



Supporting offenders into employment

Centre for Mental Health is an independent mental health charity working to improve the lives of people facing or living with mental ill health. Our research and development work aims to improve the way people with mental health conditions are supported to build better lives on their own terms.

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is a tried and tested approach, offering personalised support to help people with mental health problems into employment. The Centre is currently carrying out an evaluation to test whether this approach can meet the specific needs of offenders. We are working on this project in partnership with HM Prison Service, South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Enable, SOVA and the Institute of Mental Health (University of Nottingham).

What is Individual Placement and Support (IPS)?

IPS is a well-established model of supporting people into the right job for them, using a personalised approach.

It is based on the following **8 principles** and the more closely these principles are followed the more effective it is.

1. It aims to get people into competitive employment
2. It is open to all those who want to work
3. It tries to find jobs consistent with people's preferences
4. It works quickly
5. It brings employment specialists into clinical teams
6. Employment specialists develop relationships with employers based upon a person's work preferences
7. It provides time unlimited, individualised support for the person and their employer
8. Benefits counselling is included.

Many people with severe and enduring mental health problems want to work, recognising all the benefits it brings. These include contributing to their health and wellbeing, social interaction, financial benefits, satisfaction and quality of life.

Employment has been made possible by services which provide IPS. Success in employment can be achieved for anyone who is motivated to work, regardless of their diagnosis or mental health symptoms. However, availability of IPS is patchy and so many people do not have access to them.

The employment rate of people with severe and enduring mental health problems is the lowest of all disability groups at just **7.3%**

HSCIC 2013

In 2011-12, just **27%** of prisoners entered employment on release from prison

32% of prisoners reported being in paid employment in the four weeks before custody

37% of prisoners did not expect to return to their jobs upon release

BROMLEY BRIEFING SUMMER 2013, PRISON REFORM TRUST

Evidence suggests that supporting people to find and keep employment quickly after they have left prison reduces reoffending by **up to 50%**

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE ANALYSIS 2013

Reoffending costs the economy somewhere in the region of **£11 billion**

THE SOCIAL EXCLUSION UNIT, REDUCING RE-OFFENDING BY EX-PRISONERS, 2002

Overview of our aims

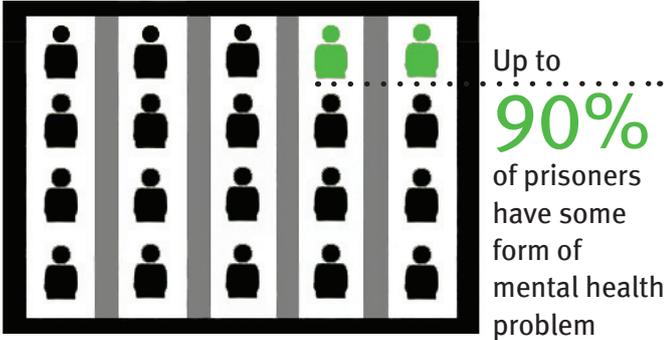
Employment for Offenders is a three year research programme, which will implement and test an innovative approach to securing employment for offenders with mental health problems. The research will adopt an evidence-based approach to help

offenders from three different prison populations (HMP Featherstone, a category C male training prison; HMP Drake Hall, a closed women's prison; and HMYOI Brinsford, a young offenders institute) secure employment on release from prison.

Project and evaluation

Previous work on IPS

- Previous research by the Centre has found that people in the criminal justice system with mental health problems are routinely excluded from programmes that provide vocational rehabilitation.



SINGLETON ET AL, 1998

- While people with severe and enduring mental health problems have one of the lowest employment rates in the UK, the vast majority want to work and with the right support can.
- Previous research has also shown that the IPS methodology is effective at supporting members of the general population with severe mental health problems to get and keep paid work.
- Across studies of IPS an average of 61% of clients achieved real, competitive employment.

The aim of the evaluation

To establish whether IPS can achieve improved employment outcomes for offenders who have very specific needs and face unique challenges.

Key elements of the evaluation

Employment specialists trained in the IPS methodology are being recruited to work alongside prison mental health teams and prison resettlement departments. The project will adopt a graduated roll-out across the three prisons, in order to incorporate adaptation lessons learnt during the establishment of the first project. The Employment Specialists form relationships with the person seeking employment and then with employers about that person. The Employment Specialist provides indefinite support

to the employee, the employer and also works with the community mental health service that takes over the care of the person once they leave prison. During this project some participants will also receive support from a volunteer mentor to allow us to gauge any added benefits this might bring.

Qualitative and quantitative research

The evaluation will use a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches to explore whether the adapted IPS methodology intervention is successful in achieving real employment outcomes and whether it contributes to a wider set of outcomes (e.g. mental wellbeing, social stability and reducing reoffending.) Consideration will be given to how IPS needs to be adapted to achieve the best outcomes in prison and whether the intervention provides value for money.

The impact of mentoring support

The element of mentoring support will also be evaluated - a sample of participants will be given such support during year two to three of the project, in order to gauge its added value and cost-effectiveness.

“We’re people rather than prisoners out here...it’s like we’re trusted people and we’re treated as yourself.”

Prisoner on Forestry Commission work scheme

FORESTRY COMMISSION REPORT, 2008

AS USED IN *BEYOND THE GATE*, CENTRE FOR MENTAL HEALTH 2010

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