

PROBATION CHIEFS
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RESEARCH

PCA Research and Analysis Review

Kate Stephens

January 2012

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Contact: pcaadmin@probationchiefs.org
www.probationchiefs.org

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Acknowledgements

PCA would like to express its thanks and appreciation to the West Yorkshire Probation Trust Research Team which facilitated this research and to Rochelle Gold who was involved in overseeing it.

PCA would also like to acknowledge the financial support from Probation Trusts for this work.

PCA Research and Analysis Review

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I. INTRODUCTION

Scope and limitations of the review

This review significantly updates to the end of 2011 the review of statistics and research first prepared for the PCA in May 2010. It therefore takes account of developments since the start of the coalition government. Broadly similar headings are covered, although now including sections on 'Payment by Results' and some of the outputs of the Offender Engagement Programme. The coverage of re-offending has been completely re-written because of fundamental changes to the data reports. This also applies to parts of the section on sentencing.

This review should not be seen as a comprehensive treatment of 'what works'. The largest number of additions and changes has followed from changes in statistical series, rather than effectiveness research. There are some gaps: the review does not cover, for example, statistics and research on specific groups of offenders (e.g. women), or the full range of types of intervention. Nor does it comprehensively cover all aspects of the effectiveness evidence review presented for *Breaking the Cycle*. A particular gap is prevention and early intervention. However, with the change towards a more practitioner-led model of development, the expectation of a single comprehensive summary of research and analysis should be reduced.

This report is footnoted with web links to full reports or abstracts. Similarly to the 2010 document, each section is presented under the headings of: Key Sources; Key Points; and In the Pipeline. It is intended as a resource to be easily mined for further information and research, as well as verification of the information and ideas it contains. References have now been consolidated in a single list at the end. Page footnotes have been retained in order to more easily support data-mining and verification.

The report is accompanied by a spreadsheet of sources, including many consulted but not specifically referenced in this report. These are colour-coded and labelled in an attempt to distinguish between: statistics and research or analysis; trendable series and one-off reports; and reports which have been peer-reviewed or independently quality-assured in some way and those which have not. These distinctions are not always easy to make accurately, and the codings should not be taken as totally clear-cut. Additionally, some websites have also now been included.

The review has been conducted almost entirely through freely available internet sources, either in full text or abstract form. This provides good coverage of published material, including government reports. However, it does not provide complete coverage of all research and analysis conducted within Probation Trusts, or other organisations involved in rehabilitation delivery. While NOMS OEP newsletters sometimes give a window on this world, typically they are lacking in key citation information. Access to this 'grey' literature may become more difficult in the world of Payment by Results.

Overview of sections II to VI

The most recent Home Office data on **crime trends** show a recent flattening of the over falling trend since the mid 1990s. Despite some recent increases for specific crimes, there is – up to the time of writing – insufficient data to conclude that trends have now started to increase. Speculations about rising crime in a recession have not so far been substantiated by the best available data, which always lags somewhat behind events. Reports due in January 2012¹ will be the first to include the period of the August 2011 riots.

The reviews of national crime statistics which have taken place under both Labour and Coalition governments – while not bringing the reliability and professionalism of national crime data into question - have pointed to the need for better presentation and transparency. In order to improve trust in impartiality, the production of crime data is to be moved away from the Home Office and located in the Office for National Statistics. There have also been moves towards increasing public access to local data. Local crime websites now use police data to enable public access to statistics at local levels, including constituencies, police forces and streets. Perceptions of crime vary from actual historical trends, and continue to be influenced by the media, despite this increasing local access to information.

Alongside falling crime rates, the prison population is still growing. Since 2008, up to the riots of August 2011, there was a slowing down of this growth. The summer disorder contributed to a 2% growth from the previous year to a total of 87,501 in September. On 2011 projections, it is uncertain whether the overall population will fall or continue to grow over the next 5 years. The most recent *Offender Management Statistics* confirms the overall decline of use of Community Orders and a recent decline in use of Suspended Sentence Orders, following steep increases since their introduction in 2005. The overall rise in the probation caseload was driven by SSOs and pre and post custody supervision. Strengthening of Community Orders appears not to have worked as a means of reducing the size of the prison population.

Recent data on the **impact of sentencing on reducing re-offending** provide a mixed picture. The ineffectiveness of militaristic regimes, organised prison visits intended to deter, and short prison sentences (particularly without rehabilitative interventions) remains well-supported. However, the 2011 MOJ *Compendium* of statistics makes a range of further comparisons which are less favourable to community supervision (including comparison with longer prison sentences, fines and conditional discharges). This data should be interpreted carefully. Such comparisons are always hampered by the difficulty of making true like-for-like comparisons. International comparisons do not support the view that increased imprisonment has been a cause of overall crime reduction.

Restorative justice and reparation for crime have become key elements of government policy. While the underlying evidence base does not appear to have substantially changed since the last review, recent analysis and interpretation of data - cited in the MOJ evidence review for *Breaking the Cycle* – appears to be now more positive.

¹ This report is now available. It does not suggest a change from the previous flat trend in overall crime

Prison remains the most costly sentencing option. Moves in the direction of **cost-benefit analysis** for interventions have been made by WSIPP in the US, and Matrix in Britain. However, economic tools for assessing costs and benefits of different modes of intervention are still not fully developed. The Home Office has launched a tool for local value for money assessment to support Integrated Offender Management projects. The international evidence base for appropriately targeted **cognitive-behavioural interventions** remains strong and new analysis of UK reconviction data supports their use.

Since the last review, there have been major changes to the way **re-offending statistics** are calculated and presented. The six previous measures have been combined into a measure of proven reoffending. This includes both juveniles and adults, and cohorts are followed for 12 months plus 6 months for processing. Adjustments have been made to allow for changes in cohort composition, making geographical and other comparisons more feasible. The changes mean that the overall rates appear lower than previously, but the underlying pattern remains the same, showing a continuing overall falling trend.

Age patterns continue to show that reoffending peaks in the early to mid teens then falls. Recent falls in overall reoffending have been most marked for younger age groups (up to 29), while the most recent 12 months saw a rise for older offenders. Data on prolific offenders (more than 25 previous offences) show that the concentration of offending in this group is much more marked for adults (accounting for two thirds of offences) than juveniles (accounting for just under one fifth of offences). Well-known comparisons in reoffending between burglars (highest) and sex offenders against children (lowest) still hold. The prisoner-based cohort study presented in the *2010 Compendium* shows relationships between reoffending and patterns of needs, including problems in early life, family and schooling and drugs and alcohol use.

The new statistics allow side-by-side presentation of reoffending data by type of sentence, but caveats for effectiveness comparisons remain. More in depth analysis is presented in Ministry of Justice *Compendiums* for 2010 and 2011, but warnings of the limitations of data matching and current administrative data are still included. From these comparisons, community supervision seems to be more effective than less than 12 month prison sentences. The other comparisons presented do not show advantages of Community Orders over other sentences. *Early estimates of proven reoffending* (using short follow up of 3 months plus 3 months processing) are now used for management information, presented by Probation Trust, Prolific Offender schemes, Drug Action Teams and Young Offender Teams.

The limitations of current proven reoffending statistics to measure **Payment by Results** are noted in the UK Statistics Authority statement of compliance of the new statistics. Various PbR schemes are now underway. Early evaluation lessons indicate problems of: attributing causes of effectiveness (particularly in a multi-agency environment); cherry-picking; establishing sensible comparisons once there is national roll out; and the means by which any savings might translate into less use of custody. The government response to the Justice Committee report on the role of the Probation service, locates responsibility for resolving outcome measurement issues with the wider research community, rather than solely MOJ.

The government's *Green Paper Evidence for Breaking the Cycle*, cites **desistance** as one of four elements of evidence supporting its rehabilitation policy. This review does not add substantial new research findings to the 2010 version. However, new compilations of evidence, supporting the integration of research into practice, have become available through the **NOMS Offender Engagement Programme** (OEP). The writings of McNeill and others, which have been a focus for the OEP, provide some underlying principles for practice development, but do not provide cut-and-dried prescriptions for practice.

NOMS at times presents the OEP as a hypothesis-testing piece of research, capable of providing 'proof' of the effectiveness of offender engagement. Although external research, which may deliver useful findings including reconviction analyses, has been commissioned by NOMS, the OEP should not - in itself - be seen as a research programme. It is probably better seen as (in part) a professional development initiative aimed at changing the manner in which research-informed thinking is integrated into front-line practice.

II. CRIME TRENDS

Key sources

1) UK National Statistics²

- **ANNUAL CRIME REPORT** – The Home Office Statistical Bulletin *Crime in England and Wales* is published annually around the middle of the calendar year, reporting on findings from a previous 12 month period spanning 2 calendar years. These reports combine findings from the British Crime Survey (BCS), an annual representative household survey of experiences and perceptions of crime, and police recorded crime³.
- **QUARTERLY UPDATES - Crime in England Wales: Quarterly Updates** provide data on rolling 12 month periods. They are usually published 3 times each year, around 3 months after the end of the 12 month period on which they report.
- **SUPPLEMENTARY VOLUMES** - Three supplementary volumes are usually published each year, treating specific subjects in depth.
- **User Guide to Home Office Crime Statistics** (Home Office, 2011)⁴ – This volume was most recently updated in October 2011, and provides detailed information on how the data are collected and analysed.

2) Review of Crime Statistics

- **National Statistician's Review of Crime Statistics** (Matheson, 2011)⁵
- **Overcoming Barriers to Trust in Crime Statistics: England and Wales** (UK Statistics Authority, 2010)⁶

3) International Comparison

- **Eurostat**⁷ provides crime statistics for the European Commission.

² The label 'National Statistics' includes only those statistics which are assessed as compliant with the UK Statistics Authority code of practice <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html>. This was established by act of parliament in 2007, following reviews of the coverage, reliability and usability of government statistics, by the Statistics Commission http://www.statscom.org.uk/uploads/files/reports/Crime_Statistics_Review-final.pdf and a cross party committee set up by Home Secretary Charles Clarke in 2005.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs06/crime-statistics-independent-review-06.pdf>

³ The BCS and police data each have their strengths and weaknesses. The BCS is a large representative sample household survey of people aged 16 and over. It asks about experiences and perceptions and can provide trend data over time as it is not affected by changes in ways of recording data. It **does not include** the homeless or people living communally or in institutions. Police recorded crime is based on figures provided to the Home Office by the police. It covers only reported and recorded crime, which is only a proportion of actual crime. It can provide trend data for well-reported and the most serious crimes and can be broken down into geographic area, but is affected by changes in data recording practices.

⁴ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/user-guide-crime-statistics/>

⁵ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/ns-reports--reviews-and-guidance/national-statistician-s-reviews/national-statistician-s-review-of-crime-statistics.html>

⁶ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/ns-reports--reviews-and-guidance/national-statistician-s-reviews/national-statistician-s-review-of-crime-statistics.html>

⁷ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Crime_statistics

- **The US Bureau of Justice Statistics**⁸ provides access to US recorded crime data, and the National Crime Victimization Survey.

4) Local crime data websites

- **The Local Crime and Policing Website for England and Wales**⁹ enables the public to view counts of crime types at street and neighbourhood level, for each month from April 2011.
- **The Crime and Policing Comparator**¹⁰ enables comparison of recorded crime and anti-social behaviour by police forces in England and Wales.
- **UKCrimeStats**¹¹ enables searches on police recorded crime data by a range of variables, including crime type, police force and parliamentary constituency. Rankings by neighbourhood, street and constituency have been published in 2011.

Key points

1) Results of Crime Statistics Reviews

- Presentation of data needs to be improved.
- Changes impacting on trends to be transparent.
- Office for National Statistics (ONS) to assume responsibility for crime statistics reporting and publication. Police crime data reporting and validation to stay at the Home Office. (UK Statistics Authority, 2010; Matheson, 2011)

2) Overall crime

- **Following consistent falls in overall crime since 1995, the trend is now flattening.** There was no statistically significant change in overall BCS crime between either the 2010 and 2011 annual reports (Home Office, 2011b)¹², or the quarterly update to June 2011 compared to the year ending June 2010 (Home Office 2011c)¹³.
- The falling trend of overall crime has mirrored that seen across the developed world¹⁴. The causes are unknown. There is broad support for an impact of improved vehicle and household security, but there is no general agreement on the impact of other factors, such as imprisonment (Home Office, 2011b).
- Data due January 2012 will include time period of August 2011 riots.

⁸ <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm>

⁹ <http://www.police.uk/>

¹⁰ <http://www.hmic.gov.uk/crime-and-policing-comparator/>

¹¹ <http://www.ukcrimestats.com/Homepage/>

¹² <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/hosb1011/hosb1011?view=Binary> Figure 1.1 on page 15 of this report shows the falling then flattening trend.

¹³ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/hosb1611/hosb1611?view=Binary>

¹⁴ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Crime_statistics

3) Violence¹⁵

- There were 24 more homicides in 2010/11 than the previous year: a rise of 4% (Home Office, 2011b). This followed a fall of 14% in the previous year. Homicide data involve (relatively) small numbers, and fluctuate from year to year.
- There was a rising trend of homicide from the 1960s to the end of the century. Since 2000, there has been a falling trend, taking numbers down to those seen in the mid-1990s.
- As in previous years: victims were most likely to be male; the most common method of killing was with a sharp instrument; female victims, and victims under 16, were more likely than males to know the main suspect than male victims (76% and 75%, compared to 50%) (Home Office, 2011d)¹⁶.
- Crimes involving firearms have continued on a downward trend since 2005/06. There is also some evidence for a fall in knife crime (Home Office, 2011b).

4) Acquisitive Crime

- Despite expectations of increasing acquisitive crime in a recession, the 2010/11 annual statistics **show ‘no consistent trend of upward pressure across the range of acquisitive crime’** (Home Office, 2011b, p.19). Despite recent increases in burglary and other household theft, the quarterly update (to June 2011) suggested, **‘it is still too early to be confident that there has been a real change** in the medium-term trend for BCS burglary, which has been relatively stable since 2004/5’ (Home Office, 2011c, p.4)
- Measurement of fraud is not adequately covered by either BCS or police data. From UK Cards Association data, combined with new BCS supplementary questions, plastic card fraud appears to have stabilised and more recently fallen (Home Office, 2011a, p.19).

5) The local picture

- Police data have been made available on websites during 2011.
- Analyses based on police data – except in the case of murder and some serious violent offending – provide only a partial picture of crime levels. This is because a large proportion of crime goes undetected, and so is more accurately estimated via victimisation surveys (such as the BCS). Also, police recorded crime is influenced by both national and local policing priorities, which may not themselves reflect prevalence.
- UKCrimeStats have published reports league tables of high and low crime streets, neighbourhoods and constituencies, including an annex on problems with the data (UKCrimeStats, 2011a & 2011b)¹⁷.

¹⁵ Provisional police data on homicides are reported in the annual *Crime in England and Wales*, prior to confirmation in the later published *Supplementary Volume*, based on the Homicide Index, a live police investigations database, which is subject to change as investigations continue or cases come to court.

¹⁶ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/hosb0111/hosb0111?view=Binary>

¹⁷ <http://www.ukcrimestats.com/Homepage/>

6) Perceptions

- **People’s perceptions of rising crime tend not to reflect the historical trend¹⁸.** Despite falling levels of crime up to 2005/06, high proportions of people continued to think crime was rising.
- **People continue to be more likely to think crime has risen nationally than locally^{19 20}.**
- **Perceptions about rising local crime levels, although exaggerated, do follow the geography of actual recorded crime.** This means that people living in high crime areas are more likely to perceive increased crime levels than people living in low crime areas²¹.
- **Perceptions about increasing national crime levels do not reflect where people live.** This means the perception gap on national crime levels is biggest for people in low crime areas.
- **Despite recent public access to local crime data, the news media appear to still influence perceptions more strongly²².**

In the pipeline

1) Rising crime levels?

Prediction and speculation about rising crime in a recession has run ahead of the supporting quantitative evidence for the UK. European data shows that in some southern European countries, rising crime levels have now replaced previously falling trends. The quarterly update of *Crime in England and Wales* (due early in 2012) will be the first report to provide coverage for the dates of the August 2011 riots.

2) Changes for crime statistics

The reporting of crime data will move to the ONS. This move is intended to increase public confidence in the independence of the statistics.

Local availability of police data is likely to lead to increased local analysis, although data quality caveats still remain.

The Home Office is currently consulting about changes to the BCS sample design, following a cut of 23% in spending up to 2014/15²³.

¹⁸ Jansson (2007) ‘British Crime Survey: Measuring Crime for 25 years’, London: Home Office.

¹⁹ Moon and Flatley (eds.) (2011) <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/hosb1811/>

²⁰ Moon and Walker (eds.) (2009) <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs09/hosb1709.pdf>

²¹ Moon and Walker (eds.) (2009) <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs09/hosb1709.pdf>

²² Moon and Flatley (eds.) (2011) <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/hosb1811/>

²³ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/science-research/about-home-office-science/consultations/>

III. SENTENCING, REPARATION, OFFENDER MANAGEMENT & COSTS

Key sources

1) **Statistics**

- **MOJ – Story of the prison population 1995-2009²⁴**
- **Offender Management Statistics Quarterly²⁵**
- **Prison Population Projections 2011-2017 England and Wales²⁶**
- **Compendium of reoffending statistics and analysis (MOJ, 2010 and 2011)**

2) **Research and Analysis**

- Mair (2011) *The community order in England and Wales: Policy and practice*²⁷
- Mills (2011) *Community Sentences: a solution to penal excess?*²⁸
- Hedderman's chapter in *The Handbook of Probation* (2007) thoroughly reviews research of effectiveness of sentencing.
- Marsh et al. (2009) *Is custody an effective sentencing option for the UK?*
- Killias, et al. (2006) – evidence for Campbell Collaboration systematic review
- McDougall (2009) Benefit-cost analysis of sentencing – Campbell Collaboration
- Allen (2009) *Changing public attitudes to crime and punishment*²⁹
- MOJ research and analysis 2010 and 2011³⁰.
- Fox and Albertson (2010) *Could economics solve the prison crisis?*³¹
- Aos (2011) *Return on Investment: Evidence-Based Options to Improve Statewide Outcomes*³²
- Matrix (2007) *The economic case for and against prison*³³
- MOJ (2010c) *Green Paper Evidence Report*³⁴

Key points

1) **Growth in prison population**³⁵

- The prison population grew rapidly from 1993 to 2008 at an average of 4% per year.
- This increase was due to increased severity of custodial sentencing, increased recalls following breach of licence conditions, and these offenders spending longer in prison once recalled.

²⁴ <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/docs/story-prison-population.pdf>

²⁵ <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/statistics-and-data/prisons-and-probation/oms-quarterly.htm>

²⁶ <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/statistics-and-data/rojstats/prison-pop-projections-2011-17.pdf>

²⁷ <http://prb.sagepub.com/content/58/3/215.abstract?rss=1>

²⁸ <http://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/rssasolutiontopenalexcess.html>

²⁹ <http://prb.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/55/4/389>

³⁰ <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/research-and-analysis/roj/index.htm>

³¹ <http://prb.sagepub.com/content/57/3/263.abstract>

³² <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/rptfiles/11-07-1201.pdf>

³³ <http://www.matrixknowledge.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/economic-case-for-and-against-prison.pdf>

³⁴ Ministry of Justice (2010c) <http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/docs/green-paper-evidence-a.pdf>

³⁵ Ministry of Justice (2011a) <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/statistics-and-data/rojstats/omsq-q2-2011-bulletin.pdf> p.4

- Growth slowed from summer 2008 (average 1% per year), until the public disorder of August 2011.
- The recent flatter trend had been due to CJIA 2008 and falls in remand population due to fast delivery pre-sentence reports.
- At the end of September 2011 the prison population was 87,501 – an increase of 2% from the previous year.
- By 2017, on 2011 projections³⁶ - which provide for 'lower', 'medium' and 'higher' scenarios – the population could either rise or fall.

2) Probation caseload³⁷

- Annual probation caseload increased by 39% between 2000 and 2008.
- This rise was driven by the introduction of the Suspended Sentence Order (SSO) and increased pre and post custody release supervision.
- The use of community sentences declined from 2005, while the use of SSOs increased and then stabilised.

3) Impact of community sentences on prison population^{38 39}

- Trends in the use of SSOs and community orders suggest the former may have tended to replace the latter.
- Strengthening of community orders has not worked to reduce the size of the prison population.

4) What sentences work to reduce reoffending?

- Probation supervision is more effective in reducing reoffending than prison sentences of less than 12 months. For 2007 sentences, the difference was 7 percentage points⁴⁰. For 2008 sentences the difference was between 5 and 9 percentage points⁴¹.
- Where longer prison sentences allow delivery of effective interventions they may be more effective than shorter sentences which lack effective interventions.⁴²
- There were only small differences in reoffending between SSOs and fines. Comparison with conditional discharges suggests that they were more effective than community sentences by 5.6 percentage points⁴³.
- All attempts to compare global effectiveness of disposals are hampered by the difficulty of controlling for the full range of factors on which decision making may be based.
- **In general prison is not more effective than community sentences.** Killias et al. (2006)⁴⁴ systematically reviewed controlled or natural experiments concluding

³⁶ Ministry of Justice (2011b) <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/statistics-and-data/mojstats/prison-pop-projections-2011-17.pdf>

³⁷ Ministry of Justice (2011a) <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/statistics-and-data/mojstats/omsq-q2-2011-bulletin.pdf> p.8-9. See Figure 1.3.

³⁸ Mair (2011) <http://prb.sagepub.com/content/58/3/215.abstract?rss=1>

³⁹ Mills (2011) <http://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/rssasolutiontopenalexcess.html>

⁴⁰ Ministry of Justice (2010a) <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/statistics-and-data/mojstats/compendium-of-reoffending-statistics-and-analysis.pdf>

⁴¹ Ministry of Justice (2011c) <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/statistics-and-data/mojstats/2011-compendium-reoffending-stats-analysis.pdf>

⁴² Ministry of Justice (2011c) <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/statistics-and-data/mojstats/2011-compendium-reoffending-stats-analysis.pdf>

⁴³ Ministry of Justice (2011c) <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/statistics-and-data/mojstats/2011-compendium-reoffending-stats-analysis.pdf>

that reoffending after non-custodial sanctions was lower in 11 out of 13 comparisons, with no difference in 14 out of 27 comparisons.⁴⁵

- **There is ‘little to choose’ in making global comparisons between imprisonment and community penalties in reducing reoffending.** This was Hedderman’s conclusion in her 2007 review.⁴⁶ She explained the problems in making ‘raw’ comparisons between dissimilar groups that seem to favour one over the other, and also the technical criticisms that can be made of various studies.
- **As the prison population increased, reoffending also increased.** Hedderman (2007) discussed how examination of trends over time may suggest that prison became less effective as its use increased.⁴⁷
- Marsh et al. (2009)⁴⁸ in another meta-analysis found **no evidence for the benefits of prison alone in reducing reoffending.** More effective than prison were: residential drug treatment, surveillance; surveillance with drug treatment; and prison in combination with a range of treatments.⁴⁹
- **Elements of sentences should be compared rather than sentences as a whole.** This is because prison and community sentences have overlapping aims, and may include similar elements, such as rehabilitative programmes. It is more useful to think in terms of the effectiveness of activities undertaken with offenders in each setting.

5) What doesn’t work?

- **Militaristic regimes do not work.** A 2005 systematic review of ‘correctional boot camps’ - common in the US - showed that they are not effective.⁵⁰
- **Organised visits to prison for juveniles at risk do not work.** ‘Scared Straight’ programmes do not work.⁵¹
- **Short sentences do not work.** OMSAS (2009) analysis indicated that short prison sentences are unlikely to have benefits in terms of reducing reoffending.⁵² Short sentences are limited in their potential to intervene to reduce reoffending. They also have social costs which are difficult to quantify. A 2010 NAO report⁵³ indicates that prisons are failing to meet the offending-related needs of short-sentenced prisoners. Courts are not using community orders as much as they might as alternatives to short prison sentences.⁵⁴ The ineffectiveness of short prison sentences is reinforced by comparisons presented in the 2010 and 2011 Compendia of reoffending statistics and analysis.

⁴⁴ <http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/library.php>

⁴⁵ Only 2 out of 27 comparisons favoured custody. (However, they concluded that the stronger designs tended to favour custody.)

⁴⁶ Handbook of Probation 2007.

⁴⁷ See Hedderman 2007, p462. One reason for this may be overcrowding and stretched capacity.

⁴⁸ <http://prb.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/56/2/129>

⁴⁹ Educational/vocational interventions, sex offender treatment and drug treatment. For juveniles community programmes with reparation, aftercare and surveillance were found to be effective.

⁵⁰ <http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/library.php>

⁵¹ <http://www2.cochrane.org/reviews/en/ab002796.html>

⁵² <http://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/14209/response/35111/attach/3/EvidenceDigestJune2009.pdf>

⁵³ National Audit Office (2010) http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/0910/short_custodial_sentences.aspx

⁵⁴ Allen (2008) <http://prb.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/55/4/389>

6) **Reparation and Restorative Justice**⁵⁵

- MOJ evidence for the green paper *Breaking the Cycle* highlights a developing evidence base for restorative justice as a means of reparation.
- While Shapland's (2008) re-offending analysis had been previously interpreted as inconclusive, later MOJ analysis is more positive.

7) **Economic analysis**

- **Current methods of for assessing benefits and costs are not good enough.** McDougall et al. (2008)⁵⁶ systematically reviewed cost-benefit studies and found firm conclusions difficult to draw. This was due to small number of studies and lack of commonly accepted methods.
- **Prison is the most costly sentencing option.**
- The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) has calculated (last updated July 2011) returns on investment for public policies in the US. Data are presented for rates of return on investment for a range of interventions in the community and in prison⁵⁷.
- Matrix Knowledge Group (2007) presented specific cost savings for the following adult community interventions: residential drug treatment; surveillance; and surveillance with drug treatment⁵⁸. Their data was insufficient to determine the overall impact of community supervision compared to prison.
- The Home Office have launched a tool for assessing value for money for Integrated Offender Management projects⁵⁹.

8) **Recent evaluations related to Offender Management (2011)**

- **Intensive Alternatives to Custody pilots**⁶⁰ – Average cost is £5000 per year per offender. No reoffending data currently available, but likely to be more cost effective than prison.
- **Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)**⁶¹ – pre and post comparisons of reconviction are promising, suggesting a fall of 2.7 percentage points.
- **Home Detention Curfew (HDC)**⁶² – Costs £1300 for 90 days, compared to average cost of £6500 for 90 days imprisonment. Early released prisoners were no more likely to reoffend than similar prisoners who were not released.
- **Offender Management** – Quantitative data is not yet available from the *Offender Management Community Cohort Study*. A recent qualitative report⁶³ of practitioner views broadly supports the concept while highlighting resource

⁵⁵ Ministry of Justice (2010c) <http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/docs/green-paper-evidence-a.pdf> See page 64. See also Restorative Justice Council (2011) for a recent review of the evidence provided by Shapland et al. research http://www.restorativejustice.org.uk/restorative_justice_works/

⁵⁶ <http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/library.php>

⁵⁷ <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/rptfiles/11-07-1201.pdf>

⁵⁸ <http://www.matrixknowledge.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/economic-case-for-and-against-prison.pdf>

⁵⁹ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/reducing-reoffending/iom/>

⁶⁰ <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/research-and-analysis/moj-research/intensive-alt-custody-research-summary.pdf>

⁶¹ <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/research-and-analysis/moj-research/patterns-reconviction-mappa.pdf>

⁶² [http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/research-and-analysis/moj-research/effect-early-release-hdc-
recidivism.pdf](http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/research-and-analysis/moj-research/effect-early-release-hdc-
recidivism.pdf)

⁶³ <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/research-and-analysis/moj-research/delivering-noms-offender-management-model.pdf>

issues. The report also highlights the need to stabilise offenders (for example by addressing alcohol issues) to enable effective sequencing of interventions.

- **Integrated Offender Management** *Process Evaluation of Five Integrated Offender Management Pioneer Areas*⁶⁴ describes local variations in concept and implementation. *Evaluation of the Diamond Initiative* did not find a statistically significant benefit of integrated offender management⁶⁵.

In the pipeline

Statistics, Research and Analysis

- Offender Management Statistics Quarterly
- Prison Population Projections (Annual)
- 2012 Compendium of reoffending statistics and analysis
- OMSAS unit costs study of interventions
- Further economic analyses
- Reports on 'Payment by results' pilots
- Reports on Integrated Offender Management projects

⁶⁴ <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/research-and-analysis/moj-research/evaluation-integrated-offender-mgt-pioneer-areas.pdf>

⁶⁵ London Criminal Justice Partnership (2011)
http://www.londoncjp.gov.uk/publications/diamond_year2_FINAL_050511.pdf

IV. OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR PROGRAMMES⁶⁶

Key sources

- **REVIEWS BY GOVERNMENT RESEARCHERS⁶⁷** – ‘What works’ reviews (including summaries of international systematic reviews and meta-analyses⁶⁸) are available in Goldblatt and Lewis (1998)⁶⁹, Harper and Chitty (2005)⁷⁰, Hollis (2007)⁷¹ and Chitty (2009)⁷², and MOJ (2010c)⁷³ – Green Paper Evidence Report for *Breaking the Cycle*
- **UK FINDINGS⁷⁴** – Friendship et al. (2002), Falshaw et al. (2003), Cann et al. (2003) McDougall (2007), Sadlier (2010)⁷⁵, and Travers (2011)⁷⁶ report prisons’ findings. Reports on probation evaluations⁷⁷ are in Ong (2003)⁷⁸, Stewart-Ong

⁶⁶ The most common form of offending behaviour programmes are general offending cognitive skills programmes. However, this term also covers programmes for violent, domestically violent and sexual offenders.

⁶⁷ During the period of these reviews, research departments have been renamed and relocated. Reviews have been conducted by RSD (Research Statistics and Development, in the Home Office), RDS (Research Development and Statistics, in the Home Office) NOMS Research and Analysis, and OMSAS (Offender Management Statistics and Analysis) in the Ministry of Justice. Since the change of government in 2010, pre-2010 reports were archived, but should all still be available via the old web addresses. All Home Office and MOJ research and analysis from 2010 is available through either <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/research-and-analysis/moj/index.htm> or <http://homeoffice.gov.uk/science-research/research-statistics/> Email alerts can be requested from each site.

⁶⁸ Vennard et al. (1997) stated: “Put simply, this technique involves reducing the characteristics of individual studies into a number of summary statistics, such as number of offenders, the type of treatment given, and recidivism rates (however measured) after treatment. The summary statistics are then analysed to produce an overall ‘effect size’ statistic which represents the amount of difference in recidivism that exists between the intervention programme and the respective control programme. One of the main advantages claimed for this technique is that the results from small scale studies, which may be of limited use when considered in isolation, become influential when combined with the results of similar programmes.”, Vennard et al. (1997) p21. The authors also note the technique’s limitations.

⁶⁹ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/hors187.pdf> This review underpinned the Crime Reduction Programme. Section III, Part 8 (Vennard and Hedderman) is about effective interventions with offenders, summarising a longer background review of research, as well as a survey of then current probation programmes:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/hors171.pdf>

⁷⁰ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/hors291.pdf> Third edition, first published in 2003.

⁷¹ Appendix 3 of this NPS report contains an update of RDS evidence.

<http://www.probation2000.com/documents/Reconviction%20Analysis%20and%20IAPS%20Report.pdf>

⁷² This review is largely a repetition Hollis (2007) Appendix C.

<http://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/14209/response/35111/attach/3/EvidenceDigestJune2009.pdf>

⁷³ <http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/docs/green-paper-evidence-a.pdf>

⁷⁴ The designs of some of these studies have been criticised. The key issues are: poorly matched comparison groups; lack of meaningful comparison groups; and findings based on completers only - Treatment Received (TR) groups rather than Intention to Treat (ITT) groups.

⁷⁵ <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/research-and-analysis/moj-research/eval-enhanced-thinking-skills-prog.pdf>

⁷⁶ <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.2044-8333.2011.02026.x/abstract>

⁷⁷ These are reports of national evaluations. At least one probation area (West Yorkshire) has conducted a local outcome study, including comparison to a waiting list group. See Turner (2006)

<http://www.westyorksprobation.org.uk/documentlist.php?type=1&year=2006>

⁷⁸ Copies of the unpublished full report can be obtained from the National Offender Management Service.

(2004)⁷⁹, Hollin et al. (2002)⁸⁰, Hollin et al. (2004)⁸¹, Palmer et al. (2007)⁸², and Hollis (2007)⁸³.

- **OTHER REVIEWS AND DISCUSSION PAPERS** – Davis (2008) summarised research for the National Audit Office⁸⁴. Recent debates about ‘What Works’ evidence can be found in: Raynor (2008)⁸⁵ and (2004)⁸⁶, Sherman (2009)⁸⁷, Tilley (2009)⁸⁸, Hope (2009)⁸⁹, Stanley (2009)⁹⁰, and Hollin (2008)⁹¹.
- **NPS PERFORMANCE REPORTS** – NPS (2008)^{92 93}, NPS (2007)⁹⁴ and NPS (2006)⁹⁵.
- **NOMS ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS (2011)**⁹⁶

Key points

1) What works?

- The most recent international systematic reviews of evidence strongly support the use of cognitive skills programmes to reduce offending⁹⁷.
- Estimates of how much overall difference they can make have varied between 4 and 15 percentage points reduction^{98 99}. The two most recent analyses of England and Wales prison (not community) data - Sadlier

⁷⁹ NPS published summary of Ong (2003)

<http://www.probation.homeoffice.gov.uk/files/pdf/Think%20First%20Research%20Study%202004.pdf>

⁸⁰ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hors247.pdf>

⁸¹ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/rdsolr6604.pdf>

⁸² <http://bpsoc.publisher.ingentaconnect.com/content/bpsoc/lcp/2007/00000012/00000002;jsessionid=5gn35wo41ng93.victoria>

⁸³ <http://www.probation2000.com/documents/Reconviction%20Analysis%20and%20IAPS%20Report.pdf>

⁸⁴ http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/0708/the_national_probation_service.aspx

⁸⁵ <http://crj.sagepub.com/content/vol8/issue1/>

⁸⁶ <http://crj.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/4/3/309>

⁸⁷ <http://crj.sagepub.com/content/vol9/issue1/>

⁸⁸ <http://crj.sagepub.com/content/vol9/issue1/>

⁸⁹ <http://crj.sagepub.com/content/vol9/issue2/>

⁹⁰ <http://prb.sagepub.com/content/vol56/issue2/>

⁹¹ <http://crj.sagepub.com/content/vol8/issue1/>

⁹² <http://www.probation2000.com/documents/NPS%20Annual%20Report%202007-08.pdf>

⁹³ 2008 appears to have been the last performance report in this format.

⁹⁴ <http://www.probation2000.com/documents/Annual%20Report%20for%20Accredited%20Programmes%202006-2007.pdf>

⁹⁵ <http://www.probation2000.com/documents/Accredited%20Programmes%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

⁹⁶ <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/corporate-reports/noms/noms-annual-report-2010-11.pdf>

⁹⁷ The most recent meta-analyses remain Aos (2006) and Landenberger and Lipsey (2007).

⁹⁸ It is important to distinguish between effect size (which is a measure of the proportion of the change observed to what would be expected without the intervention), and percent points by which reconviction was found to be reduced. Given typical levels of reoffending, the percent points reduction is usually about half the effect size.

⁹⁹ Estimates of expected reductions in reconviction have varied quite widely. Goldblatt and Lewis (1998) cited 10-15 percentage point lower reconviction, rising to reported a 20 percent points lower for the best implemented programmes. Hedderman and Sugg cited Losel’s figure of 10 percent points lower reoffending, and Lipsey’s 10-16 points lower for juveniles. Chitty (2009) estimated a 4 percent point reduction in reoffending, based on Aos (2006), a Washington State Institute of Public Policy international systematic review. Drake et al. (2009)

<http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/pub.asp?docid=09-00-1201> updates the WSIPP analysis, and includes cost-benefit analysis, groups the programmes differently, and gives a somewhat smaller effect size. However, the 2008 ‘User Abstract’ for a Campbell Collaboration review claims reoffending <http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/library.php> can be reduced by half for the best implemented programmes.

(2010)¹⁰⁰, and Travers (2011)¹⁰¹ – finding, respectively, 6 percent and 6.4 percentage points reduction in reoffending less than comparisons.

- Programmes that work address thinking and attitudes and provide skills training, including interpersonal problem solving and anger control¹⁰². They need to be consistently implemented and be delivered by specially trained staff using pro-social modelling, and as part of an appropriate package of intervention.
- Cognitive skills programmes appear to work best for higher risk offenders¹⁰³.
- UK evaluations¹⁰⁴ have shown mixed results. There are promising findings, but these have mostly been limited to studies which suffered from possible selection effects or weak comparisons¹⁰⁵. Palmer et al. (2007) reported positive findings from the probation pathfinders, using statistical techniques to control for some possible selection effects. The most recent prison results for ETS show effects of 6 percentage points (Sadler, 2010) and 6.4 percentage points (Travers, 2011).
- Evaluations have consistently pointed to the challenges of large-scale implementation.¹⁰⁶

2) **What are the implementation problems?**

- **The scale and pace of change affects quality of delivery** – Lipsey's (2001)¹⁰⁷ review noted that small pilots were more effective than routinely rolled-out programmes. In the UK, Blud et al. (2001)¹⁰⁸ and (2003)¹⁰⁹ concluded that, for prisons, quality of implementation may be as important for effectiveness as details of the programme itself (Impact was highest when tutor turnover was low, and early positive findings were not replicated when prison implementation was quickly scaled up). Probation evaluations have made similar observations¹¹⁰.

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/research-and-analysis/moj-research/eval-enhanced-thinking-skills-prog.pdf>

¹⁰¹ <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.2044-8333.2011.02026.x/abstract>

¹⁰² Landenberger et al. (2005) <http://www.springerlink.com/content/y23723280476028u/fulltext.pdf>

¹⁰³ Landenberger and Lipsey (2005). However, Palmer's (2008) UK study of offender allocation to GOBPs confirmed that there had been widespread misallocation of offenders in the highest risk categories, for whom programme completion was very difficult to achieve. While better completion rates were achieved with low risk offenders, this did not have a significant effect on reconviction rates. See West Yorkshire Probation website for a review of this study.

¹⁰⁴ The UK prison studies are: Friendship (2002)The UK probation studies are....

¹⁰⁵ Hollin et al. (200?) Used a logistic regression analysis to show.....

¹⁰⁶ For example, Hollin et al. (2002). For a historical account of the pathfinder implementation and evaluation process, see Raynor (2004) and (2008).

¹⁰⁷ <http://ann.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/578/1/144>

¹⁰⁸ <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/112477785/abstract>

¹⁰⁹ <http://bpsoc.publisher.ingentaconnect.com/content/bpsoc/lcp/2003/00000008/00000001/art00006>

¹¹⁰ See, Stewart-Ong (2004)

<http://www.probation.homeoffice.gov.uk/files/pdf/Think%20First%20Research%20Study%202004.pdf>

- **Referring the right offenders** – Issues with unclear targeting were noted in the probation evaluations¹¹¹. It has been suggested that this was influenced by challenging national targets set for completions. Effects are weakened if programmes are offered to low risk offenders.
- **Drop out reduces effectiveness, and may lead to higher reconviction** – Probation evaluations of the pathfinder programme found that only a third of offenders completed.¹¹² Several studies have suggested that those who start but failing to complete programmes have higher rates of reoffending. McMurrans's (2007)¹¹³ systematic review of 16 studies supports this view, particularly for community samples.

3) OBPs in the Community

- **Completions** - Targets for accredited programme completions were met in 2007-8 for the fourth successive year¹¹⁴. Across all programmes (not including sex offenders and domestic violence), there were 14,531 completions (104% of the target). More recently numbers of completions may have fallen¹¹⁵
- **Tackling drop-out** – Local areas have analysed reasons for drop out¹¹⁶ and embarked on retention initiatives¹¹⁷. Nationally, the Probation Service has reported on levels of attrition by programme and at different stages. In 2006/07, 68% of offenders who started programmes completed. However, 20% of offenders referred were low risk (below the OGRS risk of reconviction level recommended)¹¹⁸.
- The new accredited Thinking Skills Programme (TSP) has been rolled out nationally.
- **Improvement in targeting** NOMS (2010)¹¹⁹ report that probation exceeded its target of 85% of programme starts meeting criteria in 2009/10 (89%) and 2010-11 (94%).

¹¹¹ For example, Hollin et al. (2002)

¹¹² Hollin et al. (2004)

¹¹³ <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a780489997>

¹¹⁴ <http://www.probation2000.com/documents/NPS%20Annual%20Report%202007-08.pdf>

¹¹⁵ <http://www.napo.org.uk/publications/Briefings.cfm>

¹¹⁶ For example the following studies were conducted in West Yorkshire probation area: Robinson (2009) Turner (2006) <http://www.westyorksprobation.org.uk/documentlist.php?type=1&year=2006> Briggs et al. (2003) <http://www.westyorksprobation.org.uk/documentlist.php?type=1&year=2003> Stephens (2002) <http://www.my-lms.co.uk/library.php?showresults=true&marked=&page=2#A> and Stephens (2003) <http://www.my-lms.co.uk/library.php?showresults=true&marked=&page=1#A>

¹¹⁷ Briggs (2003) <http://www.westyorksprobation.org.uk/documentlist.php?type=1&year=2003>. Williams (2007) is an example of a Greater Manchester study (obtainable from Greater Manchester Probation Trust).

¹¹⁸ <http://www.probation2000.com/documents/NPS%20Annual%20Report%202007-08.pdf>

¹¹⁹ <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/corporate-reports/noms/noms-annual-report-2010-11.pdf>

In the pipeline

1) Large cohort studies

Government researchers in OMSAS¹²⁰ are working on a large cohort study of offenders under community supervision. This study is expected to show how the effects of interventions interact with different offender needs and characteristics: that is, what works with whom.

2) Benefit-Costs

OMSAS unit cost study for interventions delivered to adults in prisons and for YOT practitioners. NOMS Specification, Benchmarking and Costings programme (SBC) is developing cost data to support understanding of cost-effectiveness.

The select committee report *Cutting Crime: The Case for Justice Reinvestment*¹²¹ pointed to government response to the high costs of imprisonment. In this context, the ability to show the value for money of community interventions is likely to prove critical.

¹²⁰ <http://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/14209/response/35111/attach/3/EvidenceDigestJune2009.pdf>

¹²¹ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmjust/94/94i.pdf>

V. MEASURING REOFFENDING & PAYMENT BY RESULTS

Key sources

1) Ministry of Justice Statistics

- Response to consultation on reoffending statistics¹²² (MOJ, 2010b)
- **Proven Re-offending Statistics Quarterly Bulletin (PRSQ)** – January to December 2009, England and Wales¹²³ (MOJ, 2011g)
- **Early estimates of proven reoffending** – January to December 2010, England and Wales¹²⁴ (MOJ, 2011h)
- **2011 Compendium of Reoffending Statistics and Analysis**¹²⁵ (MOJ, 2011c)
- **Assessment of compliance with Code of Practice for Official Statistics – Statistics on Re-offending in England and Wales**¹²⁶ (UK Statistics Authority, 2011)

2) Payment by Results

- See **PRSQ** (MOJ, 2011g) and **2011 Compendium** (MOJ, 2011c) for caveats regarding re-offending effectiveness comparisons.
- Disley, et al. (2011)¹²⁷ describes implementation issues for the Peterborough Social Impact Bond
- **Breaking the Cycle**¹²⁸ provides ‘rehabilitation revolution’ policy context background (MOJ, 2011i)
- The **Green Paper Evidence Report for Breaking the Cycle** (MOJ, 2010c) provides a summary of experience of and issues for PbR
- **Government Response to the Justice Committee Report: The role of the Probation Service** (MOJ, 2011j)¹²⁹
- **Fox (2011)**¹³⁰ discussion on PbR and social impact bonds

Key Points

1) Changes to the way re-offending statistics are calculated and presented

Following consultation in 2010 there have been substantial changes to the basis of re-offending statistics. These changes have been found to be compliant with regulations for National Statistics. Changes include:

- Combination of 6 previous measures to a single measure

¹²² Ministry of Justice (2010b) <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/consultations/improvements-moj-statistics-consultation-response.pdf>

¹²³ Ministry of Justice (2011g) <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/statistics-and-data/reoffending/proven-reoffending-jan-dec09.pdf>

¹²⁴ Ministry of Justice (2011h) <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/statistics-and-data/reoffending/proven-reoffending-early-estimates-2010.pdf>

¹²⁵ Ministry of Justice (2011c) <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/statistics-and-data/mojstats/2011-compendium-reoffending-stats-analysis.pdf>

¹²⁶ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/index.html>

¹²⁷ <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/research-and-analysis/moj-research/social-impact-bond-hmp-peterborough.pdf>

¹²⁸ <http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/docs/breaking-the-cycle.pdf>

¹²⁹ Ministry of Justice (2011j) <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmjust/519/519i.pdf>

¹³⁰ <http://crj.sagepub.com/content/11/5/395.abstract>

- Including adults and juveniles from age 10 in the same statistic
- Using a cohort follow-up methodology for all measures, and so making national and local measures consistent¹³¹
- Following up for 1 year, plus 6 months for court processing
- Presentation of an adjusted proven re-offending rate to control for changes in the composition of the offender group.
- Enabling of geographical area and offender type comparisons
- Enabling measurement of prison and probation re-offending

Generally re-offending rates appear lower than with the previous measures because of changes to the range of offenders and disposals included in the single measure, and changes to the follow up period. Trends under the old and new measures are broadly similar.

The percentage of offenders re-offending, and the number of offences they commit have now been made accessible on the Ministry of Justice Website *Making Sense of Criminal Justice* (MOJ, 2011k)¹³². Data can be viewed at local authority level.

2) **Overall trends in re-offending**

- Recently (2008 to 2009) the re-offending rate fell from 26.9% to 26.3%.
- This continued the longer term trend (2000 to 2009) which has fallen from 27.9%.
- There has also been a recent fall (2008 to 2009) in the average number of proven re-offences from 2.89 to 2.79 per offender.
- This continued the longer term trend (2000 to 2009), which has fallen from 3.37 offences per offender.

3) **Age and re-offending**

- Proven re-offending was highest for 15-17 year olds, falling with increasing age.
- From 2008 to 2009 proven re-offending fell for 15 to 29 year olds and rose for other age groups.
- The largest falls were for those aged 21 to 24.

4) **Previous offences**

- Although proven re-offending was highest for both adults and juveniles, the largest fall since 2000 was for offenders with more than 25 previous offences (a fall of 3.8 percentage points).
- Adults with more than 25 previous offences represented just over a quarter (27.8%) of adult offenders in 2009, but committed almost two thirds of proven re-offences.
- Juveniles with more than 25 previous offences represented only 4.8% of juvenile offenders in 2009 but committed almost one fifth proven re-offences by juveniles.

¹³¹ This represents a change from the previous controversial use of a 'snapshot' methodology for performance data. The previous 'Local Adult Re-offending' measure continues to be published. MOJ (2011) <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/statistics-and-data/mojstats/local-adult-reoffending-july10-june11.pdf>

¹³² <http://sentencing.justice.gov.uk/reoffending/>

5) Index offence and re-offending

- Burglary has continued since 2000 to have the highest re-offending rate (48.1%).
- Sexual offences against children continued to have the lowest (9.8%).

6) Comparing prison and court orders

- **PRSQ Bulletin January to December 2009** gives re-offending for prisoners and adults starting community orders, **but these data cannot be used to evidence differential effectiveness as the groups are not matched**¹³³.
 - All prisoners: 46.8% (average 4.03 offences)
 - Less than 12 month sentences: 56.8%
 - Community Orders: 35.6% (average 3.15 offences)
 - Suspended Sentence Orders: 31% (average 2.86 offences)
- **Compendiums** produced in 2010 and 2011 compared 'relative effectiveness of different disposals'.
- The **2011 Compendium** broadened the range of comparisons and improved some of the matching procedures.
 - Community Orders and Suspended Sentence Orders were more effective than custodial sentences of less than 12 months by between 5 and 9 percentage points, for data up to 2008
 - This reinforced the 2007 finding.
 - Generally, sentences up to 4 years were found to have lower re-offending than shorter sentences.
 - Compared to Community Orders, SSOs and conditional discharges had lower re-offending (1.4 and 5.6 percentage points respectively).
 - There was no evidence of a difference in re-offending between community orders and fines.
 - Conditional discharges showed lower re-offending than fines.
- **2011 Compendium** warned of the limitations of current Ministry of Justice administrative data to determine relative effectiveness (MOJ, 2011c, p.4)

7) Offender needs and reoffending

- **Compendium** (2010) provided the analysis from the research study: Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction.
- Higher reconviction was associated with: problems in early life, family and schooling (violence in the home; abuse as a child; school expulsion or exclusion and lack of qualifications.)
- Homelessness and joblessness were more prevalent than in the general population.
- Drugs and alcohol use were more prevalent in than in the general population and were associated with higher reoffending.
- Reconviction rates were similar for offenders reporting treatment for mental health problems in the year before custody compared to those who did not report treatment.

¹³³ See PRSQ Bulletin (2011g) p.29 for caveats regarding conclusions about effectiveness.

8) Performance comparisons¹³⁴

- **Early Estimates of Proven Reoffending – January to December 2010**, using 3 month follow up and 3 month waiting period, showed more increases in reoffending than decreases compared to the previous year:
 - Probation Trusts: 15 had lower rates; 20 had higher; none remained the same. (Trusts were also compared to expected rates, showing 2 lower and 3 significantly higher.)
 - PPOs: 37 local authorities showed lower estimates; 42 showed higher.
 - Drug Action Teams: 41 had lower rates; 123 had higher.
 - Young Offender Teams: 48 showed lower rates; 109 higher.

9) Payment by results (PbR)

- PbR is part of the government's focus on reoffending, cost saving and decentralisation. PbR aims to shift the risk for innovation and effectiveness away from the taxpayer and towards private and voluntary sector organisations.
- **PRSQ** cannot be used to examine the effectiveness of sentence types¹³⁵.
- **2011 Compendium** presented more detailed sentence comparisons, but how the new reoffending statistic will be used to evidence PbR is not yet clear.
- Pilot PbR schemes are underway at Peterborough and Doncaster prisons. There are also local 'justice reinvestment' projects in London and Manchester.
- Early implementation evaluation of the social impact bond pilot at Peterborough (Disley, 2011) has indicated the following issues for outcome measurement:
 - Time consuming and complex analytical process
 - Difficulty of attributing change and sharing outcome payment where several agencies involved
 - Need for 'intention to treat' analytical model to avoid 'cherry picking'
 - The Peterborough control group comparison model for evaluation cannot be rolled out nationally for outcome measurement as there would be no comparison group to provide a counterfactual.
 - Availability of robust cost data
 - Importance of size of project in delivering 'cashable' benefits.
- Government response to the Justice Committee report on the Role of the Probation Service located responsibility for developing appropriate measures for PbR with the wider research community, rather than solely MOJ.
- Fox and Albertson (2011) conclude that the case for PbR in the criminal justice sector is not yet proven, given lack of agreement on evidence base and difficulty of quantifying savings.

¹³⁴ These comparisons are not currently used as performance indicators.

¹³⁵ This point is stated in paragraph A2.11 of the UK Statistics Authority (September 2011) assessment of the compliance of MOJ statistics on re-offending.

In the pipeline

- 1) Proven Reoffending Statistics Quarterly Bulletin April 2009 to March 2010¹³⁶
- 2) May 2012 **Compendium** will include:
 - 2 and 5 year follow up for headline reoffending rates
 - Penalty Notices for Disorder
 - Analysis of reoffending from end of sentences
- 3) Future plans to publish include quarterly comparisons by prison, Community Safety Partnership, Local Authority and Probation Trust, and a measure of re-offending while on license.
- 4) Reconviction analysis of the impact of the Peterborough Scheme expected 2013-14.
- 5) Full roll out of payment by results principles is planned to begin in 2015.

¹³⁶ Published January 26th, 2012.

VI. DESISTANCE & OFFENDER ENGAGEMENT

Key sources

Desistance research can be seen as one part (the part most closely associated with the rehabilitative work of Probation¹³⁷) of a wider ‘criminal careers’ approach. Longitudinal studies, following up individuals over the course of their lives, and using statistical modelling techniques, have been one well-established method¹³⁸ to investigate onset, duration and desistance. More recently qualitative studies and narrative analysis of offenders’ stories have drawn parallels with findings from the mental health field about recovery from depression, and prompted new theorising about effective intervention.

The ‘good lives model’ (GLM)¹³⁹ is one theoretical approach to desistance. As well as recent research, it draws on experience in sex offender treatment, and wider psychological theories of motivation. GLM has gained popularity following implementation problems found with the ‘what works’ approach to interventions. Andrews and Bonta et al. (2011)¹⁴⁰ have recently pointed out that its current popularity may have more to do with implementation failures of the Risk Needs Responsivity (RNR) model – to which it is sometimes counterposed – than to theoretical differences.

Defining ‘key’ sources is difficult for this diffuse¹⁴¹ and sometimes densely theoretical topic. There are some key empirical studies:

- The Cambridge Study in Delinquent Behaviour¹⁴², associated with the work of David Farrington and others
- Maruna’s *Liverpool Desistance Study*¹⁴³ a narrative analysis of offenders’ accounts of their lives
- Farrall’s study of 199 probationers¹⁴⁴, followed up over 4 interviews since the late 1990s
- Rex’s 2002 research into probationer perceptions’ of offender-officer relationships¹⁴⁵

Reviews and discussions of key theoretical ideas and findings can be found in¹⁴⁶:

¹³⁷ Criminal careers research is as much (if not more often) about onset and persistence, as desistance.

¹³⁸ For example, Laub and Sampson (2003), following up the work of the Glueck’s from the 1950s, or the work of Farrington and others on the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development, which began in 1961, with a series of reports from the mid 1980s.

¹³⁹ Ward and Maruna (2007)

¹⁴⁰ <http://cjb.sagepub.com/content/38/7/735.short>

¹⁴¹ In its broadest sense, desistance research could be seen as just another term for effectiveness research, or ‘what works’. Use of the term ‘desistance’ as opposed to reoffending, signals a more positive approach, as well as a concern for process, practice, and the realities of offenders’ lives.

¹⁴² The dataset for this study has supported a large number of published analyses, and is available for researchers through the US Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/8488/documentation;jsessionid=CF1A49DD72CF33CC3D67D2CFD65963CD> or the UK Data Archive <http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/findingData/snDescription.asp?sn=2456>. It was a prospective longitudinal survey of 411 South London boys from a largely white working class area, beginning in 1961-2 when they were 8-9 years old and continuing to age 40. Data is based on interviews with the boys, their families and teachers, as well as case information including convictions.

¹⁴³ See Maruna and Porter et al. (2004) <http://prb.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/51/3/221> and Maruna (2004) <http://www.shaddmaruna.info/pdf/5%20Journal%20of%20Contemp%20Criminal%20Justice.pdf>

¹⁴⁴ Farrall (2002) <http://www.willanpublishing.co.uk/cgi-bin/indexer?product=1843921022> and Farrall and Calverly (2006) <http://www.mcgraw-hill.co.uk/html/0335219497.html>

¹⁴⁵ <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/119072766/abstract>

- Piquero, Farrington and Blumstein (2007) *Key issues in Criminal Career Research*¹⁴⁷: *New Analyses of the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development*¹⁴⁸
- Ward and Maruna (2007) *Rehabilitation*¹⁴⁹
- McNeill (2006) *A desistance paradigm for offender management*¹⁵⁰; McNeill (2009) *Towards effective practice in offender supervision*¹⁵¹; and McNeill and Weaver (2010) *Changing Lives? Desistance Research and Offender Management*¹⁵²
- Porporino (2010) *Bringing sense and sensibility to corrections: From programmes to 'fix' offenders to services to support desistance*¹⁵³
- Kazemian (2007) *Desistance from Crime: Theoretical, empirical, methodological, and policy considerations*¹⁵⁴
- Andrews and Bonta et al. (2011) *The Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) Model: Does adding the Good Lives Model Contribute to Effective Crime Prevention?*¹⁵⁵

NOMS' recent change of focus towards 'offender engagement' is supported by a collection of research summaries and commentaries, and a series of 'Research Bulletins':

- NOMS, 1st edition (2010) *An initial summary of evidence gathered to prove the hypothesis that the one-to-one relationship between the offender and practitioner can be a powerful means of changing behaviour, and therefore reducing re-offending*¹⁵⁶
- NOMS *Offender Engagement Research Bulletins*¹⁵⁷

The following websites provide access to NOMS documents and other professional development materials:

- Essex Probation Trust Resources
http://www.essexprobation.org.uk/staff_resources_73.html
- Midlands Probation Training Consortium 'Thinking in Practice' seminars -
<http://www.probationtraining-midlandsconsortium.org.uk/learning-development/thinking-in-practice/>

¹⁴⁶ This is a selection. There are many other relevant sources, some of which are listed in the spreadsheet accompanying this **Briefing**.

¹⁴⁷ Farrington and others use the term 'development and life-course criminology' (DLC). This covers a wider range of concerns than intervention to support desistance.

¹⁴⁸ <http://www.cambridge.org/catalogue/catalogue.asp?isbn=9780521613095&ss=exc> Farrington provides an overview of criminal careers research, analysis of 5 different trajectories of onset, persistence and desistance, and an agenda for future research. Further analysis is expected in Farrington's forthcoming book.

¹⁴⁹ <http://www.routledge.com/books/Rehabilitation-isbn9780415386432>

¹⁵⁰ <http://crj.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/6/1/39>. The argument is presented more briefly in a CJSScotland paper: <http://www.cjsScotland.org.uk/pdfs/Desistance.pdf>

¹⁵¹ http://www.sccjr.ac.uk/documents/McNeil_Towards.pdf

¹⁵² <http://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/supporting-desistance>

¹⁵³ Porporino reviews the 'what works' evidence and scans desistance theory for promising new directions. This is a chapter in Brayford et al. (eds.) (forthcoming) *What Else Works? Creative Work with offenders*

<http://www.willanpublishing.co.uk/cgi-bin/indexer?product=9781843927662> This book also contains a chapter by Weaver and McNeill on desistance theory.

¹⁵⁴ <http://ccj.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/23/1/5> Kazemian's account of the state of current research highlights a range of unresolved problems, such as the lack of an agreed definition of desistance, and the need to replicate findings on different groups.

¹⁵⁵ <http://cjb.sagepub.com/content/38/7/735.short>

¹⁵⁶ http://www.essexprobation.org.uk/staff_resources_73.html

¹⁵⁷ http://www.essexprobation.org.uk/staff_resources_73.html

- Discovering Desistance ESRC Knowledge Exchange Project - <http://blogs.iriss.org.uk/discoveringdesistance/>

Key points

- 1) **Desistance research complements other approaches.** It is in the same tradition of renewed belief in the potential effectiveness of rehabilitation as the risk-needs-responsivity-based 'what works' movement which followed the 'nothing works' era. Desistance research is oriented towards reducing reoffending, although from a more positive recognition of offender strengths than RNR, which has been described as a deficit-oriented approach. While some commentators suggest an opposition with 'what works' research¹⁵⁸, others see it as already presaged in much of the 'what works' literature¹⁵⁹.
- 2) **Desistance research draws on the 'criminal careers paradigm'.** This means that it concerns changes that happen to individuals through their lives. However, desistance research focuses on the aspect most relevant to the work of Probation – stopping offending, or offending less often, or less seriously. There is a well-known finding that crime peaks in the early teens and drops off after that (the 'crime-age curve'). The desistance perspective maintains that we need to understand this process in order to help offenders towards giving up crime. McNeill describes this as complementary to 'what works' evaluation in the same way as developmental educational psychology is complementary to evaluation of teaching methods.
- 3) **Limitations of risk-based approach**¹⁶⁰ The following points have been made:
 - R-N-R¹⁶¹ approach is grounded in the idea of risk to society, and has been said to neglect wider service values.
 - By neglecting broader human needs (as opposed to criminogenic need), it neglects motivation and identity as key elements in change.
 - It focuses on general responsivity, while neglecting individual responsivity.
- 4) **The 'Good Lives Model'**¹⁶²
 - was developed from the research insights from Maruna's desistance study, and Ward's theory rooted in sex offender treatment practice and 'positive psychology';
 - recognises the strengths of risk-based approach, including overall evidence of its effectiveness in reducing reoffending;
 - builds on the problems and issues found in 'what works' implementation studies;
 - sees targeting of risk as necessary, but not sufficient;
 - advocates an individualised approach to assessment and treatment;
 - stresses the possibility of 'redemption'.
 - GLM suggests:

¹⁵⁸ See for example the editorial to Probation Journal 56: 2 <http://prb.sagepub.com/content/vol56/issue2/>

¹⁵⁹ See Porporino (2010) and Andrews and Bonta (2011)

¹⁶⁰ These points, and the account of GLM (good lives model) draws heavily on McNeill's (2009) account http://www.sccjr.ac.uk/documents/McNeil_Towards.pdf, which in turn draws on Ward and Maruna (2007).

¹⁶¹ The 'risk-needs-responsivity' model is mainly associated with the work of Canadian correctional psychologists, such as Andrews and Bonta (2003). As implemented in England and Wales, it became a highly centralised approach to assessment and intervention, which was (arguably) partially successful.

¹⁶² Again, this is based on McNeill's account, particularly McNeill (2009).

- harnessing natural motivation towards legitimate ‘approach goals’¹⁶³ in the context of an overall pro-social life-plan
- going beyond tackling risk factors, towards a ‘holistic reconstruction of the self’
- basing intervention on offenders’ strengths
- basing intervention in understanding aetiology¹⁶⁴ of offending
- balancing focus on offender goods and happiness, with management of risk.
- interventions that combine programmes with work on family ties and associates, as well as advocacy to access resources and promote inclusion, are likely to be most effective.

- 5) **Motivating offenders.** Offenders share an essential humanity that is motivated towards primary human goals of personal autonomy; relatedness to others; and competence¹⁶⁵. Interventions should focus on pro-social ways of meeting desired goals, rather than addressing criminogenic need. The officer-offender relationship (the ‘working alliance’) is a potential tool¹⁶⁶ in effecting change through engagement of motivation. Compliance will depend on offender’s perception of legitimacy, which in turn rests on engagement and relationships.¹⁶⁷
- 6) **Listening to offenders** is key to understanding why they give up crime. There have been some qualitative studies providing new insights into: ways of talking about desistance (‘redemption narratives’)¹⁶⁸; offender motivation, officer-offender relationships, and the zigzag nature of giving up offending¹⁶⁹
- 7) **Building social as well as human capital** Theorists have differed in the emphasis they place on individual psychological factors (including the stories they tell about themselves), and the wider social context.

¹⁶³ Mann et al. (2004) reported the greater effectiveness of ‘approach goals’ compared to ‘avoidance goals’ in work with sex offenders. However, these terms have wider application in the developing field of ‘positive psychology’, which concerns optimising health and happiness, as opposed to the frequent focus of psychology professions of illness and deficit. The work of Martin Seligman (known for the idea of ‘learned helplessness’) has been influential. Positive psychology owes much to ‘humanistic psychology’ and the Abraham Maslow’s well-known concept of the hierarchy of human needs.

¹⁶⁴ Aetiology means either causes or reasons, and is a term widely used in medicine. Preferring to use the term ‘aetiology’ over ‘cause’ signals a certain position on the age-old line of tension within the human sciences between the machine metaphor (which prefers causes) and purposive or agency models (which prefer reasons).

¹⁶⁵ This is one of the key tenets of the good lives model, developed in Ward and Maruna (2007) *Rehabilitation*.

¹⁶⁶ Ansbro (2008) <http://prb.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/55/3/231> provides another account of the mechanisms whereby relationships might affect change. Her account is rooted in attachment theory.

¹⁶⁷ Farrell (2002) found that the supervisor-probationer relationship was less important than other relationships. Overcoming obstacles to change seemed to be more closely associated with offender’s own motivation and supportive social context, than with the relationship with the officer. This suggests that a sense of self-efficacy is closely connected with change.

¹⁶⁸ Maruna presents a systematic content analysis of modes of causal attribution in offenders’ talk about their lives.

¹⁶⁹ See Farrall (2002) and Rex (2002)

8) Criticisms of desistance approach

- **Theory**
 - The concept of desistance is not well defined¹⁷⁰
 - GLM makes several proposals for practice, but these are not based in a fully developed theory¹⁷¹.
- **Evidence base**
 - The desistance approach focuses on developmental process rather than intervention effectiveness¹⁷².
 - Specific hypotheses need more empirical support. While qualitative approaches have provided valuable new insights, or supported practitioner experience, issues of cause and effect - and how widely findings can be applied – remain.
 - Cost-benefit analysis can only be based on quantitative outcome data¹⁷³.
- **Specifically, there is a lack of current evidence on:**¹⁷⁴
 - diversity in views of ‘the good life’, and the general applicability of ‘human goods’;
 - which offenders really need ‘holistic reconstruction of the self’;
 - whether anti-social ‘good lives plans’ might work quite well for some offenders, and thus work to support offending; and
 - whether an individual psychology focussed approach (which is common to both R-N-R and GLM) is sufficient without wider social intervention.
- **Challenges for case management practice**
 - Finding the resources to intervene on many levels
 - Individualising treatment could lead to loss of focus and overall service effectiveness.
 - Problem of balancing individualised treatment with structured systematic intervention.
 - Over enthusiastic implementation of a new wave of programmes could face the same obstacles as ‘what works’ programmes.

9) NOMS Offender Engagement Programme

- Sometimes presented as a research project to test the effectiveness of one-to-one supervision, which draws on desistance literature¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁰ See Kazemian (2007).

¹⁷¹ See McNeill’s account.

¹⁷² However, the OEP aims to assess the effectiveness of interventions that incorporate learning from desistance research (e.g. SEED).

¹⁷³ However, even for quantitative studies, clear and agreed methodologies of benefit-cost analysis have proved elusive.

¹⁷⁴ This list is derived from McNeill (2009).

¹⁷⁵ NOMS Offender Engagement Programme aims test the hypothesis that the one to one relationship between the offender and supervisor can be a powerful vehicle for change. See Offender Engagement Programme Overview, 2011 http://www.essexprobation.org.uk/staff_resources_73.html . NOMS Business Plan 2011-12 (p.12) suggests that the impact of the OEP on reducing re-offending is already known.

- Driven by the need to develop and share best practice, as well as the coalition government aim to reduce central bureaucracy¹⁷⁶ and measure outcomes
- Central feature is practitioner professional development and support, to underpin greater professional autonomy
- Key projects are: SEED (Skills for Effective Engagement and Development); RSM (Reflective Supervision Model); and SPA (Sentence Planning Approach)
- OEP is supported by a programme of research, including local and small-scale work reported in its Research Bulletins¹⁷⁷

In the pipeline

External research commissioned by NOMS OEP is being conducted by the University of Sheffield and by a partnership between Leicester University and the Institute for Criminal Policy Research (ICPR), now at Birkbeck College, University of London.

The Offender Engagement Project at the University of Leicester is using the Offender Management Feedback Questionnaire (combined with a version for Offender Managers) to investigate relationships between:

- offenders' and probation practitioners' views measured by OMFQ
- OMFQ and intermediate measures of success
- OMFQ and re-offending.

The OMSAS cohort survey of offenders in the community may offer useful findings on offender experiences and opportunities to statistically model how different combinations of intervention combine to predict outcomes. The research comprises a survey conducted by NatCen and a dataset, including case management information, analysed by Matrix Knowledge. A report is due in April 2013.

The ESRC funded Desistance Knowledge Exchange Project (Discovering Desistance)¹⁷⁸ is developing a documentary and a series of practitioner conferences.

¹⁷⁶ The much quoted statistic that probation staff spend only 24% of their time in direct contact with offenders appears to arise from an unpublished source.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmhansrd/cm091104/halltext/91104h0006.htm>

¹⁷⁷ http://www.essexprobationtrust.org.uk/staff_resources_73.html

¹⁷⁸ <http://blogs.iriss.org.uk/discoveringdesistance/>

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