evidence that a 'What Works' approach has influenced the positive development of initiatives to promote 'pro-social modelling' in hostels (Loney et al 2000). Mc Ivor and Taylor (2000) raise some issues about possible differences in need between convicted offenders and residents on bail. A hostel pathfinder project under development by the National Probation Service will explore these and other dimensions of practice. However, it would be wrong to assume that supervised hostels are a model for services designed for ex-prisoners. It makes little sense for intensive services to be open access. The supply of hostel placements should be a function of risk assessments within the probation caseload targeting the highest risk.

It follows that the acceptance of medium and low risk probationers within hostels should be carefully checked and controlled, and alternative independent or supported accommodation should be available for such groups. There is now growing evidence that new home-based technology such as 'tagging' can be an effective means of preventing re-offending and protecting the public. If successfully implemented, new technology for surveillance including CCTV, voice recognition and tagging will make the hostel increasingly less necessary especially for lower risk groups and will give extra options for oversight of independent accommodation. However, it may be that in future the more difficult part of the task will be to access the accommodation element and not to install the equipment. Technology will be useless without some means of establishing an accommodation base –unless the electronic surveillance of the homeless were to form the next bizarre stage of social control!

Accommodation, support and a positive integrated lifestyle

Suitable accommodation is more than a physical arrangement; it becomes a social expression of its inhabitants. Ordinary people want to live with dignity and to choose their social connections, with co-habitees or friends. There is consistent evidence that offenders want independent accommodation and do not wish to live in managed hostels for the needy (Paylor 1995; Carlisle 1996). Probation officers have concurred in preferring independent accommodation for many of their clients (McIvor and Taylor 1994; Andrews 1979). These views tend to support the emerging assumption that hostel provision can best be described as temporary and emergency accommodation: it is not an end-point but a beginning.

In considering prospects for re-integration, hostels can be criticised as inflexible and segregating, with a funding base that fails to move along with the needs of the user. Provision has been developed that seeks to bridge the gap between traditional hostels and the wider housing market.

‘Floating support’ and ‘move-on’ accommodation are part of this attempt to achieve re-integration in a purposeful fashion.

Traditionally, ‘supported housing’ meant a housing provision that also gave support to the residents. ‘Floating support’ is defined as support that is provided wherever the user is housed. It is an internationally discussed concept that involves a clear distinction between the home and the support (Carlisle 1996; Conway 1999). The support is delivered to the individual who occupies any suitable address. Offenders can change accommodation while still accessing a support package. The advantages of flexibility in accessing provision of different kinds are seen as an advantage. Individual preferences for accommodation can in theory be met.

In principle, this means that support is available beyond fixed and designated accommodation for offenders, such as hostels, and can be continued up to the point where it is no longer needed. For example, tenancies that might otherwise be refused can, in theory, be more easily accessed through promising support, and thereafter the new tenancy can be sustained through a flexible system of support. If there is a failure the support can still continue in a fresh setting. However, it had only begun to be implemented across the social housing field from the mid-90s, thus limiting the scope for assessment of its long-term impact.

‘Move-on’ accommodation is intended to provide a stable and independent housing base for those placed in temporary accommodation. As properties are eventually assigned to users, there is a need for new properties to be added to the pool. Hence good inter-agency working is essential for ‘move-on’ and reintegration to occur.

The Timble Housing project is an example of a unified project with a range of provision. It was set up as an independent charity working with the probation service in West Yorkshire to rehouse and support single homeless offenders (Paylor 1995). It was found to offer: a lodgings scheme; hostels of up to six beds, supported by staff; and stable ‘move-on’ accommodation in the form of single tenancies. The project had been designed to result in the achievement of independent housing for its users. Over time there has been a move to smaller units with more privacy: ‘shared housing’ (two-bed flats with single bedrooms); ‘trainer flats’ (one -bed flats, accessed following a stay in a bed-sitter) and ‘single tenancies’ (following successful resettlement). All the accommodation is dispersed, thus avoiding the stigma of property designated for offenders (Sutton 2001).

There are other collective options, such as alcohol- and drug-free (ADF) housing in the US, which bring together people with similar needs and give them opportunities for self-management (Wittman 1993). Particular designs of accommodation can be adapted to meet needs for support while advancing independence. ‘Core and cluster’ designs, for example, allow for accommodation units to be placed around a core base.

Informal solutions may have significant lessons for the public services. In the absence of sensitive service provision, communities of homeless ex-offenders who are allowed to make a living in the informal economy give one another mutual social support reducing the more serious crime potential of their situation (Duneier 1999).

Baldry et al (2002, p.3) conclude from international evidence on accommodating ex-prisoners that

- ‘sending ex-prisoners to ex-prisoner hostels may be a continuation of the labelling practices of the prison and that, although 24 hour supported hostels are necessary for some ex-prisoners as a transition to the community, a greater variety of accommodation, especially self-contained units, with support being available *in situ*, be provided.’

Meeting needs in placements: the functions of support

The idea of 'floating support' was developed to distinguish methods of delivering support. But what is contained in the service labelled 'support'? How far is it concerned with housing issues, like budgeting or fittings, and how far with more general needs, like accessing services, challenging discrimination, or reducing isolation? How far is it a function of a relationship?

If a placement is found, a major priority is to provide access to services. A challenge in providing for offenders is to give them access to a normal lifestyle especially if there are court-imposed restrictions on what they can do. Boredom is a threat in conditions that limit opportunity (HMIP 1998, 2001). Support can be designed to encourage and facilitate access to services.

There is a group of prisoners who are especially likely to benefit from supported accommodation. Corden and Clifton (1983) focused on socially isolated prisoners with high accommodation needs who were also unemployed and significantly mentally disordered. Support was especially welcomed by this group, who were also faced with overcoming discrimination against them. Support staff need to be advocates as much as carers if external prejudices are to be tackled.

Support can be seen as something practical and emotional that emerges from normal relationships of trust and reciprocity. Carlisle (1996) notes that, in her study, support provided by partners and relatives helped prisoners retain accommodation; equally, lack of support and relationship breakdown led to the loss of accommodation. An equivalent from a responsible agency would take the form of positive and sustained help and advice. Support in this sense is recognisable to the everyday observer-not very mysterious. In her hostels study, Wincup (2002) describes practical help –with benefit claims, for example- and emotional support – a 'listening ear' that was always approachable, and a willingness to allow residents a second chance. Workers felt that residents should be treated respectfully, presented with choices and offered support to achieve goals. However, specialist services, such as counselling, for example, could only be accessed externally, not supplied by hostel staff.

In principle, support should be tailored to the needs of particular groups and situations. Accessing accommodation after a period of homelessness can be a period of great emotional vulnerability (SEU 1998). In a study of floating support for young homeless people (Day et al 1997) young people mentioned needs for information, advocacy, mentoring, life-goal planning, and specialist help with money management and sexual health, in addition to housing that felt 'safe'. It appears that it would be straightforward to come up with lists for other user groups that were equally specific. A collation of assessments using the new standardised tool (NPS 2001) could serve the purpose of identifying a range of typical needs.

The concept of support emerging from the study by Day et al (1997) is centred on the user, resembling a 'safety net' that enables the user to survive failure and regain access to mainstream services. In that report the concept is translated into an outline of a general service – a 'Floating Support Agency' - that would assist 'difficult to place' young people but touches various systems of referral such as the warning or cautioning young people for offences. This proposal is more than a refinement of housing management; it is closer to the idea of a mental health support service or of support from personal advisers to gain employment. A similar breadth is implied by other studies of support (SEU 1998; GLARG 2000). A service could continue to offer something valid even if the

housing needs were resolved. From this perspective it is therefore difficult to arrive at a definition that is tied simply to housing.

The notion of a support worker was advocated by a prisoner interviewed in a recent study.

‘Housing has always been a basic need first, then you can start to establish a life....most prisoners should have a support or case worker, inside and out, someone with a bit of clout, more than the probation service can offer.’

John, prisoner in HMP Brixton, quoted in Greater London Authority Research group (2000) p46

A key question to be resolved is how far the protocols for such support are designed to attain the public protection objectives of the agencies providing support and supervision, particularly if the support is in effect delivered at arm’s length from a managed hostel or a probation office. In an inspection of voluntary provision the importance of communication and liaison between the probation officer and the project staff about compliance with statutory requirements has been emphasised (HMIP 2001). Yanetta and Third (1999) described multi-agency arrangements in Scotland to allocate housing to sex offenders. In Manchester a Tenancy Compliance and Support scheme has been developed through a partnership of the housing department and the probation service. It provides intensive management and support for high-risk ex-offenders involving home visits to see if there are signs that the risk of re-offending has increased (SEU 2002).

In Scotland McIvor and Taylor (1995) found that residents in supported accommodation valued its structure and welcomed the chance of a breathing space. Living in dispersed accommodation meant coping with greater responsibility than when living in a communal setting. In this study, of 74 leavers, a tenth returned to prison, a fifth ‘disappeared’ and over a third were asked to leave owing to rent arrears or rule infringements. The authors conclude that despite these unsatisfactory outcomes the projects were valued by residents and had considerable potential which was hindered by poor funding and planning.

Medium and long term outcomes

A focus on outcome requires a willingness to make forward plans that meet the full duration of need. Services for offenders tend to be time-limited, yet the cut-off points pay scant attention to the timescales needed for social reintegration (Travis et al 2001; Carlen 1996; HMIP 2001). Fraser et al. (1992) discovered a shortage of move-on accommodation for those in hostels or supported accommodation, emergency accommodation and provision in rural areas. Appropriate move-on accommodation for hostel residents was also a shortage found in the studies by McIvor and Taylor (1995) and Carlisle (1996). The time scales for drug treatment need to recognise the chronic nature of abuse and the high risk of relapse but there is evidence of undue reliance on short term funding (Kothari et al 2002).

Part of the problem is that agency timescales are led by managerial targets specific to one agency and not shared with others. If there was a clearer continuum of responsibilities so that the needs of ex-offenders could be placed more strongly on to the agenda of agencies other than probation for example it would be possible to envisage more extended and appropriate time scales. For many groups of offenders there is also a very high official outcome expectation- avoiding reconviction within two years, for example- that bears little explicit relationship with service input over the relevant period.

Another requirement is an information system that records outcomes, yet this system may be lacking or uneven. In a national survey of 40 local probation services in England and Wales (Grimshaw and Salmon 1999), forms for monitoring accommodation outcomes varied between detailed records on individual clients and summary data of the kind required by the Home Office. The focus seemed to be on exit data rather than long-term outcome. Despite the significance placed by national policy on crime reduction, only two services had access to a recent statistical breakdown of re-offending rates during a probation-funded placement.

Services were asked if they routinely recorded any evidence about what happens after placements have finished, such as unplanned movements, return to custody, movements into other housing situations, or homelessness.

Table Specific outcomes routinely recorded by local probation services in England and Wales, 1999 (sample N =40)

Outcome	Services
Return to custody	27
Movements into other supported housing	27
Movements into independent housing	27
Unplanned movements	26
Homelessness	24

Twenty-one stated that they had other information about outcomes or effectiveness, ranging from evaluation reports to information contained in standard Home Office quarterly returns.

Particular needs

Childhood and youth

Policy and practice should be aimed at improving home conditions, supporting parenting, and promoting non-intrusive surveillance for children through family support schemes and supervised activities (Graham and Bennett 1995).

Initiatives will need to target the multiple exclusion of young people who pass through welfare and penal placements. Better local employment schemes would reduce the need for young people to leave home to find work. Community –based schemes with lodgings are recommended as an answer to youth homelessness (Stockley et al 1993). Another option is the foyer concept, which brings together services and accommodation in one location. Small scale evaluations of recent work by foyers with young people at risk of offending, which has been funded by charitable grants, imply that the potential of foyers may depend on good interagency cooperation and on harnessing peer influences productively; it will be important to determine how far offenders and non-offenders can form a balanced mix in this kind of provision (Foyer Federation 2002). Further evaluations will be needed to demonstrate long term outcomes. Leaving care schemes that support disadvantaged young people have been found to deliver positive outcomes (Biehal et al 1995).

Women

Women ex-prisoners have difficulties creating positive social connections post-release that may be associated with their inability to secure suitable housing (Fabb 1991; Robson and Nancarrow 1991; Lewis and Hayes 1997). Work on women's needs has drawn attention to positive principles that emphasise the value of understanding and support, the merits of a participative approach, and the need to consider extended support. Eaton (1993) commends the approach of UK mutual aid groups such as WIP.

Women suffer from the disparities in provision that favour services for men, including mixed hostels that can be unsuitable for women. A wider range of provision should allow choice and offer women opportunities regardless of the gender composition of a particular setting (Wincup 1996). Recent investigations of residential work with women offenders give some pointers towards good practice. Placements should be available that allow women to care for children. Support work should be based on a recognition that women are vulnerable to violence, have often experienced abuse and have different typical patterns of offending from their male counterparts. Women need empathy from those who understand their histories, challenges and prospects. (Wincup 2002). Specialist resources should be accessed where appropriate. Security features are important if women are to be protected from violent men (Wincup 2001).

Time limits on support for women are a theme explored in the literature. A review of policy in Victoria (Australia) cited by Baldry et al (2002, p.14) has suggested that current limits on support periods reduce their effectiveness and force women to cycle in and out of crisis and/or further incarceration.

Dutreix (2001, p.3) states that:

‘[Women ex-offenders’] crime rates can be reduced further as a result of a different housing policy. However [it] needs to address the issue from a broad and holistic perspective. This would include increasing public housing stocks, further funding for emergency and transitional accommodation and providing appropriate support services’.

Sex offenders

There is a shortage of research on options for accommodating sex offenders (Cobley 2000). A multi-agency approach to the management of risk will increasingly be needed if sex offenders are excluded from provision and targeted by vigilantes. There is evidence that even approved hostels have exclusion policies (McIvor and Taylor 2000). Providers will need to be closely consulted if adequate quantities of suitable accommodation are to be accessed in a timely fashion. Legislation in the 90s left such offenders with a minimal set of housing rights but there is evidence that, through issuing positive guidance on interagency working, blanket exclusions have been avoided (Cowan et al 1999). Controls upon residents through tenancy conditions could be used positively in the future. The Tenancy Compliance and Support scheme in Manchester represents one pathway towards supervision and support in a community setting (SEU 2002).

Placement-based CCTV will be used increasingly as a means of surveillance for this group. However the location of this facility may by itself lead to the clustering of offenders, leading to undesirable networking. Policies of dispersal that may appeal to professionals on risk management grounds are constrained by the limited availability of managed provision (Cowan et al 1999; Adams 2001). Currently specific voluntary sector provision is functioning as accommodation of last resort for those excluded by approved hostels (HMIP 2001). With public concern high, even prison accommodation is being adapted to this purpose (Cobley 2000).

Research on residential treatment of sex offenders indicates that this provision has been used for a highly deviant group whose long-term outcomes in individual cases can be problematic. In other respects the quantity and quality of treatment -particularly in changing attitudes- compared favourably with other non-residential community-based treatment (Hedderman and Sugg 1996). Practice issues have been explored with several interesting issues emerging: the need for public education; protocols for sharing information; and contact with the private sector (Allen and Sprigings 1999).

Drug misusers

Services should be designed to take advantage of key transitions in the drug misuser's career. For example, arrest referral schemes can be an opportunity to access accommodation services (Dorn and Seddon 1996). However residential provision can fail if there is inadequate preparation before referral (Boother 1991). A recent official report observes that local strategies should give proper attention to drug misuse by homeless young people (Drugscope and the DPAS 2002).

Integrating support services, for example, by placing a specialist worker on site, can help hostels to access appropriate community-based resources. In planning their work drug workers in this setting derive benefit from negotiations about the boundaries of their role in relation to probation's coercive functions (Newburn 1998).

In the field of prison aftercare a recent review of treatment has identified a shortage of literature (Kothari et al 2002). It is known that release from prison brings a significant risk of drug fatalities (Shewan et al 2000; Seaman et al 1998). Support after release is associated with better outcomes in terms of drug misuse and re-offending especially when the first part of a programme was begun in prison (Inciardi 1996; Hiller et al 1999; Pelissier et al 2001). The project studied by Hiller involved assistance with accommodation and anti-relapse support recognising that ex-prisoners faced risks in returning to their old haunts. A small number of comprehensive programmes to treat substance-abusing offenders have been trialed in the US and housing needs feature in their wide range of service objectives (e.g.:Rossman et al 1999). Residential treatment programmes in the UK have demonstrated success in reducing offending and drug misuse (Gossop et al 1999).

In England and Wales the National Probation Directorate of the Home Office will be piloting post-release hostels for short-term prisoners with histories of drug misuse. There will be up to five hostels in the pilot, one for women and four for men, planned to be open in summer 2002. The hostels will provide intensive support to this high-risk group through the first few months following release from prison (Drugscope 2001).

Mental disorder

The general aim of policy in the UK has been to provide care and treatment for mentally disordered offenders in health and social service settings (Dept of Health/Home Office 1992). Finding places for offenders with mental disorder has been the subject of considerable reflection, though the empirical literature concentrates on secure hospitals and similar settings (Dabbs and Isherwood 2000).

Working with mentally disordered offenders in the community is challenging when many have resisted treatment in the past. Professionals are advised to adopt a structured approach that

prioritises risk factors. The organisation of residential settings forms part of this attempt to provide treatment within clear structures- for example, using behaviour contracts (Lamb et al 1999).

Joint working among agencies is a particular theme in the literature (Southern 1999; McIvor and Taylor 2000). Hostel and community-based accommodation services have been studied in the US and the UK. In the US, recent experience of community –based programmes has reinforced the case for sound interagency agreements (McFarland and Blair 1995; Roskes and Feldman 1999). Across the Atlantic, Elliott House, which has a medical team, offers a unique service, and has a low rate of offending while in residence, an outcome promoted by peer support (Brown and Geelan 1998; Geelan et al 2000); this is similar to the Effra Trust, a voluntary sector service with 39 beds, which has produced some encouraging outcomes (Robertson and Gunn 1998).

Selection policy is a major issue, particularly in considering whether applicants solely with personality disorder should receive this type of provision (Brown and Geelan 1998). The formation of therapeutic communities for women with personality disorder has also been advocated (Kennedy et al 1997). Southern (1999) emphasises the need for prisoners on remand and short sentences to be eligible for sentence management and care schemes.

Other studies have described diversionary services and provision, for example, at St Christopher's Bail Hostel (Staite et al 1994; Nadkarni et al 2000). One benefit from collaboration is the training of hostel staff who can then more insightfully support residents. Chung et al (1998a) report that a bail accommodation scheme for mentally disordered offenders accepted 98 people, of whom 46 successfully completed their stay. Staff turnover was one problem; another was a difficulty in agreeing with psychiatrists whether transfer to hospital was necessary. In another study analysing outcomes of diversion after 6 months, Chung et al (1998b) found that while mentally disordered offenders' quality of life was impoverished when compared with a general population, hostel residents had better life experiences in terms of relationships and opportunities than prison or hospital inmates but worse than those in private households.

Given the significant rate of mental disorder among remand prisoners there is an argument for partnership arrangements to be generalised across the hostel system.

Resettlement initiatives

Further information is likely to emerge from UK initiatives under way or in the pipeline. A comprehensive concept of resettlement implies that a number of needs should be addressed. Pathfinder resettlement projects, some of them run in partnership with non-government agencies, are trying out initiatives with short-term offenders emerging from six prisons . Homelessness is one of the major issues that will be targeted, alongside long-term unemployment, and drug and alcohol addiction. Evaluation of the Pathfinders is under way (Home Office Circular 35/99).

The international picture

It is clear that the UK is not alone in facing the challenge of meeting diverse needs that can only be met by a coordinated policy of measured social integration. Travis (2001) and Petersilia (2001) have emphasised the huge challenge of re-integrating the US prison population. Baldry et al (2002) reviewing international evidence on accommodating ex-prisoners state that:

‘there is almost a total lack of coordination / integration amongst appropriate government and non-government agencies in this matter’

Yet there is an accepted research vacuum. For example, in New South Wales (Australia) the absence of empirical research has inhibited policy development and funding allocations. An inquiry by the NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee on *Law and Order Into Crime Prevention Through Social Support* (2000) could only call for an evaluation to take place before being able to recommend new funding.

If there is one conclusion to be drawn from this review it is that the level of international research barely matches the extent and diversity of need shown by various studies.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

Gaps and opportunities

The collection of literature on offending and accommodation needs has been a challenging process which identified relatively scattered sources even in countries such as the US and the UK that have extensive criminological communities. The review's concentration on these countries has, however, allowed some useful comparisons to be made, which has shed light on the gaps in a 'What Works' literature of similar international scope.

Both in relation to needs or services, lack of research has hampered attempts to address the problems experienced by offenders. Despite the persuasive evidence cited by Sherman et al 1997, it is not at all apparent that interventions to meet housing needs have been incorporated in a coherent 'What Works'. The research challenges for the future encompass needs and services alike.

Need and risk - a framework for theory and research

The life course

Though hardly definitive, the literature findings tend to support the claim that a life course approach can help to identify transitions that demonstrate criminogenic processes. The particular causal relationship between offending and accommodation needs is conditioned by the stage which a vulnerable individual has reached.

For young people, housing deprivation and early departure from home represent pathways towards offending, posing particular challenges to social control. The distinction between primary needs (connected with an individual's behaviour) and secondary needs (resulting from responses to behaviour) was fruitful in showing the part played by social reaction in shaping outcomes.

In particular, it is necessary to appreciate the impact of street regulation and enforcement on the most visible sections of the homeless. Issues of offending should be understood in the context of an array of social controls. While a consistent spiral of amplification through an individual's life course seems to be a worst-case scenario, there is evidence of escalation of need, and in some cases, of renewed offending, at points when certain interventions occur, such as placements in care, police charging of homeless offenders, or imprisonment.

Accommodation needs

Exploring relationships between offending and housing needs in this review has been complicated by the problem of defining needs in different contexts. It appears for example that the closure of bad housing may have played some part in worsening street homelessness. One need has therefore displaced another, making for a paradoxical kind of progress. In future research, it will therefore be important to avoid being tied to simple operational definitions of accommodation need and to explore needs in new contexts.

The review has identified several key components of need. In future it will be crucial to define needs in relation to community, group and individual circumstances. For example, young people in poor housing conditions can face not only deprivation but also family abuse and neighbourhood adversities. The safety of women, and their greater child care responsibilities, are major considerations in determining what constitutes need for them. Similarly, the needs of communities and victims enter into assessments of need. Conclusions about sex offenders' needs will seek the

most appropriate balance between considerations of risk and of social re-integration. Drug misuse is affected by the social network linked to locations and residences.

Empirical studies of causation

A good deal of the available research is cross-sectional with some retrospective elements; the best involves longitudinal follow-ups and comparison groups. These methodological choices have been partly imposed by real practical difficulties. The problems of conducting research on mobile populations are daunting but not insuperable. Above all, it is time to develop coherent approaches to research that can capture the effects of transient situations and investigate the different living options, including street –based ones, available to the needy. Understanding the complex sequences of offending and accommodation needs demands accurate measures that take into account the stages of the life course. It is interesting that McCarthy and Hagan (1992) have made progress in research on causation by focusing on a particular age group in different localities within the same country. It should be possible to carry out further studies on older populations, such as prison and probation intakes, or even arrestees, comparing these individuals' offending and accommodation needs in their proper historical sequence.

Recommendation

Studies involving comparison groups of offenders and the general population should be commissioned so that the effects of accommodation needs are clarified.

Principles of intervention

Aims and objectives

In the absence of a comprehensive literature, there is much to do before an effective set of 'What Works' principles can be confidently declared. The aims and objectives of interventions should be cast in terms that embrace crime reduction, accommodation outcomes and social integration. Welfare assessments must go beyond immediate needs and look more deeply at the cluster of needs that vulnerable individuals typically present. Equally, attention to risk is at the heart of complex questions about the management of feared and excluded offenders. In the most challenging cases, drawing a balance between the competing considerations is likely to be fraught with difficulties that will require political skills of a high order to resolve. An acknowledgement of the responsibilities of offenders, communities and agencies will be required in order to meet such anxieties.

Recommendations

A review of legislation on housing and crime should be mounted to ensure that crime reduction and social integration are consistently recognised aims.

Government structures should be coordinated so that policy is clear and evidence based. Offenders should be considered as citizens whose path to social reintegration involves a willingness to change and appropriate accountability for their own role in this process; that path should involve equally a responsiveness from social agencies and communities.

Strategies

There is a case for strategic interventions that help to structure accessible housing provision. Access to decent housing is widely accepted to be a fundamental feature of citizenship and a key step in the

social reintegration of offenders and vulnerable groups. However there have been tendencies within the market and in social policy that have been exclusionary.

Effective management of the market for accommodation as well as policies for allocation creates significant conditions for meeting housing needs and reducing crime. Benefits that ensure continued access to housing are an integral part of the support that offenders require.

Problems of this kind are not likely to be resolved by sweeping away the homeless. Evidence suggests that street clearing policies threaten to become counterproductive especially in combination with tough welfare restrictions.

If public services are inadequately coordinated, people who have multiple needs will fail to receive a proper level of attention. The advantages of local coordination are internationally recognised.

Recommendations

Assessments of local need by Supporting People groups or other interagency groupings should be collated and reviewed so that a coherent national picture of market and social housing trends is produced.

Regular reports should be produced about the roles of the police and of street regulations in controlling public space and about their impact on those living on the street.

Proposals for the supply of affordable housing should take into account the needs of offenders and their families. Benefit and income policies should be reviewed accordingly.

Under central guidance local bodies representing agencies and communities should be allocated budgets to deal with all forms of housing exclusion and vulnerability.

Acting soon; acting for the long term

In developing services that 'work', a great deal more attention should be paid to the current and future needs of offenders so that problems can be better anticipated and remedied. Young people presenting difficulties need support at home if a career in care or on the streets is to be avoided. Similarly, ex-offenders encounter predictable difficulties on release from prison, and a consistent approach to throughcare is essential. A proactive approach is called for, based on sound assessments and the monitoring of referrals. Sufficient time and resources should be made available so that services give the support that is needed to achieve lasting results, whether this is move-on accommodation or maintaining floating support.

Recommendations

Social agencies and the criminal justice system should focus on identifying housing needs quickly and put in place adequate systems of referral, monitoring and support.

Prisons, probation service and youth offending agencies should be held responsible for assessing needs and reporting to multi-agency coordinating groups.

Resettlement surveys should aim to follow up outcomes for at least a year, and for some groups several years.

Provision

There is evidence that focused interventions around accommodation can address criminogenic needs. For example, successful projects have offered help with accommodation to those waiting to appear before the courts. Though clear international evidence about ‘half-way houses’ is lacking, hostel provision when properly managed can help to prevent re-offending. However the majority of offenders want to access normal provision and there is increasing interest in community-based support and services, which are delivered flexibly. Mutual support to sustain treatment or crime reduction goals also presents a promising way forward that deserves evaluation.

In a multi-agency context, the broader management and policy issue is how to deliver support that is close enough to understand and engage the individual yet avoids supplanting specialist services and gives case managers in the criminal justice system adequate scope for planning and reviewing progress. There is scope for confusion if it is unclear who is the advocate for the user, who provides a particular service, or who is responsible for assessing risks or sanctioning breaches of orders or agreements. Ways of working that inform and encourage offenders are critical to success. There is no substitute for continuous communication, using meetings, written agreements and protocols. It is evidently inadequate to simply throw agencies together and expect individually tailored services to emerge by some chemical process of interaction. Some groups of users may need interdisciplinary projects that focus contributions from all the agencies.

Recommendations

A study of support and case management needs for specific offender groups should be commissioned.

A review group from housing, social services, health and criminal justice agencies should prepare guidelines for allocating specific responsibilities to probation officers, housing workers, specialist services, and other personal support workers.

The advisability of separately managed interdisciplinary projects should be evaluated.

The implications of existing studies (e.g. Day et al 1997) should be considered as part of the review process.

The interface with Multi-Agency Public Protection Panels should be carefully assessed.

Research on needs and services should examine how far support and accommodation packages help to reduce re-offending. It should investigate how the roles and relationships among staff impact on quality of outcome. Different models for engaging offenders in achieving goals should be evaluated.

These findings should be used to assess how much residential provision is necessary and how far support needs can be met in dispersed and mainstream housing settings.

Multiple and particular needs

Particular needs will be best addressed through assessment and planning that recognise vulnerabilities and multiple needs among groups of offenders. Initiatives are required to promote the reintegration of young people who are currently given care and penal placements. Because women’s housing needs are a function of their relationships and greater child care responsibilities, as well as

their need for safety and security, a wider range of targeted support and services than currently exists is called for. Accommodating sex offenders will require joint agency working and government political support to meet threats from shortages of provision and from community opposition. Provision for mentally disordered offenders and drug misusers should be managed in such a way as to reduce resort to custodial provision while maintaining the support and treatment necessary to enable them to live in the community.

Recommendation

Policy groups for specific needs should be commissioned to draw together existing knowledge and ensure that these needs are fully addressed at a strategic level.

Prospects for the future

Across various jurisdictions and nations it is clear that a coordinated policy of social integration is required in order to meet the volume and diversity of need shown by vulnerable groups and offenders. This review has sought to collate evidence about need, risk and interventions that can make a difference to the lives of offenders and thereby increase the security of communities. Clearly there is much still to explore if possible explanations, as well as promising strategies and projects, are to be properly tested and evaluated. It would be beneficial if it were possible to envisage a further review in a few years' time that showed the progress made in addressing needs which, even from the current evidence, are far too important to ignore.

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