

Reintegration Services

EVIDENCE BRIEF

Reintegration services play an important role in successfully transitioning offenders from prison to the community. There is very promising New Zealand evidence that these services reduce reoffending.

OVERVIEW

- Offenders face a number of challenges when being released from prison, making it difficult for them to successfully reintegrate into society.
- Reintegration services aim to ease the transition from prison into the community by providing offenders with practical assistance and support.
- It is important to make the distinction between reintegration and rehabilitation services.
 - Rehabilitation services are designed to effect a behavioural or attitudinal change in a person through psychologically-based programmes or up-skilling through education and/or employment training.
 - Reintegration services are designed to remove or mitigate common challenges offenders face in transitioning successfully into the community. This includes ensuring the offender has suitable and stable accommodation, has adequate income, can obtain employment, and can connect into pro-social support networks.
- Overall, the international evidence on the effectiveness of reintegration services is mixed. Some research suggests services are effective at reducing reoffending, while others show no effect.
- However, a recent outcomes analysis of 'Out of Gate' and 'Release to Work' reintegration services provided by the Department of Corrections indicated a positive impact of these services for offenders.
- The effectiveness of other reintegration services in New Zealand is yet to be evaluated, primarily due to these programmes being relatively new innovations.

EVIDENCE BRIEF SUMMARY

Evidence rating:	Promising
Unit cost:	Out of Gate: \$2000 per offender for a standard service and \$4,000 per offender for an intensive service. Release to Work: No real unit cost per offender.
Effect size (based on Corrections latest RQ results):	Out of Gate: reduces reconviction by 5.2 percentage points e.g. if offenders had a 12 month reconviction rate of 50% this means that of those offenders who received Out of Gate, 44.8% would be reconvicted. Release to work: reduces reconviction by 4.2 percentage points e.g. if offenders had a 12 month reconviction rate of 50% this means that of those offenders on Release to Work, 45.8% would be reconvicted.
Current justice sector spend:	Approximately \$20.5 million each year (Department of Corrections).
Unmet demand:	Unknown

DO REINTEGRATION SERVICES REDUCE CRIME?

International evidence

Most developed countries provide assistance and support to prisoners who are returning to the community. However, evidence on the effectiveness of such services is limited.

Housing

Reviews of the international research on housing for released prisoners have reached different conclusions. While some have concluded they are effective at reducing reoffending,ⁱ others have concluded that they have no effect.ⁱⁱ

There is some evidence to suggest while housing support may not be effective in reducing reoffending for the general population of offenders, the more intensive housing support programmes may be effective when targeted at serious violent offenders.ⁱⁱ

Findings from the US-based non-profit organisation “Justice Centre”ⁱⁱⁱ also support this suggestion. Of three studies that evaluated effectiveness of housing support, two found housing support had no effect on reoffending. However, the most rigorous study found housing support reduced reoffending for high risk offenders.

Obtaining employment

A common service aimed at helping offenders to gain employment is work release programmes.

Meta-analyses on work-release programmes have typically been inconclusive. For example, Mackenzie (2006)^{iv} examined multi-component and work programmes and found that only one of the studies included in the review showed a statistically significant result favouring the treatment group. Mackenzie (2006) concluded that there is not enough evidence to consider

these programmes as effective in reducing reoffending. Others, such as Wilson, Gallagher, and Mackenzie (2000)^v and Visher, Winterfield and Coggeshall (2006),^{vi} have also reached the same conclusion regarding the effectiveness of these programmes.

A number of the meta-analyses which include work release programmes also review prisoner education and vocational training programmes.¹

Other reintegrative services

Although limited, there is some evidence to suggest other reintegrative services are effective at reducing reoffending. For example, Griffiths et al. (2007)^{xii} presented findings from evaluations of assistance and support-based reintegration programmes, such as Circles of Support and Accountability, and concluded that some support programmes are successful in reducing reoffending. However, Griffiths et al. (2007) add that additional research would be useful to fully understand the dynamics of such programmes given other related programmes have produced less positive results.

New Zealand Evidence

Of the Department of Corrections’ reintegration services, two have been evaluated for their effectiveness. The majority of the other reintegration services are too new to be evaluated using recidivism as the key measure.

The evaluations which have been conducted have used the Rehabilitation Quotient method, which compares reconviction and reimprisonment rates of those who completed an intervention to those of a matched group who did not complete an intervention.

The latest evaluation of the Release to Work programme delivered encouraging results with a 4.4 percentage point reduction in reimprisonment in 12 months and a 4.2

¹ A separate evidence brief is being prepared on this topic.

percentage point reduction in reconviction in 12 months.^{vii} The Release to Work programme is evaluated regularly and while results have varied over the past seven years they have averaged at a four percentage point reduction for reimprisonment and a five percentage point reduction for reconviction. This suggests a reasonably positive level of effectiveness.

Research examining the effectiveness of Out of Gate was first conducted in 2014/15. Initial findings are positive for this service, with a 6.2 percentage point reduction in reimprisonment in 12 months and a 5.2 percentage point reduction in reconviction in 12 months.^{vii} The Department of Corrections' annual report presents the reimprisonment rates of most of its rehabilitative interventions, and in 2015 Out of Gate was ranked third behind the Young Offenders programme and the Special Treatment Unit Rehabilitation programme, both of which are intensive and expensive interventions.

Overall, there is some evidence to suggest that reintegrative services have a positive impact on reoffending. However, evaluation of the wider range of New Zealand services will be useful to be able to reliably conclude the effectiveness of these services on reoffending in the New Zealand context.

WHAT MAKES REINTEGRATION SERVICES EFFECTIVE?

What factors increase success in reducing crime?

The quality of current evidence is not yet at a level that we can understand comprehensively the characteristics that make reintegration services more or less effective.

However, the literature indicates that reintegrative services which are effective tend to be those that:

- begin in an institutional setting but continue (and take place mostly) in the community^{viii}
- are intensive in nature^{viii ix}
- are aimed at individuals who have a higher risk of reoffending^{viii ix}
- follow on from successful rehabilitation programme participation, thereby ensuring that all of the offender's presenting needs are met,^x and address the many and complex interrelated challenges faced by offenders^{xii}
- are specific in their focus, both in the target group of offenders and in the needs they address^{xii}
- are underpinned by sound methods for assessing the needs and risk factors of offenders^{xii}
- balance surveillance and control and support and assistance^{xi}
- are a joint-agency effort^{xii}
- are supported by sound case management practices and information management systems^{xii}

- reflect the public safety priorities of the community^{xii}
- have community engagement built into their planning and delivery,^{xii} and
- are evaluated to ensure they are effective, and that shortcomings in service design or delivery can be corrected.^{xii xiii}

Why do reintegration services reduce crime?

In theory, the mechanism behind why reintegrative services may reduce crime is likely to vary for the different types of services.

For example, gaining employment and income may be explained by economic theories of crime. Economic theories of crime (e.g., Piehl 1998^{xiv}) are based on the notion that individuals will respond rationally to the costs and benefits of criminal opportunities. Supporters of these theories hypothesise that factors which reduce the expected benefits or increase the expected cost will reduce crime.

Effectiveness of other services may be explained by social control theory. Social control theories (e.g., Sampson and Laub 1993^{xv}) are based on the idea that individuals are less likely to engage in criminal behaviour when their bond to society is strong. These theories hypothesise that engaging in reintegration programmes reduce reoffending through building a commitment to conventional society.

A useful perspective is “relapse prevention”, which proposes that relapse into an undesirable pattern of (formerly habitual) behaviour, such as criminal offending, is more likely to occur when the individual faces high levels of stress, such as homelessness, lack of income, and absence of social support.

CURRENT INVESTMENT IN NEW ZEALAND

Reintegration falls within the Department of Corrections’ Rehabilitation and Reintegration appropriation. In 2014/15, the total expense for this appropriation was \$169.1 million.^{vii} Reintegration is only one component of this appropriation and the estimated cost of this was \$16.5 million in 2014/15.^{xvi}

The budget for reintegration services is \$20.5 million in 2015/16, and it is expected reintegration services will be delivered to 4,300 prisoners in this period.^{xvi}

The estimated cost for Out of Gate is \$2,000 per offender for a standard service and \$4,000 per offender for an intensive service. There is no real unit cost per offender for Release to Work. A brief summary of these two services follows.

Out of Gate

Each offender is assigned a navigator who works with them one-on-one to help them access the support they need as they move from prison into the community. Support is provided in all areas of reintegration such as employment, accommodation, health and wellbeing, life skills and community support.^{xvii}

This service was introduced across all New Zealand prisons in November 2013 using \$10 million over two years from the Justice Sector Fund (JSF). Due to the promising results, the Department of Corrections was granted another \$5 million from the JSF in Budget 2015 to extend the programme. As at June 2015, the service has had a total of 4,547 referrals.^{vii}

Results from the Out of Gate programme show that for every one percentage point reduction in reoffending, there is a benefit of \$5.5 million to the justice and wider social sector.^{xviii}

Release to Work

The Release to Work programme allows minimum security prisoners to engage in employment in the community during the day, and return to prison at night.^{xix} The aim of the programme is for prisoners to develop skills and habits of normal employment, and to rebuild contact with employers and the general public.

The Department of Corrections partners with employers to create relationships between offenders and prospective employers. Employers engaged in the Release to Work programme are encouraged to offer permanent and sustainable jobs to their Release to Work workers following release. In 2014/15, 50% of prisoners who took part in Release to Work gained permanent employment with the same employer at the end of their sentence.^{vii}

The Department of Corrections also works with a number of organisations to provide a range of other reintegrative services.^{xx} Some of the supporting organisations are:

- The Prisoner's Aid and Rehabilitation Society (PARS) network
- Prison Fellowship New Zealand
- The Salvation Army
- Salisbury Street Foundation
- Arts Access Aotearoa
- National Urban Māori Authority.

The types of services offered by the Department of Corrections and these partnering organisations are many and varied, including, but not limited to:

- Emergency accommodation
- Reintegration Support for Long Servers (RSLs) - Supported accommodation
- Rotorua, Tokoroa and Taupo (RTT) partnership between the Department of Corrections and Healthcare NZ Mental Health
- Volunteer services

- Reintegration Support services for Short Serving prisoners (RSSS)
- Reintegration Support Services
- Reintegration Support for Long Servers (RSLs) – Navigation
- Tiaki Tangata service to support Māori offenders
- Intensive Residential Services.

EVIDENCE RATING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Each Evidence Brief provides an evidence rating between Harmful and Strong.

Harmful	Robust evidence that intervention increases crime
Poor	Robust evidence that intervention tends to have no effect
Inconclusive	Conflicting evidence that intervention can reduce crime
Fair	Some evidence that intervention can reduce crime
Promising	Robust international <i>or</i> local evidence that intervention tends to reduce crime
Strong	Robust international <i>and</i> local evidence that intervention tends to reduce crime

According to the standard criteria for all evidence briefs,² the appropriate evidence rating for reintegration services is Promising.

This rating reflects that while the international research is mixed, there is evidence to suggest more intensive reintegration programmes are effective, particularly for those who are at high risk of reoffending. It also reflects the recent positive findings for two of New Zealand's reintegration services.

According to the standard interpretation of the Promising rating, this means that:

- There is robust international or local evidence that interventions tend to reduce crime.
- Interventions may well reduce crime if implemented well.
- Further evaluation is desirable to confirm interventions are reducing crime and to support fine-tuning of their design.

This rating also suggests more conclusive international evidence and robust evaluation of

the wider suite of services available in New Zealand will be beneficial in order to provide further evidence that these interventions reduce reoffending.

First edition completed: April 2016

Primary author: Stephanie Dorne

² Available at www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector/what-works-to-reduce-crime/

FIND OUT MORE

Go to the website

www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector/what-works-to-reduce-crime/

Email

whatworks@justice.govt.nz

Recommended reading

Department of Corrections. (2009). What works now? A review and update of research evidence relevant to offender rehabilitation practices within the Department of Corrections. New Zealand.

Griffiths, C.T., Dandurand, Y., & Murdoch, D. (2007). The social reintegration of offenders and crime prevention. Ottawa: National Crime Prevention Centre, Public Safety Canada. Policy, Research and Evaluation Division.

James, N. (2011). Offender re-entry: Correctional statistics, reintegration into the community, and recidivism (CRS Report RL34287). Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service.

Petersilia, J. (2004). What works in prisoner reentry? Reviewing and questioning the evidence, *Federal Probation*, 68.2, 4-8.

Seiter, R. & Kadela, K. (2003). Prisoner re-entry: what works, what does not, and what is promising. *Crime & delinquency*, 49.3, 360-388.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2012). Introductory Handbook on the Prevention of Recidivism and the Social Reintegration of Offenders. United Nations: New York.

Workman, K. (2012). How should we reintegrate prisoners? Retrieved January 19, 2016, from: http://www.rethinking.org.nz/assets/Newsletter_PDF/Issue_104/07%20Paper%20on%20Prisoner%20Reintegration.pdf.

REFERENCES

- ⁱ Seiter, R. & Kadela, K. (2003). Prisoner re-entry: what works, what does not, and what is promising. *Crime & delinquency*, 49.3, 360-388.
- ⁱⁱ Miller, M. & Ngugi, I. (2006). Impacts of housing supports: Persons with mental illness and ex-offenders. Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, Document No. 09-11-1901.
- ⁱⁱⁱ What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse (n.d.). Focus area: Housing. Retrieved January 19, 2016, from, <https://whatworks.csgjusticecenter.org/focus-area/housing>.
- ^{iv} MacKenzie, D. L. (2006). Vocational Education and Work Programs. In D. L. MacKenzie, What Works in Corrections: Reducing the Criminal Activities of Offenders and Delinquents (pp. 90-111). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- ^v Wilson, D. B., Gallagher, C. A., & MacKenzie, D. L. (2000). A Meta-Analysis of Corrections-Based Education, Vocation, and Work Programs for Adult Offenders. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 347-368.
- ^{vi} Visher, C. A. (2006). Systematic Review of Non-Custodial Employment Programs: Impact on Recidivism Rates of Ex-Offenders. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*. doi:10.4073/csr.2006.1
- ^{vii} Department of Corrections. (2015). 2014/15 Annual Report. Retrieved January 19, 2016, from: http://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/annual-reports5/annual_report_201415.html
- ^{viii} James, N (2011). Offender re-entry: Correctional statistics, reintegration into the community, and recidivism (CRS Report RL34287). Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service.
- ^{ix} Petersilia, J. (2004). What works in prisoner reentry? Reviewing and questioning the evidence, *Federal Probation*, 68.2, 4-8.
- ^x Department of Corrections. (2009). What works now? A review and update of research evidence relevant to offender rehabilitation practices within the Department of Corrections. New Zealand.
- ^{xi} Bazemore, G., & Stinchcomb, J. (2004). A civic engagement model of reentry: Involving community through service and restorative justice. *Federal Probation*, 68, 1-14.
- ^{xii} Griffiths, C.T., Dandurand, Y., & Murdoch, D. (2007). The social reintegration of offenders and crime prevention. Ottawa: National Crime Prevention Centre, Public Safety Canada. Policy, Research and Evaluation Division.
- ^{xiii} United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2012). Introductory Handbook on the Prevention of Recidivism and the Social Reintegration of Offenders. United Nations: New York.
- ^{xiv} Phiel, A. M (1998). "Economic Conditions, Work and Crime." In *The Handbook of Crime and Punishment*, edited by Michael Tonry. New York: Oxford University Press.
- ^{xv} Sampson, Robert J., and John H Laub. (1993). *Crime in the Making: Pathways and Turning Points through Life*, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- ^{xvi} The Treasury (2015). Vote Corrections Estimates of Appropriations 2015/16. Retrieved February 3, 2016, from: <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/budget/2015/estimates/v7/est15-v7-corr.pdf>.
- ^{xvii} Department of Corrections (2014). Practice: The New Zealand Corrections Journal, vol 2, issue 3. Wellington: New Zealand.
- ^{xviii} New Zealand Government. (2015). Budget 2015: \$6.5m boost to reduce reoffending [Press release]. Retrieved January 19, 2016, from: <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/budget-2015-65m-boost-reduce-reoffending>.
- ^{xix} Department of Corrections (n.d.). Release to work. Retrieved January 19, 2016, from: http://www.corrections.govt.nz/working_with_offenders/prison_sentences/employment_and_support_programmes/employment_activities/release_to_work.html
- ^{xx} Department of Corrections (n.d.). Supporting Organisations. Retrieved January 19, 2016, from: http://www.corrections.govt.nz/about_us/working_with_us/partners/supporting_organisations.html