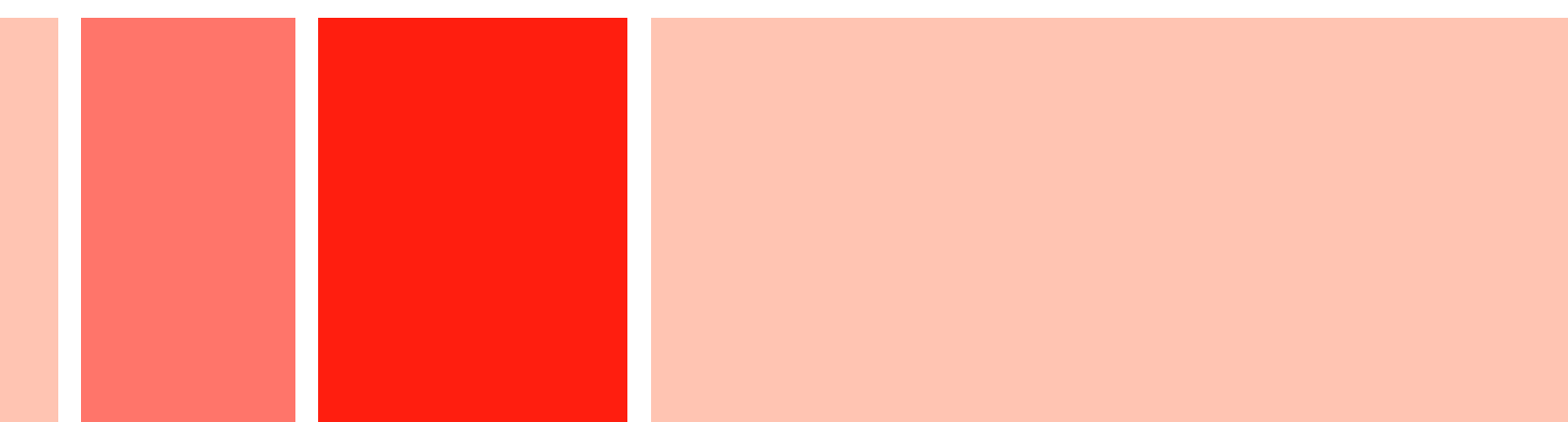Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
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Evaluation Of The Transitional Support Scheme (TSS)

Final Report to Welsh Assembly Government

2010

EVALUATION OF THE TRANSITIONAL SUPPORT SCHEME (TSS)

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Assembly Government

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Acronyms

CARAT   Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare services
CJIT   Criminal Justice Integrated Teams
DIP   Drugs Intervention Programme
DIR   Drug Interventions Record
ECL   End of Custody Licence
G4S   Group 4 Securicor
HMP   Her Majesty's Prison
NOMS   National Offender Management Service
OASys   Offender Assessment System
OGRS3   Offender Group Reconviction Scale (revised)
PGA   Peer Group Advisor
SSOM   Support Services Outcome Measure
TSS   Transitional Support Scheme
WAG   Welsh Assembly Government

Executive Summary

The Transitional Support Scheme (TSS), an all-Wales project funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, is one of the largest and longest established mentoring schemes for ex-prisoners in the UK. It offers 'through the gate' assistance to short-term male and female prisoners with substance misuse problems. The Scheme is run by Group 4 Securicor (G4S) Justice Services, which covers Gwent, South Wales and Dyfed Powys with eight mentors; and CAIS/Nacro Cymru, which covers North Wales with three mentors and employs an in-reach worker in HMP Altcourse. This report presents the results of an evaluation conducted in 2008-9, to assess TSS in terms of the quality and effectiveness of its organisational processes and practices, and its impact on the client group. The main findings were as follows:

- Over a period of five years, TSS has developed a very effective practice model. Its managers and most of its mentors are now highly experienced, skilled and well connected with other agencies. Feedback from external stakeholders was overwhelmingly positive about the quality of its work. The Scheme was perceived as building trusting and supportive relationships with its clients, plugging important gaps in services for ex-offenders (including providing support to the relatively neglected group with alcohol problems), and fulfilling a significant 'bridging' role by assisting and encouraging offenders to engage with other agencies.

- Perhaps the most important contribution that TSS makes to the resettlement of prisoners is in helping their 'transition' in the critical first days and weeks after release from a highly unstable situation to one in which they are able to engage meaningfully with agencies which can help them build a more stable lifestyle and start moving away from crime and substance abuse.

- TSS has not only met its referral targets, but has achieved impressively high post-release contact rates in comparison with other evaluated mentoring schemes (seeing 56 per cent of clients face-to-face outside prison at least once, 39 per cent two or more times, and 18 per cent at least six times). Its mentors also continue to work quite intensively with a significant proportion of clients for periods of up to three months.

- A number of areas were identified in which improvements might be made, notably expanding the coverage of Welsh short-term prisoners across different establishments, enhancing record-keeping systems and practices, and building more strategic relationships with other agencies.

- Using data from the Police National Computer, the two-year reconviction rates of all male TSS participants over 21 who were released from a variety of prisons in 2004-6 were compared with those of a sample of similar prisoners (ie male short-termers with substantial drug problems) who were in HMP Parc during the same period but did not participate in TSS. The expected reconviction rates of both groups were calculated, using the revised Offender Group Reconviction Scale (OGRS3), the standard predictor of re-offending used by the Ministry of Justice. As OGRS3 is based on static risk factors and therefore does not take account of drug problems, these predictions were

adjusted based on national reconviction data on male short-term prisoners with drug problems (as defined by OASys, the national Offender Assessment System), which were provided for us by the Ministry of Justice.

- No significant difference in reconviction rates was found between TSS participants as a whole and the comparison sample, both groups being reconvicted at rates close to those predicted. However, when the TSS participants were divided into smaller groups, according to the extent of face-to-face contact they had had with mentors after release, some fairly strong differences were apparent. In particular, those who had 2-6 such contacts were reconvicted at a considerably lower rate (71%) than either the comparison group (77%) or the TSS participants who did not maintain contact (83%), despite predicted rates for all three groups remaining similar.

- While by no means conclusive evidence that TSS mentoring has an effect on reconviction rates (it may be, for example, that those offenders who maintained contact were more motivated to desist from crime than those who disengaged early), this echoes a very similar finding from the Probation Resettlement Pathfinders (Clancy et al. 2006). It thus adds further support to the argument that 'relational continuity through the gate', maintained for at least a few meetings post-release to ease the transition from custody to community, is an important element of effective resettlement practice (Maguire and Raynor 2006; Lewis et al. 2007) .

- Other statistical data was collected to measure the 'distance travelled' by TSS participants in terms of tackling criminogenic needs such as employment, housing and substance abuse. The evidence suggests that sizeable proportions of TSS clients made progress in these areas. There was also evidence of high levels of engagement with clients and effective 'bridging' to other services.

A number of more detailed process issues were explored. It was found that:

- The induction and continuing training of mentors was found to be wide-ranging and generally appropriate.

- Mentors generally felt well supported in their role, and despite the long distances between some mentors and the project managers, all were confident that support was accessible when needed.

- Generally speaking, referrals were appropriate in terms of the targeted group (male and female short termers with substance misuse problems). The two branches of the Scheme adopted different policies in terms of prisoners with Class A drug problems: while the G4S team worked with this group, Nacro/CAIS left them to the DIP team (also managed by Nacro) and focused its efforts on those with alcohol or less entrenched drug problems.

- Referral systems at HMPs Parc and Altcourse, where the two branches of the Scheme have close links and a regular presence, worked well, but referrals from other prisons were patchy and required frequent reminders.

- Some problems were experienced in obtaining risk information from prisons referring clients, which involved managers and staff in a considerable amount of 'chasing'. Ideally, strategic level agreements would be reached with prisons whereby such information would be supplied on a routine basis.

- While there were many examples of excellent partnership working, and good relations between mentors and staff in other agencies, there was a perceived need for more strategic relationships with statutory agencies in particular, including more formal agreements on, for example, referral procedures to ensure that these do not rely too heavily on cordial relationships between individuals.

The following were identified as clear examples of good practice:

- In-reach work

- Provision of gate pick-ups

- 'Assertive outreach'

- Local networking

- Enhancing offender engagement with support services

- The involvement of Peer Group Advisors

- The Scheme's focus on alcohol

Finally, the research raised a number of 'questions for the future':

- How thinly should the jam be spread? First of all, should more effort be made to recruit participants from a wider range of prisons (which would require a considerable amount of effort to gain a relatively small numbers of extra referrals) or should efforts be focused primarily on the prisons holding the largest numbers of Welsh prisoners? And secondly, should the level of mentoring be restricted to, say, one meeting a week and a maximum period of three months post-release? Or should the Scheme be more 'client led' so that offenders who wish to receive more intensive and/or extended periods of assistance are given more attention than others and/or continue to be mentored for much longer periods?

- Should TSS be expanded and/or 'mainstreamed'? Some interviewees argued that TSS services should be offered not only to more prisoners, but to other categories of offender, including those on remand or on community sentences. Others felt that clients would benefit from more structured activities. This raised the possibility of a TSS becoming more of a mainstream service, perhaps including closer integration and joint commissioning of TSS services with those of other agencies such as the DIP and Probation. While keen to get TSS on a more secure financial footing, its key staff were wary of such moves, fearing that the Scheme might lose its unique character and be 'swamped' by larger organisations with different

agendas and priorities. The general view was that any expansion should be taken slowly, the first priority being to consolidate present funding and partnership agreements.

- Can the Scheme use its experience to help take forward the philosophy, aims and practice of mentoring in the field of offender rehabilitation? Although it has often been mentioned in strategic documents as a promising form of intervention, its use has been restricted mainly to small and short-lived projects varying in philosophies and styles of working. A scheme with the experience of TSS could potentially articulate and disseminate a clear method of working (with a coherent 'model of change' – hopefully evidenced as effective) that would influence practice nationwide.

1 Introduction and background

Short-term prisoners (offenders sentenced to less than 12 months) constitute the majority of adult prisoners. They also have higher reconviction rates and higher levels of 'criminogenic needs' than any other group within the prison population (Social Exclusion Unit 2002; Lewis et al. 2007; Hudson et al. 2007; Maguire 2007). However, unlike prisoners serving 12 months or more, they are not subject to statutory supervision after release. Most therefore receive little support or assistance with their 'resettlement', and a high proportion leave custody without settled accommodation and with poor employment prospects. Again, many have substance misuse problems which are unlikely to be addressed after release, and which further reduce their chances of acquiring stable accommodation or employment and of avoiding re-offending.

This gap in provision, which was exacerbated by the rapid decline of 'voluntary aftercare' by the probation service in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Maguire et al 2000), was recognised as a serious problem in a series of independent and government reports at the beginning of this century (see, for example, Nacro 2000; HM Inspectorates of Prison and Probation 2001; Halliday 2001; Social Exclusion Unit 2002). The 2003 Criminal Justice Act appeared to have plugged the gap through the introduction of a new sentence of 'Custody Plus' to replace short prison terms, whereby offenders would spend only a few weeks in custody, followed by several months on probation licence. However, plans for its implementation were indefinitely postponed in 2005, partly because of resource constraints on the probation service (Hough et al. 2006). The problem of resettling short term prisoners therefore remains acute, being left mainly to ad hoc liaison between prison resettlement units and a variety of outside agencies, or to projects run by private or voluntary organisations.

Among the latter are a number of mentor-based projects, of which the Transitional Support Scheme (TSS) is, to the best of our knowledge, both the largest and the longest established in the UK. This was set up on an all-Wales basis in 2004 with funding from the Welsh Assembly Government, specifically for short-term prisoners with a substance misuse problem. The then Minister of Social Justice was particularly concerned about a lack of continuity between custody and community in the provision of drug and alcohol treatment, and supported the idea of a mentor-based service which would provide personal support to ex-prisoners 'through the gate' and would assist them in securing early access to treatment and other services in the community. The Scheme receives most of its referrals from the four Welsh prisons which hold male short-termers (HMPs Parc, Swansea, Cardiff and Prescoed) and from HMP Altcourse in England. It also takes on female offenders, predominantly from HMPs Styal and Eastwood Park. It began work at the beginning of January 2004, with an official launch date of 11th March 2004. The Scheme is run in partnership by two different organisations, Group 4 Securicor (G4S) Justice Services and CAIS/Nacro Cymru. Prisoners returning to South Wales, Gwent or Dyfed-Powys are dealt with from the G4S offices attached to HMP Parc, Bridgend, while those returning to North Wales are dealt with by the CAIS/Nacro Cymru partnership, based in various offices

across six local authority areas. (The latter originally held the contract for Dyfed-Powys, but this was transferred to G4S at the end of 2007.) For the sake of brevity the CAIS/Nacro and G4S branches of the Scheme will sometimes be referred to simply as TSS in 'the North' and 'the Mid/South', respectively.

An interim evaluation of TSS was carried out in late 2004 (Clancy et al. 2005). It found that the Scheme was working well in terms of numbers of referrals and contact rates, and was regarded positively by both prisoners and other agencies, but it was too early to make any firm statements about its impact on drug problems or offending. Since then, the correctional landscape has changed significantly with the establishment of NOMS, Reducing Re-offending Partnership Boards, Pathway groups and the advent of commissioning. It is important to establish where TSS, and its particular mentor-based approach to resettlement, 'fits' within these new arrangements, how well it is now working in process terms, and how effective a contribution it is making to the resettlement and rehabilitation of ex-prisoners. To this end, a new evaluation was carried out in late 2008 and early 2009. This report presents the results. It focuses mainly on the current situation, but also uses historical data to trace and comment on the project's progress and outcomes over the intervening period.

1.1 Aims and Objectives

The main aim of the research was to evaluate the effectiveness of TSS in terms of (a) quality and effectiveness of organisational processes and practices, and (b) impact on the client group.

More specifically, the objectives were to evaluate the implementation of the Scheme in:

- publicising its services to relevant statutory and voluntary agencies;
- training and managing mentors;
- recruiting the target offender group;
- making and maintaining contact with offenders prior to and after release;
- the quality of support provided;
- referrals to other agencies;
- record-keeping;
- handling of overlaps or competition with other similar schemes;
- tackling any barriers to offenders' access to the Scheme or to post-release services;
- including prisoners with alcohol as well as drug misuse problems;

and to measure any impact on the client group in terms of:

- reducing re-offending (to the extent that this is feasible);
- reducing levels and harmful patterns of substance misuse; and

- increasing access to rehabilitative interventions in NOMS pathway areas such as housing, education, training and employment.

The evaluation set out primarily to assess the effectiveness of TSS as a whole, rather than to make comparisons between its two 'branches' (run by G4S and Nacro/CAIS). However, there are some important differences in context, organisation and practice and where appropriate the two will be discussed separately.

1.2 Methodology

The evaluation uses a variety of data sources and methods of analysis, including trawls of relevant literature; interviews with project staff, offenders, agency representatives and other stakeholders; observation of Scheme activities; and analysis of TSS records. In addition, in order to gauge the outcomes of TSS mentoring, a small reconviction study was undertaken, comparing the two-year reconviction rates of offenders who participated in TSS in 2004-6 with those of a comparison group of non-participants who were in Parc prison during the same period. Further analysis was undertaken of measures of 'distance' travelled (eg in terms of housing and employment) as recorded by the scheme. These exercises are described in more detail below.

1.2.1 Interviews

A key source of data for both the process and impact evaluation was semi-structured interviews with (1) the TSS staff (senior managers, managers, supervisors and mentors), (2) TSS clients pre-release, (3) TSS clients post-release (some of whom had previously been interviewed in custody), and (4) staff from other agencies providing post-release services for offenders. The main aim of the interviews was to gather information about the operation and effectiveness of TSS from a variety of perspectives. Table 1.1 summarises the numbers of interviews conducted in each category, and further details are provided below.

Table 1.1   Interviews conducted

	South Wales, Gwent Dyfed Powys	North Wales	Total
Clients pre-release			
- Male	11	10	21
- Female	0	3	3
Clients re-interviewed post-release			
- Male	3	7	10
- Female	0	0	0
Clients post-release only			
- Male	8	2	10
- Female	4	0	4

TSS staff			
- Mentors	7	3	10
- Managers/Supervisors	2	2	4
- Senior Management	1	1	2
Agency representatives	5	13	18
Total	41	41	82

Note: It was not possible to interview any female prisoners returning to the South Wales, Gwent or Dyfed Powys areas due to difficulties gaining access to prisoners in HMP Eastwood Park.

TSS staff (n=16)

Interviews were conducted with 16 members of TSS staff across the four regions. In North Wales, interviews were conducted with: the three mentors, the TSS in-reach worker based in HMP Altcourse, the team manager, and the project manager. In the South Wales, Gwent and Dyfed Powys areas, interviews were conducted with seven mentors[1], the team supervisor, the project manager and the Head of Offender Management, Interventions and Community Projects at HMP/YOI Parc. The interviews were conducted in private and almost all were digitally recorded. The length of interviews varied from 40 minutes to nearly three hours.

TSS clients pre-release (n=24)

Interviews were conducted with 24 prisoners on short-term sentences who had been referred to TSS and were shortly due to be released. The interviews took place in HMPs Altcourse, Styal and Parc.[2] Although selection was not strictly randomised, there was unlikely to have been any selection bias, as the usual procedure was to interview all TSS participants nearing release who were in a particular prison on the day chosen to visit. The pre-release interviews were conducted through legal visits and were all digitally recorded. On average, the interviews lasted between 20 and 50 minutes.

It is important to note that the majority of pre-release interviewees were male (n=23). The lack of women in the sample is largely the result of difficulties in gaining access to HMP Eastwood Park.

TSS clients post-release (n=24)

Post-release interviews were conducted with 24 prisoners who had been engaged with TSS for up to three months following their release. The interviews were arranged with the assistance of TSS mentors. The interviews were conducted in private (i.e. not in the presence of the mentor) in a variety of locations, including clients' homes and quiet coffee shops. The majority

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[1] The eighth mentor was on maternity leave during the evaluation period.
[2] The research team made arrangements to interview clients on two occasions in HMP Cardiff. However, it was not possible to conduct the interviews on the first occasion due to inclement weather conditions and on the second occasion the prisoners declined to participate.

were conducted face-to-face and were digitally recorded. In a small number of cases, telephone interviews were conducted and detailed notes were made.

The post-release interviewees comprised 10 clients who had been interviewed by the researchers pre-release and 14 who had not. The research team attempted to conduct follow-up interviews with as many as possible of those interviewed pre-release, but more than half proved too difficult to contact. The difficulty of tracing ex-prisoners for follow-up interviews is not uncommon and is frequently reported in the literature. It is important to emphasise that, unlike the prison interviews, those conducted in the community contained an in-built selection bias: as a group, the offenders we were able to contact were more likely to have engaged with TSS mentors and to have had more settled accommodation, than those we failed to contact.

Agency representatives (n=18)

Interviews were conducted with 18 representatives of agencies providing post-release services to offenders. These included representatives from drug and alcohol agencies and housing schemes, as well as prison and probation staff. Contact was made with the agency representatives through the TSS managers, who provided lists of names and numbers for the research team to contact. Most of the interviews were conducted by telephone, though six were conducted face-to-face. The interviews were either digitally recorded or detailed notes were taken.

The digital files from all the above interviews were transcribed and loaded into NVivo for coding and analysis. The coding process was guided by a coding frame developed by the research team. The coding frame was based on the key themes and issues to emerge during the course of the evaluation. The interview data provided useful information about the operational processes and practices of TSS as well as providing qualitative information about the impact of TSS on clients.

1.2.2 Observations

As well as asking staff and clients for their views and experiences of TSS, observational research was also used to explore its operational processes and practices. To this end, the research team made regular visits to the TSS offices, attended monthly Peer Group Advisor meetings in the G4S Scheme, and observed mentors interacting with clients. These observations were useful in helping to generate an overview of the TSS and in informing the process evaluation element of the research.

1.2.3 Data from records

Another element of the evaluation was to examine the records maintained by the TSS staff. This quantitative data complemented the more qualitative data obtained from the semi-structured interviews. The quantitative data were collected from two sources: (1) case management records and (2) electronic databases.

(1) Individual case records

In order to gain a richer and more detailed and accurate picture of the day-to-day work of mentors with their clients, we also conducted an analysis of a randomly selected sample of 84 individual case records - 35 in Mid/South Wales and 49 in North Wales. These were selected from cases closed in 2008-9, regardless of how long they had been open or whether any work had been done with the client. In Mid/South Wales, the records consisted of centrally stored paper files, containing regularly completed accounts by mentors of their activities with each client (though recently G4S have begun to use PalBase to record similar material electronically). In North Wales, mentors keep their own paper files containing basic details on offenders but, as will be discussed later, these did not contain detailed case records of their activities with clients, as they were not encouraged to record such information (apparently for reasons of confidentiality and data protection). The researchers therefore sat down with each of the mentors and went through all the cases, asking them to recall details of what they had done with each. This was supplemented in some cases with accounts from PalBase records, which they had also begun to compile. Although not entirely satisfactory in terms of producing accurate details, this method at least gave us a broad picture of what had been done with each client – the mentors turned out to have excellent recall of each case. The aim of the exercise was to examine (a) the quality of the case records, (b) the level of support given and (c) the nature and number of referrals made to other agencies. The case file review was also useful in enabling the research team to identify some interesting case studies (see Appendix B).

(2). Databases

The TSS managers also provided the research team with copies of databases containing information on clients dating back to the Scheme's inception in 2004. These were analysed (a) to obtain a profile of clients who had engaged with the Scheme and (b) to identify details of clients that could be used as the basis for a reconviction study.

In North Wales, the TSS team stored data in a relational database (in SQL Server). By the end of December 2008, this held records on 1,221 offenders. About 20 per cent of these had been referred (or had referred themselves) to the Scheme on more than one occasion, so the 1,221 referrals relate to about 1,000 distinct individuals. As will be discussed later, there are doubts about the reliability of some of the Nacro/ CAIS data from earlier years, largely because of possible overlaps between work undertaken by TSS mentors and that undertaken by Nacro and CAIS staff employed on other projects, with whom they work closely (for example, until April 2009, they shared offices with Nacro-employed Drug Intervention Programme (DIP) workers). Similar questions were raised in the interim report (Clancy et al 2005) and have been discussed by the Project Board on a number of occasions. However, the introduction of PalBase, a comprehensive, case-based recording system for TSS alone, is likely to resolve such issues and greatly improve the transparency of the records.

In Mid/South Wales, data were collected and stored in two Excel workbooks. One had details of individual participants and one had details of contact between clients and mentors. By the end of 2008, data were held on 1,612 TSS participants. Again, some people had participated on more than one occasion, and the records refer to about 1,150 distinct individuals. As the database has always contained only TSS cases, much more confidence can be placed in the reliability of the information it holds. As described in 1.2.4 below, this database was used to select a sample of TSS participants from 2004-6 on whom information about reconvictions was sought from the Ministry of Justice.

Alternative indicators of impact were derived from a further database compiled by G4S since January 2008. This is the 'SSOM' (Support Services Outcome Measure), which provides an assessment of the 'distance travelled' by TSS clients in terms of addressing their problems and needs. The SSOM is based on six key measures: accommodation, substance misuse, alcohol misuse, education, training and employment, re-offending, and engagement with other substance misuse agencies. The tool is used to score participants at the start and finish of their TSS involvement. The SSOM has been evolving since it started being used in 2008 and is not yet the 'finished article', so the results so far need to be treated with some caution. Nevertheless, it is a promising tool and, in conjunction with other data, helps to provide a picture both of clients' needs and of the progress they have made. In this report, we include some analysis of SSOM data on 374 cases that were completed by the end of July, 2008.

1.2.4 Reconviction study

The final part of the evaluation involved a small reconviction study. We first extracted from the G4S database details on all offenders who joined the scheme in 2004-6 and were released before the end of 2006. To produce a comparison group, an administrative officer was asked to go through old prison records and select for us on a randomised basis a sample of adult short-termers with substantial drug problems who were released from HMP Parc in 2005 or 2006, but did not participate in TSS (we did not include offenders assessed as having alcohol rather than drug problems, as in the early years of TSS the focus was on those who had problems with illegal drugs). Both sets of offenders were then run through the Police National Computer (PNC) on our behalf by staff in the Ministry of Justice, in order to determine what proportions of each were reconvicted within two years of release. As the comparison group consisted only of adult prisoners, we excluded from our analysis all TSS participants under 21. When these cases, along with offenders for whom no match was found on the PNC and a small number of duplicate cases, were removed from the analysis, we were left with an 'intervention group' of 339, and a 'comparison group' of 154.[3] As well as

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[3] Initially, details on 449 TSS participants and 164 non-participants were run through the PNC. Matches were found for 93% of those submitted (413 of the TSS group, 158 of the comparison group). After offenders under 21 were removed from the TSS group, together

their actual reconviction rates, the *expected* reconviction rates of both groups were calculated, using the revised Offender Group Reconviction Scale (OGRS3), the standard predictor of re-offending used by the Ministry of Justice (Howard et al. 2009). However, as OGRS3 is based on static risk factors (age, gender and previous convictions) and therefore does not take account of drug problems, these predictions were adjusted based on national reconviction data on male short-term prisoners with drug problems (as defined by OASys, the national Offender Assessment System), provided for us by the Ministry of Justice.

It has to be recognised that the TSS group does not constitute a random sample of the relevant prison population (ie short-term prisoners with significant drug problems), as participation in the scheme has always been voluntary, and hence that the results have to be treated with caution. This is a common problem with retrospective studies of this kind, whose findings are inevitably less reliable than might be obtained from a prospective randomised control trial – clearly not possible in this instance. However, it was pleasing to find that the expected reconviction rates for both groups (as measured by OGRS3) were very similar, suggesting that they are not widely different in composition.[4]

1.2.5 Ethical issues

In accordance with the British Society of Criminology's Code of Ethics and University of Glamorgan Regulations, care was taken to ensure the welfare of all participants. Each interviewee was provided with clear information (either verbally or in writing) about the research prior to the interview being conducted. For all TSS clients, both written and verbal information were provided about the anonymous and confidential nature of the research and its aims, as well as the use of a consent form and the adoption of self-assigned pseudonyms. Care was also taken to maintain the anonymity of clients whose details were stored in electronic databases. This was done by removing any identifying details and by storing the databases securely with passwords.

1.3   Structure of the report

Section 2 provides a descriptive overview of the operation of TSS in both North and Mid/South Wales. Section 3 provides a 'process evaluation' of TSS, examining implementation and organisational issues which affect the delivery of its services. These include the recruitment of participants, their engagement and motivation, practical assistance and liaison with other agencies, relationships with key partners such as prisons, probation and

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with a small number of duplicate cases, we were left with a total of 493 cases for analysis (339 in the TSS group and 154 in the comparison group).
[4] It has also to be noted that, as the OGRS3 instrument is based only on static risk factors, we know nothing about the relative levels of motivation of the two groups. However, we are assured by TSS staff that in the period covered (2004-6), relatively few prisoners declined to participate in the Scheme when it was brought to their notice: failure to participate was mainly due either to not being aware of its existence or purposes or to shortages of time, staff resources or other practical constraints. Major differences between the two groups in levels of motivation are therefore unlikely.

DIPs, training and supervision of mentors and volunteers, and record-keeping practices. Section 4 idetifies examples of good practice and possible areas for improvement. Section 5 summarises what we have been able to gauge about the outcomes of TSS activity. Finally, section 6 presents a broad discussion of the findings and draws some conclusions.

2   Overview of Transitional Support Scheme

This section presents a descriptive overview of the two schemes operating under the TSS umbrella, briefly examining their management structures, staffing, referral processes and standard delivery mechanisms. Comments on these structures and processes, based on interviews with staff, stakeholders and clients, will be made later in the report. For clarity, the overview is split into two parts.   The first part focuses on TSS in North Wales, where the service is provided by Nacro Cymru and CAIS. The second part examines TSS in South Wales, Gwent and Dyfed Powys, where the provider is G4S Justice Services. This is followed by profiles of the characteristics and needs of clients participating in the Scheme.

2.1   Overall oversight of TSS

Before looking at the two 'branches' of TSS, it should be noted that the Scheme as a whole is overseen by a Project Board comprising senior members of the Welsh Assembly Government, the Probation and Prison Services and the Drug Intervention Programme (DIP). The Board monitors the delivery of the TSS by the two providers and meets formally on a quarterly basis to review the reports submitted by the providers and to consider progress towards targets. The quarterly reports provide information about numbers and sources of referrals, contact hours with clients, referrals to other agencies and (to some extent) progress made by clients. The providers also attend Project Board meetings periodically to make presentations and answer questions.

2.2   TSS in North Wales

2.2.1 Management structure and staffing

The North Wales branch of TSS is managed in partnership by Nacro Cymru and CAIS. Nacro, which was established in 1966, runs over 200 projects across England and Wales providing services to ex-offenders, other disadvantaged people and deprived communities, many of them with a focus on the resettlement of prisoners. CAIS, a voluntary sector provider of drug and alcohol services in Wales which specialises in motivational work and mentoring, was established in 1976 as the Clwyd and Gwynedd Council on Alcoholism. Its main aims are to provide a range of services for people who misuse drugs or alcohol, and to work with communities and other agencies to prevent alcohol and drug related harm.

Both CAIS and Nacro are members of the extensive DAWN partnership, which has itself been running for 10 years with the aim of providing integrated services for substance misusers in North Wales. Its other members include SOVA, Prince's Trust, Community Justice Interventions Wales, North Wales Probation, Shelter Cymru, Pennaf, HMP Altcourse, and Working Links.

Within TSS, Nacro is primarily responsible for the supervision and management of the community-based mentors, while CAIS is responsible for contract management, record-keeping and the supervision of an in-reach worker in HMP Altcourse (see Figure 1). The Nacro Project Manager, who is based in Wrexham, line manages a team leader and three paid mentors (two male, one female), each of whom is based in a separate location and covers a separate part of North Wales (Denbighshire and Conwy, Wrexham and Flintshire, and Anglesey and Gwynedd). The in-reach prison worker (who is bi-lingual) is line managed by the CAIS contract manager, who is based in Llandudno. All the staff attend supervision meetings with their managers at least every six weeks.

All the TSS staff in North Wales have received training in mentoring, motivational interviewing techniques, cognitive behavioural therapy, drug and alcohol related issues, risk assessment, and first aid. Furthermore, when each mentor joined the Scheme they spent a period of time shadowing more experienced staff before they were allowed to see clients alone.

Figure 1: TSS North Wales staffing structure
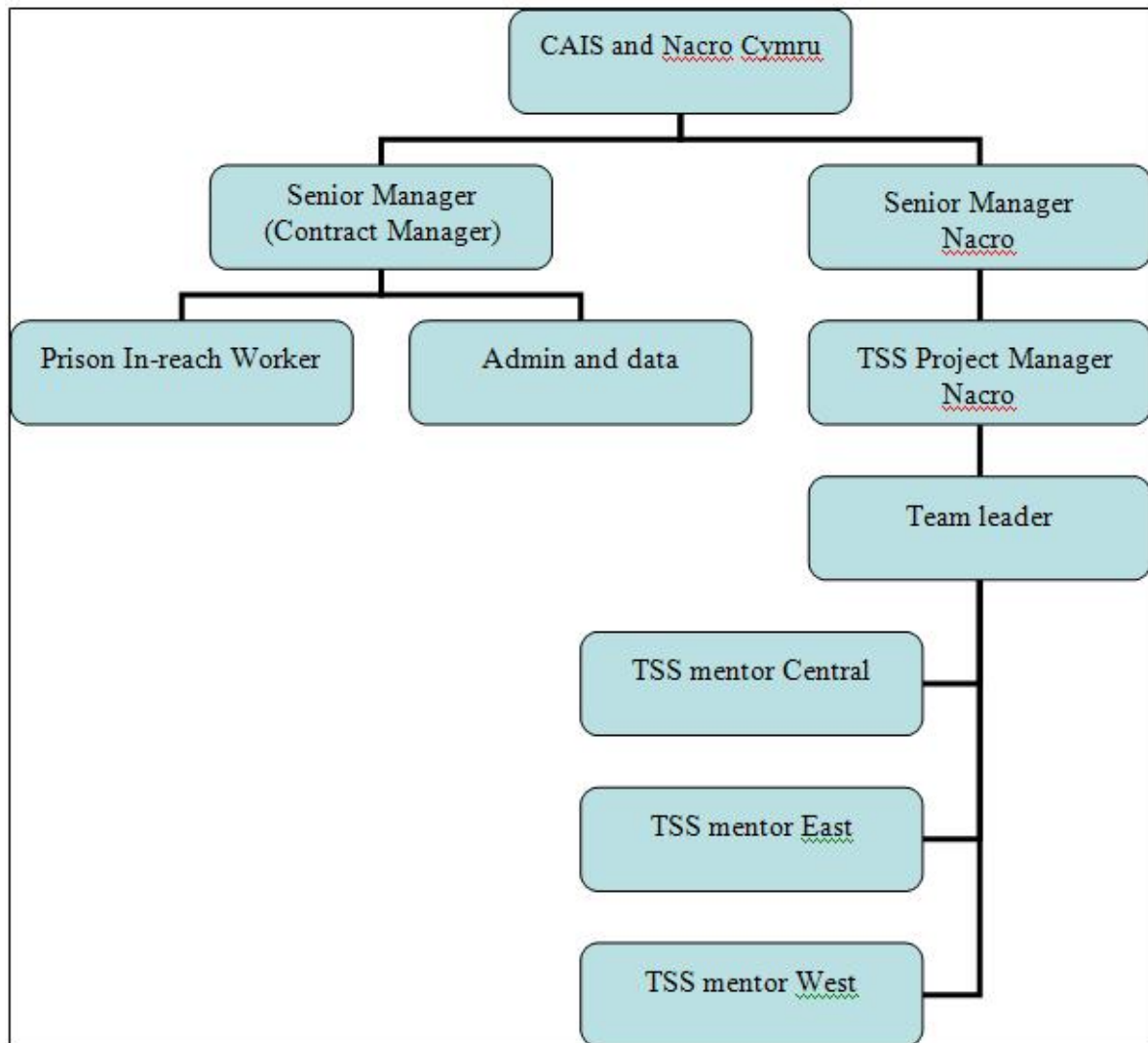
2.2.2 Referral, assessment and preparation for release

The current annual target set by the Welsh Assembly Government for TSS in North Wales is 240 participants (i.e. 20 per month). The Scheme is available to male or female prisoners with a substance abuse problem serving sentences of less than 12 months passed by a North Wales court. Remand prisoners may also be recruited, and previous participation is not a bar to being referred again. Referrals can be made from any prison, although in practice the great majority of male participants are recruited in HMP Altcourse, where the in-reach worker is based, while female clients are referred mainly from HMP Styal. The Scheme does not normally work with offenders who use Class A drugs, as these are dealt with by the DIP team (working with prison CARAT - Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare - services).

In HMP Altcourse, the in-reach worker is tasked with going to see all prisoners who fit the eligibility criteria and offering them support. If they agree to

become involved with the Scheme, the in-reach worker completes the North Wales Services Referral Form and then faxes the completed form to the TSS office in Colwyn Bay. There, each prisoner is given a unique ID number, logged onto the TSS database, and a copy of the form is then faxed to the appropriate mentor for their own personal records. All three mentors attend surgeries in the prison every Monday on a rotational basis, to see their relevant clients, both existing and newly referred.

In HMP Altcourse, the TSS in-reach worker is piloting a computer software programme called ComMIT, which TSS participants (along with other prisoners) are encouraged to attend. ComMIT has been developed and funded by CAIS in partnership with a number of individuals with specialist knowledge. It uses a motivational enhancement approach to address drug and alcohol use. Apparently this type of approach has not been used before in a custodial setting. The programme is currently being evaluated by a PhD student from Bangor University.

In HMP Styal, referrals are generally made via the prison's resettlement team. One of the mentors also attends the prison's resettlement surgery every Wednesday.

The standard recommended practice is for all clients to be seen at least twice by the appropriate mentor (who is allocated according to the area in which the prisoner intends to live) before they are released. During the first meeting the client's needs are assessed, using a tool based upon the Drug Interventions Record (DIR). Introduced in 2005 with the aim of producing greater consistency and easier information sharing between agencies, the DIR is a tool now used routinely by Criminal Justice Integrated Teams (CJITs), DIPs and CARATs. It includes information not only on drug and alcohol use, but on a range of other needs such as accommodation and employment. However, the assessment used for TSS is not as intensive as the full DIR.

The main purpose of the second meeting is for the mentor to discuss with the prisoner concrete plans for their release, including possible plans for picking them up at the gate and any arrangements the mentor may have made for referrals to service providers.

2.2.3 Support and assistance after release

Following release, the mentors are contracted to work with clients for up to 12 weeks, the frequency and intensity of contact being dependent upon client need. In doing so, they may draw upon the services of close partner organisations such as the DIP and other CAIS, Nacro and DAWN projects, as well as making referrals to agencies such as Shelter, Progress to Work and Working Links. Where appropriate (ie when there are concerns about whether a client will attend), the TSS mentors are encouraged to arrange appointments on clients' behalf and/or to accompany them at least to their first meeting with a new organisation or agency. Clients are also told that they can

contact the mentor (usually by mobile telephone) at any time if they have any immediate problems that need to be addressed.

2.3 South Wales, Gwent and Dyfed Powys

G4S Justice Services are contracted to deliver the TSS sevice across South Wales, Gwent and Dfyed Powys. The contract runs for three years from November 2007 until November 2010. G4S Justice Services is a division of Group 4 Securicor Plc, which was formed in 2004 from the merger between Securicor Plc and Group 4 Falck A/S's security business. Group 4 Securicor Plc has operations in over 110 countries and employs over 570,000 employees worldwide. It is the largest security services company in the UK, with around 40,000 employees. The company provides a broad range of services to a wide range of customers in both the public and private sector, including the transportation of bank notes, electronic monitoring, de-mining, children's services and justice services. It has worked in the criminal justice sector since 1992 when Securicor won the contract to operate HMP Wolds, the first such contract awarded to the private sector.

In 2004, G4S Justice Services were contracted to deliver the TSS service in South Wales and Gwent. This contract was renewed in 2007 and extended to include delivery of the TSS in Dyfed Powys. The target numbers of referrals set by the Welsh Assembly Government for 2008 were 323 for South Wales, 145 for Gwent and 110 for Dyfed Powys. The Dyfed Powys target will rise to 121 in 2009.

The G4S-TSS team is based in offices just outside HMP Parc, near Bridgend. The prison is a category B local prison, privately run by G4S. It houses approximately 1,200 male adult and young offenders and employs more than 580 members of staff.

2.3.1 Management and staffing

The G4S-TSS is overseen internally by a management team comprising:

- Director of Offender Management Services, G4S
- Head of Offender Management, Interventions and Community Projects (Wales), HMP/YOI Parc.
- TSS Manager, South Wales, Gwent and Dyfed Powys

The G4S-TSS team itself comprises a project manager, a team supervisor, eight full-time mentors (one of them bi-lingual) and a full-time administrator (see Figure 2). It also makes use of a part-time administrative supervisor who acts as a conduit between TSS and Offender Management in Parc Prison. In addition, there are variable numbers of volunteer assistants, who provide administrative and mentoring support as appropriate. These include the Peer Group Advisors (previous TSS clients), as well as students from the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, and applicants from Newlink Wales.

The project manager was first appointed in August 2003 when G4S Justice Services won the contract to deliver TSS in South Wales and Gwent. The project manager currently spends 90 per cent of her time managing TSS and 10 per cent assisting in the contract management of the Criminal Justice Integrated Team for the DIP in South Wales, Western Region. Her role covers organisational procedures, managing the budget, managing staff, doing appraisals (annually), recruiting staff and monitoring volunteers. She operates an open-door policy whereby staff can meet to discuss any issues or concerns at any time. A consistently low staff turnover rate and minimal sickness levels may, in part, reflect the close working relationship that the manager, supervisor and mentors all agreed that they experienced.

Figure 2: TSS Mid/South Wales staffing structure
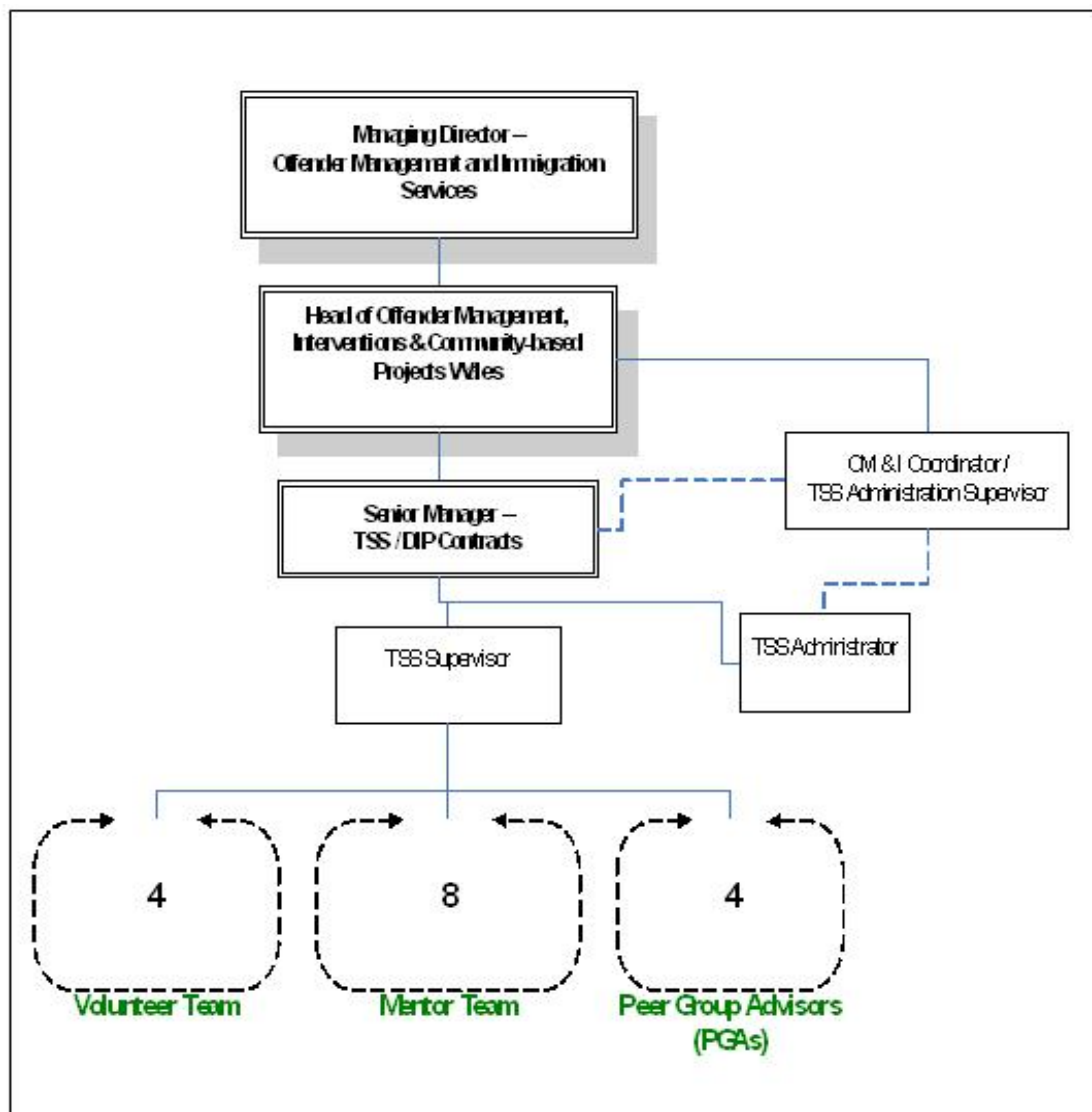
Seven of the eight G4S-TSS mentors had been in post for more than 12 months (ranging from one to 3 years) at the end of 2008. They came from a variety of backgrounds including the Job Centre, the Drug Interventions Programme, and a homelessness project. Three started working on a voluntary basis while they were studying at University, while one is an ex-offender. Six of the eight are female.

The G4S mentors are appointed[5] to the Scheme following an interview with a panel comprising the project manager, the supervisor and a former TSS client. Once appointed, the mentors are shown a DVD illustrating the TSS process from referral through to community engagement. They then spend several weeks 'shadowing' more experienced colleagues and attending training courses. The mentors report having participated in a variety of training programmes including first aid, drug and alcohol awareness, motivational interviewing, breakaway techniques and mental health. Training is ongoing and mentors are regularly asked (and sometimes requested) to attend courses relevant to their role. Newly appointed mentors are given a probationary period of six months in the same way as any new employee of G4S.

The G4S-TSS is based wholly on outreach, which means that the mentors spend the majority of their time 'in the field': indeed, during 2008, they are reported to have travelled between them more than 115,000 miles. All of the full-time mentors are provided with a car, laptop, mobile phone, first aid kit and personal alarm. They are encouraged to attend the offices in Bridgend at least once a week to drop off paperwork, liaise with other mentors and meet with their supervisor. They must also attend the monthly Peer Group Advisor meeting, held in the Bridgend offices, where ex-clients who have been appointed as Peer Group Advisors meet with mentors, the team supervisor and manager.

Peer Group Advisors (PGAs) form an important part of the G4S-TSS team. They are former TSS clients who have completed their 'formal' engagement with TSS and are no longer offending or misusing substances. PGAs provide TSS with an inside view of the difficulties experienced by clients and they are therefore able to provide advice to TSS clients based on personal experience. In return, the PGAs are said to gain a sense of achievement and get 'a buzz' out of their role as an advisor to others. The PGAs are involved in TSS in a variety of ways, including attendance at monthly PGA meetings, observing the recruitment of new mentors, developing outcome measures (i.e. the SSOM), and assisting mentors on outreach work. The PGAs are carefully monitored by the project manager to ensure that they continue to make progress and provide assistance to TSS.

The mentors are line managed by the team supervisor, with whom they have daily telephone and email contact. The team supervisor began working for TSS in 2004 when she was employed as one of the first full-time paid mentors. She was promoted to the role of supervisor in 2007 and her duties now include supervising mentors, recruiting new clients, and liaising with external agencies. The supervisor is also responsible for monitoring the out-of-hours telephone service that operates between 5pm and 9pm for TSS clients who need urgent assistance. The supervisor is line-managed by the project manager.

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[5] Publicity material for the TSS indicates that mentors are recruited 'specifically with their personal qualities and professional forbearance in mind'.

2.3.2 Referral, assessment and preparation for release

G4S-TSS is for all prisoners who are (a) resettling in the South Wales, Gwent or Dyfed Powys catchment area, (b) serving a sentence of less than 12 months and (c) have a drug or alcohol misuse problem. As in North Wales, offenders who have worked with TSS in the past can join the Scheme again if sentenced to a new term of imprisonment, as long as the above criteria are met.

Prisoners are usually referred to TSS by a CARAT team member, but referrals from any source (including self-referrals) will be considered if the eligibility criteria are met. In HMP Parc, a large proportion of referrals are made through the TSS supervisor, who regularly walks on to the wings to promote the Scheme to potential clients. The TSS staff also make regular presentations to prisoners undergoing induction, and the resettlement unit provides a further route for referral. At other prisons, efforts are made to boost referrals through attendance at 'resettlement fayres' and through liaison with prison workers. The Scheme also accepts a small number of referrals of ex-prisoners who are already in the community (released within the last three months), usually through the Probation Service.

Referrals are made either by telephone or in writing to the TSS office. Once a referral has been received, either the manager or supervisor will make a decision regarding eligibility. If the offender is deemed eligible, a case file will be opened[6] and the prisoner will be allocated to a mentor. The mentor will then attempt to visit the prisoner at least twice before they are released. As in North Wales, during the first of these meetings, the mentor will complete a detailed assessment of the prisoner using the Drug Interventions Record. The mentor will also use the initial pre-release meetings to build up rapport with prisoners, begin contacting relevant support agencies and arrange to meet up with them after release. Where appropriate – especially where clients are leaving without an address to go to (NFA) – mentors are encouraged to make arrangements to meet them at the gate on the day of their release.

2.3.3 Support and assistance after release

G4S-TSS is based on the concept of 'total outreach': there is no centre for clients to attend. Once a client has been released from prison, the mentor will maintain contact with them by telephone and through face-to-face meetings. The intensity and duration of contact is flexible and adapted according to need and the clients' wishes, but there are some general rules and most mentors follow a standard way of working from which they deviate when considered appropriate.

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[6] Since January 2009, files have been created and stored electronically using the PalBase system, although copies of some of the information continue to be kept in paper form.

First of all, the standard period of supervision is for three months after release, at which point the case is normally closed (it can of course be closed earlier if the client does not 'engage', or for other reasons). However, the Scheme has developed a policy whereby clients who have received three months of mentoring can be taken on for more if both parties think it will be beneficial. The '3-2-1' policy means that former clients are entitled to apply for an additional two months of mentoring eight weeks after they have been 'closed down'. They are then entitled to apply for an additional one month of mentoring, eight weeks after they have been 'closed down' for the second time. Clients are also encouraged to 'keep in touch' and to contact TSS again if a crisis arises.

In terms of frequency of contact, the most common plan is for a weekly face-to-face meeting – often in a coffee shop or café - preceded by telephone calls to confirm the appointment and where appropriate, preliminary work by the mentor to arrange visits to agencies. As in North Wales, clients are given their mentor's mobile telephone numbers and are assured that they can contact the mentor whenever they need to. They are also given the number of an out-of-hours telephone line that they can call if they are having difficulties and are unable to reach their mentor. Mentors are required to maintain a careful log of every contact (telephone call, text or face-to-face meeting) that they have had with a client. This information is stored both in paper case files and, since the beginning of 2009, on PalBase.

During the three-month engagement period, the mentor will work closely with the client to assist them with their needs (e.g. housing, employment, substance misuse, financial issues, and basic life skills). When appropriate, the mentor will refer clients on to appropriate agencies. The mentor will not only assist clients in arranging meetings with referral agencies, but will also accompany them to these meetings if thought necessary to help them engage with the service. As the three-month period draws to an end, the mentor will begin the process of closing a client down. Clients are reassured, however, that while their case might be officially closed, they will not be abandoned and that contact can be maintained with the Scheme.

3   Process evaluation: how well is TSS operating?

Having in the previous section described the basic organisational structures and working practices of TSS, in this section we begin to evaluate its key operational processes.   In particular, we assess how effective it is in recruiting, engaging and maintaining contact with the targeted client group; liaising with other agencies to obtain services for its clients; dovetailing its work with that of prisons, probation and DIP; training and supervising mentors; and record-keeping.   In doing so, we draw on analysis of Scheme documentation, case records, and interviews with TSS staff, participating offenders, and representatives of other agencies.

Some of the findings discussed here will be referred to again in section 5, where we attempt to take stock of the 'outcomes' of TSS.   These include 'intermediate' outcomes which are associated with 'slowing down' and desistance from crime over the longer term, such as evidence of successful motivational work with offenders, of helping them find accommodation or obtain treatment for substance abuse, and other products of the work described below.

3.1   Recruitment of clients

We begin by looking at the numbers and sources of referrals to TSS, and the extent to which those referred match the Scheme's target group

3.1.1 Numbers and sources of referrals

Table 3.1 shows the annual totals of referrals to TSS between 2004 and 2008, according to the databases held by Nacro/CAIS and G4S. It can be seen that the totals almost tripled over this period, and rose by 36 per cent between 2007 and 2008. Both 'branches' of TSS have annual targets for the numbers of participants to be recruited. In 2008, this was 578 for G4S and 240 for Nacro Cymru/CAIS. As can be seen from the table, both comfortably exceeded the target[7].

Where Nacro/CAIS is concerned, referrals rose by almost a third in 2008, despite the loss of Dyfed Powys to G4S. This was accounted for almost entirely by a major increase in referrals from HMP Altcourse, where the Scheme has employed a dedicated in-reach worker and which in 2008 supplied 85% of all North Wales referrals (indeed, over the whole life of the project it has accounted for over three-quarters of all Nacro/CAIS referrals). There was also an increase in referrals of female offenders from HMP/YOC Styal (from 20 in 2007 to 30 in 2008).

The pattern is somewhat different for G4S, whose referrals have increased strongly year-on-year since 2004.   While 57 per cent of its referrals have

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[7] Though G4S were marginally short of their target in Gwent, they made up the required total by exceeding it in other areas, notably Dyfed Powys, where they had a highly successful first year

come from HMP Parc (the prison run by G4S where TSS is based), there is a relatively wide spread of cases from other prisons, notably Swansea and Cardiff, from which referrals rose sharply in 2008. 'Community' referrals are also quite common, these being mainly cases where ex-prisoners have sought help from other agencies (including the Probation Service) after release and have been passed on to TSS.

Table 3.1   Total number of valid referrals received, by provider and source prison (2004-2008)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Nacro Cymru – CAIS						
HMP Altcourse	138	197	209	147	238	929
HMP Stoke Heath	0	10	18	6	10	44
HMP/YOC Styal [F]	3	6	22	20	30	81
HMP Swansea	15	12	19	17	0	63
HMP Liverpool Walton	1	15	5	4	0	25
HMP Kirkham	14	2	4	2	1	23
HMP Parc	3	1	5	11	0	20
Other	10	2	16	6	2	35
Sub-total	*184*	*245*	*298*	*213*	*281*	*1221*
G4S						
HMP Parc	38	87	164	329	298	910
HMP Cardiff	25	17	16	19	98	169
HMP Swansea	16	56	29	18	37	154
HMP Prescoed	25	14	20	9	18	84
HMP Eastwood Park [F]	20	10	28	15	29	100
HMP Bristol	0	1	0	5	2	8
Other Custody	0	5	4	2	21	31
Community	1	2	2	37	97	139
Sub-total	*125*	*192*	*263*	*434*	*598*	*1612*
Total	309	437	461	647	879	2833

Notes:
'F'= female.
The figures shown are derived from the Scheme databases, rather than the official returns of referrals to the Board. These two totals are similar, but the databases do not include small numbers of referrals (such as inappropriate referrals of prisoners serving longer sentences), which were not accepted by TSS.
Nacro Cymru/CAIS figures include Dyfed Powys for the period 1 January 2004 until 31December 2007. G4S figures include Dyfed Powys from January 2008.
'Other Custody' includes HMPs Drake Hall, Low Newton, The Dana, Ashfield, Dartmoor, Foston Hall, Ashfield, Ballington, Blakenhurst, Brynsford, Hewell Grange, Leyhill, Shrewsbury, Stafford, Usk, Portland and Winson Green.
Individuals can be referred to TSS on more than one occasion, and this occurs quite frequently when ex-participants re-offend and receive a new short-term prison sentence. The total number of individuals referred was about 80% of the total referrals.

Overall, the evidence shows that both TSS providers are now operating at or above the stipulated level in terms of numbers of prisoners recruited to the Scheme. At the same time, inmates in two prisons, Altcourse and Parc, are clearly more likely to participate in TSS than those in other establishments. This is very understandable, given the easy and routine access that TSS workers have to these two prisons and their inmates, the relationships they have built up with staff working in them, and the routine systems that have developed to identify eligible prisoners and inform them about the Scheme. However, it raises questions about how to provide comparable levels of opportunities to participate to prisoners in other establishments.

3.1.2 Profiles of prisoners referred to TSS

In this subsection, we look at the main characteristics of participants referred to TSS and the extent to which these reflect the aims of the Scheme. In addition to attaining agreed target numbers, the TSS providers are contracted to provide services to particular categories of prisoners – in essence, both male and female offenders (including young prisoners) who have a substance misuse problem and are serving a sentence of less than 12 months. In addition, in line with general Welsh Assembly Government policies on substance misuse, particular emphasis has been placed by the TSS board on recruiting prisoners with alcohol problems, who have tended to take second place to drug users in treatment services in England.

3.1.2.1 Gender, age and ethnicity

As Table 3.2 shows, only a small minority (8%) of clients referred to TSS have been female. However, this is well above the proportion of females in the prison population as a whole, which is around five per cent (HM Prison Service 2008).

Table 3.2   Gender of clients referred, by year of referral and provider

		2004 - 2006	2007	2008	All	
Nacro/CAIS						
Male		95%	89%	89%	92%	
Female		5%	11%	11%	8%	
Total N		727	213	281	1221	
G4S						
	2004	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**All**
Male	84%	94%	89%	95%	92%	92%

21

Female	16%	6%	11%	5%	8%	8%
Total N	125	192	263	434	598	1612

The age profiles of clients referred to the two branches of the Scheme is shown in Table 3.3. The figures show that clients referred to the G4S TSS were slightly younger than those referred to the Nacro Cymru/CAIS TSS. The mean age was 28.4 years in Mid/South Wales compared with 31.1 years in the North.

Importantly, too, both parts of the Scheme have recruited significant numbers of young prisoners (those under the age of 21), who tend to have particularly high risk of re-offending and who many consider likely to benefit from mentoring through the provision of a role model as well as help in learning to live independently. Over the lifetime of the Scheme, G4S referrals have included a higher proportion of young prisoners, but in 2008 the proportions were similar in the Mid/South and North, at 13 and 11 per cent of all referrals, respectively.

Table 3.3   Age at referral, by year and provider

Nacro Cymru/CAIS

Age at referral	2004-6	2007	2008	All
18-20	8%	14%	11%	10%
21-25	17%	20%	26%	20%
26-29	18%	21%	15%	18%
30-34	24%	14%	14%	20%
35-44	25%	22%	20%	23%
45 or over	8%	10%	13%	10%
Average (mean) age	31.4	30.5	31.0	31.1
Base N	727	213	281`	1221

G4S

Age at referral	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	All
18-20	5%	9%	19%	21%	13%	18%
21-25	39%	23%	25%	24%	26%	25%
26-29	16%	26%	21%	20%	25%	20%
30-34	20%	16%	18%	15%	18%	17%
35-44	14%	20%	12%	16%	13%	15%
45 or over	2%	4%	3%	4%	5%	4%
Average (mean) age	28.4	29.8	27.8	28.1	28.5	28.4
Base N	125	192	263	434	598	1612

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

Finally, full and reliable figures were not available on the ethnic composition of the clients referred to TSS for two reasons: (1) data on ethnic group was not electronically recorded by G4S, and (2) while data on ethnic group is logged on the Nacro/CAIS database, 40 per cent of the referred clients 'preferred not to report' their ethnic group (see Table 3.4). While the data are unreliable, they suggest prima facie that very few BME offenders have participated in TSS. Even given the relatively low BME population in Wales in comparison with England, this is a matter of some concern and deserves further exploration[8]. It is worthy of note that previous studies of resettlement schemes have also found an under-representation of BME prisoners (see Clancy et al. 2006).

Table 3.4   Ethnic group of referrals to Nacro Cymru/CAIS TSS, by year

Ethnic group	2004 - 2006	2007	2008	All
White	73%	17%	56	59%
Black	<1%	0	<1%	<1%
Mixed race	<1%	0	<1%	<1%
Asian	<1%	0	0	<1%
Not reported	26%	83%	43%	40%
Base N	727	213	281	1221

Note: Columns may sum to more than 100 because of rounding.

3.1.3 Offences and sentences

Details of offences and sentences were also readily available only in North Wales, where these were included in the computerised Scheme records.

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[8] BME groups are significantly overrepresented in the overall prison population, and one would assume that this applies to Welsh prisoners too.

The lengths of sentence being served by clients referred to the Nacro Cymru/CAIS TSS in 2007 and 2008 are presented in Table 3.5. There is again some missing data, but it appears that, among sentenced prisoners, roughly equal numbers were serving under and over six months. The most common sentence range was three to less than six months. Given that only half the time is served and that further reductions can be made through time spent on remand or early release on End of Custody Licence (ECL), this means that there is relatively little time in most cases for the mentors to work with offenders while they are still 'inside' (indeed, in at least 12 per cent of all cases – those sentenced to less than three months - there is a maximum of six weeks available). It is also striking that 13% of referrals were of prisoners on remand: presumably most of these expected a short term of imprisonment and were referred in order to expedite the process of joining TSS.

It is interesting to note that in four per cent of cases in North Wales, the prisoner had been sentenced to a term of imprisonment of 12 months or more, despite this being outside the guidelines of the Scheme. It appears from discussions with Nacro staff that some of these were referred but not taken on as live cases, while others were offenders who had been returned to prison to serve a short period for breaching their license conditions, thus making them eligible for TSS. One or two of the latter types of case were also discovered in the paper files of G4S TSS.

As one might expect, TSS participants had committed a wide range of offences. Appendix Table 1 shows that those referred to the Nacro/CAIS in the first ten months of 2008 had 15 different types of principal offence. Perhaps the most striking finding was that 20% of referrals were of clients who had been found guilty of violent offences (mainly ABH, GBH or wounding). This suggests that alcohol may have been a prominent factor in their offending. It also shows that mentors take on people who may pose some physical risk, and underlines the importance of accurate risk assessment.

Table 3.5   Length of sentence of clients referred to Nacro
             Cymru/CAIS TSS, by year

Sentence length	2004 - 2006	2007	2008	All
Less than 3 months	11%	13%	14%	12%
3 to < 6 months	28%	12%	22%	24%
6 to < 9 months	17%	26%	15%	18%
9 to < 12 months	11%	13%	15%	11%
12 months or over	3%	8%	3%	4%
Remand	15%	4%	15%	13%
Not recorded	14%	25%	15%	16%
Base N	727	213	281	1221

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

3.1.4 Substance misuse problems

One of the main criteria for eligibility for TSS is having a substance misuse problem and, as stated earlier, the Scheme is encouraged to give as much attention to alcohol problems as to drugs. Table 3.6 shows that Nacro Cymru/CAIS TSS has increasingly taken on more alcohol cases over the years, and that the latter now form the majority. In 2008, 43 per cent of referred prisoners had a drug problem and 63 per cent an alcohol problem (these figures include six per cent who reported both).

Table 3.6   Nature of substance misuse problem of clients referred to Nacro
             Cymru/CAIS TSS, by year

Nature of problem	2004 - 2006	2007	Jan-Oct 2008	All
Alcohol	24%	32%	57%	33%
Drugs	51%	40%	37%	46%
Both alcohol and drugs	25%	28%	6%	21%
Base N	727	213	281	1221

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

A little more detail about the nature of clients' substance misuse problems can be obtained from the case records maintained by G4S. Although this information was until recently held in paper form, making extraction of the data a laborious task, some has been transferred by students to the electronic database used to produce the Support Services Outcome Measure (SSOM). As noted earlier, this is intended to gauge the extent of clients' problems pre and post engagement with TSS and hence to assess their 'distance travelled' during the mentoring period. We were able to analyse SSOM data for 374

clients whose cases were closed in the first seven months of 2008 (see Table 3.7). The figures relating to substance misuse indicate that the majority of clients (53%) who joined TSS had been chaotic or injecting users of Class A or B drugs prior to joining the Scheme (unfortunately, the proportion injecting is not separated out, so this category covers a very wide span of drug problems). A further 17 per cent were classified as more controlled (or safer) users of Class A or B drugs. Just over one-fifth of clients had been linked with a specialist agency for assistance with their substance misuse problems or had been abstinent (in terms of drug-taking).

Table 3.7   Nature of initial drug misuse problem of G4S clients in 2008

Type of drug and nature of misuse	Score at start
Class A/B - chaotic / injecting etc	53%
Class A/B - risk aware	17%
Class C	8%
With specialist agency/substitute meds/abstinent	21%
Total N	374

Note: Based on cases closed in Jan-July 2008

The SSOM data can also be used to indicate the prevalence of alcohol problems among clients in 2008. Table 3.8 shows that 59 per cent had been classified as daily abusers or bingers of alcohol at the time of referral. In other words, as in North Wales, the G4S TSS takes on a high proportion of clients with alcohol problems.

Table 3.8   Nature of initial alcohol misuse problem of G4S clients in 2008

Alcohol abuse description	Score at start
Daily abuse/binge intake - unacceptable behaviour	59%
Daily/binge - risk aware – controlled	5%
Occasional intake – safe	16%
Linked with specialist agency/abstinent	20%
Total N	374

Note: Based on cases closed in January to July 2008.

3.2   Maintaining contact with clients

Of course, recruiting participants is only the beginning, and the number of 'referrals' - always a slippery concept - is on its own a poor measure of the Scheme's effectiveness. The real test is the extent to which offenders actually engage with the project and its mentors. Evidence about the quality of the relationships established and about the kinds of services provided, will

be discussed in the next two sections. Here we provide a preliminary statistical overview of the volume and duration of contacts between mentors and offenders both before and after release, again as recorded in Scheme records. As noted earlier, we have doubts about the accuracy of some of the North Wales data: possibly, some of the recorded contacts were not with mentors but with other Nacro staff (eg DIP workers), with whom the mentors often worked closely and some of whose activities were recorded on the same database.

3.2.1 'Attrition' of referred cases

Figures 3a and 3b present, respectively, 'attrition charts' for the G4S and Nacro Cymru/CAIS branches of TSS. These were produced by combining two different databases (one based on individuals, the other on contacts) which have been maintained by the Scheme since TSS was established. In the case of G4S, they include all closed cases up to the end of July 2008 and for Nacro/CAIS, up to the end of December 2008[9]. Starting with the number of referrals to each, the charts show how many offenders were recorded as having been seen in prison by mentors (and/or, in Altcourse, by an in-reach worker) and how many went on to be seen in person after release.

According to these records, in the G4S area mentors met prisoners while they were still 'inside' in only 52 per cent of all referred cases, while Nacro/CAIS mentors or workers met them in 73 per cent. As most of the cases in which no contact is recorded include data from initial assessments (information on substance abuse, housing needs, etc), we assume that the databases do not always count initial assessment meetings as 'contacts' and hence that the above figures in both areas under-represent the amount of contact in prison. Nevertheless, the higher prison contact rate recorded by Nacro/Cais may reflect a real difference between the two branches of the Scheme, partly explained by the presence of a full-time in-reach worker employed by TSS in HMP Altcourse, who was able to identify and visit potential TSS clients at an early stage of their sentence (the TSS in North Wales was also assisted in earlier years by in-reach workers employed by Nacro or CAIS). The G4S TSS covers a wider range of prisons, which do not always refer as promptly as Parc, while its mentors do not make routine scheduled visits to all, so they are more likely to miss prisoners, for example, who are released on ECL without warning. In addition, G4S receives a considerable number of community referrals (ie referrals of recently released prisoners made by offenders themselves, the probation service or other agencies), in which case no prison

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[9] There is often a delay in closing cases officially and showing this on the database, so for the purposes of this chart we have deemed cases to be closed 5 months after initial referral or three months after release. The G4S dataset was initially analysed at an early stage in the fieldwork, so figures were available only up to July 2008. However, the research team was originally given an incomplete dataset by Nacro/CAIS, and the error did not come to light until April 2009. A complete re-analysis was undertaken of the North Wales data at that point. Consequently, we were able to include cases referred up to the end of 2008 in the analysis.

visit is of course possible. There were 97 such referrals in 2008 (see Table 3.1)[10].

As can be seen from the charts, in both areas, a fair proportion of those not seen in prison (apart from possibly an initial assessment meeting) were later contacted after release. Altogether, across the whole Scheme over the five years monitored, almost 80 per cent of the 2,248 offenders referred to TSS were seen face-to-face by a mentor at some point.

Where face-to face contact post-release is concerned, the computer records indicate that over the four to five years since the establishment of TSS, about 56% of all prisoners referred to the Scheme have been seen face-to-face by mentors at least once post-release. As will be discussed in section 5, this is an exceptionally high proportion compared with other mentoring schemes that have been evaluated. The figures suggest that G4S mentors both saw a marginally higher proportion than their northern counterparts outside prison and saw them more often (19% of all cases seen six or more times, compared with 16%). This is the opposite situation to contact in prison, and probably reflects the more systematic efforts made by the G4s mentors to 'chase' offenders who do not keep appointments or fail to respond to messages. G4S has a well-established system of telephone calls, letters and 'cold call' visits to offenders who have failed to keep in touch, and we found four examples among a sample of 35 of their casefiles of this eventually paying off and a working relationship being re-established.

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[10] Prior to June, 2007, such referrals were generally recorded as originating from the prison in which the client had last been held. Since then they have been recorded separately as 'community referrals'.

Figure 3a: Attrition chart, G4S TSS: completed cases, January 2004 – July 2008
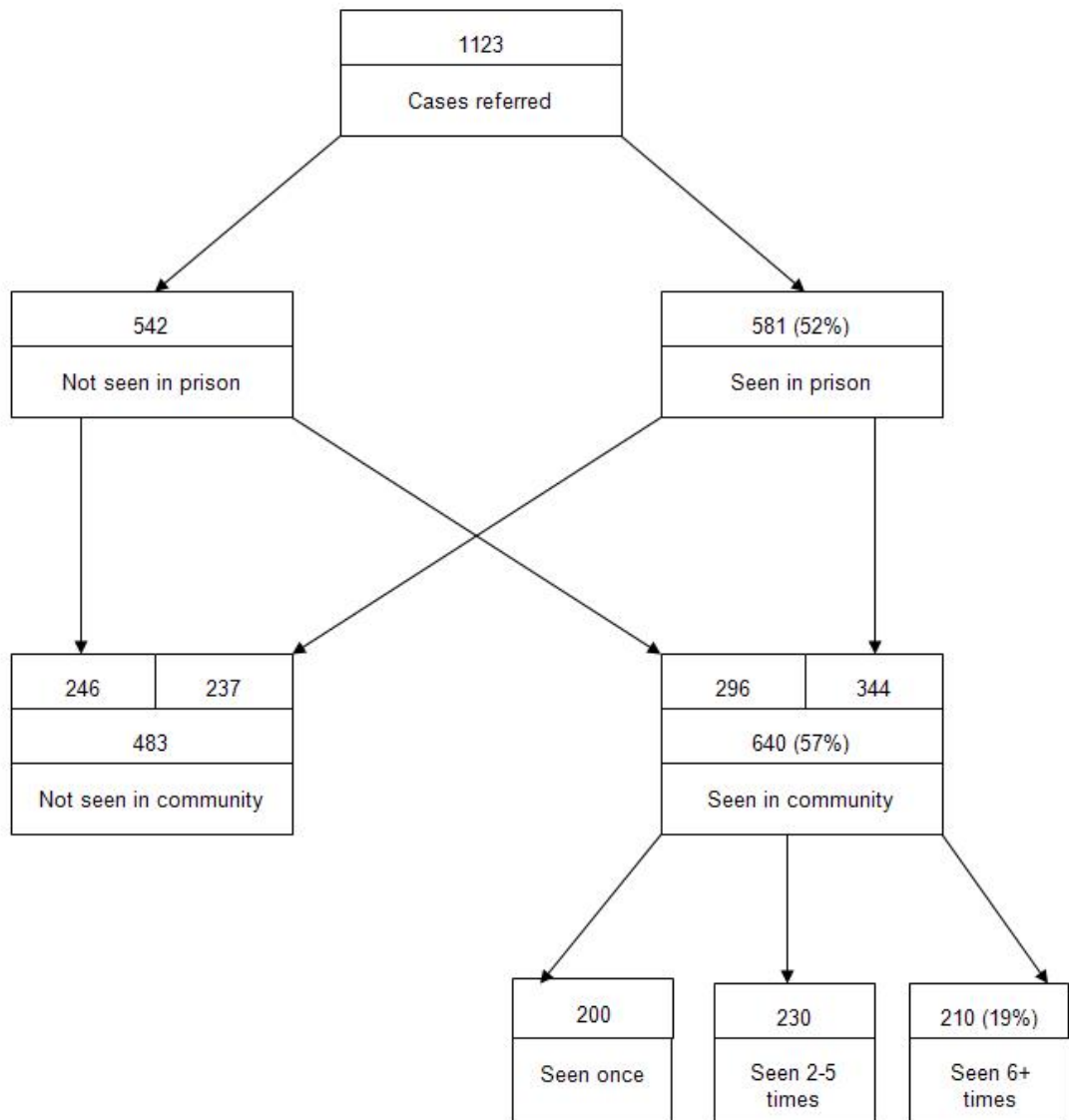
Notes:

1. Based on the G4S database. Between January 2004 and July 2008, 1378 clients were referred to the G4S TSS. Of these, 1123 were 'eligible' for inclusion in the attrition analysis. Eligibility was based on cases that had been officially closed, where the release date was at least 3 months before the end of July 2008, or where the referral date was at least 5 months before the end of July 2008.

2. 'Seen' refers to face-to-face contact with a TSS mentor. However, it is likely that many of those recorded as 'not seen in prison' were in fact seen by a mentor or other TSS staff for an initial assessment interview.

Figure 3b: Attrition chart, Nacro/CAIS completed cases, January 2004–
December 2008
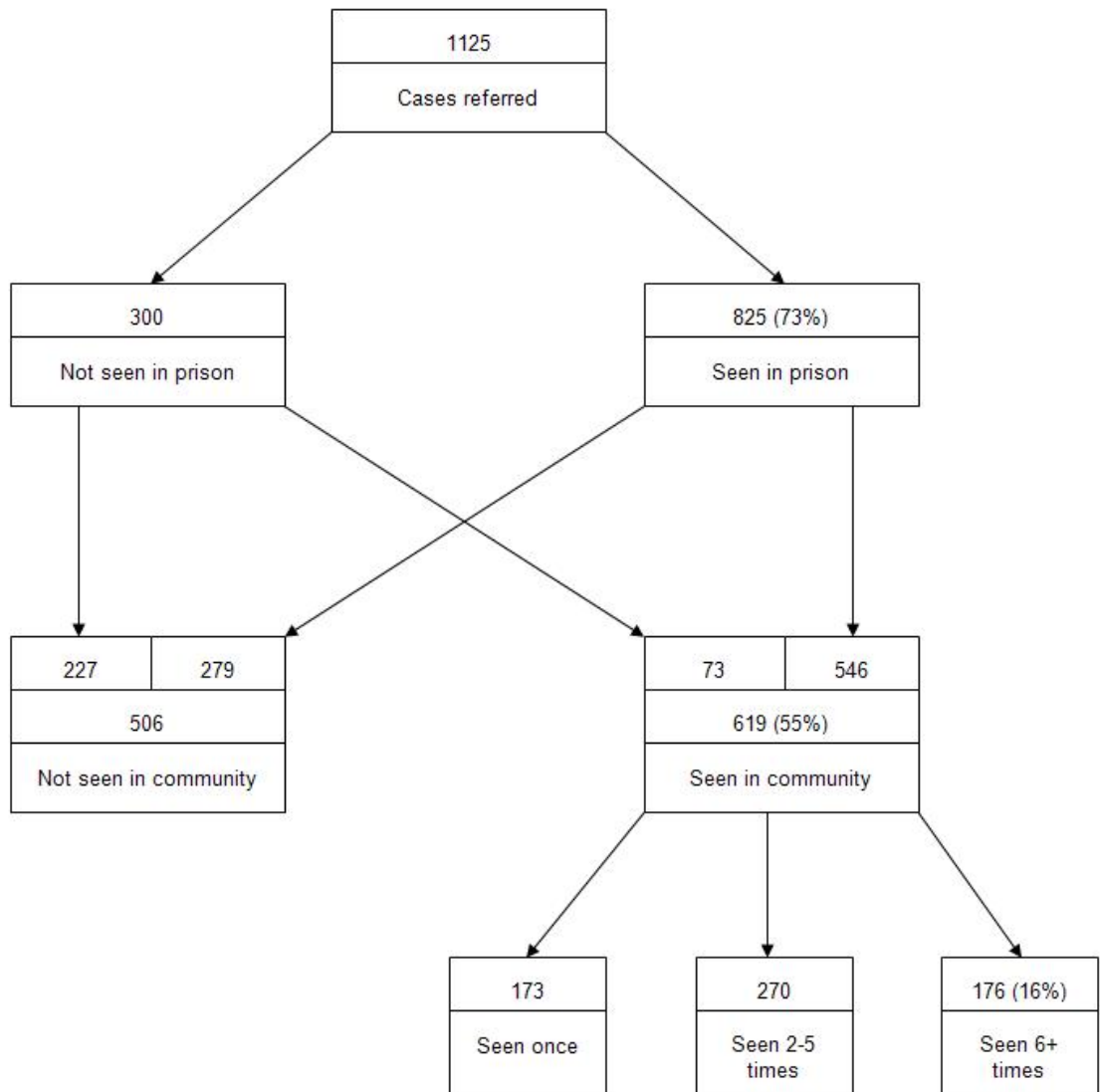
Notes:
  1. Based on Nacro/CAIS database. Between January 2004 and December 2008, 1221
      clients were recorded as having been referred to the Nacro/CAIS TSS. Of these,
      1125 were 'eligible' for inclusion in the attrition analysis. Eligibility was based on
      cases that had been officially closed or cases where the release date was at least 3
      months before the end of December 2008 or cases where the referral date was at
      least 5 months before the end of December 2008.

  2. 'Seen' refers to face-to-face contact with a TSS mentor or worker. However, it is
      likely that many of those recorded as 'not seen in prison' were in fact seen by a
      mentor or other TSS staff for an initial assessment interview.

Finally, Figure 3c below shows a similar attrition chart for all 2008 referrals to the TSS in North Wales. This is included because of the earlier mentioned doubts about the reliability of data from earlier years, and also because it covers the period since the new contracts were awarded and Nacro/CAIS ceased covering Dyfed Powys. It can be seen that the recorded proportions of clients seen in prison (67%) and post-release (44%) are a little lower than in the full chart for 2004-2008, but nevertheless still high compared with other mentoring schemes. (We do not have equivalent data for G4S covering the whole of 2008, but their figures from January to July 2008 are very similar to those from earlier years.)

Figure 3c: Attrition chart, Nacro/CAIS completed cases, January–December 2008
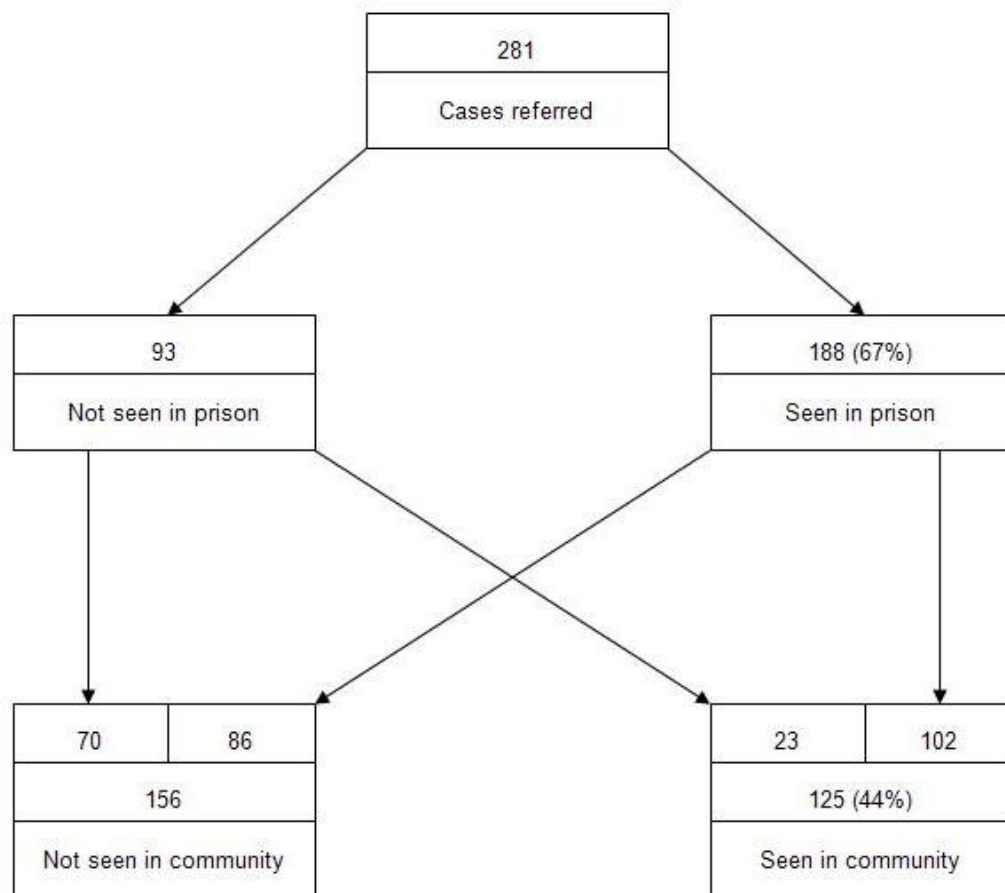
Notes:
1. Based on Nacro/CAIS database, all cases, 2008.

2. 'Seen' refers to face-to-face contact with a TSS mentor or worker. However, it is likely that many of those recorded as 'not seen in prison' were in fact seen by a mentor or other TSS staff for an initial assessment interview.

3.2.2 Frequency and duration of contact post-release

We now look more closely at the available information about contacts between TSS staff and their clients. We shall supplement analysis of data from the Scheme's computerised records with that of our own small samples of casefiles from 2008. As noted in the methodology section, we found these to have been very conscientiously and comprehensively completed by mentors in the G4S area. This was not the case in North Wales, but a combination of early PalBase records and 'talking through' each case with the mentor provided us with some broadly comparable (though admittedly less detailed, accurate and reliable) material from that area.

As in the 'attrition tables' above, in discussing 'contact' we shall focus mainly on face-to-face contact post-release. This is largely because it is this personal outreach aspect of the Scheme, whereby mentors develop a relationship with ex-prisoners and use this to motivate them and support their efforts to build a better life, which stands at the heart of TSS's practice philosophy and of what it sets out to achieve. This is not in any sense to undervalue work pre-release, which is often critical in engaging the offender in the first place, nor post-release contact by telephone, which is clearly a vital tool for maintaining engagement and 'oiling the wheels' to ensure that appointments are kept. The G4S casefiles give a vivid picture of the persistent efforts that are often required to keep in touch with TSS clients: many files contain records of large numbers of failed attempts to make telephone contact, including mobile phones suddenly being switched off, messages taken by friends or family, messages left on ansaphones, and so on. Telephone calls can also be valuable in alerting mentors to possible crises, preventing self-harm, and so on, as well as on occasion being used to discussing personal problems in depth.

Table 3.9, again based on the Scheme's computerised records since 2004, shows the total amount of time that TSS workers spent on average in contact with each offender, both inside and outside prison. The calculations exclude cases where there was no recorded contact at all. The average times are shown separately for face-to-face meetings and telephone calls.

There are again some differences in pattern between the two branches of TSS. The average total length of contact per client inside prison was considerably higher in the Nacro/CAIS area than in the G4S area, and was at its highest in 2008: this is further evidence of the North Wales focus on HMP Altcourse and the contribution of the in-reach worker there.[11] By contrast, the mean contact time post-release (again excluding cases where there was no contact) was slightly higher for G4S clients, who had on average 8.4 hours of face-to-face contact with mentors after leaving prison. As pointed out earlier, too, there are some doubts about whether the recorded North Wales data

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[11] It is not clear to what extent the records of meetings within prison include initial assessment interviews, so these figures must be treated with some caution.

refer solely to contact with mentors or include some with other Nacro/CAIS workers.

Table 3.9   Length of contact by provider, type of contact and year of referral

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008*	Total
Nacro Cymru/CAIS						
Total length of prison visits						
Mean hours per case	2.28	2.75	3.26	3.53	4.04	2.86
N of cases	140	201	217	145	122	825
Minimum	0.5	0.25	0.1	0.33	0.5	0.1
Maximum	15	13.92	19.3	28	27	28
Total length of face-to-face contact in community						
Mean hours per case	12.34	8.79	6.63	5.92	9.60	8.14
N of cases	89	149	180	106	94	618
Minimum	1	1	1	1	0.5	0.5
Maximum	77.5	69.2	61.5	86.5	94.5	94.5
Total length of phone calls						
Mean hours per case	2.41	1.65	1.03	1.12	1.4	1.52
N of cases	101	164	146	93	6	510
Minimum	0.25	0.05	0.1	0.17	0.5	0.05
Maximum	11	11.68	7.59	6	3.5	11.68
G4S						
Total length of prison visits						
Mean hours per case	2.0	1.3	1.0	1.1	1.5	1.3
N of cases	87	93	138	198	65	581
Minimum	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Maximum	8.8	5.7	7.7	26.4	12.0	26.4
Total length of face-to-face contact in the community						
Mean hours per case	6.9	8.8	11.6	8.3	5.5	8.4
N of cases	81	107	120	239	93	640
Minimum	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Maximum	34.1	59.8	72.2	109.5	24.6	109.5
Total length of phone calls						
Mean hours per case	1.2	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1
N of cases	69	120	126	202	92	609
Minimum	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
Maximum	15.7	7.8	6.9	11.1	9.4	15.7

Notes: Length of time is measured in hours.
Means calculated after excluding zeros.
*Nacro/CAIS: all completed cases up to December 2008. G4S: all completed cases up to July 2008.

Records of prison visits may not always include initial assessment interviews.

Another aspect of the differing patterns is reflected in the average numbers of contacts per client. As shown in Table 3.10, the main difference here concerns telephone calls: the recorded number of telephone contacts per case was around eight in the G4S area, compared with just over three in North Wales. At first glance, this seems to contradict the finding (Table 3.9) that average telephone contact time was longer in the north. However, the explanation is almost certainly that - as is evident from casefile analysis and interviews with staff - the G4S mentors tend to make stronger efforts than their counterparts to 'chase' clients who are not fully engaging, making many short telephone calls to ask them to keep in touch, remind them of meetings, and so on.

Overall, although some aspects of it have to be treated with caution, the data from TSS records presented in this section paint a very encouraging picture of mentor-client contact. They indicate that TSS has consistently achieved a high degree of contact with its clients in terms of both frequency and duration. On average, those who are seen in HMP Altcourse can expect three visits before release. And across the Scheme as a whole, those participants who maintain contact with the Scheme after release can expect on average to see a mentor or worker five or more times, for a total of over eight hours.

3.2.3 Caseloads

The above analysis shows that patterns of contact between mentors and clients are very varied in terms of frequency, intensity and duration (their quality will be discussed in the next subsection). For this reason (and the fact that mentors differ significantly in terms of the distance they live from prisons and from major centres of population), any calculation of the 'average caseload' per mentor should be treated with caution, and is certainly crude and potentially misleading in isolation as a measure of 'workload'. At any one time, a mentor's caseload may contain greater or lesser numbers of clients who are still in prison, who are being seen frequently, or who are out of contact. However, for what it is worth, if one assumes that each client referred remains 'on the books' for about four months (one month in prison and three months post release) the notional 'average caseload' per mentor in the G4S area at any point in 2008 would have been about 25, and that in North Wales either 23 or 31, depending on whether one counts the in-reach worker as a mentor[12].

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[12] Calculated by dividing the total referrals for the year by three (to reflect offenders' 4-month periods 'on the books') and then by the number of mentors in each area (598/3/8 and 281/3/4 or 281/3/3, respectively).

Table 3.11 Numbers of contacts per case, by provider, contact type and year of referral

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008*	Total
Nacro/CAIS						
Prison visits						
Mean N per case	1.75	2.57	2.05	2.18	2.93	2.16
N of cases	140	201	217	145	122	825
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	4	9	6	9	18	18
Meetings in community						
Mean N per case	8.68	9.01	6.07	5.70	6.18	7.28
N of cases	89	149	180	106	94	618
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	34	40	38	42	55	55
Telephone calls						
Mean N per case	3.87	4.32	2.52	2.18	2.83	3.29
N of cases	101	164	146	93	6	510
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	17	22	11	10	5	22
G4S						
Prison visits						
Mean N per case	2.0	1.5	1.3	1.5	1.7	1.5
N of cases	87	93	138	198	65	581
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	7	5	6	9	9	9
Meetings in community						
Mean N per case	5.1	5.4	6.6	5.5	5.1	5.6
N of cases	81	107	120	239	93	640
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	17	37	49	51	22	51
Telephone calls						
Mean N per case	6.2	7.6	8.1	8.6	10.0	8.2
N of cases	69	120	126	202	92	609
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	29	52	43	75	41	75

Notes:

*Nacro/CAIS: all completed cases up to December 2008. G4S: all completed cases up to July 2008.
Cases without any recorded contact excluded
Records of prison visits may not always include initial assessment interviews.

3.3 Engagement with clients

It is already clear from the previous subsection that TSS mentors – especially in the G4S area and increasingly in the Nacro/CAIS area - have maintained post-release contact with clients in a relatively high proportion of cases, seeing them several times over a significant period of time. Indeed, the figures on levels of post-release contact are better than in any previous resettlement scheme that the authors are aware of. We now look at evidence concerning the quality of this contact. This comes mainly from interviews with participants and from analysis of casefiles. The focus first is on issues around the establishment of relationships and efforts to motivate clients. We shall then look at assistance to clients in accessing services.

As noted in the methodology section, we interviewed 24 TSS clients in prison, and 24 post release (10 of the latter being second interviews with members of the prison sample, the other 14 first interviews with offenders we had not met before). We emphasise again that, while we made every effort to select clients for post-release interviews on a broadly randomised basis, there was an inevitable in-built bias in that those we succeeded in contacting were more likely to have been leading settled lives and to have engaged well with TSS mentors than those we failed to contact. This is reflected in the fact that of the 24 we interviewed in custody (who were broadly representative of current TSS clients pre-release), we managed to re-interview only 10 post-release. Most of the other 14 had lost touch with their mentors and we were unable to locate them (in many cases, they had already moved addresses and the mobile telephone number they had given was no longer operating). In the case of the post-release interviews, therefore, we are mainly discussing clients who were relative 'successes', rather than TSS participants as a whole.

That having been said, the post-release interviews were not with people who had been 'cherry picked' or who were 'easy to work with'. Many of those interviewed led what are often described as 'chaotic lives', had lengthy criminal records, had major social and personal problems, and had cynical views about 'the system' and other agencies which they felt had let them down. That these interviewees were virtually unanimous in their views about TSS and its mentors was surprising and, in our view, offers strong evidence about the quality of mentors' work when they do succeed in maintaining contact with clients.

Every one of the interviewees, both pre and post release, was positive about TSS and the support they had been offered or received. For those who had previously been in prison on a short-term sentence and not received any support, it had come as a welcome surprise, and several comments were made about a stark contrast with prior experiences of prison where their substance misuse problems had been largely ignored. For example, one expressed his disillusionment with services on a previous prison sentence as follows:

It's not the professionalism that I'd expect anyway. I was just so disappointed in the system. Totally disappointed in the system, and I knew it wasn't just me, there was a lot of people in there. And I was tending to feel more sorry for them because they've just…you know, I'd only just started drinking again and they'd been on it, and they go in there in a hell of a state and they're just left in a cell. You know so I wasn't impressed at all.

[Male 1]

Because of this and poor experiences of support from other agencies, some interviewees described initial scepticism about what the project would actually deliver. Whilst this was overcome once they started working with TSS, it indicates the challenge that the project may face in engaging some offenders:

Interviewer: *Before you joined the Scheme, what did you think the Scheme would offer?*

Respondent: *Well, to be honest, I thought it was a load of rubbish. … It just sounded too good to be true, really. … They were just offering help with everything I needed help with and then I thought 'Nah, that can't be right. No one can offer all that help for free.'*

[Male 10]

I have a bit of negative thoughts when it comes to probation and things like that, because for me personally they've never really done anything worthwhile, for me. But I think A----- goes out of her way for you and she does really, really help me, but I didn't think it was going to be much use to me at first.

[Female 2]

3.3.1 Quality of Relationships

When asked about what they valued in their participation with TSS, one of the most frequent responses – especially among those who had already been released, but even in some cases those still in custody - was to speak about the quality of their relationship with their mentor. Mentions of emotions and emotional support were prominent, and phrases and terms such as '[He/she] is there for me', 'trust' and 'feelings' were common. For example:

He'll go out of his way, if he can, to be there for you. If you need help with probation, if you need help with the dole office, if you need help with work, he will be the man to talk to, instead of me running round everywhere. So he's the one that I can just ring up and ask him to come and see me, and he will and we'll have a talk and I'll let him know

how I'm feeling and what I want to do, and he's going to be there to help me. That's why I want to hurry up back home, because I know I've got a lot to do now, so …

Q   And are there any particular bits of support you can think of that he's kind of helped you with so far?

B---- has taught me, he's sat me down many a time and he's said, 'There's better ways than just going out and drinking.' He was telling me what happens when you get into these depression moods, 'What are you going to do?' He's taught me a lot about that and he's said if I'm ever feeling down, ring him and he'll come to see me, and 'We'll talk about it, we'll try and sort it out.' And I want to go back working for myself again so he's going to be there for me, which I won't get outside, with help like that.

<div align="right">[M6]</div>

*When you talk to **someone that you know and trust** that is outside the vicious circle you can pour your worries on to someone else knowing it's not gonna go any further and not worrying anyone else, so that's the main thing about the meeting.*

<div align="right">[M1]</div>

*It's like a support, isn't it? **Moral support**, talking to you, talking you through with certain things. And it gives you a bit more to hope for when you get out.*

<div align="right">[M5]</div>

*This time now I'll have contact and I'm going out to make a fresh start so I'm really looking forward to **having someone there**.*

<div align="right">[M17]</div>

Frequent mention was made of the ready accessibility of mentors, and in particular their willingness to be telephoned for support at any time, as well as the (to many, unprecedented) practice of mentors telephoning them 'out of hours' (such as over the weekend) to ask if they were alright. This was one aspect of a general feeling among clients that the mentors were not 'just doing it as a job', but actually cared about individuals – all of which clearly differentiated mentors in their mind from officers and workers in most other agencies they had contact with:

*Now fair play to my TSS worker, she **keeps her phone on for me all weekend**, so if anything was to trouble me I could ring her any time. And it shows that **there's care there, it's not just a job to her**, and I feel that I can speak to her more than actually my drug counsellor and anybody. I don't trust my drug counsellor, to be honest, because he tells me information about a lot of people that I shouldn't be knowing about. Whereas my TSS worker, I know that whatever I say to her stays tight-lipped, unless it's detrimental to my health or whatever. I know when it means confidential she means confidential. So **I put my***

whole trust in her. … She's helped me come a long way in the past few months. When I first met her I was still right at rock bottom, I'd just come out of jail, got a child at home and everything, and a partner, where it's all going wrong.

[F1]

*It's been brilliant, I couldn't have asked for more. She's brilliant and yeah, I really appreciate what she's done for me, she's stretched out her arm and I've grabbed it with both hands, sort of thing. **But to actually call me on the weekend, 'I will leave my phone on for you'**, it's just nice to know that **they're not just there because it's a job** and it pays the bills, there is a bit of, you know … How can I say it? **There is a bit of emotion in these people**, they do care, it's not just a job to them*

[M12]

*Like she was coming, like she makes the effort. Like she phones me and things like that and makes sure everything's alright. Like once when I had my script, this time I think I had it on like on the Thursday or Friday, Monday then she phones me and asks me how's it going. **Just phones me out of the blue** like and say how are you coping and everything alright? Just having somebody like that, just makes that bit of difference like. See like last time, it was nothing like that when I came out of prison.*

Q So you're finding that extra support is helping you make progress?

A Yeah, I think it is, yeah. Just having somebody.... just having somebody there really like. You know if it's something that I can't cope with, I phone.... phone C---- and she'll help me out like.

[M13]

It is important to note, however, that one of the project managers regarded some aspects of the above to be bad practice, reflecting a need for more need for work on 'boundaries'. She instructs mentors to put their telephones off at weekends and at 1700 hours during the week, emphasising that taking a telephone call out of hours commits them to follow-through action, as 'the consequences of them taking a call and then not doing anything about it are greater than not taking the call in the first place'. Any need for contact with the Scheme at weekends, she argued, could be met by the Out of Hours telephone line operated by the TSS Manager 'under a properly operated and procured system'.

3.3.2 Motivation, self-esteem and self-help

The trusting relationships, perceived caring attitudes and ready accessibility of mentors described above are clearly positive aspects of TSS, and come through strongly in many of the interviews. However, they do give rise to

questions about possible risks of clients developing over-dependency on mentors, either in terms of becoming an 'emotional crutch' which the client may find difficult to let go, or in terms of expecting the mentor to solve all the client's practical problems for them, rather than 'helping them to help themselves'. We discussed this with both co-ordinators who managed and supervised the mentors, and found that both were fully aware of these risks, incorporated them prominently in training, and discussed them frequently in supervision sessions. Particular emphasis was placed on 'empowering' offenders to change their own lives rather than 'nurse-maiding' them. In the G4S part of the Scheme, too, it was standard practice to hold a specific 'closure meeting' at which it was made clear by the mentor to the client that the relationship they had built up was coming to an end, but at the same time giving them the message that TSS would not abandon them and that if they were in urgent need of support or advice they should contact the Scheme.

The notion that mentors were there to help offenders sustain their motivation and empower them to address their own problems was certainly grasped by several interviewees. For example:

> *Client: And a lot of people need to be told that sometimes, you know, people who are in and out of prison and that, they think that's our life, our life is set out but TSS tends to show you **that your life ain't mapped out for you. You can make your own map** as you go along into a better life, you know.*
>
> *Interviewer: So it's kind of empowering you a bit, giving you incentives?*
>
> *Client: Yeah, the incentive to move on from your old life and produce a normal life.*
>
> [M3]

> *He offers me these helps and **what you can do to sort myself out like**, pushing me forward instead of looking back all the time. … Really helpful, yeah. I've never had help there before, do you know what I mean, that kind of help - probably because I've never gone looking for it really and I never knew there was so much help you can get out there.*
>
> [M4]

> *Interviewer: What does that mean to you, having someone like that?*
>
> *Client: Fantastic, I feel better in myself and I know I want to … **I'm determined to succeed this time.** And I've got six or seven weeks left. And he's coming to see me again in another week or two, so I'm more determined to stick to it this time, only because of the help I've got off them. … because they're going to help me address a lot of problems that maybe I cannot handle on me own. … **They're there to help us. Not to do everything**, just to bring us some place, or talk to some people, or explain to us all the things that we need to know. So*

he's going to be there for us and that's a good thing, what I feel that they're doing. And I'm just more happy now about just going home, because of B---, he's been very good

[M6]

A key element of the motivational and empowerment process is building up clients' self-esteem and belief that they have the ability to 'turn their own lives around'. This was also recognised by several interviewees, who were beginning to see greater potential within themselves than their negative experiences had led them to perceive:

Interviewer: Can you try and think about what you think is the most important thing *he's done for you?*

Client: I think he's made me realise that I am an individual and not just trouble really, just an ex-prisoner. I think I've realised that I **have potential in myself**. *I think he's helped me identify that I have got potential and I can do positive things really.*

[M16]

Well I think the main aims are in rehabilitating you really and keeping you from coming back to prison. Showing you there's another life out there than the life you've been leading. Because that's all TSS seem to drum into me is that, you know… there is a different life there for me. **I'm not just a waste of space you know what I mean.**

[M3]

All the above comments fit very well with current theory and research about desistance from offending. Writers such as Maruna (2000), Farrall (2002) and McNeill (2005) identify support to offenders in sustaining motivation and offenders' belief in their own capacity to change as key factors in successful desistance (see also Maruna and Immarigeon 2004; Farrall and Calverley 2005).

It is worth noting, however, that while the interviews with clients produced many more examples of awareness of the need to 'help themselves' than of possible over-reliance on mentors to 'do everything for them', the casefile analysis did reveal four or five cases where it seemed likely to the researchers that the mentor had been to some extent manipulated by the client to act as a 'taxi' to agencies and to deal with all their practical problems for them. In one case, indeed, the mentor clearly realised this towards the end of the supervision period and, together with a worker from another agency, confronted the client about it.

3.3.3 Practical help and liaison with service agencies

In addition to providing motivational and emotional support, one of the main tasks of the mentors is to help prisoners and ex-prisoners obtain access to services.

Some sense of the scale of the needs to be addressed can be gained from Tables 3.11 and 3.12, based on various records from the two TSS areas. As the record-keeping systems and the categories used in them are different, no direct comparison is possible between the two areas. Nacro/CAIS have computer records of assessed needs dating back to the advent of the Scheme. The G4S-TSS figures are based on SSOM records, which, as described earlier, are used to measure clients' problems before and after engagement with TSS, but have been recorded systematically for a relatively short time. Those in the two tables show the 'before' status as assessed by mentors, of those clients whose cases were closed or completed in 2008.

It can be seen from Table 3.11 that significant proportions of clients have needs in relation to accommodation, training/employment or drug/alcohol treatment, which are the key needs that emerge in virtually all studies of short-term prisoners (see, for example, Clancy et al 2006; Maguire 2007). However, there are also a wide range of other problems experienced by substantial numbers of offenders, including issues around claiming benefits.

Table 3.12 provides some more detailed information about housing status. There is a considerable amount of missing data in the Nacro/CAIS records on this topic, but it is clear that in 2008, at least 23% of clients returning to North Wales were classified in initial assessments as expecting to be of no fixed abode (NFA) on release. In the G4S area, nearly 40% were classified as expecting to be NFA or to go only to temporary accommodation.

Table 3.11   Needs of clients referred to TSS, 2008

Nacro Cymru/CAIS

Problems/needs	N	%
Accommodation	157	56
Employment	144	51
Access to treatment	110	39
Mentoring	103	37
Counselling	69	25
Benefits	55	20
Education	34	12
Training	31	11
Money problems	25	9
Transport	21	7
Family work	15	5
Total N	281	

G4S

Alcohol	Daily abuse/binge - unacceptable behaviour	59%
Drugs	Class A/B - chaotic / injecting etc	53%
ETE	Unemployed/poor organising skills	52%
Housing	No fixed address/unreliable temporary accommodation	39%
	Total N	374

Notes: Multiple responses possible, hence columns do not add to 100%.
Nacro/CAIS: based on computerised records of assessments January to December 2008.
G4S: based on SSOM data (see text) for 374 cases closed between January and July 2008.

Table 3.12 Housing status of clients referred to TSS (at initial assessment), 2008

	N	%
NFA	66	23
Temporary	14	5
Rented property	33	12
Lives with family	47	17
Own property	6	2
Not recorded	115	41
Total N	281	100

Source: computerised records of assessments by Nacro/CAIS, January to December 2008.

G4S

	Jan-July 2008
No fixed address/unreliable temporary accommodation	39%
Family/friend - temp (relatively supportive relationship)	21%
B&B - emergency accommodation only	<1%
Council accepts housing responsibility (+ B&B or good temp)	1%
Supported Accommodation Scheme (long-stay)	2%
Council /housing assc/private rent or family home (perm)	38%
Total N	374

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Source: SSOM data (see text) created by G4S for 374 cases closed between January and July 2008.
Multiple responses possible, hence columns do not add to 100%.

In responding to the above needs, the mentor's main aim is usually to try to get the client taken on by an appropriate agency which has the power, resources and service skills to help resolve – or at least ameliorate – the problem in question. This may be achieved in a variety of ways, ranging from contacting the agency and making all the arrangements on the client's behalf (and in some cases ferrying them by car to appointments), to simply giving information about the service to the client and persuading him/her to follow it up for themselves.

The need for help in this respect was clear from our interviews with offenders. Many said that they did not know where to go or how to access services, lacked confidence in approaching agencies on their own, or that they tended to be 'fobbed off' – mentors acting on their behalf were taken more seriously and were more likely to achieve results. Comments included:

> *Linking up with agencies sometimes can be quite difficult because it's not my everyday way of going on life and I haven't grown up through my teens and my twenties, I'm thirty now, so I haven't really grown up*

right through going about looking for work, getting qualifications. Um, so it's a bit … I wouldn't say it's a new thing for me but virtually new…

*…Yeah I have been employed in the past but …**I wouldn't know how to liaise with agencies. Um, I wouldn't even know what agencies to liaise with**, I wouldn't know how to get … where to start. So even if she does as little as that for me, that's more than anybody else has done for me.*

[M17]

*The day that they sorted the script out, C--- come up and she was determined that I was gonna have it that day and that was it like. She stayed with me.... I was losing my head because we was going over there and they were saying one thing and then somebody else was saying something else, **and she was running me about half the day in the car.** I was losing it, I was going nuts, I was. Like she stayed calm and sorted it all out like…*

*…I told her what was happening and she put me.... she put me in.... it was DIP again, she put me in contact with them but she was coming with me. **She was picking me up, taking me there, sorting it out, helping me** and she got me my script back this time pretty quick like…*

*…Like she helped with the Social and things like that, helped me sort my benefit out, made phone calls for me. **She seems to ask the questions that I don't think of, do you know?** .... Like when we go to see people like.... she'll.... like with the DIP, she asks them.*

[M2]

Specifically in relation to substance misuse, several interviewees gave examples how TSS had not only helped them to get access to services, but – importantly – had helped them face the fact that they had a problem, persuaded them that it was in their interest to seek help and worked to sustain their motivation to do so. For example, one spoke of how the mentor had helped him to realise the reasons for his drinking and the damage it was doing to his health:

*When I went in there I was… I mean, I'm an alcoholic, like, you know, a severe alcoholic and I was … just before I went in, I was pretty close to dying, like. I've got pancreatitis. And I was on… My father had just died and I was on, like, a self-destruct and was getting into trouble. And things weren't good. And when I went in, I had the attitude of just…just staying as I was. Just doing my time, get out, and then start going on the piss again. And then I started having some meetings with D--- and he was **helping me address, like, why I was drinking and what harm it was doing to me.** And then I…then I went away and sort of got some books through the library. I did an alcohol awareness course and that. It taught me a lot, actually, of, you know, the damage it does to you.*

Another said that without the mentor he would never have addressed his drug problems:

> *Interviewer: What would you have done about your problems if you hadn't joined TSS?*

> *Client: I don't know**. I would have kept them bottled in**, I would have just, you know. I would have just tried to…to be honest I don't know, I wouldn't have been* able to talk to probation, **I would have ended up back on drugs and I would have been trying to skip the tests they were doing**.

> *I **think I wouldn't have lasted six months without the help I was having** to be honest because usually before '06 I would have got out and the day I got out I would have been straight on the drugs. Like, you know, usually when I get out, because I've done a few sentences, when I get out my treat is a bit of drug. But this time I got out and my treat was going for a meal with my mother and my uncle and all that, you know.*

[M3]

The extent of assistance provided by mentors through referrals to other agencies is reflected to some degree in Tables 3.13 and 3.14, which show (according to Scheme records) the numbers of referrals made to named agencies over specific periods of time. The term 'referral' is often used in a somewhat vague sense, but it was apparent from our casefile analysis that in the majority of cases (in both branches of TSS) it meant far more than simply giving the client a telephone number to ring. As will be discussed later, the most common practice was for mentors to ring up contacts (often already known to them) in service agencies and make appointments for their clients – in many cases, too, picking them up and accompanying them to the appointment.

The purpose of these tables (which are based on different kinds of records) is not to highlight differences between the two TSS 'branches', but to give a flavour of the range of services that both access. Table 3.13 is based on 69 completed cases in North Wales in 2008 in which referrals were made before and/or after release. The figures in Table 3.14 were extracted from the G4S Scheme's quarterly returns to the Project Board, so it is not known how many cases they relate to. Perhaps the most striking feature of both tables is the sheer range of referrals made. As one might expect (from the needs outlined earlier), the most common referrals in both areas were to agencies dealing with substance misuse, housing and employment, but others contacted included agencies dealing with, among other issues, anger management, skills training, benefits advice, and general health.

Table 3.13   Referrals to external agencies, Jan-October 2008 (Nacro Cymru/CAIS)

External agency	2008
CDAT	28
Shelter	28
Progress to Work	25
Working Links	17
CAIS Counselling	16
NACRO	16
NACRO Basic Skills	10
DIP	9
CAIS	4
CALMS Course	2
NACRO Housing	2
ILM	2
Harm Reduction Team	2
CAIS Doorstop Project	1
ComMIT in the Community	1
Counselling	1
Wrexham Council – Housing	1
CAIS ComMIT	1
CAIS Move On	1
Council Housing Dept	1
Doorstop	1
Duke of Edinburgh Award2	1
Greenbank	1
Mental Health	1
The Elms	1
Anger Management	1
Dyffodol	1
Gwynedd County Council	1
Move On	1
NACRO ILM	1
Anglesey County Council	1
Benefit advice	1
Flintshire Volunteer Centre	1
GP (NHS)	1
Social Services	1
SOVA Mentoring	1
Environmental Health	1
Total number of referrals to external agencies	185

Notes: Referrals based on 69 individuals who were referred to external agencies.

Table 3.14   Referrals to external agencies, Jan-December 2008 (G4S)

Probation Services/DRRs/DTTOs/YOT	Probation	354
Surgeries / Hospitals / Mental Health/Social Servs	Medical//Health & Well being issues	150
P2W ie via Turning Point, TEDS, Newport P2W	Emp etc	139
Job Centre Plus/Employment Services/education	ETE	130
Various Benefits Offices	Benefits	90
Police Services/PPO & Tagging Agencies	Policing Matters / Tagging issues	86
Magistrates Courts / Solicitors	Crim Justice	78
The Wallich	Housing, Tenancy & Support Issues	70
Various Bed & Breakfast/hostels etc	Accommodation issues	62
CJIT Powys	Drug Intervention Programme	48
Bridgend Housing (inc Valleys 2 Coast)	Housing Issues	45
WGCADA (Swansea, Bridgend, Neath/P.Talbot)	Drugs Agency	37
CJIT Swansea	Drug Intervention Programme	36
Private Letting Agency	Housing Issues	33
Cardiff Housing	Housing Issues	30
Rhondda Housing	Housing Issues	29
Vesta Project, Bridgend, The Wallich	Supported housing	29
Shaw Trust	Emp etc	28
Working Links	Emp etc	28
Shelter Cymru	Housing Issues	26
Swansea/Neath Housing	Housing issues	24
TEDS (including Anger Management)	Drugs Agency	23
SOLAS	Supported housing	23
Pontypool Housing/Blaenau/Cwmbran/Torfaen	Housing issues	21
CJIT Gwent/Kaleidoscope	Drug Intervention Programme	20
OGWR Dash	Drugs Agency	19
CJIT Bridgend/Neath Port Talbot	Drug Intervention Programme	18
RISMS, LLwnypia	Drugs Agency	18
Mental Health Matters, MIND etc	Medical	18
YMCA, Cardiff, Swansea etc	Accommodation Services	17
CAU (Cardiff)/CDAT	Drugs Services	17
Valley of Hope	Housing issues	17
WWSMS	Drugs Agency	16
Ceredigion Housing	Housing issues	16
CJIT Carmarthen	Drug Intervention Programme	15
Banks/post offices/debt advice etc	Finances (bank accounts etc)	15
In2Change	Supported Housing	15
CJIT Llanelli	Drug Intervention Programme	14
Ty Trothwy	Housing Issues	14
CJIT RCT/Merthyr	Drug Intervention Programme	13
Caerphilly Housing (Ystrad Fach)	Housing Issues	13
Newport Housing	Housing Issues	13
Drug Aid	Drugs Agency	12
The Women's Turnaround Project	Women's project	12
Ty Gobaith	Housing Issues	10
Gas/elec power services ie Scottish Power	Tenancy Support Issues	10
Merthyr Housing	Housing Issues	9

CJIT Ceridigion	Drug Intervention Programme	8
Powys Housing	Housing issues	8
Safehaven	Housing Issues	8
CJIT Cardiff and the Vale	Drug Intervention Programme	7
Hartshorn House	Housing issues	7
Llanelli Housing	Housing Issues	7
Various bond boards	Housing issues	7
GSSMS	Drugs Agency	6
Furnace House	Housing issues	6
Tresillian House	Housing Issues	6
Swansea NA/AA	Narcotics Anon/Alcoholics Anon	6
Prison Link Cymru	Supported Housing Services	6
Royal British Legion	Tenancy Support Issues	6
Leisure Services	Fitness activities	5
Ty Croeso/Ty Newydd	Housing issues	5
GAP, Inroads	Drugs Agency	8
Recreational (gym etc)	Health / fitness	4
Dyfed Powys Housing	Housing	4
Dyfrig House	Housing Issues	4
Newlink	Training/volunteer work	4
Ceredigion Care Society	Various assistance	4
Citizens Advice Bureau	Various support issues	4
Scarehaven Project/Coastal Project	Activities	3
CJIT Haverfordwest – Pembroke	Drug Intervention Programme	3
FUSHION	Drugs Agency	3
Bridgend CDAT/RAP	Drugs Services	3
Swansea CDAT	Drugs Services	3
MIDAS Construction	ETE	3
Bargoed Housing	Housing issues	3
Brynawel House	Housing issues	3
Religious services	Religious services	3
Swansea Young Single Homlessness Project	Supported Housing	3
ADREF, Too good to waste	Accommodation furnishing	3
Compass	Drugs Agency	2
Army Career	Emp etc	2
Barry Housing	Housing Issues	2
Charter Housing	Housing issues	2
Dyffryn House	Housing issues	2
Ty Cantref	Housing issues	2
Wales & West Housing	Housing issues	2
Ystrad Housing	Housing issues	2
Career Wales	ETE	1
Employer	ETE	1
Manpower	ETE	1
Princes Trust	ETE/Activities etc	1
EEPIP	Families/children project	1
Caring Hands	Homlessness and other issues	1
Monmouth Housing	Housing issues	1
Oakhouse	Housing issues	1
Pembroke Housing	Housing issues	1
Riverside Hostel	Housing issues	1
Library	Information	1
Salvation Army	Various support issues	1

| DVLA | Vehicle licensing etc | 1 |
| Women's Aid | Women's Project | 1 |

| Total number of referrals to external agencies | 2153 |

3.4 Relationships and links with Prisons, Probation and DIP

In this section, we look at working relationships between TSS and the major statutory criminal justice agencies and drugs partnerships in Wales. We discuss in turn prisons, probation and the Drug Intervention Programme (DIP).

3.4.1 Working relationships with prisons

One of the issues commonly raised by TSS staff and mentors was the continuing need to develop, maintain and renew good working relationships with the prisons. Indeed, apart from in the two establishments with which they had very close links (HMP Parc, just outside which the G4S-TSS offices were located, and HMP Altcourse, where the CAIS in-reach worker was based) – and to a lesser extent, HMP Styal, where a Nacro mentor had established a regular pattern of visits - difficulties in developing and sustaining systematic communication and working practices were still seen as a barrier to getting more referrals. In South Wales it was suggested that more time spent building up personal, face-to-face relationships with staff in Swansea and Cardiff prisons, in particular, would bring rewards:

> *The people that refer to us - I do think if they actually saw a person and not just a voice, I really do think that would help the Scheme - help TSS as a scheme because all they hear is someone on the phone and they see some leaflets. If they have a person to relate to and they can think, 'Oh, you know, that would be a really good one for [mentor]. …you build up the relationship. … We do it with all the other agencies on the outside: the DIP, CJIT, STIR. All of the other projects, Progress to Work, they know us by face and we make ourselves known. … We make it a point to do that so I think that would probably be good with the prisons as well - but I'm not quite sure how that would work.*
>
> [Mentor 7]

The same mentor contrasted their cordial and informal personal relations with staff in Parc with the situation elsewhere, where they knew few officers by name:

> *We have obviously our office based up at Parc just on the outside. But the other prisons - I'm sure that we would be more than welcome to go and visit them and say' Hello' and make ourselves known and pop in for a coffee - but generally none of the other prisons, literally the only route that we go through that way is through legals.*
>
> [Mentor 7]

Another commented:

I think we need to either be in there on a regular basis so the prisoners need to see us - not just the CARAT. The prisoners need to see us.... they tend to see the CARAT teams as the authoritative figure, where TSS aren't seen as the authoritative figure… We need to be in there [other prisons] ourselves as we are, telling people what we can offer the… promoting it direct to the prisoners, you know what I mean? There must be some sort of.... they must have workshops.... fayres as they call them.

[Mentor 2]

It was suggested that it might be helpful to set some targets for the prisons themselves - so that they are obliged to be more active in referring into TSS in order to continue increasing the project's momentum:

…to make other people accountable. This service is there and it's not right if people don't use the effective assessment process tool when they're referring people. … It is about making use of a very good service so that we can sustain it, so that it can keep going and that somebody will want to commission us again and fund us again.

[Mentor 6]

The situation in the Nacro/CAIS area was made even more difficult by the lack of a prison within North Wales[13] – though as will be discussed later, close relations were established within HMP Altcourse, not far across the border in England. It was pointed out that Welsh prisoners were distributed across a wide range of English prisons and that the TSS staff did not have the resources to cover them effectively:

They can't cover every prison that our service users go to, and they certainly can't do pre-release visits if somebody's in Wiltshire or whatever. And because … we haven't got local prisons, so our prisoners go all over the UK. And it is small numbers …[if] we have ten people it's worth going down. But for one person it's very difficult to do that.

[TSS Staff Member]

On the other hand, the general view of TSS that emerged from our interviews with staff working in the prisons with which the Scheme had regular contact was very positive. TSS was seen to increase their capacity to work with short-term prisoners. Indeed, a member of the prison resettlement team in Altcourse went as far as to comment that 'now that TSS caters for Welsh prisoners', his team were able to undertake more intensive work with non-Welsh prisoners (whether this is a desirable outcome is of course debatable!). A further benefit reported was that the prison resettlement team now rarely had to 'cold-call' agencies in Wales with whom they had little/no prior contact – this was often undertaken by TSS staff.

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[13] On 5 February 2009, the Ministry of Justice announced that the site for the new Welsh prison was to be Caernarvon, North Wales.

Before TSS there was very little support out in the community. It was very difficult to access support. Now the fact that TSS have come on board and come into the prison, taken a bit of a - well taken a large burden off the resettlement team … in terms of offering support for this group of prisoners.

A representative from CARAT in another prison admitted that the only knowledge she had about the post-release impact of TSS came from conversations with TSS clients who had returned to prison, but commented that even these individuals (who might be thought not to have had a successful experience of TSS) were very positive about the support they had received. Moreover, the CARAT worker explained how the existence of TSS meant that initiatives that CARAT workers start to put into place for short-term prisoners, but cannot complete because of the extremely brief time periods, can now be pursued in the community by TSS workers.

Finally, on the negative side, a particular issue that frequently caused problems for mentors was the sudden award to prisoners of End of Custody Licence (ECL), granting release up to 18 days earlier than anticipated. This impacted negatively not only on their ability to meet clients in prison, but their chances of contacting them after release. Some also thought that the lack of preparation for release could increase their chances of re-offending:

Sometimes we get the referral, especially with the ECL, and they're out next week. … you can't get two [prison visits] done then. So it'll just be a case of, "Right, I'll meet at the week that you're out."

[Mentor 3]

ECL, I think is ridiculous. It's not being explained to the prisoners exactly what's happening. They think 'Eighteen days, I'm released early, yeah let's go!' And what they don't realise is they get home, their parents have had a gut full of them within…because they're not used to their using. They get kicked out and they're homeless and they're on the streets. They can't be re-housed because they've got an address of release and then the boys are recommitting crime then to get back in, to come out.

[Mentor 8]

It's just…this ECL is just not working. About a fortnight ago, a gentleman that does work on the release area and he was going back to tell the inmates to be careful and think about ECL. … So we suggested that the boys who do put in for ECL, make sure they have got a fixed address when they come out and they're going to be okay. Because if they're not, do they understand that when they go to the council they're just going to shake their heads. … that needs to be explained… there needs to be a system where they are…they've got to understand how it all works when they come out.

[Mentor 4]

Unlike HDC, where they've got to have an approved address, - with ECL they could give anyone's address and get out. It could be anyone's. It could be a crack house and nothing's checked up. They're just let go to that address. So if you have got things lined up for them on release, they may miss all of the appointments made pre-release because you don't get chance to tell them because those last sort of couple of weeks are crucial for setting things up. And sometimes they don't know until the morning they're getting out so they wouldn't have been able to let us know.

<div align="right">[CARAT worker]</div>

Some support for the above views came from a prisoner we interviewed who regretted the fact that ECL had resulted in him not joining TSS during a previous sentence. It was not until much later that he realized what potential support he had missed out on:

If you get the eighteen-day early release they sometimes miss you … my sentence that I done last year, that I was going to have contact, and I had an eighteen-day early release because the rule had just came out. … Once I was back on me own I had a letter off 'em, maybe two or three letters actually. … suggesting I contact 'em, just to have a chat and see how my offending behaviour is. … But I never did contact them, I fell straight back into drugs, crime with it, and I was a bit sorry then that I didn't take the support.

<div align="right">[M7]</div>

3.4.1.1 Prison in-reach worker

As has often been highlighted in previous literature (see for example, Clancy et al. 2006; Maguire 2007), one of the keys to successful voluntary post-release contact with mentors is the establishment of a relationship before the offender leaves prison. Both TSS staff and external agency representatives were well aware of this, and identified it as one of the particular strengths of the Scheme that mentors visited clients as many times as practicable while they were still 'inside'. For example:

The good thing about having TSS coming in to see guys ... is it gives the opportunity for the guys to see someone, to put a face to the name. Rather than just be given an appointment or a drop-in time to go somewhere…. Because they [mentors] sit down with them [prisoners] for about half an hour ... they've got a bit of a relationship going then. They know the person. I think that's the good thing about them coming in. And I know from feedback ... from prisoners, ... it's really important when they initially get out to have someone there.

<div align="right">[Agency Representative]</div>

I find if you haven't done a [prison] visit it's hard to build the relationship when they first come out, because you're going round to their house, or their environment, where they don't really know you. Whereas in a

<div align="center">54</div>

prison it's a lot easier to build that relationship then, and they know who you are when you knock at the door then. ..

<div align="right">[Mentor 5]</div>

An interesting extra element in the operation of the Nacro/CAIS TSS – which did not prevent mentors from visiting – was the appointment of a full-time 'in-reach worker' in HMP Altcourse. While some questions were raised as to whether this post needed to be full-time (see below), none of those interviewed doubted that having an in-reach worker had considerable benefits, including providing an accessible source of support to prisoners in between their mentor visits. As the worker said himself:

An in-reach TSS worker ... there on a daily basis ... because obviously issues or problems will arise in between the mentor visits ... [but] they [prisoners] know exactly where I work, so they can ... come and see me in between the community mentors. So the fact that I'm here on a full-time basis, I think that's a really important factor.

Equally important, having a post located in the prison meant that the in-reach worker had much easier and more frequent access to inmates, and could use this to assist both clients and mentors:

Freedom to move around the prison. ... they don't feel like they're relying on staff all the time then, ... that helps with confidentiality - you haven't got an officer sat around you.

<div align="right">[Mentor]</div>

It also enabled the team to respond within the exceptionally short time-scales that they sometimes have to engage with prisoners:

I just see it on a daily basis, the fact that the work that they're doing is assisting a difficult set of prisoners. Prisoners are coming in serving sentences of three weeks which really … you've got something like 10 days … maybe 12 days to work with that offender now. That's where we rely heavily on TSS to get involved the day after they come in if need be. Get them in touch with services that are outside because they are the link.

<div align="right">[Prison staff member]</div>

This post also provided a more regular link between prison-based support workers (eg: CARAT and resettlement staff) and the TSS mentors in the community – with the latter in a good position to increase the prison-based staff's awareness of community services. Indeed, the co-location of the in-reach worker and the resettlement team was seen as crucial to the effective delivery of TSS:

I think it's a must. ... I don't think it can work any other way to be honest. ... I'd really recommend that they [in-reach workers] need to be as close as possible to housing advice/resettlement workers.

<div align="right">[Prison staff member]</div>

The main doubts raised about this post came from those who felt that Nacro/CAIS was very short of community mentors. One interviewee from the Scheme argued that an extra mentor would be a more effective use of resources, but a more common view was that the post could be made part-time and combined with work in the community and/or in other prisons.

3.4.2 Relations with Probation

Interviewees with probation service representatives both north and mid/south Wales admitted that strategic relationships between themselves and TSS were perhaps not as strong as they should be, although it was asserted that positive improvements were being made. It was also pointed out that some very close working relationships had been established at some local levels. A probation manager in North Wales commented:

> *TSS itself, and the providers of the TSS service, have not sought to actively engage in an active promotion of the service within Probation. So the individual worker might have formed individual relationships with individual probation officers, if they happened to have coincidentally got together. In a very simplistic term you could say that the providers have not in any sense come and sold the service to probation officers.*

> *…Your average probation officer, I think we probably didn't even know the service existed! I might have done but whether anyone else did is another matter altogether. And you probably only knew it existed if you actually sat in any DAWN strategic meetings. Outside of that environment you probably didn't even know it exists.*

> *… The second phase funding has led to good individual practice and good worker-to-worker relationships. And sometimes, in fact, that is the only way you can develop a service anyway, no matter what managers can say, workers don't necessarily do it! So sometimes that is the best way.*

The initial perception is perhaps that with the probation service not working with those released from a prison sentence of less than 12 months, there is little need for a joined-up approach. As the same manager commented, there is however an overlap between the two client groups:

> *We have a number who go to prison and then don't come back to us. But I don't think we have any joined up care pathway that deals with that matter. And there's a good argument for, in a sense, that actually being a recommendation of your piece of work, to both the provider and ourselves, that we ought to give much more consideration to, is there a process by which Probation could be informing TSS of a percentage of its client group that has suddenly, whatever, breached, recalled, been returned to prison, committed another offence, all that sort of stuff - who might benefit from a TSS service in terms of being released to the community and not coming back to Probation?*

In fact, this has been happening more often than the commentator perhaps realised – as shown in Appendix Table 1, around one in six of referrals in North Wales have been of people imprisoned for breaches of one for or another.

One final point was made by one of the respondents from the probation service – that the damage caused by short-term prison sentences could better be avoided by ending them altogether – rather than by providing support to try to enable ex-prisoners to settle back into the community:

> *TSS is not the problem, Probation is not the problem. It's actually short-term prison sentences that are the problem in themselves. … We don't need a TSS service - not because we don't need a TSS service, because we don't need people going to prison for disruptive six week, three month, four month periods. No one wins. It's costly, it's expensive, it's ineffective, and it achieves nothing.*

3.4.3 Relations with the DIP and other drug and alcohol services

Offenders with substance misuse problems can access support and treatment from a range of different voluntary and statutory agencies. Some of these agencies provide services which overlap with those delivered by the TSS. Most importantly, in addition to its core service of treatment provision, the Drug Intervention Programme (DIP) offers counselling and support - including mentoring support - to drug-misusing offenders 'through the gate'.

Interviews with TSS staff indicated that the introduction of the DIP in April 2006 had created some 'initial tensions' and 'concerns'. The concerns were focused on two issues: the potential overlap in client group (i.e. drug-misusing offenders), and the potential duplication of services provided (i.e. mentoring support). Both of the project managers described their initial apprehension about the introduction of DIP:

> *It was a concern when DIP came into Wales what effect would that have on TSS because in the service specification for the DIP, it does include mentoring. And so … you wouldn't be wrong in thinking well where does TSS fit in, and we did wonder ourselves and so did probably the Welsh Assembly.*
>
> [Manager 1]

> *And then, of course DIP came along and DIP created some initial tensions because you had your drugs go to DIP, but TSS can help those with all substance misuse issues. And drugs and alcohol go to DIP as well.*
>
> [Manager 2]

These initial concerns, however, were not long-lasting. Both project managers agreed that it '*very quickly became very clear*' that '*there's room for us all*'.

Indeed, close and cordial working relationships had been established in some cases, with a fairly clear understanding of which cases should be dealt with by which group. One manager spoke specifically of 'a niche' for TSS, in that it provides mentoring support to clients with 'any' kind of substance misuse problem, including problems with alcohol. By contrast, the DIP specifically targets Class A drug users who are in need of a script:

> *Now in Wales, it's [DIP is] meant to be a 14-week[14] rapid access programme with rapid access prescribing where appropriate. It's for anybody caught up in the criminal justice system, so it just happens then that would include prisoners. Now the main crux of it, of the DIP, is that it's for Class A, so your heavy end, users. Not alcohol. DIP does not cover alcohol alone … and alcohol can't be the primary drug of choice.*
>
> [Manager 1]

The G4S TSS accepts referrals for clients with any kind of substance misuse problem, including Class A drug users. However, clients in need of medication or 'script' seem to be regarded as the responsibility of the DIP.

> *The DIP is kind of like what we are but they prescribe.*
>
> [Mentor 7]

> *Yeah we work with people with drug problems, but then if they're going on the medication they're normally going on to DIP or something along those lines.*
>
> [Mentor 5]

Class A drug users in need of a script who have slipped through the DIP net, but end up as TSS clients, are usually referred on to the DIP for treatment. The TSS mentors will then work alongside the DIP during a four-week 'handover' period:

> *If he comes out with TSS and we feel that he needs a bit more support than we can offer him, hence a script, we can refer him into the DIP, work alongside the DIP and the participant for four weeks, so we can do a proper handover. If they come out to the DIP straight away, then they will go with the DIP.*
>
> [Mentor 6]

The situation is a little different in the north, where the TSS has worked closely with the DIP (both of which were delivered by Nacro up to March 2009) to develop 'distinct pathways' into their respective services. In practice this means that clients with Class A drug problems are channelled through to the DIP while clients with alcohol problems and clients with Class B or C drug problems are channelled to TSS. A representative from an external agency in

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[14] In fact, the time length of the programme is under negotiation in different geographical areas

North Wales said that the introduction of DIP had reduced the range of offender categories that TSS would take on:

> *.. it's slightly changed a bit really because unfortunately if they're serving more than 12 months we can't put them into TSS anymore and if they've got a Class A drug problem we can't either, so we still use them, but it's mainly now for sentences under 12 months and anyone who's got maybe just got a cannabis problem or alcohol and cannabis problems.*
>
> [Agency Representative]

On the other hand, the introduction of DIP was regarded by some as providing the TSS with clearer and useful boundaries, making it more focused and stopping it from stretching its resources too thinly. It had taken time to develop and implement more effective working processes, but substantial improvements had been made:

> *One of the things we did within our second [TSS] bid was try ... to make referral routes and engagement more effective. ... In Altcourse there was, soon after the award of the second contract, significant internal reorganisation. ... We developed an integrated pathway whereby the CARAT teams have those individuals with drug or drug and alcohol problems, refer them to the DIP and then they would re-refer those suitable for TSS from the single point of contact. Those with alcohol problems would be referred directly to TSS through our prison in-reach worker.*
>
> [Contract Manager]

Even so, the problem was raised that some prison and external agency staff still remain confused over the differences between DIP and TSS. Indeed, one manager was concerned that this might be restricting referral pathways from prisons and leading to referrals not being made:

> *I just basically wish that we could get more referrals from prisons, to be honest. I know that we're not the professionals in the treatment agencies, but if there's people there on crack, cannabis, amphetamines, pills, a whole handful of them are not really eligible for DIP. So where are they?*
>
> [Manager 1]

Although concerns about potential overlap of services were raised, it was clear that there were some significant differences between TSS and the DIP in terms of methods of delivery. Whereas the DIP provides predominantly a structured approach based on attendance at pre-arranged appointments, the TSS is based mainly on 'outreach', whereby mentors deliver mentoring support directly to clients within the community. In the G4S TSS, the term 'total outreach' was regularly used to describe their practice model and contrast it with DIP. A manager explained the difference as follows:

Certainly for TSS and South Wales and Gwent and Dyfed Powys, we [TSS] do work solely on a peripatetic service.... it's becoming clear that the demands on the DIP, where they're having to go a little bit more structured because they have to try and deliver group work... they're going to become more involved in Tough Choices, … and that'll put a whole new slant on things. They haven't.... they're not going to have time to go out and do all those other things and they don't. And a lot of the way the DIPs operate are under.... they give.... they send an appointment, a letter of an appointment. So if the person's in prison, they'll send a letter saying you have an appointment on so and so day …Well I know that half the time, if you don't take somebody to somewhere at first, the chances are they're not going to go. And they do have a lot of DNAs, did not attends at the DIPs.

The fact that DIP workers are not always able to provide the necessary level of support to clients, has led some DIPs to commission TSS to help fill the 'gap' in service provision. Hence, in some areas TSS and the DIP work particularly closely to support clients with serious drug problems.

> *Some DIPs have given us funding. Given TSS funding so we can work alongside them.*
>
> [Mentor 6]

The generally close relationships between TSS and the DIP have been cemented by the fact that in some areas, they are being delivered by the same organisation. G4S has the contract for delivering the TSS in South Wales, Gwent and Dyfed Powys and also for delivering the DIP in western South Wales (Swansea, Bridgend and Neath/Port Talbot). Similarly, until March 2009 CAIS, in partnership with Nacro, held the contract for delivering both the TSS and the DIP in North Wales. In some cases, TSS and DIP staff were working in the same offices. A representative from one external agency highlighted the usefulness of this close relationship.

> *I think the other strength around it is that TSS and DIP are the same provider. So it's almost like it's Nacro workers and it doesn't really make any difference to anyone whether it's TSS or DIP, it's just a Nacro worker and that's fine, it makes that connection much easier.*
>
> [Agency Representative]

The closeness of the relationship between the DIP and TSS has raised some interesting questions about why 'one generic service' covering both has not been developed.   A representative from one external agency stated:

> *I'd be very, very cautious about this, and I've probably already alluded to this a bit. But I don't understand why we have a separate DIP and TSS service.*

One of the TSS managers suggested that the reason why the two have remained separate is because

… it actually helps promote a balanced approach alongside the DIP for those with predominantly alcohol problems…

… They have seen and recognised what common people like me have long been saying, that alcohol is a damn sight bigger problem in communities than drugs.

3.4.3.1 Relations with other drug and alcohol agencies

In addition to the DIP, the TSS works alongside a range of other drug and alcohol agencies. Relations between TSS and these other agencies seem generally quite positive. For example, a representative of the Community Drug and Alcohol Service reported that the introduction of joint information sharing protocols and three-way meetings had improved and strengthened partnership working with TSS substantially:

I think they are far more visual now. They do work with a wider number of agencies and I think there is less issues around information sharing …we have agreed that we can discuss it with other agencies and things, and that's helped an awful lot I think. So it strengthens the co-working. And it stops the duplicating the working as well, because we'll do three-way meetings with people, almost like a joint agency meeting with all the agencies involved.

Some more negative views were also expressed. One mentor, for example, felt that some agencies viewed TSS as working in competition with them rather than working alongside them:

Possibly some of the drug agencies, I think they see us as a threat and we're not. … So I think we know those barriers need to be broken down and that's not necessarily a TSS thing, it's something that other agencies need to take on board, that we're there to…. we're more than happy to work with anybody.

[Mentor 2]

The competitive attitude of some specialist agencies was also reported by one of the TSS supervisors. She expressed concern that these agencies were not always recognising the contribution that TSS could make to their service:

I just feel that a lot of [treatment] agencies out there sort of like to keep their own. Once we've referred in [to them] they're 'theirs', and they feel like you might be treading on their toes - which we're not because we're not there for that. We're there to help them as well. If they [the client] build up the relationship with the mentor, the mentor can always make sure the client gets the appointment. …

[Supervisor 1]

The perception of TSS as a threat rather than a partner suggests that some agencies do not fully appreciate the aims of TSS. This lack of understanding

could be problematic in that it might prevent drug-misusing offenders from accessing all the support that they are entitled to. A representative from a drug and alcohol agency felt that lack of understanding of TSS was a particular problem for organisations working outside the criminal justice system.

> *I think if you probably asked an inter-SMAT chair or SMAT coordinator how much they would know about TSS, they would not know them. … Away from the Criminal Justice element I suppose. If you're talking to a team that have got Criminal Justice involvement, I think they would know TSS and what they do and how they link in. But if you're talking to a team away from Criminal Justice, I'm not sure how much they'll know about TSS.*
>
> [Agency representative]

3.4.3.2 Access to substance misuse treatment

Prompt access to a script is often key in preventing a client from relapsing into substance misuse and crime. Several mentors, however, reported problems in accessing timely substance misuse treatment for their clients. One mentor expressed real frustration with the DIP after referring a client to them for 'rapid' access to a prescription.

> *I referred him [TSS client] into DIP, worked with him over the four week handover, and they kept promising him a script, 'Yeah you should have one within two weeks.' Six weeks later he still doesn't have a script. He's working full time, he's actually paying for his heroin out of his wages… I'm so annoyed. Really, really annoyed. … They were supposed to be sorting it.*
>
> [Mentor 5]

The mentor recognised the difficulties of accessing a script, because only certain doctors are licensed to write scripts. Even among those who are licensed, the mentor reported a reluctance for them to 'script' alone. Sharing the responsibility means that 'if anything goes wrong, it doesn't fall back on one doctor'. After all, 'scripting methadone and subutex is quite a dangerous game'.

Another mentor stressed the importance of being realistic when referring clients into treatment. She explained that it was important to be realistic about waiting lists and not give clients 'false hope':

> *The reality is, the waiting lists are a lot longer than what people think they are. … if they're not suitable for DIP because some are not, they go onto CDAT where you're talking a five to six months waiting list. A lot of people get disillusioned with that, which is understandable.*
>
> [Mentor 3]

3.5 Relations with other service agencies

We now shift attention from substance misuse to service provision in other areas such as housing and employment. In section 3.3.3 we explored TSS's liaison with relevant agencies from the perspective of clients. Here we take a more strategic look at the Scheme's relations with partner agencies, based mainly on our interviews with representatives of a range of service providers.

The agency representatives we interviewed were overwhelmingly positive about the knowledge and skills of the TSS mentors and about the contribution that TSS was making to the resettlement of short-term prisoners. Specific mention was made of the ability of TSS staff and mentors to engage 'difficult' clients; their detailed understanding of the complex community support infrastructure and their good working relationships with the wide variety of agencies that clients need to access; their ability to share information with prison-based workers while still maintaining their independence from the prison system. The mentors' opinions also appeared to be widely trusted and often led to clients being fast-tracked into services thereby ensuring 'continuity of care'.

One of the most frequently mentioned ways in which the involvement of TSS concretely benefited the work of other agencies, concerned the role of mentors in persuading and helping offenders to engage with interventions in the crucial early days after leaving prison. For example, the representative of a job training organisation for young people commented:

> *It think definitely we've been more involved at an earlier stage, instead of them finding us as a result of interaction with probation officers...or youth offending. They've [TSS] referred them direct into us at an earlier stage and we can help them rather than them fail the minute they come out the prison door. …* ***Because they're at their most vulnerable in the first ten days after release.*** *… We don't like to do intensive work in the first couple of days because the TSS are doing that. But they may bring them on the very first day just to introduce them so they know where we are, where we're based and if they've got an emergency they can come to us.* ***And to start building that relationship, they will accompany them and stay with them for the whole of the first day.***

In the same vein, a representative from a major organisation offering employment services for ex-offenders said that, while 'cold referrals' resulted in under 20% of those referred engaging with the service, if a mentor accompanied the prospective client to their first meeting, the proportion engaging rocketed up to something approaching 80%. He commented that it is 'not just a taxi service' – on the contrary, a great deal of motivational work was often done in the car on the way there and back, while on many occasions the mentor sat in on their first interviews with the employment agency staff.

In addition, he and other agency staff commented favourably on the mentors' provision of continuing motivational support over the early weeks while the client was attending the intervention. Similarly, representatives from local authority housing departments and housing associations – although in some cases quite cynical about the chances of ex-offenders desisting from offending and keeping their tenancies – reported valuing TSS's ongoing support to ex-prisoners in their tenancies, also noting that the mentors' ability to maintain close contact with clients made it easier for the agencies to remain informed about any difficulties they might be experiencing.

However, the relationship with housing authorities was not always a smooth one. Attitudes to ex-offenders were said to vary widely, and while recognising the pressures created by serious shortages of social housing and acknowledging the efforts of some individual housing officers to assist them, some mentors were quite frustrated by responses they had had:

> *The Housing Officers are there, but the facilities for people to be housed in is not actually there.*
>
> [Mentor 3]

> *It's [TSS] brought home a number of lessons in terms of some of the frustrations that we face. … if you're an ex-offender or if you have a substance misuse problem, you're not gonna be on top of the list compared to a nice young couple needing a house. …in order to ensure equality of access, you actually have to provide preferential additional resources for certain vulnerable client groups.*
>
> [Mentor 5]

Most mentors agreed that they should adopt an adversarial role if necessary to challenge unfavourable Local Authority homelessness decisions. Indeed, the representative of a major housing charity specifically stated that TSS assistance in this respect was of benefit to their own adversarial work. A particular way in which TSS was said to have helped with advocacy arose from the relatively new early release scheme, ECL (End of Custody Licence), described under section 3.4.1 above. It was pointed out by a housing worker that some local authorities were using this to avoid some of their responsibilities to house homeless ex-prisoners, but that TSS mentors had assisted in challenging this practice:

At the moment they're coming out 18 days early on the end of custody licence and some of the local authorities are trying to say that they're not actually homeless on release from legal custody. So they're refusing to take a homeless application at the official release date after that 18 days staying with a friend or family…

> *… So if it hadn't been for the TSS workers or close working with DIP as well, then we wouldn't have managed to get the case probably up to the High Court where we managed to get an injunction to force the local authorities to immediately accommodate, because probably the*

client would have just gone to the homeless person's unit, been told that they had no duty, and just not pursued it further…

…So with having the support of a TSS worker, who I have already told there may be an issue so they're already aware that we're on standby if there is a problem, then obviously we can then do all the necessary legal work because the ex-prisoner is being supported right through the process. So [Mentor X] helped us with a case with B----- and he had to take a witness statement regarding the street homelessness status of the ex-prisoner. So they've really done wonderful work for us to manage to push things forward.

[Prison link housing worker]

Finally, despite the overwhelmingly positive comments made by other agency staff about TSS, a number of areas were identified in which it was felt that improvements could be made concerning the Scheme's links with other agencies and/or its integration with wider systems. Specifically:

- The need to improve links between TSS and the Probation Service was highlighted as particularly important: these were seen as patchy in quality and too dependent on individual relationships (though the North Wales Prison Clinic was identified as a useful forum for achieving more systematic links).
- While strong working relationships had been built with some external agencies, and between individuals, it was felt that these needed to be more systematically embedded, so that if particular staff moved on, these working links would not be lost.
- It was hoped that the development of stronger links between agencies would lead to a more preventative focus within substance misuse services.
- The use of gate pick-ups was another area identified that could benefit from better links. Some respondents suggested gate pick-ups could be organised in a more cost-effective manner and coordinated across TSS, DIP, the probation service and substance misuse services.
- There was a general need to disseminate more information about TSS and what it does, both within and outside the criminal justice system.

Several interviewees argued that the most effective way of developing closer working relationships with other agencies, both statutory and voluntary, would be, as one mentor put it, to 'do it strategically', rather than relying on individual mentors to build up links simultaneously across Wales:

I just think that we could do so much more as a Scheme. I think if perhaps we had more…I'm trying to think of how to put it. People need to be more aware of who we are but we as a Scheme can only do so much. We have like eight mentors and we all network individually in the areas we cover and we try our best to do that and I suspect the feedback you've got from other mentors is that they go into different agencies and try and make themselves known. But I do think

> *networking is a huge, huge thing and getting ourselves known and I wish we could offer a bit more to participants as well.*
>
> [Mentor 4]

A representative from an external drugs and alcohol agency likewise suggested that adopting a more strategic approach would help to ensure consistency across the areas in which the TSS is delivered:

> *Making sure it's coordinated, and that it's consistent across all of the six counties really, so that the delivery is very similar across the six counties and they're linked in with the same type of organisations across the six counties. … Some areas have engaged with TSS much better than others, haven't they? But service users sometimes will come out to Wrexham, sometimes they'll go to Conwy/Denbighshire, sometimes, you know … And it's about those services being available wherever they decide to be released to really. So perhaps it being thought as a North Wales service rather than an individual area service I suppose.*
>
> [Agency Representative]

3.6 Training and Supervising Mentors

3.6.1 Training

The mentors interviewed for the evaluation all described having received a broad range of training[15]. The induction and continuing training provided was broadly similar in the two branches of TSS. A wide range of issues were covered, including motivational techniques (some mentioned as particularly useful a two day course, 'Motivating Offenders to Change', which was also singled out in the original evaluation as a valuable input), health and safety; self-defence (breakaway) techniques; First Aid, drug awareness; prison inductions; diversity training; and training about how imprisonment impacts on the families.

Generally speaking, they were happy with the initial training, although one mentor suggested that a more systematic programme of introductions to other local agencies would have been beneficial at an early stage:

> *I would have liked to have had maybe the office book appointments to introduce me to the area, introduce me to the probation, introduce me to the police…*
>
> [Mentor 4]

Some of the mentors also indicated that they would welcome further in-depth training on certain specific issues. These included a need for training on:

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[15] All three mentors working for the Nacro TSS and seven of the eight mentors working for the G4S TSS were interviewed during the study period. The eighth G4S mentor was on maternity leave and was therefore not available for interviewe

- mental health issues to help them better understand client depression, anxiety and mental illnesses such as schizophrenia;

- regular updates on new policies or practice guidelines;

- more drug awareness courses to ensure that they have a good understanding of substance misuse treatment, particularly in relation to substitute prescribing;

- more training in areas like counselling and anger management

Others suggested involving Peer Group Advisors in the motivational training – to gain more direct insight into the experiences and perspectives of clients.

3.6.2 Mentor supervision, support and risk management

Overall, mentors were very positive about the way the Scheme was managed and how they were supported. This is reflected in a very low staff turnover rate, several mentors having been with the Scheme since the beginning. Despite the long distances between some mentors and other TSS staff - particularly in North Wales and Dyfed Powys - there was confidence that support was accessible not just in the scheduled supervision or peer group advisor sessions, but any time they felt they needed it:

> *It's not necessarily face-to-face supervision, but I know if there was a problem – and sometimes I think 'Oh my gosh, am I doing things right up here?' – they'd know about it. They're very…they're very good down there. They'll pick it up in my paperwork or they could pick it up from me if I wasn't happy up here. Then they'd…they'd be asking me why and what. … sometimes you feel quite sort of, oh my gosh, I'm up here on my own doing…doing my thing. But the more I go down South Wales, I go…I do feel like part of the team when I'm down there. And I do up here as well because I know if I did need any support somebody would be here straightaway.*
>
> [Mentor 1]

Mentors felt able to raise any problems with their managers and were confident that these would be addressed:

> *I think the way that it works, if you've got a problem, we're all open either with each other or with the management. So any views that we need to air, we air them and they're dealt with. There's nothing long-standing or underlying that we think that this is going to be problematic because we fix the cracks if there's any that are showing, anyway.*
>
> [Mentor 3]

Support was felt to be particularly necessary in the event that a mentor faced a situation where they felt their personal safety might be at risk:

It's always good to have people on the end of the phone you can perhaps call upon if you…if you are in trouble. And I feel like I've got somebody in every area that I cover; just somebody from another agency perhaps. So I can pick up the phone at any time.

[Mentor 1]

The Scheme managers were well aware of risk issues, and put a considerable amount of effort into ensuring that appropriate checks were carried out and that TSS had sufficient information about offenders before they were released. For example, the G4S team routinely completed Public Protection Forms with information gleaned from OASys and CRAMS and where possible from prison inmate information systems (easier to access in Parc than elsewhere). This provided them with a picture both of the risk of re-offending and of behaviour which might cause problems for staff. Risk assessments were signed off by the mentor and placed in casefiles. Where appropriate the team sought further information (including intelligence) and completed a risk matrix that included additional safety measures and guidelines for mentoring, such as implementing 'double up facility' or 'organised intermittent phone contact from the office'. Where Prolific Priority Offenders were concerned, a TSS manager sat on the relevant PPO Board, where risk information is integral to the case management plan. Nacro/CAIS did not have the same advantage as G4S TSS in Parc of direct access to prison databases and the provision of risk information by referrers was described by one of the managers as 'a little hit and miss', but most referrals from Altcourse were accompanied by an assessment of risk and the in-reach worker could usually help in requests for information if it was lacking. Further assistance with risk assessment was also obtained from probation staff, while the mentors themselves undertook their own assessments in preliminary formal interviews with prisoners. More generally, if risk information was lacking, the managers normally made telephone inquiries from the referrer or through other contacts. This appears to be one area in which a more 'strategic' approach to partnership, in which prisons might be persuaded to supply risk information on a routine basis rather than TSS staff having to 'chase' it, would be particularly beneficial.

Finally, the implementation of PalBase has provided another risk management facility, in that managers can electronically annotate risk level as a warning to mentors and other workers who have authorisation to access the system.

3.7   Record Keeping

In this section we review the record keeping systems and practices used by the two TSS areas. The records kept can be divided into two main types: those maintained for administrative or statistical purposes, and casefiles recording work with individual offenders. We discuss each in turn. We also comment on the new electronic database, PalBase, which has recently been adopted by both G4S and Nacro/CAIS, and which is already bringing about significant changes in record-keeping practices in both areas.

3.7.1 Administrative and statistical records: client details and contact data

Both G4S and Nacro/CAIS are required to provide statistical reports quarterly to the project board, which monitors the delivery of TSS services by the two contractors. In order to provide these data, both keep electronic records of clients who have joined the Scheme, using spreadsheets containing basic details of the source of each referral, dates the case was opened and closed, the client's name address and telephone number, his or her main service needs, and so on. Both contractors have been set target numbers of referrals to meet, and the resulting data allow the Board to monitor their progress towards these targets.

In addition, they both compile a set of 'contact' data to report on the numbers, types and duration of contacts between mentors and clients, both inside and outside prison: these are used a basic performance indicators through which the board can satisfy itself that the Scheme is maintaining a reasonable level of activity with its clients.

To produce these figures, mentors are asked to keep a log of every contact they have with each client. This includes every meeting, every text, and every phone call (whether answered, missed or rejected). In some cases the number of contacts can amount to more than fifty, or even a hundred. In the Mid/South Wales TSS (although it is now changing), the standard system has entailed the use of paper forms filled in and submitted weekly by mentors– one form for each client, summary details being then entered into an Excel 'contacts' spreadsheet by the TSS administrative assistant and the sheet being added to the client's paper casefile (discussed later). However, the G4S mentors now all have laptops, on to which they enter records which can then subsequently be transferred electronically on to the central database in Bridgend.

In the north, the Nacro mentors compile a weekly log of all contacts with clients, using a composite contact sheet. This sheet is not specific to an individual client, but instead covers contacts made with any number of clients over the course of the week. The information is handwritten onto the sheet (into a table where each row represents a contact) and includes the client's initials, the date of contact, the length of the contact, and a code number indicating the type of contact made (e.g. visit, telephone, letter). Once completed, these handwritten contact sheets are sent or faxed across to the CAIS offices in Colwyn Bay, where the data is entered into an Access database by administrative staff and aggregated to provide monitoring data for the board. There appear to be some ambiguities in the way these data are recorded, which may contribute to some exaggeration in the contact figures presented in the tables earlier in this section: for example, the variable 'advice and guidance' – which is included in counts of community visits - may in some cases have included advice by other workers than the mentor.

More generally, the purpose of these contact records is almost entirely administrative – one cannot (without a great deal of time-consuming computer analysis) deduce anything particularly useful from them about the amount, nature or quality of work undertaken with any individual. At the time of our study (although the situation has since changed with the implementation of PalBase) if one wanted to use TSS records to gain more than a very superficial picture of what mentors do with their clients, this could only be gleaned through analysis of individual casefiles, as discussed in the next subsection.

3.7.2 Casefiles

Since the TSS was first introduced in 2004, case records of individual clients have been created and stored in paper files – although these have now been partly replaced by the case record facility on PalBase (see below). However, throughout the life of TSS, G4S and Nacro/CAIS have adopted significantly different practices in respect of case records.

The casefiles kept by G4S have always provided a detailed, continuous narrative record of clients' changing needs and their engagement with the TSS mentors and other agencies. Mentors routinely record information on each client's background, offending history and risk of reoffending, and any referrals to external agencies, together with very detailed notes of all contact and attempts at contact (including text messages and missed phone calls) between client and mentor, and accounts of conversations, recent events, plans, progress in treatment or obtaining services, and so on. The comprehensive nature of these files means that they are often several centimetres thick. The files are all stored centrally and securely in the TSS offices in Bridgend.

The researchers found the casefiles maintained by G4S staff hugely impressive, in many cases akin to those maintained by probation officers. However, this came at a price, in that those mentors who were not quick and fluent writers sometimes found their recording duties difficult and time-consuming. For example:

> *At the moment it just feels…because my caseload has got…increased and I'm spending quality time with my participants and they're doing really well, I feel that I can't…I don't want to relapse in the time I'm giving them because they're doing really well. I find it hard then that I'm actually pulling my laptop out at half past six at night to do my paperwork. … 'Is it our fault? Are we not time managing our times, or are we giving the clients too much of our time?'*
>
> [Mentor 4]

The relevant TSS manager had recently been made aware of this and had planned a meeting to try and address it through time management strategies and advice on how to keep reports succinct and focused. It was also hoped

that once the mentors became fully used to PalBase, they would find that it lowered their administrative burden.

The situation in the north was found to be very different. Here, while the casefiles contain basic details about clients and their initially assessed needs, mentors have not (at least until very recently – see below) kept narrative records of their contact with clients. Reading the files therefore provides little information about the content and quality of individual meetings between mentors and their clients, and gives little indication of how much time and effort mentors have put into supporting them (though, as described above, global figures are produced on contact time). There is also no central repository for the paper casefiles in the north. Instead, mentors store their clients' files in their local office, taking them with them elsewhere (eg to supervision meetings) when needed.

The reasons given by the Nacro mentors for the lack of detailed information in the casefiles revolved around concerns about 'confidentiality' and the fact that clients could see their own files if they so wished, it therefore being thought unwise to record too much personal information or frank judgements about them in the casefiles. However, a senior manager stated that this appears to stem from some form of misunderstanding. When we asked the mentors how they could maintain continuity in their work with clients if they had made no detailed record of previous meetings, discussions, plans, referrals, and so on, the general response was that they were able to recall sufficient details from memory. Further comment on this issue is made in sections 4.2.5 and 6.2.3 below.

3.7.3 PalBase

As noted above, both the above sets of practices are now undergoing change due to the adoption of PalBase, which should eventually allow the Scheme to manage all its different data requirements –including the keeping of narrative case records - in one system. PalBase is a bespoke software package designed and developed by Paloma Systems Ltd. It is described as "an intuitive, user friendly monitoring and case management system, for organisations/agencies dealing with the rehabilitation of drug related offenders and referrals to treatment" (www.paloma.co.uk). PalBase aims to improve multi-agency working by joining together all the different strands of activity and streamlining the treatment process.

One of the mentors explained that PalBase was originally used by the DIP and is a web-based system that can be accessed anywhere at any time.

> *DIP use PalBase, TSS have now bought into it and we're using it as well. It's web-based so we can access it whenever, just search a client and you can put all your case notes on there, and it's a bit of a diary and … It will be very good once it's up and running …*
>
> [Mentor 1]

In October 2008, the Scheme began its transition away from case files to the PalBase system, and it was implemented fully in January 2009. All TSS mentors are now able to enter details of all contacts, referrals etc directly into a sophisticated system. Given that the shift over to PalBase occurred only very recently, it is too early for the evaluation team to comment in detail on the operation of the new system. However, it undoubtedly has the potential to be a very useful management tool. It will enable managers to review files and observe mentoring work easily without recourse to cumbersome paper-based files and – so long as entries are made in a timely fashion – to keep up to date with any developments that they should know about.

The mentors generally seemed positive about PalBase, although at the time we interviewed them they were still coming to grips with what was seen to be quite a big transition. For example, one stated:

> *It's a really good system. I think it's such a good idea because we were using just general sort of contact sheets. We've only actually recently gone on to the computer, before we were writing them, so it's quite a big transition.*
>
> [Mentor 8]

Another was particularly enthusiastic about the information-sharing qualities of the system, allowing not only supervisors, but other mentors, to know what was going on:

> *So that will be an electronic system where it's all connected … yeah, so we can all look at each other's case notes … so T--- [supervisor] can look at mine. By the end of today, they'll have been updated, or perhaps Monday they'll be definitely up to date and she can see … she'll be able to see on there.*
>
> [Mentor 1]

A further advantage identified was that PalBase could help ensure that clients continue to get support even when their designated mentor goes on annual leave.

> *We're on PalBase as well now, so it's important that other people see. I went on annual leave, it's paramount that somebody can go in that file and have background of somebody with the last couple of contacts that's gone on, what the person's been like. … I'm fresh to it … I've put a few contacts on it. I think it's great. The idea behind it is great. … we had laptops recently, so that made it a lot easier because we could just email those in then …*
>
> [Mentor 3]

Similarly, another mentor described how PalBase enabled colleagues to step in if a mentor happens to go on sick leave or leaves the Scheme.

So if any one of us goes off sick or leaves or anything we can just go into the file and see what's been done and what needs to be done, if there's any future appointments.

[Mentor 7]

From their own workload point of view, the main benefit of the new computerised system was perceived to be that, if used correctly, it would reduce the amount of time spent by mentors on record-keeping. This was emphasised particularly by mentors working for G4S, who have all been issued by the company with wireless encrypted laptops and are able to access PalBase from anywhere. For example, one explained that with the advent of PalBase she no longer needed to attend the TSS office as often as she used to.

I used to go in a lot more often but as my caseload has built up you don't have enough time and with PalBase and with everything coming along you don't really need to be down there as much.

[Mentor 8]

The Nacro/CAIS mentors did not have laptops (partly because they were seen as a potential security risk) but were able to access PalBase from any of the partner offices in North Wales.

At the time of our fieldwork, the system was still new and not yet being used to its full potential. Preliminary analyses of a small sample of PalBase files indicated that some of the mentors were continuing old habits and had not yet fully adapted to a new way of working. Thus records of contacts with offenders made by the Nacro/CAIS TSS were mainly still very brief, rarely amounting to more than one or two lines of text per contact. By contrast, some of the PalBase files maintained by G4S appeared to be as comprehensively (and perhaps unnecessarily) detailed as they were in the old paper-based system. Nevertheless, the signs are that once the mentors become fully used to PalBase and it becomes embedded as a routine aspect of practice, it will produce comprehensive and up to date records that will assist the oversight of cases, the supervision of mentors and the preparation of management data. Equally important, it will allow the Board, researchers or other outsiders to obtain a much richer and more accurate picture of TSS work than has been possible in the past.

4 Good practice and suggested improvements

This section highlights a number of areas in which we or our interviewees identified what seemed to be particularly good practice, as well as some which were mentioned when we asked interviewees to suggest improvements that could be made. Some of these points have been briefly mentioned already, but they are repeated here to help highlight them. They are discussed briefly under the following headings:

Examples of good practice:

- in-reach work
- the provision of gate pick-ups
- the 'assertive outreach' mentor role
- local networking
- assisting offender engagement with support services
- peer group advisors
- the focus on alcohol

Suggested improvements

- expanding capacity
- avoiding potential clients 'slipping through the net'
- commissioning and contracts
- the development of more strategic approaches to partnership
- record-keeping

4.1 Examples of good practice

4.1.1 In-reach work

The literature on resettlement strongly suggests that an important factor in effective work with offenders after release is the establishment of a relationship while he or she is still in prison. This gives the worker or mentor an opportunity to build trust, bolster offenders' motivation and facilitate the development of concrete release plans and the making of appointments with relevant service agencies. This was recognised by TSS managers and in both branches of the Scheme it was common practice for mentors to visit prisoners two or three times before their release. Indeed, Nacro/CAIS mentors regularly attended prison surgeries at Altcourse and Styal on a rota basis, where they would meet new clients and see all those who had already signed up as participants. G4S mentors, whose clients came from a wider number of establishments tended to visit more sporadically, as and when they could fit it in their schedule, but nevertheless regarded this as an important aspect of their work.

As discussed in section 3.7, in addition to the mentors, Nacro/CAIS had since the beginning of 2008 invested a proportion of their TSS grant in a dedicated 'in-reach worker' in HMP Altcourse. This had clearly paid off in terms of referral numbers, which had increased significantly from that establishment. The worker also helped to deliver a motivational course, acted as a useful link between TSS and the CARAT team and other sources of referrals, and could help in chasing up missing information about prisoners, especially in relation to risk.

In short, systematic in-reach work both by mentors (who also see offenders after release) and prison-based workers (who do not) is clearly valuable to resettlement work and merits highlighting as good practice. However, there remain doubts about whether it is cost-effective to base an in-reach worker full-time in one prison only, as opposed to covering a number of establishments part-time.

4.1.2 Provision of gate pick-ups

Gate pick-ups were identified by many interviewees as a particularly effective method of working. They provide clients exiting prison with immediate practical assistance that affords mentors a good opportunity to build up a positive rapport – whilst also reducing client temptation to misuse substances as they leave prison:

> *I think the fact that we offer services like gate pickups ... are extremely good practice. I think that ... hour and a half from Liverpool to North Wales ... [is] a really good opportunity for, first of all, for the community mentor and the client to build up some sort of professional relationship, and it's also a really important time for.... to gain some sort of engagement with the client.*
>
> [TSS Staff Member]

Quite often the mentor is able to take the client directly to the Homeless Person's Unit to help sort their accommodation out – or to attend any other appointments that have been lined up for them.

> *I know TSS workers do actually collect from the prison, ... do gate pick-ups, and therefore we're confident that they're turning up for their appointments. … That is where I think the TSS workers come into the fore because … if they gate pick-up, they've got that offender, and they will take them for the housing, the job centre appointments, the drug appointments. ... So they [the offenders] haven't got the temptation of the discharge grant in their back pocket, and they've got pubs, off licences, there's drug dealers. That temptation is taken away from them.*
>
> [Agency Representative]

However, this aspect of TSS is crucial not just because of physically accompanying the client to their appointment – but also because of the

advocacy support that the mentor can provide – particularly with homelessness officers:

> *When they go with them to the housing on the day of release to see the homeless officer, that's good because a lot of the fellows, they might have had trouble in the past with authority and they don't sort of … listen to what's being said to them and they get a bit angry and het up and they can't put it in the little boxes how it's coming across, and then the minute they show any anger they're out the door because they don't have to be housed if they're showing any aggression.   Whereas if you've got another person there, (1) the homeless officer's going to be … I know this sounds awful, but a bit more professional because he or she can't say what they like, ... and also (2) they've got someone to speak for them, to put it across.*
>
> [Agency Representative]

The only critical comment made about gate pick ups was that referred to in section 3.4 above – ie that this service could be organised in a more cost-effective manner and coordinated across TSS, DIP, the probation service and substance misuse services.

4.1.3 'Assertive outreach'

The TSS staff and representatives from external agencies recognised the value of the strong positive relationships that the mentors could build with the individuals they worked with:

> *I think it's really good that they have that support when the come out because if they haven't got a probation officer or whatever, they haven't got anywhere or anybody to say "I can go to them for support". [So] it's nice for them to have that one-to-one, to have met somebody before they're released, to have built that rapport, and to know that they've got somebody that wants to help them and will listen to them. Because a lot of the time they have no knowledge of what services and what help is available, or what they're entitled to.*
>
> [Agency Representative]

The quality of the relationships being forged was identified as one of the key factors behind the effectiveness of TSS – providing practical assistance and a trusted source of advice:

> *… somebody that they can turn to and open up to. Because it's no use if you're talking to them and they don't trust you. ... I'd say relationships have a lot to do with it. Because if you can get on with somebody ... they will actually listen to you and respect what you're trying to do.*
>
> [Mentor 1]

As several interviewees - including clients and mentors themselves - emphasised, it was the 'assertive' approach that mentors took in their role that made the support gained from TSS stand out from that of other agencies:

We'll chase participants.   We will track them down because other agencies will ring them, 'Oh well, I can't get hold of them. They'll have to get hold of us'. But TSS will ring, and they will ring, and they will visit the house that they've gone to, that they've put their address down, they will literally until they get hold of them. ... I think it makes such a difference to be able to go their home.

[Mentor 7]

Because we're out there [in the community], we're more effective. ... We're out there in the field, ... we're out there with the participant. We're walking the walk with them.

[Mentor 2]

The good thing with us is that we are out there and really right throughout the community. ... I absolutely believe the key for our effectiveness is the fact that we're out there all the time. We go to the participant. ... We're known, we're out on ... the streets, out everywhere and there's no hiding place. And literally we've gone looking in bushes for people because we know that's where they'll be.

[Manager 2]

Many clients interpreted such assertive outreach as a demonstration that their mentor cared for their welfare:

I value the contact I think because, like I said, they contact you. ... For me personally, it makes you think you've got somebody there to talk to and you've got somebody there behind you like helping out. ... Like sometimes, ... she's come up, we haven't talked about nothing in particular like, but it's just having somebody to ... somebody outside your own house, somebody to talk to like. ... Somebody that wouldn't judge you, you know?

[TSS Client 2]

Fair play to my TSS worker, she keeps her phone on for me all weekend, so if anything was to trouble me I could ring her any time. And it shows that there's care there, it's not just a job to her, and I feel that I can speak to her more than actually my drug counsellor and anybody.

[TSS Client 1]

Such constant availability of support with one known and trusted individual is an almost unique feature of TSS:

Having a support, having someone there that's going to be there is a big thing for someone coming out of prison especially a person who hasn't got any support, no family, no one available. And having like

someone that they know, ... and having their phone number with them so they know that they can ring them up anytime, I think that's invaluable.

[Agency Representative]

Because they have their mobile numbers, there's none of this ringing single points of contact and speaking to somebody that's just a filtering person. When they ring the office, it is TSS. If they ring the mentor, it's direct to the mentor.

[Manager 2]

4.1.4 Local networking

The work of the TSS mentors was valued not only for their ability to meet clients in prison and start to build a strong rapport, but also because of the substantial networking that they had undertaken with the relevant agencies in the community – and their comprehensive knowledge of the support systems available. This stood them apart from CARAT workers:

Because they [TSS mentors] know what's in the community and know what's available, they've got good networking and links to everything whereas we haven't as much. … because they're actually out there, they're learning about all the different schemes that are going on ... They're actually speaking to the people involved. ... If we're unsure of anything we'll pick up the phone and ask them whether they've heard about something and usually they've got a good knowledge.

[Agency Representative]

It was also said that good, productive relationships had been built between TSS and the other agencies – ones in which there was rarely a sense of 'competing for clients', but rather in which ways were sought of developing integrated methods of delivering support:

They're not precious about the fact that 'They're our service users and you can't work with them!' I think that's really good practice, about an integrated way of working. And that also comes from their strategic level as well, that they're working in an integrated way with other services.

[Agency Representative]

A further benefit from this close networking was said to be a strong contribution to raising and sustaining awareness among other agencies, both statutory and voluntary, of the particular support needs of short-term prisoners, a traditionally neglected group:

I guess it's heightened the awareness of services around short-term prisoners. I'm not sure there was much happening around short-term prisoners before TSS.

[Agency Representative]

Mentors also reported benefiting from the fruits of each other's networking – providing a network of detailed local knowledge across the areas that they worked in:

We all work in different areas, so if I've got somebody down in a different area where I'm not so familiar with the services in that area or the people that I can go to, I've only got to pick up the phone to somebody else and say, "Well, you've worked quite intensively in this area. Can you give me good pointers, please?" and vice versa. So everything's shared.

[Mentor 3]

4.1.5 'Transitional' support: enhancing offender engagement with services

In addition to its staff's close knowledge of, and networking with, other local service agencies, TSS was described as adding significant value to the work of such agencies by acting as a 'bridge' to them during the critical first few days and weeks after release from prison. It is this 'transitional support', whereby the mentor motivates and helps the offender to engage with services to meet their needs, which several of the agency representatives saw as the Scheme's main contribution to the resettlement of short term prisoners. Some gave specific examples of how the mentors' willingness to set up appointments and then to accompany ex-prisoners to their first two or three meetings with a new agency (including sitting in on discussions with key workers) enhanced the take-up of services by a group of potential clients who are unlikely to engage on their own. As reported earlier, one estimated that 'cold' referrals of ex-prisoners resulted in under 20 per cent engaging, whereas around 80 per cent of those accompanied by TSS engaged with his agency's services. More generally, another argued:

The good thing about TSS is because they're working with under 12 months it's getting more people in to service. ... I think those short-term ones, if there wasn't anything like TSS or they didn't know about the TSS and the support that they get, ... would go by the wayside. I think they'd just go back to what they were doing, back to their old areas. Like in the old days when … there was very little support and it was hard to find.

[Agency Representative]

TSS's impact in this respect was also reported to have increased over the years it had been in existence, as it developed stronger links with other agencies and became more embedded in the local support infrastructure:

Increasingly positive [impact]. ... However, it has only been able to do that as it has sought to increasingly work with organisations like Shelter and other organisations. In other words,... getting integrated into a relationship where it addresses some of that acute homelessness release agenda.

4.1.6 Peer group advisors

The 'peer group advisor' (PGA) system in operation in G4S-TSS – whereby successful 'graduates' of the Scheme attend monthly meetings, take part in the induction of new mentors, meet new clients and provide general advice - was seen by several interviewees as an important element of the work of the Scheme, both 'symbolically' and in terms of its practical value. On the one hand, it helped 'graduates' of the Scheme to maintain contact and to feel that they were making a contribution to its work, which could help them with their own progress away from drugs and crime. On the other, it was seen as valuable for new clients to meet people who had been in their situation but had managed to 'turn their lives around'. In addition, it was said by the G4S TSS manager that PGAs provide the Scheme with an 'inside view' of the difficulties experienced by clients and they are therefore able to provide advice both to mentors and to new clients based on personal experience.

4.1.7 The Scheme's focus on alcohol

Many contributors to the evaluation raised the issue that TSS provided one of the main (if not only) services for alcohol misusing offenders. With CARAT work focusing on drug misuse only and DIP concentrating mainly on Class A drugs, the reality of the links between alcohol and offending seem to be completely overlooked, 'forgotten', by most policy makers:

> *The fact that you're [the Scheme is] funded for dealing with alcohol-only cases ... is really positive because alcohol is a major issue amongst our client base and one that the prison service doesn't really fund. So I think it's really positive that there's funding in place to deal with people with alcohol misuse issues. ... I think we ... [are] one of the very few prisons in the country that provide anything at all for alcohol, so I think that's a real positive.*
>
> [Agency Representative]

> *What the TSS does offer them - because we're able to work with alcohol clients - is there is a gap in the market within the prison and in the community for offering services to people with alcohol related issues. And so I think that's where the TSS is quite strong.*
>
> [TSS Staff Member]

> *It's raised that problem that there is a high number of offenders in prisons with alcohol problems that have fallen through the gap. And that's because it's not seen as as much of a problem as drugs - but you only have to ask any police officer working in city centres at weekends how much of a problem alcohol is. And added to that is the health risks … that goes along with alcohol use. I personally think too much focus is put on drugs.*
>
> [Agency Representative]

4.2 Suggested improvements

We asked interviewees of all kinds what improvements they would like to see to the TSS. Relatively few suggestions were made, especially by clients, who seemed very content with the service they had received. Most of the suggestions that were made (mainly either by TSS staff or by staff of partner agencies) related to one of four topics: possible expansion of the service; ways of avoiding potential clients 'slipping through the net', issues around commissioning and contracts, and a desire to see more strategic partnerships. We add to this list an issue in which most members of the research team identified a need for improvement, that of record-keeping.

4.2.1 Expanding range and capacity

The most common suggestions made related to ways of increasing the range and capacity of the Scheme – principally, extending it to include young offenders, increasing the length of time that clients could participate, or increasing the amount of support that mentors could provide to individual clients:

> *I'd have liked to see him more, but then again he did explain to me that I'm not the only person he sees.*
>
> [TSS Client 7]

> *They could get more workers probably so we could spend longer with each other. … More mentors so us clients could spend longer with our mentors because they're very busy. … I don't think three months is long enough to be honest with you. … when the three months is up ... perhaps you haven't finished a lot of things you would like to have finished, you know, with your mentor. … and then it's time to move on ... So I think it should be six months I do.*
>
> [TSS Client 5]

CARAT staff also supported the idea of increasing TSS resources so that whenever one mentor was occupied, another would be available in the community to provide support to other clients. The need to provide more intensive support to clients was also raised by mentors. It was felt that more staff would mean that more time could be devoted to building up the referral pathways:

> *If we had more mentors, you would have that quality time with that person to move that person away from everything. And you've have more time then …to get the referrals in. You have to do all this and try and time manage. … You're trying to get work in as well as your mentoring. So I think if we had more mentors, then someone could be mentoring and others could be accumulating work…*
>
> [Mentor 4]

Whilst some mentors took phone calls from their clients at any time of the day or night, one of them suggested introducing a shift-pattern to the structure of their work. This would ensure that clients could be assured access to a mentor during most hours of the day[16].

> *These people are chaotic and …some of the boys will phone me at quarter past five after I've finished work - "Oh, fancy meeting up now? I'm on a downer." And I think the service could be better where… someone else [was] working a two till ten shift. … So I think there should a shift pattern because they do…all addictions is shift patterns. …They don't stop having their needs because we finish at five o'clock. They don't finish at five o'clock, so why should we?*
>
> [Mentor 4]

Some interviewees felt that the three-month time limit for TSS support was too short and would be more appropriately determined according to individual client need:

> *Probably till I find work or that sort of thing, till I'm on my feet more properly like. … personally for me, I think it's a bit short a few months like. For me, I think they should evaluate the person, I think it should be different for different people, depending on their needs sort of thing like.*
>
> [TSS Client 2]

Some of the mentors also expressed concern about the impact of the time limit on clients. They felt that three months was not sufficient time in which to help clients with long-standing substance misuse problems turn their lives around.

> *You're expecting a person of fifteen years to give up heroin or to give up their routine of life which they've known for fifteen years in three months?…I find it's a rushing process and you can't rush people like this because they're bound to relapse*
>
> [Mentor 4]

> *… you're asking somebody to change everything about them in three months, it's not realistic is it? … I would change it to six. …You know because it's sustaining something. You get somebody off drugs within three months; you get them stable and everything, that's the easy part. The harder part is staying stopped*
>
> [Mentor 6]

One mentor, however, reported the benefits of applying a three-month time limit. This mentor felt that providing endless support served only to make the clients more dependent on their mentors:

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[16] In Mid/South Wales, the introduction of an out of hours telephone line has gone some way towards meeting this need.

I think the three months is a good period because otherwise they will end up relying on you so much that they will never ever find their own feet - so I think the three months is good.

<div align="right">[Mentor 7]</div>

The point was also made that TSS is a transitional support scheme – ie that its key contribution is to bridge the gap between a client leaving prison and engaging with services in the community. Three months was seen as about the right length of time to achieve this.

Whilst it was recognized that the probation service provides support to prisoners who have served longer-term sentences, there was a general belief that this support was not intensive enough. Some mentors wanted the TSS to be extended to provide mentoring support for offenders with longer sentences. However, the increased risk to the mentors' safety was seen as an important factor that needed to be weighed against the potential benefit to the extended client group:

I wish there wasn't that restriction with under twelve months - Probation don't do what we do. They don't pick them up from the gate and take them to Housing. There's still people coming out of there homeless after doing two years of prison. And I can remember people saying, 'Oh yeah but your whole risk will change.' But how can it? We could be mentoring somebody who's just done a two month sentence, but their previous sentence could have been six years.

<div align="right">[Mentor 7]</div>

I think the service it could be a little bit wider, we could do even more good … I don't know where you'd draw the line because of safety issues, because I suppose if someone's been put away for five or seven years, they could have been put away for quite horrendous or quite a dangerous crime, so that would have to be judged and balanced.

<div align="right">[Mentor 2]</div>

Finally, one or two suggestions were made about expanding the scope of TSS in terms of its range of activities. For example, some suggested that the Scheme might provide structured activities for clients who have little else to occupy their time. Both mentors and clients recognized the link between boredom and substance misuse:

There could have been like a few things, like.... especially when people are coming off drugs and things like that - that are not working - I think there should be summat maybe like a group thing, you go out somewhere for the day or.... summat like that, an activity or maybe some sort of courses or something like that. Because my biggest thing has been, because I'm not working, it's boredom. … Something to take time up like, or activities.

<div align="right">[TSS Client 3]</div>

The only thing that I think is missing is activities to keep people from being bored. Boredom is such a big issue with everyone. … For some of them it's not just even the taking of the drug, it's the getting the money to go and buy the drugs, the whole picture of it, they're constantly chasing around. So it's taking up their days….

Once they stop that then, they want to turn back to drugs because there's nothing else to do. Yeah that's the hard part really. … the one thing that DIP have got over us that they can offer gym passes. And so many people say to us, 'Oh can you get us a gym pass?', and we haven't got the funding for any of it. It's really annoying! That would be a great one. Because when they're in prison that's something they mainly focus on, they've got that gym however many times a week, they've started to feel good about themselves through going. And they come out and can't afford the gym membership.

[Mentor 4]

I know that we offer motivational support but because obviously we have limited time and limited funding for things ... I wish I could turn around to them and go, 'Oh, there's a football match on. Let's take you there'. But that's not part of my job.

…Participants get so bored and with boredom comes drug use. And that's the only problem. I'll ring them up to try and go, 'Oh what are you doing today? How are you getting on?' 'I'm bored. I need something to do. I need a job. I need to start the gym. I need to do a hobby. Do some training'. And obviously, you know, I can help but at the end of the day that boredom is what leads them to take drugs, which leads them to re-offend. I mean obviously not in all cases, but that's from my experience I see it quite a lot. I wish there was something we could do to stop the boredom.

[Mentor 7]

One suggestion was also made that TSS might deliver voluntary programmes in the community that would help individuals to address some of their substance-misuse and offending related needs:

There's a big gap there for non-accredited programmes that we see as a challenge and an opportunity. … The problem might be anger management, so we need to be able to help that individual to cope with that as a trigger to prevent.... to prevent it happening again. And a whole range of other things, right.

[Mentor 8]

However, this kind of suggestion was seen as unrealistic by others, due to the limited resources available. As one of the managers succinctly put it:

…Can [TSS] expand its range of operations? … Not with three mentors in the community and one in prison. So not unless we drop something that we're doing now or we expand the actual workforce.

4.2.2 Avoiding clients 'slipping through the net'

A need for more publicity about both the existence of the TSS and the range of support it offered was mentioned by many of the interviewees. A number of clients, for example, described how they had only heard of the TSS from fellow prisoners – and how subsequent to their engagement, they had begun to encourage other prisoners to get involved.

> *Although I was only there a month, and it's on remand, I didn't hear about it. And I don't know anybody else who did, to be honest. I think they only speak to people who have been sentenced, not people on remand, because they don't know how long they're going to get. … Well there were a few girls on my wing, and I never heard about it until I came out.*
>
> [TSS Client 1]

> *Like in women's jails, you don't.... especially if you're on remand, you don't hear about it. … Like my partner only found out because he was in Parc Prison, because he never found out in Swansea. But I think there should be a lot more advertisement of it.*
>
> [TSS Client 3]

Other potential clients were identified as either 'slipping through the net' or being outside the existing target group, but who nevertheless would benefit from TSS:

> *There are people who I'm aware of who are slipping the net. … they're the inmates who come in on remand and who then receive under a 12 months sentence. Because although I go and speak to every inmate who comes in who's received a sentence of under 12 months, those who are on remand who are then sentenced to under 12 months are not seen. So I do think that they're maybe slipping the net…And also people without any drug or alcohol issues and also those who may not recognise that they have a drug or alcohol issue.*
>
> [TSS staff member]

Whilst some work had been initiated with remand prisoners, this was not being actively developed: partly because of the practical obstacles and partly because targets were currently being met and resources were insufficient to expand service provision.

More generally, the TSS managers acknowledged the large imbalance between referrals from HMPs Parc and Altcourse and those from other prisons. Clearly, there are many Welsh prisoners elsewhere who would benefit from TSS services, but have relatively little opportunity to access them: this raises questions about equality and fairness of treatment. However, at the same time, (a) there is a limit to the number of cases that the Scheme can handle and (b) while (in the South Wales prisons, particularly) substantial efforts have been made to widen the range of sources of referral, this requires a great deal of time and resources.

4.2.3 Commissioning and contracts

Another set of issues raised by some interviewees related to the commissioning of the TSS. Given the similarity of aims for the TSS and DIP – one question to emerge was why they were not commissioned jointly. The current DIP commissioning process, taking place a year after the TSS process, was said to have had caused some temporary disruption to joint working between TSS and DIP:

> *Once the DIP re-commissioning is concluded, I think that will allow us to move forward with agencies again. Because DIP is all re-commissioning at the moment so all those services, we're all waiting for the new providers. … And I think that will allow those sort of processes to move forward, because you'll have a provider that's going to be there for three years, and they can start working in a more coordinated way and the DIP prison clinics can be the focus point to move things forward in that way. And I think it will allow some development.*
>
> [TSS manager]

The separate commissioning process, however, was not entirely unwelcome as there was some concern that joined-up commissioning could result in the subordination of the TSS.

> *I don't understand why we have a separate DIP and TSS service. But I would be very scared of the all consuming small number of high drug using clients that can consume more joined up commissioning.*
>
> [Agency representative]

The commissioning of TSS for a fixed three-year period was also an issue of concern to some of the TSS managers and staff. This time-limited approach to commissioning was felt to have a negative effect on staff morale. As the end of the contract period approached, it was felt that momentum is lost and staff members begin to look for new employment opportunities:

> *Three years funding is very difficult, I think, … because they don't know whether it's going to be continued, you lose staff in that final year, because staff will move on … the last six months you lose the momentum because you're trying to backfill … I guess, at the end of year two they need to be making those decisions about whether they're going to fund after year three, not at the end of year three.*
>
> [TSS staff member]

> *What happens as well with the TSS is that whilst you had an initial contract of three years, once we were coming up to that, then it was extended a bit and then extended a bit. And so, that in itself is hard work because you have to maintain your staff. Staff morale, keep people.... keep people with you and good people as well.*

It's always in the back of your mind that funding's only been put forward for three years. So you're thinking in the back of your mind what's.... what could happen. It's hard not to think of the worst and I do think that that is unsettling in some cases and maybe if it was set in stone that the funding was there, I think that you're able to just concentrate on what's…. the work in hand instead of thinking well what's gonna be happening in a few years time with funding…

… So if funding was made more permanent, I think that that would relieve a lot of tension or stress for myself, because I'm thinking well come two years time, what's gonna happen, where am I gonna be and will I still be working as part of the TSS? Will there be.... it's quite unsettling, especially with what's going on economically at the moment, that is a concern.

[TSS staff member]

The negative financial impact of running short-term contracts was also reported by respondents. One staff member highlighted the fact that money is lost both at the start of the project when investments are made in training and induction, and at the end of the contract when backfilling takes place:

They lose a lot of money, because … the first three or four months you're investing in training and induction, and at the end that you're backfilling, so you're losing part of the project time all the time. And you put a new organisation in, for the first three to six months, their induction, and that's what they're constantly doing. So they do lose part of their funding every time they do that. A longer-term investment is much better I think. They get better value for money as well I think.

[TSS staff member]

The introduction of longer-term, more permanent, contracts was advocated as a way of providing job security for staff. It would also provide TSS managers with the opportunity to make long term plans for improving the efficiency and delivery:

It's very difficult to start planning for the long term and improving for the long term when the funding isn't secure. It's quite difficult to say, and "this is where we'd like to be in five, ten years down the line" when funding isn't guaranteed past two years. So I think it's very difficult to plan for the future, to improve things in the future, when there's uncertainty around funding.

[TSS staff member]

4.2.4 The development of more strategic approaches to partnership

The last two areas in which improvements were suggested have already been considered in some detail earlier in the report, so will be reiterated only very

briefly here. First, as discussed in sections 3.4 and 3.5, a number of interviewees noted that, while TSS project managers and mentors had excellent relationships with staff in many other agencies at an individual or local level, the Scheme would benefit from more strategic relationships, supported by formal agreements or protocols, at a wider level – in the words of a substance misuse service representative, 'being thought as a North Wales service rather than an individual area service I suppose'. Of course, he might also have said 'all-Wales'.

In this context, particular mention was made the three main statutory bodies which were seen key stakeholders for TSS – the prison and probation services, and the DIP. Advantages of 'doing it strategically' were variously seen as more coherence from the client's perspective, the ability to use resources more efficiently (eg by having a shared 'gate pick-up' system), dissemination of wider knowledge about TSS, and a more stable and systematic referral system. Another area in which TSS would benefit from more formal, strategic level agreements with prisons and probation (perhaps in consultation with NOMS Cymru) is that of risk assessment. As noted in Section 3.6, TSS managers often have to 'chase' risk information, rather than it being routinely supplied in a systematic form by those making referrals. While this might be difficult to negotiate, as it would involve the latter in extra work, it is a very important area for those working with offenders in situations where they are potentially vulnerable, and a more formal system may anyway prove more cost effective in the long run than the ad hoc chasing process that is currently necessary in quite a lot of cases.

4.2.5 Record-keeping

Finally, as discussed in section 3.7, the TSS record-keeping systems have had some major weaknesses, most importantly in the Nacro/CAIS area where both the lack of systematic case notes kept by mentors, and doubts about the accuracy of some of the entries on the main database owing to possible overlaps with work by non-TSS staff, made it anything but simple for the research team (or the project board) to get a clear picture through Scheme records of the activities of the mentors. In addition to concerns about accountability in the event of something going wrong, the lack of proper case-notes made it difficult for supervisors to keep a close 'handle' on mentoring activities and/or for others to 'pick up' cases if the mentor was indisposed.

More generally, there was a lack of an 'outcome' focus across the TSS records as a whole. More attention could be paid to the recording clients' progress in terms of housing or employment, engagement with substance abuse treatment, and so on. The researchers again found it quite difficult to get a comprehensive and accurate picture of this from TSS records in both areas: not only was extracting such information a complex and time-consuming task because the computer records were unwieldy and based on separate and incompatible databases, but there was also a large amount of missing data. The richest and best source of information on outcomes (as

well as on activities with clients) was G4S' paper casefiles, but extracting the information from these required a great deal of work.

At the time of the fieldwork, there were signs that some of the above problems were being addressed, although it was too early to tell how much improvement would be made over the longer term. First, G4S had introduced the 'SSOM', an instrument for assessing progress (or distance travelled') in individuals. The researchers felt that this was a promising tool, but still needed considerable work to make it more reliable (see section 5.4 below). Most importantly, both branches of the Scheme had begun to use PalBase, which (to some extent like CRAMS in the probation service) combines basic record-keeping functions with ongoing case notes entered by mentors. If used correctly and in a timely fashion, this should both allow easier extraction of basic management information and data for quarterly reports, but should allow the construction of much clearer and more accurate pictures of the activities of mentors and the outcomes of their work, facilitating both supervision by project managers and any future evaluations of the work of the Scheme. It is to be hoped that within a short period of time, mentors will become fully attuned to this system and that the overall quality of record-keeping in the Scheme will significantly improve.

5 Impact and outcomes

What I do know from actual experience is, we've got a really cracking team of people and they're working their socks off and they really are making a difference to people, in terms of not just quantitative stuff but the qualitative comments returned by people three months later and stuff. And also the actual outcomes aren't often reported in TSS in terms of individuals who in TSS may have gone through the Dawn system or through the DIP system, they actually get a proper job and a house nine months, 12 months later. Well how can you evidentially link the effect of one on the other? Many of the anticipated outcomes, you can't legitimately link the causality of any two, can you? Because there's so many other factors involved. But when the time span then goes after the three months for the TSS and they go onto others, being able to say well TSS contributed a lot, a little or what have you becomes quite difficult to do.

[TSS manager]

How do you measure success with somebody? Are they still drinking and using? Are they drinking safely? Are they not being a pain to society? Are they not going back to jail? Are they not offending? I've got quite a few people who are still using drugs but in a different manner. They're selling the Big Issue instead of stealing. They're not re-offending and they're not going back to jail. Is that a success? I've got people who drink occasionally and not binge drinking and getting in trouble with the police. And then I've got some not so successful.

[Mentor 6]

The above comments encapsulate many of the problems involved in demonstrating the effectiveness of TSS and measuring its impact or 'outcomes'. Although the 'final outcome' at which the Scheme is aiming is the reduction of re-offending, it is surely over-optimistic to expect that voluntary contact with mentors for a short period will have a clear and immediate impact on the reconviction rates of people who are in many cases severely damaged by personal and social problems and have been offending for many years. TSS mentoring is only the first stage of what is likely to be a long journey through interventions by many other agencies - a journey, moreover, that is likely to involve frequent setbacks and failures, conforming to Burnett's (2004) characterisation of desistance from crime as a lengthy 'zigzag' process. For this reason, we emphasise that the reconviction data presented in this section should not be taken as decisive 'proof' that TSS does or does not 'work'.

How, then, should the impact of TSS be assessed? We suggest that what is needed is a variety of indicators, both quantitative and qualitative, which together begin to produce a cumulative picture of what has been achieved. A number of quantitative measures have been derived from Scheme records, including some that the managers have devised themselves to demonstrate change in clients: notably the assessment by staff of their 'distance travelled'. Qualitative data is often regarded as providing less valid measures of

performance than statistical data, but in difficult and complex activities such as mentoring persistent offenders with substance misuse problems, we regard it as providing a very important dimension. For example, in reading the casefiles in detail, we were struck by the fact that several cases ended with a (usually minor) reconviction and had no obvious measurable 'outcomes' in terms of, for example, the clients giving up alcohol or acquiring a job or permanent accommodation, yet a great deal of progress had clearly been made in terms of helping them understand the roots of their problems and begin to seek help and engage with relevant services. In some cases, indeed (especially those involving mental health problems, depression, self-harm, and so on) it was obvious that a great deal had been achieved simply by keeping highly vulnerable clients 'afloat' for a few months. Such progress or stability – albeit temporary – is often not reflected in quantitative outcome measures, but it may be making an important contribution to a much longer term process of improvement to people's lives, including desistance from crime.

It is important to note in introducing the impact measures discussed below that, generally speaking, the form in which TSS records have been kept – at least until the recent introduction of PalBase, which has not yet had sufficient time to 'bed down' – has not been conducive to the production of accurate and meaningful measures of effectiveness. Many of the Scheme records we examined required a great deal of reformatting and analysis in order to produce the tables in this report, did not record outcomes consistently, or suffered from large amounts of missing data. Problems of the latter kind were also identified in the interim report on TSS (Clancy 2005), particularly in North Wales, where they may have contributed to the creation of a picture in which the Nacro/CAIS branch of the Scheme appeared to perform worse in a number of ways than was actually the case.

We present impact and outcome related data under six headings: continuity of service through the gate; quality of engagement post-release; bridging to other services; 'distance travelled'; re-offending; and qualitative evidence.

5.1 Continuity of service through the gate

One of the most important elements in the effective resettlement of prisoners is maintaining meaningful contact with them after release. In the evaluations of the two phases of the Probation Pathfinders (Lewis et al 2003; Clancy et al. 2006), one of the main indicators of effectiveness used was that of 'continuity of service', defined as face to face contact beyond the first day of release. While it was recognised that meeting offenders at the gate (usually combined with accompanying them to eg housing or benefits agencies) was a valuable intervention in itself, it was felt that if this was not followed up with meetings on further occasions the chances of making a significant impact on resettlement would be considerably lower. The levels of continuity of service measured in this fashion were found to vary widely, to a large extent influenced by the geography of the catchment areas of the different prisons. In the initial Pathfinders study, they ranged between 16 per cent and 47 per

cent[17] (Lewis et al. 2003), with an overall rate across all seven prisons of 29 per cent. In the second Pathfinders, which involved only three prisons (all of which combined mentoring with the delivery pre-release of the 'FOR A Change' cognitive-motivational programme), the overall rate was 22 per cent, but there were again major variations between the establishments, one scheme achieving 41 per cent, one 15 per cent and the third only 6 per cent (Clancy et al. 2006).

As shown in Table 5.1, in comparison with the above schemes, the TSS has performed very well on a similar 'continuity of service' measure. The figures in Table 5.1 are derived from the 'attrition charts' in section 3.2 (Figures 3a and 3b). They indicate that between 2004 and 2008, mentors saw 39 per cent of their clients two or more times post-release. (It should also be noted that they saw 56 per cent of all participants at least once post-release, and 18 per cent six or more times). When it is remembered that TSS clients, especially those mentored by G4S, are released from several different prisons – in contrast to the Pathfinders, each of which was based on an individual prison – this is clearly an impressive achievement.

Table 5.1 Continuity of service through the gate

% of participants met two or more times face-to-face post-release, 2004-2008

G4S: 39%
Nacro/CAIS   39%
TSS as a whole   39%

Previous studies: % of participants seeing mentor/key worker after day of release
Probation Pathfinders 1   29%
Probation Pathfinders 2   22%

*Source: G4s and Nacro/CAIS Scheme records.

5.2   Quality of engagement post-release

Based on analysis of our sample of 84 casefiles[18], we present in Table 5.2 our own assessments of the extent to which clients appeared to 'engage' with their mentors post-release. This is obviously a broad subjective measure, but is based on a careful consideration of all the information we had about each case. It can be seen that a third of all cases involved sustained engagement, usually characterised by regular meetings and discussions, together with continuing willingness by clients to try to 'work at' their problems. This is

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[17] The 47 per cent was achieved by a scheme working from a women's prison. The best rate achieved from a male prison was 42 per cent.

[18] As noted earlier, the North Wales casefiles did not contain full accounts of meetings with clients, and the analysis was supplemented by talking through each case individually with the mentors.

broadly in line with the findings above regarding the proportions of cases involving two or more face-to-face meetings post-release.

Table 5.2 Quality of engagement with mentors post-release

Strong engagement throughout	33%
Variable/limited	29%
Minimal/none	38%

	100% (N=84)

Source: Sample of 84 casefiles.

5.3   'Bridging' to other services

As emphasised several times throughout the report, one of the key roles of TSS is to act as a 'bridge' for prisoners into a variety of services to assist them in meeting their needs in the critical few days and weeks after their release. A third indicator that can be used in assessing the effectiveness of TSS is therefore the extent to which mentors refer clients to relevant agencies and – more important – how frequently those referred actually attend and engage with these agencies as a result. Standard records kept by TSS give a good picture of the overall numbers and range of referrals made, but it is harder to determine the outcomes of these referrals.

As discussed in section 3.3.3, G4S mentors were recorded as having made 2,153 separate referrals to other agencies in 2008, an average of 3.6 referrals per client. The Nacro/CAIS records indicate that over the first ten months of 2008, 185 external referrals were made, an average of less than one per client if one includes all participants referred to the Scheme (as in the TSS calculation above). However, the records refer to only 69 clients: it is not clear whether no referrals were made on behalf of the 150 or so others also referred over this period, or whether (more likely) these were not included in the records.

Information on the extent to which clients actually attended the appointments made for them (or by them, on the advice of mentors), and on the extent to which they 'engaged' with the agencies when they attended, is again available only from individual casefiles. Based on an analysis of our sample of 84 casefiles, it is clear that in those cases (about a third of the total) in which mentors continued to see clients face-to-face for some weeks after release, the great majority of appointments made resulted in attendance by the client - mainly because mentors took them there. A common pattern, especially in the Mid/South Wales TSS, was for the mentor to make the appointment, ring up the client to remind them the day before it was due, and then to pick them up in a car and drive them to it.

Table 5.3 shows our broad assessment of the extent to which the TSS clients in the casefile sample engaged with agencies to which they had been referred.

Table 5.3 Assessed levels of work/engagement with other agencies

High level of work/engagement	39%
Some engagement	14%
Minimal/none	47%

	100% (N=84)

Source: Sample of 84 casefiles.

Although the casefile sample is relatively small, it provides strong indicative evidence that the Scheme is performing extremely well in terms of the level of engagement generated between clients, mentors and other agencies. This conclusion is further supported by the results of our interviews with offenders, mentors and representatives of other agencies. As evidenced at length in section 3, there was very wide agreement that TSS was performing very well its basic 'bridging' role of helping offenders to access and engage with services, one of the most telling comments being that of an agency representative who claimed that, whereas 'cold' referrals of ex-prisoners resulted in under 20 per cent engaging with the services his agency offered, referrals from TSS – which normally included the mentor 'delivering' the client to the first meeting or two – resulted in an 'engagement rate' nearer 80 per cent.

A further indication of the Scheme's effectiveness in this role is a finding from the casefile analysis that 13 of the 84 cases examined resulted in some form of 'handover' at the end of the mentoring period to a key worker in another agency – for example, a housing 'floating support' worker, or a worker in a drugs agency – who was able to take over to some extent the support role supplied by the mentor (in some cases, such handovers took place early on, in others only at the end of a three month mentoring period). In other cases – especially in South Wales, Gwent and Dyfed Powys – TSS mentors played a bridging role in the early part of the post-custody supervision of Prolific and Priority Offenders (PPOs), where they worked in close cooperation with PPO teams, eventually 'exiting' in a planned way with a handover of their responsibilities.

Finally, it was clear that in some areas, mentors played a different kind of 'bridging' role. This was where ex-prisoners came up against negative or apparently discriminatory attitudes on the part of statutory agencies (housing departments and benefits agencies being mentioned a number of times in this respect), and consequently mentors acted in an advocacy role on their behalf. While TSS managers were keen to stress that successful efforts had been made to engage positively with housing providers in particular, advocacy was an important service to clients in areas where such discussions had not yet brought results.

5.4   'Distance travelled'

Apart from reconviction data, perhaps the best proxy indicators of impact on re-offending are measures of outcomes in areas of 'criminogenic need', such

as housing, employment or substance abuse. As discussed earlier, G4S have since January 2008 used the 'SSOM' system (Support Services Outcome Measure) to measure clients' progress in such areas. This allows measures to be constructed of the 'distance travelled' by clients in addressing their problems, by comparing their scores at the beginning and end of their TSS involvement. Tables 5.4 to 5.7 show SSOM results for clients' progress in terms of, in turn, accommodation, drugs and alcohol abuse.

The SSOM is still in development and some of its measures have weaknesses in terms of confusing and overlapping categories (such as conflating 'chaotic and injecting' drug users), as well as relying to some extent on self-report by offenders (who may be tempted to exaggerate in order to get help from TSS) or on subjective judgements by staff (who are keen to identify progress), so the results must be treated with caution. Nevertheless, it is clear from the tables that significant numbers of clients have made progress in all of the above dimensions, most obviously in terms of improvements in housing (as both the casefile analysis and interviews with clients confirm, largely the result of mentors assisting clients in their dealings with local councils) and in terms of making new links with specialist drug and alcohol agencies. In addition to the figures shown, there is similar evidence of progress in relation to training and employment needs, notably an increase from 3 per cent to 23 per cent in the proportion linked with agencies such as P2W (Progress to Work).

Table 5.4   'Distance travelled' in respect of accommodation needs

Accommodation description	Score at start	Score at closure
	% of clients	% of clients
No fixed address/unreliable temporary accommodation	39%	20%
Family/friend - temp (relatively supportive relationship)	21%	18%
Council accepts housing responsibility (B &B/temp accom)	1%	7%
Supported accomodation scheme (long-stay)	2%	5%
Council /housing assoc/private rent or family home (perm)	38%	50%
	100%	100%

Table 5.5   'Distance travelled' in respect of drug abuse

Drugs description	Score at start	Score at closure
Class A/B - chaotic / injecting etc	53%	35%
Class A/B - risk aware	15%	15%
Class C	8%	9%
With specialist agency/ substitute meds/ abstinent	21%	41%
	100%	100%

Table 5.6   'Distance travelled' in respect of alcohol abuse

Alcohol abuse description	Score at start	Score at closure
Daily abuse/binge intake - unacceptable behaviour	59%	35%
Daily/binge - risk aware – controlled	5%	9%
Occasional intake – safe	16%	27%
Linked with specialist agency/abstinent	20%	28%

100%

100%

Note: In tables 5.4 to 5.6   N= 374 participants who exited G4S -TSS in 2008.

One last indication of outcomes in relation to criminogenic needs comes from our sample of 84 casefiles. In each case, we made a judgement as to whether the client's involvement with TSS had produced identifiable progress in terms of meeting the need in question.   Table 5.7 shows the results, which provide broad support for the conclusions from the SSOM analysis, albeit indicating a somewhat lower degree of impact where substance misuse is concerned.

Table 5.7   Percentage of casefiles with evidence of progress in meeting needs

Area of need:

Accommodation   29%
ETE   27%
Substance misuse   15%

Source: Sample of 84 casefiles.

5.5   Re-Offending

As the central goal of TSS is to reduce re-offending, perhaps the most important indicator of effectiveness is the reconviction rate of TSS participants. However, this has to be handled with care. Reconviction rates are very crude indicators of change in criminal behaviour in that, not only are they only a proxy for re-offending (as not all offenders are caught, and detection rates vary widely between types of crime), but they make no distinction between people who re-offend once and those who engage in multiple re-offending, nor between serious and minor offences.   More importantly, in order to find out whether a specified intervention (such as TSS) has made any difference to the reconviction rate of a given group of offenders, it is necessary to have some idea of what that rate would have been had they *not* experienced the intervention: in other word's the group's *expected* reconviction rate. Furthermore, to have any confidence in the result, it is necessary to compare both their expected and actual reconviction rates with those of another similar group of offenders who have *not* had the intervention.

As explained in section 1.2.4, in the current study, we determined both the expected reconviction rates (based on OGRS3) and the actual reconviction rates of male participants in the G4S TSS who were aged 21 and over and left prison in 2004-6, as well as those of a comparison group selected at random

from among adult male offenders with significant drug problems who had served short sentences in HMP Parc in 2005-6 but had not participated in TSS. The OGRS3 scores and reconvictions were derived on our behalf from the Police National Computer. After excluding relatively small numbers of non-matches and duplicates, we were left with an intervention group of 339 TSS participants and a comparison group of 154 prisoners from HMP Parc, and it is these that will be used in the following analysis.

This methodology is not as reliable as a randomised control trial, whereby offenders would be put into the intervention and comparison groups on a random basis, because it is possible that there are important hidden differences between our two groups (not measured by OGRS3, which relies on static factors only) which affect their likelihood of reconviction: notably, as participation in TSS is voluntary, it is possible that the intervention group was more motivated to desist from crime than the comparison group, and hence its members were less likely to re-offend from the outset. We cannot know this, though as mentioned earlier, we are somewhat reassured by the facts that (a) the predicted reconviction rates of the two groups were very similar, and (b) relatively few prisoners declined to participate in the Scheme when told about it, and failure to participate was usually for practical reasons, so any selection effects may be fairly small.

One final complication is that both our intervention and comparison groups consist entirely of prisoners with significant substance abuse problems. As OGRS3 does not take substance misuse (a strong criminogenic factor) into account in its calculation of predicted reconviction rates, this means that it will under-predict the rates for both our groups.[19] This was confirmed by figures kindly supplied to us by the Ministry of Justice, based on large-scale, nationally collected data, which showed that the actual two-year reconviction rate of male short-term prisoners with significant substance misuse problems (as identified by OASys) is around 82 per cent, compared with an OGRS3 prediction of 75.5 per cent.[20] Interestingly, the latter figure is very similar to the OGRS3 predictions for our groups, suggesting that TSS is dealing with typical offenders in this category and not 'cherry-picking' in any way. The significance of the above for our reconviction study is that the predicted reconviction rates for both our intervention and comparison groups need to be adjusted upwards (by about 6 percentage points) in order to reflect the unusual composition of both groups in terms of substance abuse.

The main results of the reconviction analysis were as follows. First of all, as Table 5.8 shows, there was no significant difference in reconviction rates between TSS participants as a whole and the comparison group. Both groups reoffended at a rate higher than that predicted by OGRS3, but slightly lower

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[19] A 'typical' group of offenders with the range of ages, offences and previous convictions represented in our samples might include, say, 60 per cent with substance misuse problems, and this would be reflected in the group's overall OGRS3score. However, a group in which 100 per cent have such problems (indeed, selected on that basis), though having a similar OGRS3 score, will almost certainly produce a higher reconviction rate.

[20] Philip Howard, MoJ, personal communication. OASys is the standardised Offender Assessment System used by all prisons and probation services to assess risk and need.

than the predicted rate when adjusted to take account of the exceptional level of substance misuse (as explained above).

Table 5.8   Predicted and actual 2-year reconviction rates, TSS and comparison group

	OGRS3 predicted rate	Adjusted prediction	Actual (+/- prediction)
All TSS participants	74%	80%	79% (-1)
Comparison group	75%	81%	77% (-4)

Notes.
n=339 TSS participants, 154 comparison group (all adult males, released 2004-6)
Adjusted predicted reconviction rate based on national OASys data on prisoners with significant substance misuse problems.

However, as Table 5.9 shows, when the TSS sample is divided into subgroups according to the amount of post-release contact they had (face to face) with mentors, it emerges that those who had any such contact were reconvicted at lower rates than those who had none (76% compared with 83%). Moreover, one particular subgroup – those who had between two and six face-to-face contacts after release - were convicted at a significantly lower rate than the rest (71%), including those who had large numbers of meetings. Although this is based on a relatively small number of offenders (89) and thus cannot be regarded as a robust finding, it is interesting because it fits well with the argument that TSS is most successful as a temporary 'bridge' to help offenders leaving prison to 'get back on their feet' and gain access to community-based services, as discussed earlier in the report.   In other words – though this may be stretching the evidence too far - we may be looking at cases of 'too little' (represented by those who did not see their mentor post-release or saw them only once) 'too much' (those who saw them many times) and 'just right' (those who saw them a sufficient number of times to make a successful transition back to life outside, but did not become dependent on the relationship).

Table 5.9   Predicted and actual 2-year reconviction rates, TSS and comparison group, showing TSS participants by number of post-release contacts face-to-face.

	OGRS3 predicted	Adjusted prediction	Actual (+/- prediction)
TSS participants			
No post-release contact	74%	80%	83% (+3)
Any post-release contact	73%	79%	76% (-3)

1 post-release contact	73%	79%	80%	(+1)
2-6 post-release contacts	**73%**	**79%**	**71%**	**(-8)**
7+ post-release contacts	73%	79%	80%	(+1)
Comparison group	75%	81%	77%	(-4)

Notes.
n=139 TSS participants with no post-release face-to-face contact and 200 with some (55 with one, 89 with 2-6, 56 with 7 or more).
Adjusted predicted reconviction rate based on national OASys data on prisoners with significant substance misuse problems.

Apart from the above, there were no statistically significant differences between subgroups of TSS participants in terms of reconviction rates, although there were some indications that the Scheme may be relatively more successful with older prisoners than younger ones.   For example, for prisoners aged 21-25, the predicted reconviction rate (adjusted) was 85% and the actual rate 87%. The equivalent figures for those aged over 25 were 76% and 74%, respectively (see Table 5.10).

Table 5.10   Predicted and actual 2-year reconviction rates, TSS and comparison group, showing TSS participants by age group.

	OGRS3 predicted	Adjusted prediction	Actual (+/- prediction)	
TSS participants				
Aged 21-25	79%	85%	87%	(+2)
Aged over 25	70%	76%	74%	(-2)
Comparison group				
Aged 21-25	79%	85%	85%	(--)
Aged over 25	73%	79%	74%	(-5)

Notes.
n= 131 TSS participants aged 21-25 and 208 over 25 (Comparison group 48 and 106, respectively)..
Adjusted predicted reconviction rate based on national OASys data on prisoners with significant substance misuse problems.

In summary, the findings do not suggest that TSS is having a significant impact on reconviction rates, but as argued earlier, it would be very surprising if a relatively small scale project could achieve this alone after just one brief intervention in the lives of offenders who have long criminal records and major social problems (it being remembered that to 'fail', an ex-prisoner has to

offend only once in a two-year period). In this context, we would argue that schemes like TSS should be judged on a range of evidence as to whether they are making a useful contribution to longer term and multi-pronged strategies for reducing re-offending, rather than being expected to demonstrate a clear and immediate impact on reconviction rates (a notoriously difficult and trap-laden process, and a result which is not often achieved, even by very much larger and more costly interventions). Reconviction data should therefore be regarded as just one indicator among several.

That having been said, the reconviction data do suggest (echoing earlier findings) that post-release face-to-face contact with mentors is a vital ingredient of the service, and that to be effective there should be enough contact (2-6 meetings, in most cases weekly) to ease offenders' transition from custody to community and facilitate their access to services. They also at least raise the possibility that the Scheme may be relatively more successful with older offenders than younger offenders.

5.6 Qualitative evidence

Finally, there is a great deal of qualitative evidence, much of which has already been presented in section 3, which bears upon the importance and quality of the service provided by TSS. One aspect of this is a frequently repeated recognition that TSS fills a serious gap in existing services, and that the Scheme's full value would become readily apparent if it were to disappear. This was expressed by some in terms of concern that an essential 'safety net' for ex-prisoners would be removed if TSS were to cease to exist – particularly for those who do not use class A drugs:

> *In fact that is a big worry with there being DIP, having TSS disappear, because other areas don't have TSS. Cheshire haven't got TSS and the cannabis people, the young people who are on cannabis and alcohol, they fall by the wayside then because there's no service that's going to … only the community drugs team and there's little they can do for cannabis. It's support that people need … practical.*
>
> <div align="right">[Agency representative]</div>

Others recognised that the disappearance of TSS would have repercussions for their own service:

> *Q   If TSS were to disappear, how would it affect the work of the CARAT projects?*
>
> *A   I think it would affect us because we wouldn't have those people coming in, the prison link workers to let them know what is out there and available. Yeah, we could easily have a list of things, but there's other little things that go on. They might be only running for ten weeks or things that are up and running, things that aren't just set in stone that we'd miss. If they didn't have TSS I think they'd have to look at the DIP*

teams because at the end of the day, drug intervention programme, the class B drugs and C drugs are drugs at the end of the day and there is a big problem with them, so they'd have to look at the way that that's run.

[CARAT worker]

More generally, as discussed at length in section 3, all TSS participants we interviewed expressed very positive views about TSS and felt that it had had a beneficial impact on their lives, particularly in terms of providing emotional support and helping motivate them to change their circumstances.

6 Summary and conclusions

The main findings to emerge from the evaluation are briefly summarised below under three headings: general, process issues, and outcomes. We then conclude the report by raising some questions about the future of TSS.

6.1 General

1. Over a period of five years, TSS has developed a highly effective model for 'through the gate' mentoring of short-term prisoners with substance misuse problems. Its managers and most of its mentors are now very experienced in this challenging task, and the Scheme as a whole is almost certainly the largest, the longest established and the most successful of its kind in the UK.

2. Feedback about TSS from a variety of external stakeholders – offenders, prison and probation managers and staff, and representatives of service agencies – was overwhelmingly positive about the quality of its work. The Scheme was perceived as building trusting and supportive relationships with its clients, plugging important gaps in services for ex-offenders (such as providing support to those with alcohol problems), and fulfilling a significant 'bridging' role by assisting and encouraging offenders to engage with other agencies.

3. Perhaps the most important contribution that TSS makes to the resettlement of prisoners is in helping their 'transition' in the critical first days and weeks after release from what is in many cases a highly unstable situation in terms of basic needs such as housing, employment or financial resources, to one in which they are able to engage meaningfully with agencies which can help them ameliorate these needs and hence increase their chances of building a more stable lifestyle and moving away from crime and substance abuse. The importance of early engagement with offenders post-release was a theme that emerged many times in the course of our interviews. For example, one of the TSS managers commented:

> *In terms of patterns of intervention, one facet was 'front loading' the interventions, if you like, so that we made sure that people that needed to be seen frequently were seen very often during the initial weeks, post release. Because clearly, if people are saying to you ... that they're more likely to re-offend within the first three weeks, that's where you need to put the effort isn't 'it?...…*

> *…All too often what happens is people end up on waiting lists and don't get seen for six weeks or two weeks or whatever. If we don't meet that moment of opportunity in a matter of two days, not two weeks, we've lost them.*

The successful management of this 'transition' requires staff and mentors who have on the one hand the ability to engage, motivate and earn the trust of offenders; and on the other, good knowledge about and close relationships

with prisons, probation, DIPs, and other relevant statutory and voluntary agencies. The research evidence we collected indicates that the Scheme has performed consistently well in both these respects.

4. Previous studies of projects involving 'through the gate' work with short-term prisoners have generally found quite low rates and lengths of post-release contact, as such contact is voluntary and clients with 'chaotic lifestyles' frequently lose interest and fail to keep appointments. TSS has not only achieved impressively high post-release contact rates (seeing 39 per cent of clients face-to-face twice or more in the community), but its mentors continue to work quite intensively with a significant proportion of clients for periods of up to three months.

5. A number of areas were identified in which improvements might be made, notably the coverage of Welsh short-term prisoners across different establishments, record-keeping systems and practices, and strategic relationships with other agencies. The research also raises some general questions about the future of TSS. These are discussed in more detail below.

6.2   Process issues

6.2.1 Targetting

It was clear from analysis of client characteristics that TSS was targeting the kinds of offenders that it was set up to assist: almost all had a significant substance abuse problem, and – in line with WAG policy – the Scheme took on a significant proportion with alcohol problems (almost half of all clients). The great majority were prisoners serving sentences of under 12 months (the main target population), although there were also small numbers of referrals of remand prisoners, offenders on community sentences and the occasional prisoner serving over 12 months (usually taken on at the request of a probation officer). As it is expected to, TSS takes on substantial number of young prisoners (almost a fifth of all referrals) and is now working with more female prisoners than in the past. In 2008, the Scheme comfortably met its overall target numbers of referrals, as well as (with one near miss) those for prisoners returning to particular regions of Wales.

6.2.2 Coverage

Although the Scheme was targeting the 'right kinds' of prisoners, not all those eligible had equal opportunities to obtain access to TSS. Those held in HMPs Parc or Altcourse, with which the Scheme and its mentors had close and frequent connections, were much more likely to hear about the Scheme and/or to become participants than those in other prisons. Some progress had been made in this direction in 2008 – with, in the south, increases in referrals from Cardiff and Swansea and, in the north, more female prisoners from Styal – but the fact that 85 per cent of Nacro/CAIS referrals and 57 per

cent of G4S referrals still came from HMPs Altcourse and Parc, respectively, demonstrates that there is still a long way to go to resolve this problem.

The difficulties of doing so should not be underestimated, as awareness among prison staff and inmates of schemes like TSS (which is only one among a plethora of agencies from many parts of the country offering some kind of services to prisoners) tends to fade quickly unless reinforced by robust agreements with governors and regular visits from mentors or in-reach workers. This also raises questions about how well the Scheme is explained and 'marketed' among those who can provide referrals (including self-referrals). A number of prisoners were said to have 'slipped through the net' due to misunderstandings about the nature of the Scheme: for example, uncertainty among prison staff about the difference between DIP and TSS in terms of the kinds of substance misuse problems each dealt with.

A further 'coverage' issue identified was the very low numbers of minority ethnic offenders referred by prisons (or self-referred) to TSS. This was noted in the interim report in 2000 and, as far as we can tell from Scheme records, there appears to have been no significant increase since. A similar finding emerged from the Probation Resettlement Pathfinders (Lewis et al. 2003), which shows that it is not unique to TSS, but it is a matter of concern which should be explored further.

6.2.3 Record-keeping

A number of weaknesses were found in the Scheme's record-keeping systems and practices, although most may be resolved by the advent of PalBase, which was being introduced at the time of our fieldwork. The most important weakness was the lack of detailed case notes in the Nacro/CAIS TSS. Until recently, mentors did not keep formal records of their meetings with clients beyond noting the length of time spent with them. What were described as 'casefiles' contained for the most part only basic details of the client and the initial assessment. Although it was clear from interviews with the mentors that they had good recall of what they had discussed with their clients and what actions they had agreed to undertake, the lack of case notes (a) made it difficult for the project manager to monitor in any depth what the mentors were doing, (b) would have made it difficult for somebody else to 'pick up' the case if the mentor was ill or indisposed, and (c) would cause problems in the event of anything going seriously wrong. Practice appeared to be improving with the introduction of PalBase (on which case notes can be entered electronically), but it was too early to judge whether this will lead to a fully satisfactory record-keeping system.

More generally, the main computerised records systems in place before the introduction of PalBase did not provide in either area a readily accessible and reliable picture of the activities of the TSS mentors, nor of the outcomes of cases. In the case of Nacro/CAIS, although there had been improvements over time, there was a history of deficiencies in recording practice and statistical returns (also identified in the interim report) which had led on

several occasions to criticism from the project board. It was unclear exactly where the problem lay, but it seems to us most likely to do with the close working relationships of TSS mentors with Nacro and CAIS staff who are assisting offenders under the auspices of other projects, details of which are recorded on the same database: there may be inconsistencies in recording which do not always accurately separate out the two. However, this is speculation on our part: whatever the reason, the system as we found it was still far from transparent, and it was difficult for an outsider to get a clear picture from any of the records held by Nacro/CAIS of the reality of the work of the mentors (which, as far as we can tell from all our other sources of evidence is conscientious and of high quality). In the G4S area, although the paper case records contained a wealth of data about the progress of individual clients (eg in addressing housing, employment or substance misuse problems), this was not held in electronic form and so could not easily be extracted and summarised. The introduction of the SSOM system had allowed some measures of such progress to be made, but this was still in experimental form and contained a considerable amount of missing data, so could not as yet be considered as a robust indicator.

Overall, the researchers concluded that more thought should be given to ways of routinely and consistently measuring the progress of TSS clients, right across the Scheme. We are confident from our analysis of casefiles and interviews with mentors and offenders, that a great deal of effective work is being undertaken, but this was not easy to demonstrate in a clear and reliable fashion from the systems in place at the time of our study (the difference between the two TSS areas being that there was plenty of rich and accurate data in the G4S records, but it was complex and time-consuming to extract, whereas the Nacro/CAIS records appeared to be deficient in terms of both completeness and reliability). At a time when funds are tight, it is vital to be able to demonstrate effectiveness to outsiders in a robust fashion. The introduction of PalBase offers an excellent opportunity to achieve this right across the Scheme, provided that data are entered correctly, consistently and comprehensively, and that the system's analytical capabilities are used to their full potential.

6.2.4 Mentor training, supervision and risk management

The induction and continuing training of mentors was found to be wide-ranging and generally appropriate. The following suggestions were made by interviewees – in each case by only one or two individuals – about how the training might be improved:

- more introductions and visits could be made to other local agencies at an early point in a mentor's employment to help them understand better what services were available and to begin to forge personal relationships with workers;
- more training would be helpful on mental health issues to improve mentors' understanding of client depression, anxiety and mental illnesses such as schizophrenia;

- regular updates should be provided on new policies or practice guidelines;
- more drug awareness courses would be helpful to ensure that they have a good understanding of substance misuse treatment, particularly in relation to substitute prescribing;
- more training in counselling and anger management would be of value;
- Peer Group Advisors could usefully be involved in the motivational training, which would help mentors gain more direct insight into clients' perspectives.
- Where supervision is concerned, mentors generally felt well supported in their role, and despite the long distances between some mentors and the project managers, all were confident that support was accessible when needed.

Finally, the protection of mentors was given high priority by the Scheme managers, and comprehensive risk assessment and management procedures were in place, including additional safety measures where judged necessary, especially in the case of work with PPOs. However, some problems were experienced in obtaining risk information from prisons referring clients, which involved managers and staff in a considerable amount of 'chasing'. Ideally, strategic level agreements might be reached with prisons (perhaps with assistance from NOMS Cymru), whereby such information would be supplied on a routine basis.

6.3 Relationships with, and referrals to, other agencies

It was clear from many sources that TSS has developed excellent working relations with – and earned the trust and respect of - a wide range of agencies, becoming increasingly embedded in local structures. A large number of referrals are made by mentors to these agencies, and in many cases they continue to work in close consultation with the relevant staff about the client's progress. This applies to work with PPO schemes (with which the G4S TSS worked on a frequent basis), as well as with service agencies in fields such as employment and housing. In North Wales, TSS' close links with DAWN – an umbrella organisation overseeing a variety of third sector projects – are particularly valuable in this respect.

In terms of relations with the three key statutory agencies with which TSS has contact – prisons, probation and the DIP – the picture is a little more complex, but on the whole good partnerships have developed over time. As noted earlier, relations with prisons were excellent where Parc and Altcourse were concerned, and very good at times in other establishments, although they had continually to be 'worked at' in order to maintain a reasonable flow of referrals: collaboration with CARAT teams (which varied considerably between prisons) was of particular importance in this respect. Relations with the Probation Service were somewhat 'patchy', as short term offenders over the age of 21 do not receive statutory supervision after release and tend to remain somewhat off the probation 'radar'. However, we found several examples of excellent cooperation between mentors and individual probation officers,

especially in PPO cases and cases involving young prisoners, where information was shared and the mentor helped by driving clients to appointments with probation and others. Where DIPs are concerned, it was said that when these first appeared on the scene there had been some confusion and even rivalry over which prisoners should be referred to each organisation, but this had quickly given away to agreement and cooperation, as it was realised that their services were complementary and that there was a far greater level of need than either could handle alone. There were differences between G4s and Nacro/CAIS in the criteria used to allocate cases between DIP and TSS, but apart from some confusion on this score among some prison staff, the arrangements appeared to work well in both areas. Indeed, in North Wales (at least, until March 2009), both DIP and TSS were delivered by the same service provider and workers from the two schemes shared the same offices, so that effective liaison between them, and with drug services within the prison, was relatively easy to achieve.

Overall, then, there were many examples of excellent partnership working, and good relations between individual mentors and individual staff in other agencies. The main area for improvement identified by interviewees was that of strategic relationships with statutory agencies in particular. This might include more formal agreements– for example, with prisons to agree more robust and sustainable referral procedures – to ensure that effective partnership working does not rely too heavily on cordial relationships between individuals.

6.3.1 Examples of good practice and suggested improvements

In section 4 we drew attention to specific aspects of the work of TSS (some of which had already been discussed in previous sections) that were identified by interviewees and/or the researchers as clear examples of good practice. These were:

- In-reach work
- Provision of gate pick-ups
- 'Assertive outreach'
- Local networking
- Enhancing offender engagement with support services
- Peer group advisors
- The Scheme's focus on alcohol

We also noted that suggestions for improvements had been made in the following areas, all of which will be touched upon in our concluding comments (section 6.4):

- Expanding range and capacity, including more equal opportunities for Welsh prisoners across the prison estate to access TSS services
- Avoiding clients 'slipping through the net'
- Commissioning and contracts
- The development of more strategic approaches to partnership

- Record-keeping

6.4 Outcomes

As noted in section 5, it is very difficult to produce robust findings on the outcomes of the work of TSS, partly due to the current lack of comprehensive and reliable data in the Scheme's records, but more fundamentally because input from TSS is only one component of what may be in some cases a wide variety of interventions by other agencies. Indeed, the role of TSS is by definition 'transitional' – ie its main contribution is to act as a 'bridge' to more significant interventions. It is hardly to be expected that a few weeks of contact with a mentor will in itself 'turn around' the lives of significant numbers of people who have been offending for years and who in many cases have deep-rooted social and personal problems in addition to being damaged by long-standing substance misuse. This is not to say that the TSS contribution is unimportant: on the contrary, support from mentors may be vital in the early post-release period (widely agreed to be a time at which they are particularly vulnerable to slipping back into a criminogenic lifestyle) in sustaining ex-prisoners' fragile motivation to change and to engage seriously with rehabilitative interventions. However, its effect may not be readily visible or fully appreciated until many years later. As has been shown in interview-based studies of older ex-offenders by Maruna (2000), Farrall (2002) and Burnett (2003), desistance from crime is often a very lengthy, 'zigzag' process, characterised by shifts in motivation and frequent lapses, and it may be only with hindsight that the contribution made by any one agency or individual is understood. From this perspective, it may be that the contribution of TSS to the reduction of offending is best understood as a vital link in a long chain. Hence, while it is certainly worth obtaining and analysing reconviction data (a task which has often been avoided by the designers and overseers of much bigger projects than TSS), it is important not to place too much emphasis upon them and to look also for other indicators of impact which reflect the role just described. These may include evidence of sustained motivation, engagement with interventions, progress towards a more stable lifestyle, reduced substance misuse, and so on.

The various forms of 'impact' data we collected were presented in Section 5, and are briefly summarised below.

6.4.1 Continuity of service through the gate

As in the Probation Pathfinders (Lewis et al 2003; Clancy et al. 2006), a measure of 'continuity of service' - defined there as 'face to face contact beyond the first day of release' and here as 'meeting participants two or more times face-to-face post-release' – was used as a basic indicator of whether mentors had succeeded in the first and vital step of engaging offenders sufficiently to persuade them to meet them voluntarily after release (both definitions exclude 'gate pick-ups' as these require only passive assent from the prisoner). Analysis of Scheme records indicate that between 2004 and 2008, the TSS mentors achieved a continuity of service rate of 39 per cent.

This compares very favourably with the Pathfinder findings, where the averages over the first and second phases were 29 and 22 per cent, respectively. When it is remembered that TSS clients are released from several different prisons – in contrast to the Pathfinders, each of which was based on an individual prison – this is clearly an impressive achievement (it is also worth noting that 56% of all clients were seen at least once – in many cases being met at the prison gates).

6.4.2 Quality of engagement post-release

A more subjective measure was designed to attempt to assess the quality of clients' post-release 'engagement' with their mentors. Analysis of a sample of 84 casefiles (supplemented in North Wales by detailed questioning of mentors) indicated that a third of all cases involved sustained engagement, usually characterised by regular meetings and discussions, together with continuing willingness by clients to try to 'work at' their problems. In a further 29 per cent of cases, the quality of engagement was assessed as 'limited or variable'.

6.4.3 'Bridging' to other services: referrals and 'value added'

Scheme records indicate that, on average, G4S mentors referred each of their clients to four other agencies and Nacro/CAIS mentors to just below three. Based on our casefile analysis, we concluded that the majority of such referrals had resulted in some engagement with the agency, and that nearly 40 per cent of TSS clients ended up with a high level of engagement with at least one agency. This suggests that the Scheme is achieving considerable success in its key 'bridging' role post-release, described above. This conclusion is supported by our interview data, which includes several statements from representatives of other agencies about the positive effect of mentors accompanying clients to their first meetings. It is also supported by a finding from the casefile analysis that 13 of the 84 cases examined resulted in some form of 'handover' at the end of the mentoring period to a key worker in another agency – for example, a housing 'floating support' worker, or a support worker in a voluntary sector drugs agency – who was able to take over to some extent the support role supplied by the mentor.

6.4.4 'Distance travelled' - SSOM and case files

Apart from reconviction data, perhaps the best indicators of impact on re-offending are measures of outcomes in areas of 'criminogenic need', such as housing, employment or substance abuse. Unfortunately (although the situation is likely to improve once PalBase is 'bedded in'), the Scheme's computerised records were not particularly helpful in this respect. This was because (a) the systems were not set up to carefully record or to allow the ready extraction of outcome data of this kind and (b) missing data was a common problem (of course, some missing data is inevitable, as, if contact is lost with a client, the mentor may not know what the outcome was, but even

taking this into account the records were generally poor in this area). However, G4S have since January 2008 used the 'SSOM' system (Support Services Outcome Measure) to measure 'distance travelled' by clients in addressing such problems and needs, comparing their scores at the beginning and end of their TSS involvement. As noted in section 5.4 above, the instrument is still in development and has some weaknesses, so the results must be treated with caution. Nevertheless, it indicates that significant numbers of clients have made progress in terms of improvements in housing, in making new links with specialist drug and alcohol agencies, and in meeting training and employment needs - notably an increase from 3 per cent to 23 per cent in the proportion linked with agencies such as Progress to Work. Our analysis of a sample of 84 casefiles provides some support for these findings: this found evidence of progress in meeting accommodation needs in 29 per cent of cases, education/training/employment needs in 27 per cent, and substance misuse needs in 15 per cent (the last figure, however, being considerably lower than suggested by the SSOM).

6.4.5 Re-Offending

As described in section 5.5, we undertook a small and necessarily fairly crude reconviction study, based on data from the G4S TSS about male adult offenders who joined the Scheme and left prison in 2004-6, comparing their reconviction rates (as recorded on the Police National Computer) with those of a sample of similar offenders who were in HMP Parc over the same period but did not join the scheme. We also calculated predicted reconviction rates for both groups and various sub-groups, using the OGRS3 instrument. The results do not suggest that TSS participation *per se* is associated with a reduction in reconviction rates, but we did find a difference between the reconviction rates of offenders who met up with their mentors after release (and especially those who met face-to-face between 2 and 6 times) and those who did not. There were no major differences between the *predicted* offending rates of these groups, but while 83% of those who did not see their mentor post-release were reconvicted, this was true of only 71% of those who saw him or her 2-6 times. There was also some indication that the Scheme may achieve better results with older prisoners than younger ones.

6.4.6 Other qualitative evidence

Finally, the research found a considerable amount of other qualitative evidence about the importance and quality of the service provided by TSS. In particular, it was widely recognised that TSS fills a serious gap in existing services, and that the Scheme's full value would become readily apparent if it were to disappear. It was variously stated that if TSS ceased to exist, a vital 'safety net' for ex-prisoners would be removed (particularly for those with alcohol problems or problems with misuse of class B or C drugs), a greater strain would be placed on other agencies, and that a scarce and high quality source of emotional and motivational support for offenders would be lost.

6.5 Concluding comments: questions for the future

We conclude this report with some thoughts, comments and questions relating to the future development of TSS, arising either out of our own observations of its practices or out of suggestions made by interviewees about ways in which the service might be improved. Some of these raise fundamental questions about the aims of the Scheme, while others concern practice issues.

6.5.1 Referrals and coverage: how thinly should the jam be spread?

Despite the success of TSS in meeting its 2008 referrals targets, the total number of participants was made up predominantly of offenders from two prisons – Parc and Altcourse. This raises questions about fairness and equality of opportunity among Welsh prisoners in accessing mentoring services.

This issue requires some strategic guidance from the Board. If it is decided that more effort should be made to widen access, some concrete arrangements need to be put in place to bring this about – simply distributing leaflets or making sporadic visits to exhort staff to make more referrals have proved to be only temporarily effective. It is clear that the most effective way of increasing referrals from a specific establishment is to ensure that a TSS staff member visits the prison on a regular and routine basis and that these visits are tied in as closely as possible with prison routines such as induction processes or resettlement fayres. This helps to embed TSS in the minds of prison staff and facilitates regular transmission of information about it to eligible prisoners. The extreme, of course, is the appointment of a specialised in-reach worker, as in Altcourse, where it appears to have had a significant impact on the number of referrals from that establishment. However, as noted in the report, the employment of this worker means that a quarter of the Nacro/CAIS mentoring budget is spent on boosting referrals from one prison. If it is felt that Welsh inmates of other prisons should benefit in a similar way, the most obvious strategy would be for this post to include the provision of regular in-reach work on a part-time basis in two or three other establishments in addition to Altcourse (these could even include establishments which hold prisoners returning to Mid or South as well as North Wales, if closer cooperation and appropriate financial agreements were developed between the two 'branches' of the Scheme). An alternative approach might be to make formal arrangements for each mentor to visit a particular prison on a routine (eg fortnightly) basis specifically to work alongside staff to recruit new participants: this has worked well in Styal, where one of the Nacro mentors visits every three weeks and takes part regularly in induction processes. Such arrangements might be accompanied by annual referral targets agreed with individual prisons.

Of course, the downside of this kind of approach is that it would require more work and more travelling than at present in order to recruit similar numbers of participants. This is part of a more general dilemma that faces organisations

like TSS, which have many more potential clients than they have the capacity to assist: how thinly should they spread the 'jam'? Should they simply accept those who are most conveniently located (and clustered most densely) and use their resources predominantly on mentoring this group? Or should they attempt to reach a much wider and more dispersed population and expend more effort and resources on making the recruitment process more equitable?

Another aspect of this same dilemma concerns the length and intensity of work that mentors undertake with individual clients. Although the differences were neither clear-cut nor dramatic, the researchers noted that G4S and Nacro/CAIS tended to adopt somewhat different strategies in this regard. G4S mentors tended to work in a manner that offered roughly equal amounts of attention to each client, most commonly through arranging weekly meetings and (unless there were exceptional circumstances) closing cases down after a period of three months. By contrast, Nacro mentors tended to be more 'needs led' (a phrase heard quite frequently), and there seemed to be more variation between cases in the amounts of time devoted to them. Some clients were seen very frequently and some cases were not closed for several months. In addition, while the G4S mentors tended to 'chase' clients if they failed to keep appointments (often through procedures that had become almost standard, telephone calls being followed by three letters and a cold visit before the client was deemed not to be willing to engage) the Nacro mentors were less likely to do this, concentrating their efforts heavily on those who were strongly engaging.

In very general terms, it might be argued that the culture and practices adopted by the Nacro/CAIS team are (not surprisingly) fairly typical of those found in the voluntary sector, while those adopted by G4S fall closer to those of the statutory sector. For example, the Nacro workers seemed to be less concerned about reaching large numbers of potential clients or about maintaining careful records of every case, but more willing to go outside the guidelines, happier to work more intensively with fewer individuals, and so on. Indeed, one interviewee argued that it was illogical in a 'needs led' system to restrict assistance to a maximum of three months. By contrast, the G4S team, which (perhaps reflecting the criminal justice background of most of its managers) seemed to focus more consciously on issues around re-offending and on the scale of the need for resettlement services, placed more emphasis on 'spreading the net' and encouraging access to TSS services as widely as practicable – even though this might mean 'rationing' the amount of attention that can be paid to any one individual. We repeat that this is a very broad characterisation of what are different positions along a continuum rather than fundamentally different approaches, but feel that there is some truth in it. We also emphasise that we do not consider either approach intrinsically 'better' than the other. However, if – as we have concluded – TSS represents a highly valuable and effective resource for ex-prisoners, it is important to consider strategic questions about the balance between widening access and offering intensive enough support to sustain offenders' motivation to change.

6.5.2 Expanding or 'mainstreaming' TSS?

In addition to reaching more of the current core target group – short-term prisoners with substance misuse problems - some interviewees argued that there was a need to expand TSS services to other categories of offender, principally those on remand or on community sentences. It was also pointed out that many clients would benefit from more structured activities to keep them occupied in the community until they managed to get a job, and that provision of such activities could be a long term goal of the Scheme. Of course, increasing the capacity of the Scheme in any of the above ways depends on a significant increase in funding to hire more mentors and/or in-reach workers and perhaps to open more local offices. For this to occur (unlikely as it may appear in the present financial climate, though it may be a feasible development in the future), the status of TSS would have to change from that of a relatively small 'project' to something closer to a mainstream service, and consideration would have to be given to how its activities would fit strategically with a number of other major agencies such as the probation service and the DIP. This might also entail joint commissioning of TSS services with those of other agencies, most obviously the DIP.

Most of the interviewees with whom we explored such issues were somewhat wary of moves in this direction. While keen to get TSS on a more secure financial footing and to expand its operations, they feared that the Scheme might lose its unique character and be 'swamped' by larger organisations with different agendas and priorities. The general view seemed to be that any expansion of TSS should be taken slowly, the first priority being to consolidate present funding and to extend contracts for longer periods than the present three years, avoiding the problems of insecurity and potential loss of staff as the end of each contract period approaches – ideally accompanied by some extra funding to increase the numbers of mentors and to expand in-reach work. It was also seen as important as a preliminary step to begin to build more strategic approaches to partnerships with other agencies, with collaborative arrangements backed up by protocols and formal agreements rather than relying too heavily on individual relationships. These might also include more systematic coordination of activities and pooling of resources: for example, one suggestion was that gate pick-ups could be coordinated across TSS, DIP, the probation service and substance misuse services, perhaps sharing a mini-bus.

In the longer term, of course, thought needs to be given to the most appropriate funding sources for TSS, and in particular to an appropriate division of responsibility between WAG and NOMS, to both of whose agendas TSS already makes a valuable contribution.

6.5.3 The philosophy, aims and practice of mentoring

Most of the national and international research evidence about mentoring has focused on its use with young people, predominantly in educational settings, and there is as yet relatively little evidence about its impact on adults or in a

criminal justice context[21]. In a rapid evidence review, Joliffe and Farrington (2007a) found only two relevant studies in the UK - though, as they later conceded, they missed Clancy et al. 2006, which is arguably the most comprehensive British study of mentoring of adult short-term prisoners. From their examination of 18, mainly American, studies, they concluded that 'Mentoring is a promising but not proven intervention': overall, the results suggested that it reduced re-offending by between 4 and 11 per cent, but more rigorous and larger scale research was needed before firmer statements could be made. The same authors have further noted that mentoring is aimed at both reducing re-offending and 'increasing positive life outcomes' (Joliffe and Farrington 2007b), which suggests – as we have argued above - that short-term reconviction rates should not be the sole outcome by which its impact is judged.

This raises broader questions about the philosophy, aims and practice of mentoring and its potential contribution to the criminal justice system in England and Wales. Although it has often been mentioned in strategic documents as an activity that holds out promise for the future (indeed, 'Volunteers, Mentors and Governance' was one of the five 'key areas' identified in the NOMS Communities and Civil Renewal Strategy, Together We Can Reduce Offending, in 2005), as yet its use has been restricted mainly to small and short-lived projects attached to individual prisons, few of which have been evaluated. These have varied in philosophies and styles of working, using either paid or unpaid mentors, outreach or office-based meetings, short or long periods of support, focusing to different degrees on practical assistance, motivation or befriending, 'matching' offenders with mentors or not, having close or only distant links with criminal justice agencies, and so on[22]. A further related development is 'Circles of Support', used mainly with sex offenders, whereby a group of volunteers forms a proxy circle of acquaintances to offer some form of community interaction and support to – as well as to monitor the behaviour of – offenders who are socially isolated (Kemshall 2008).

If mentoring is eventually to find a more secure place in the armoury of interventions for offenders, not only will more research be required to demonstrate its effectiveness, but – given the diversity of aims, practices, and levels and types of training found in these various projects - more thought will need to be given both to basic theories behind mentoring and to practical

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[21] The most comprehensive British study of mentoring of juvenile offenders is that by Tarling *et al* (2004) of the Youth Justice Board's experimental mentoring projects under the Crime Reduction Programme.

[22] Varying examples include CARD (Closing A Revolving Door), which uses volunteer mentors 'matched' individually to short-termers in HMP Exeter, to whom they offer through the gate support (http://www.eci.org.uk/card/card_purpose.htm); the Connect project, a region-wide ESF funded partnership set up in 2004 between four Probation Boards and the West Midlands Region Prison Service, which used locally resident volunteer mentors to support and maintain the motivation of ex-prisoners as part of efforts to improve their employability and 'housability' (ie their attractiveness to both employers and landlords); and a small pilot project in Hartlepool offering mentoring to offenders on community sentences (Booth 2005).

questions about how it is best organized and delivered. At present it is relatively rare for mentoring schemes to articulate or implement a clear 'model of change': in other words, to provide an explicit model of how and why change (of whatever kind) is likely to be brought about, and to reflect this in guidance to their workers (this point is also underlined by Newburn and Shiner (2006) in the context of the mentoring of young offenders). This impacts on practical questions, such as the extent to which work should be directed at discussing offending behaviour with clients as opposed to simply providing 'welfare'; or what kind of balance should be sought between 'nurse-maiding' clients and 'helping them to help themselves'. The need for more clarity on such issues may afford an opportunity for TSS – as one of the largest and longest established organisations involved in the mentoring of adult offenders – to share its knowledge and experience more widely and hence to play a more active role in helping to define good practice and develop the field. It was evident from our discussions with both managers and mentors that they had developed their own implicit, if not explicit, models of change as much through experience as through theorizing. All the following comments contain assumptions about how and why mentoring should 'work' – and in some cases, why it has the potential to work better than other kinds of interventions (such as those by 'support workers'). Common themes that infuse them are those of normalization, empowerment, motivation and the building of personal relationships which inspire sufficient trust for offenders to confide in the mentor. A more systematic articulation of these aims would be a major contribution to the future of mentoring in the resettlement of prisoners.

[It's about]… getting people back in to living a normal life. Motivation again is a big part of TSS. And it's just being there for somebody. It's that missing link from prison, into this big scary world, because that's what it is to them. Prison is the safety net to them, and walking out of those gates knowing that you've got a mentor there, to take you to your housing, to get you to your B&B, to get you to your benefits, to get you into your agencies, and then meeting up and having a cup of coffee and a giggle and a laugh, having that normal person to talk to. I think that's a big part of TSS.

[TSS manager]

It's being there for somebody. It's not telling somebody what to do, but it's given them direction. It's being able to motivate them in the direction that they can go. It might not be a specific one, but there's choices that they have got. If one doesn't work, then fine, go back to the drawing board, we start again. … Helping them help themselves, I guess - achieve things that they want but they don't think they can. Showing them that, actually, it is possible. It's difficult. I don't patronise anybody. I will say it is difficult … you're asking somebody to change their whole life - and that's their behaviour, their way of thinking, everything. [Mentor 3]

I suppose the main thing is that I found when I was a support worker, you basically just did a task and that was it, whereas a mentor, you can come in, have a coffee, look and chat to people, get to know them.

*Find out what motivates them and just, if they do have a bad day …
But that is.... there is the huge difference with the mentoring, you do
get that freedom to talk and chat with people about their problems and
what issues they might have, that might not be directly related to
benefit issues.... training issues, it might be something personal which
at least, although you're not the expert, you can at least listen and be
an ear.*   [Mentor 2]

*Reduce re-offending but keeping it real. Because reducing re-
offending is ... a big, big aim. So reduce re-offending but considering
factors that go with that. [For example] making better communities,
safer communities and reducing drug related incidents and deaths by
trying to keep people well. … It doesn't work for everybody first time
and I think that's difficult as much for the provider as for the
commissioner, as for the person that's got back involved in crime. But
it's about chipping away.*

[TSS manager]

*It's empowering people to do things for themselves, and I explain that
from day one. 'I haven't got any shining armour, I'm not gonna polish it
up and say I've come to save your life. I'm gonna help you and walk
with you for you to save your own life. I'm not telling you what to do, I'll
advise you and whether you take it up is entirely up to you'. It's all
about people coming out of there and growing up.*

[Mentor 6]

*They're empowered to think, and are enabled by the service that we
provide, to start making some better decisions. And it won't work every
time but even one better decision is better than what maybe it used to
be before.*   [TSS manager]

We end with two comments from mentors, which seem to encapsulate much
about the reality of their work. The first serves as a useful reminder of the
scale of the challenge and the importance of avoiding the creation of
excessive expectations of what can be achieved in the short term:

*Because you're not [just] asking somebody to stop taking drugs and
stop drinking. You're asking somebody to change their lives
completely. That is a big order to ask of anybody. I mean you're asking
them to change their friends - and sometimes their family, change their
behaviour, change the way they think, change the way they act. And
it's hard, it takes a lot of courage for somebody to come out of that jail
and change their life. It does take courage.*

The second reflects the amount of effort that is often required from mentors to
help offenders take what may be only one step in a long path towards
desistance from crime, yet at the same time the difference this can make to
the client and the rewarding nature of the work for the mentor:

I went to Housing yesterday at half past nine and half past one I was finished in the Housing. But if I wasn't sitting with the person they wouldn't be there because you're talking about somebody who's just come out of jail and the first thing they want to do is drink and take drugs, they ain't gonna stay there. So again, it's the motivation to keeping somebody sat still. And sometimes they can go on all day, all day sitting in one place, you know. But you're securing somebody accommodation at the end of it and that's the rewarding thing about it. You know when you go home to your bed they've actually got a bed. They haven't got a doorway.

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APPENDIX A.   TABLE 1

Nature of principal offence committed by clients referred to Nacro
Cymru/CAIS TSS, January to October, 2008

Main offence type	%
Assault/ABH/GBH/wounding	20%
Breach of order/probation/ licence	17%
Burglary	9%
Car theft	2%
Criminal damage	3%
Driving offence	6%
Drugs offence	6%
Fraud	0%
Handling stolen goods	1%
Other	2%
Public order	6%
Sexual offence	1%
Theft	16%
Threatening behaviour	1%
Weapons offence	4%
Not recorded	5%
Total N	233

Note: Column may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

APPENDIX B.   CASE STUDIES

Case Study of Mark

Mark, a man in his early forties, was serving a second custodial sentence for drink-driving when he joined the North Wales Transitional Support Scheme (TSS). With his alcohol misuse resulting in two custodial sentences "within the space of two months", and Mark feeling that his life could not go "any lower", he decided that he needed to do something to address his alcohol use. After seeing a flyer for TSS on a notice board, Mark asked a wing officer if he could enquire about the Scheme on Mark's behalf. Later the same day, the Scheme's in-reach prison worker came to see Mark on the wing and explained the Scheme to him. Although Mark's initial meeting with the in-reach worker gave him a general awareness of what the Scheme could offer, he was "surprised" by both the level and nature of the support that he subsequently went on to receive prior to his release: "They've done a lot more than I expected to be honest". Firstly, the in-reach worker used the COMMIT software package to assist Mark in addressing his alcohol misuse: "He went through the pros and cons of drinking with me, and that was a big surprise to me because I didn't realise how bad I was before I came in here. It was quite an eye-opener". Secondly, the mentor met with Mark on two separate occasions. As he recalled: "I told her what I needed, what I wanted, and she told me the ways and means of going about it. ... Considering she's a stranger, I felt comfortable talking to her ... and she seemed to like to listen".

Prior to his release the mentor arranged for Mark to see: his doctor on the day after his release for 'anti-abuse' tablets to help him to address his alcohol misuse; the Community Alcohol Support Team on the same day; and the mentor herself on the following day. As Mark recalled: "She's coming out to the house, which has never happened before with CAIS". Furthermore, due to Mark's lack of transport (as a result of his offences he lost his driving licence for four years), the mentor also said she would, if needed, pick him up and take him to any necessary appointments - again something that was "a surprise" for Mark "because that's never been done before". Mark found having this tailored package of support in place ready for his release a "relief". As he commented: "I don't think there's anything more they [the Scheme] can do to be honest. ... I know before I get out that the appointments are there [already in place]. ... I know I haven't got to wait when I get out for help. I know it's waiting for me".

In the months following his release, Mark had not drunk at all: "Not a drop" he claimed. The primary reason for this was that his doctor had prescribed him anti-abuse tablets. As Mark noted: "They've changed my life. ... I just can't drink with them. I don't want to drink. They just take everything [the craving] out of it". As a direct result of no longer drinking, Mark claimed: "I just feel like a new person. ... I never thought anything would work to be honest ... but these [tablets] have changed everything. My daughter's a lot closer to me, my wife's a lot closer to me, ... [and] my brother is a lot closer than we ever have been". When questioned about whether or not he would have approached his doctor without his mentor's assistance, Mark replied: "I wouldn't have got the anti-abuse because I wasn't aware of it until the mentor mentioned it". And even if Mark had been aware of the tablets, he claimed he "wouldn't have known who to turn to" to get them. Furthermore, when he did go to his doctor for them, Mark claimed that it took "the mentor's intervention" on his behalf for his doctor "to say yes" to prescribing them. When asked if his mentor had done all the things that Mark had wanted her to do when he was in custody, he replied: "Of course. ... I can't thank her enough". Since his release, Mark and his mentor speak

regularly on the phone. As he noted: "We won't go past a fortnight before speaking or ... she'll just drop in". The fact that Mark is able to contact the mentor by phone whenever he feels he may need to is of great comfort to him. As he reasoned: "She's in both of my mobile phones. ... If I feel down ... she's there just, you know, for someone to talk to, ... [and] it's just the knowledge that ... there is someone there".

Case Study of Paul

Paul, a young man in his mid twenties, was serving a custodial sentence for burglary when he joined the North Wales Transitional Support Scheme (TSS). Paul found out about the Scheme from a wing officer, who then passed his details on to the in-reach worker. As Paul recalled: "they dealt with it quite quickly, ... so I was quite pleased with that. ... I came over ... to see [the in-reach worker] and [the mentor] in the resettlement unit ... [and] they said they were there to help me with any issues I had". When asked why he chose to join the Scheme, Paul stated: "I've been in prison numerous times and not had any help. ... I think I've never accepted any help before, not being wanting to change, [but] now I am. ... And basically this time the help's been offered [to] me, so I took it". Prior to his release, Paul met the mentor twice. As Paul noted: "The mentor's been very helpful. ... He's basically informed me about the local housing situation within my area, ... other services ... that I can use, like CAIS and the drug intervention programme, ... and he said that we'll be able to meet up on a regular basis to see how ... things are going". In addition, whilst in custody, the in-reach worker used the COMMIT software package to assist Paul in addressing his alcohol misuse - "Thanks to [the in-reach worker], I'm made aware of ... the levels of drinking I do. ... It's a shock to my system to think how [much] I'm drinking".

Prior to his release, Paul planned to see the mentor on the day of his release: "I'm going to meet up with him because he's going to come into the housing with me to make sure that I haven't got any issues with the housing officers there as regards ... [my] emergency accommodation". When asked about having accommodation in place for his release, Paul commented: "that's going to be very, very good. ... At least I've got somewhere that I can call home ... instead of like I used to live rough on the streets or in an overcrowded premises with mates and that". In terms of any other difficulties he might face upon release, Paul claimed: "I don't think I'm going to have any problems as long as I basically keep in contact with [the mentor]".

On the day of his release, the mentor picked-up Paul from the gate to take him home, something which Paul found "very helpful". As he explained: "[Prior to release] I thought ... what's going to happen to me? Am I going to get into trouble before I even hit the train station?". Unfortunately, within a few days of his release, Paul was evicted from the hostel he had been placed in because the hostel did not allow drug or alcohol use on the premises. As he recalled: "it was just the peer pressure, being around people again, being back outside. ... It was like I'd go and have one drink, and then the one drink led into twelve drinks and ... I got kicked out". Although this incident left Paul feeling "how have I let myself get back to this again?", the mentor arranged a placement in a second hostel. As Paul recalled: "[The mentor] kind of picked me up and said ... 'life's not over just yet', and kind of threw me another lifeline". Since then, Paul has successfully maintained his placement for over two months. As Paul noted: "Because at the hostel ... I'm not allowed to drink, ... that's helped me ... with me drink. ... I feel ... a lot healthier than ... when I was in prison". Although the mentor is continuing to help Paul address both his accommodation, and his training and employment needs, when asked to pinpoint what the most helpful thing the mentor had done for him, Paul replied: "Putting me in this ... accommodation where there's support available to help me ... with regards to like me drinking".

In the months since his release, Paul has continued to see the mentor "two to three times" a week for face-to-face meetings. In addition, as Paul described: "sometimes [the mentor] will [also] phone me to make sure I'm alright and that, keeping well and keeping out of trouble in the hostel". When asked to comment on his relationship with the mentor, Paul replied: "He just talks to me.... been nice to me and that. He's not judged me or anything. ... And now I've worked alongside him, he's been a really great help to me. ... He's helped me out of a lot of trouble. ... I think I'd be lost without him".

Case study of Sally

Sally was first introduced to TSS following her release from HMP Eastwood Park. Her mentor was visiting another participant when they met Sally. After explaining the details of the Scheme, Sally decided that she would like the support of a mentor.

She had been sentenced to a 12 month Drug Rehabilitation Requirement and a 24 month supervision order for supplying Class A drugs, intent to supply and possession of heroin/crack cocaine. Sally says that she was funding her own habit by not paying rent, utility bills etc., often spending up to £80 per day.

A contributory factor to Sally's drug taking was the bullying she endured while she was at school. She felt that the only people to accept her were drug addicts and she felt that this helped her to deal with the bullying. Nevertheless, Sally says that even during the most difficult periods in her life, her family remained supportive. Sally's 3-year-old son was looked after by her partner while she was in prison and during the involvement of Social Services, he was never taken into care.

When Sally became a TSS participant, she particularly needed help with organising the payment of her debts and motivation to keep attending her appointments including her appointments with DRR including the dispensation of methadone. Sally is delighted that she is now paying off her debts and has her own flat and a car. She hopes to look for a job when her son goes into full-time school next year and aspires to a job as a counsellor or similar role and she says that there is a position at DRR, which she hopes to be considered for.

Sally describes TSS as a wholly positive experience and wouldn't change anything about the Scheme – although she would have liked to have heard about TSS while she was in prison, perhaps during her Induction period. She feels that she has been able to be completely honest and has never had to hold back. She has since written to a number of friends who are currently in prison advising them to get in touch with TSS.

Sally said, "keep up the good work and thanks for the support I have received. I am thrilled to be part of the Peer Group Advisors team because the meetings give me something to look forward to and the opportunity to use my experiences to try to help other people".

Case study of Barry

Barry was first introduced to TSS when he attended the monthly Resettlement Fair at HMP & YOI Parc, approximately one month before he was due to be released. His mentor, N--, explained the service offered by TSS and arranged to meet up following Barry's release.

Barry did not know what to expect from TSS but quickly realised that he needed help to address his housing issues as well as his alcohol and drug problems. Barry has been in prison on three occasions for violent offences following binge-drinking sessions. One of these incidents occurred while Barry was in town with a few friends. He assaulted a boy and a girl for no apparent reason.

Barry explained that after being released from prison following a long sentence, he began drinking again and was drinking almost every day because he 'didn't have anything else to do'. He said that as well as drinking heavily, he went through stages of taking drugs. This also caused problems at home, particularly when he used to come home and just 'collapse'.

On their first meeting, N-- felt it important that she and Barry try to secure some accommodation to give him some independence. She helped him complete a referral to a housing agency for their project in Barry and this application was successful. N-- also suggested that Barry should try to enrol in a college course and he is now successfully engaging in a plumbing course and doing GCSEs in Maths and English. The plumbing course means that Barry will be a qualified plumber within two years and he will then look for work with a view to setting up his own business after gaining some experience.

Barry is an avid rugby and football player. After recovering from a recent operation on his arm, he hopes to return to training with a view to playing rugby for a semi-professional team.

Barry said that TSS was a very positive experience for him because of the reliability of the people involved.