



42. Beyond the gate

Securing employment for offenders with mental health problems

Summary

For people with a history of offending, one of the most effective ways of preventing reoffending and improving their chances of leading a better life is likely to be finding and keeping a job. However, only a small proportion of prisoners in England have jobs to go to on release and employment support offered in the criminal justice system is too often denied to offenders with mental health problems despite the high prevalence of mental ill health in the prison population.

It is possible to support people with mental health problems and offending histories into mainstream employment, from whichever part of the criminal justice system they are in. This paper provides a summary of the findings from an 18 month employment of offenders partnership programme, exploring the elements of

effective practice. It sets out the five key elements we have identified with examples of how they have been used in practice.

Employers should play an instrumental role in creating and developing opportunities. Recruitment needs to be pragmatic; on the basis of attitude and 'character' rather than qualifications or health status. Support should be offered to employees and their managers for as long as they need it. Opportunities for 'pre-employment' and 'in work' skills development should be linked to realistic employment opportunities. Criminal justice and other statutory agencies should facilitate effective pathways and access to real work and appropriate skills development while offenders are in the criminal justice system.

Introduction

Enabling a person with a history of offending to find and keep a job is probably the most effective way of preventing re-offending and improving their chances of leading a better life. It is also extremely beneficial to people with mental health problems, both in promoting their recovery and as a route out of poverty. Yet only a small proportion of prisoners in England have jobs to go to on release. The employment support that is offered in the criminal justice system is too often denied to offenders with mental health problems despite the high prevalence of mental ill health in the prison population.

There is now clear evidence that the vast majority of people with mental health problems want to work and that, with the right support in place, they can fulfil their potential in employment (Sainsbury Centre, 2009a).

Over the last 18 months, Centre for Mental Health has visited prisons, probation services and other sites across the country to find examples of where offenders with mental health problems are being supported into paid work. The Centre has applied the evidence of what works outside the criminal justice system, with the experiences of those working within it, to achieve good outcomes to produce a set of five key elements of effective practice which it believes should be in place universally.

The Centre has undertaken in depth interviews with the partners in the programme, offenders and ex-offenders and the agencies they work with and analysed these, along with findings from earlier research (Sainsbury Centre, 2009b).

Partner organisations participating in this work were intentionally selected from a diverse range of settings, designed to explore different parts of the criminal justice pathway and areas of specialisation, and also based upon demonstrated commitment to supporting offenders and ex-offenders into employment despite the challenges this poses. The seven partner organisations collaborating with the Centre are shown in Box 1.

Descriptions of each of the partner agencies are presented in a longer report of the project, available at www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk

Box 1: Partners

- BeOnSite: a not-for-profit subsidiary of private sector employer.
- Brockfield House: a secure mental health unit.
- Burnley Integrated Offender Management Unit: a police-managed community-based initiative.
- Forestry Commission: a government agency and employer.
- St Giles Trust: a third sector employer.
- HMP Wandsworth: a prison.
- West Yorkshire Probation: a probation area.

Box 2: The key principles of Individual Placement and Support (IPS)

1. Competitive employment is the primary goal.
2. Everyone who wants it is eligible for employment support.
3. Job search is consistent with individual preferences.
4. Job search is rapid: beginning within one month.
5. Employment specialists and clinical teams work and are located together.
6. Support is time-unlimited and individualised to both the employer and the employee.
7. Welfare benefits counselling supports the person through the transition from benefits to work.

(Adapted from Bond *et al.*, 2008)

In addition to visiting partners, the principles of Individual Placement and Support (IPS), the evidence-based approach to supported employment for people in contact with specialist community mental health services, were applied to this project (see Box 2). A review of the international literature on employment for offenders was also carried out.

This paper draws heavily on evidence from a population of offenders who have sentences for a year or longer. We recognise, however, that the population of people with an offending history is very diverse and we believe that many of the principles outlined are applicable to other offender groups.

Elements of effective practice

Five elements of effective practice have been identified. They are set out in Box 3 and described in detail here.

Box 3: Elements of effective practice

1. Employers should play an instrumental role in creating and developing opportunities for paid work for offenders.
2. Recruitment needs to be pragmatic: on the basis of attitude and ‘character’ rather than qualifications or health status.
3. Support should be offered to employees and their managers for as long as they need it.
4. Opportunities for ‘pre-employment’ and ‘in work’ skills development should be linked to realistic employment opportunities: not training for its own sake.
5. Criminal justice and other statutory agencies should facilitate effective pathways and access to real work and appropriate skills development while offenders are in the criminal justice system.

The role of employers

During the research it became clear that, in the schemes which achieve employment outcomes, employers play a fundamental role in creating and developing opportunities for paid competitive employment. The motivation for employers comes from a combination of commercial requirements and corporate social responsibility objectives. Employers act as champions, influencing policy and creating real employment opportunities, particularly through the use of their supply chains and wider networks.

In this way, being associated with, but not part of, the criminal justice system enables employers to work creatively across boundaries, for example in supporting ‘through the gates’ employment initiatives which require training opportunities to be linked to paid employment opportunities in the community.

Employers are also able to respond to workforce requirements within industries, for example by training employees in particular trades where there is demand.

Bovis Lend-Lease, the building company, has played a leading role in the ‘corporate alliance’ of private sector companies which engages with the Ministry of Justice and the National Offender Management Service to improve employment opportunities for offenders.

BeOnSite, a branch of Bovis Lend-Lease, has formed a partnership with Measoms Dry-Lining to provide specialist apprenticeships to offenders. It is also working with Bovis Lend-Lease to extend employment and training opportunities for public construction contracts, especially those which specify wider social inclusion and diversity clauses.

BeOnSite has formed an agreement with London Probation to provide employment and training opportunities to offenders, and has negotiated an agreement with the London Borough of Newham to provide employment and training opportunities to over 100 long term unemployed people, many of whom also have offending histories.

Timpson’s has established a shoe repair training academy within HMP Wandsworth. This facility has a capacity for 15 trainees who are prepared for employment in Timpson’s shops in the

community. Timpson's has also established academies at HMP Forest Bank and HMP Liverpool. In total, 35 ex-offenders are currently employed by Timpson's via their initiatives. A designated manager has been employed to manage both the contracts with individual prisons, recruitment from academies and any ongoing welfare or support needs which ex-offenders experience.

The Forestry Commission initiated a service level agreement with HMP Dartmoor and works with the prison's resettlement wing to create employment opportunities for prisoners in forestry. Additionally, it is working with Moor Trees, a woodland charity, to seek funding to increase the scale and range of employment opportunities to prisoners at HMP Dartmoor, and across the South West region.

Pragmatic recruitment

Partner employers all emphasised the need for a pragmatic recruitment practice in the employment of ex-offenders. Their fundamental criteria for selection to employment were universally seen as an individual showing a positive attitude and enthusiasm, and a wish to change their life – rather than necessarily possessing appropriate vocational training or educational qualifications – what might be described as 'character capabilities' (The Foyer Federation, 2010).

To emphasise the necessity of attitude over attainment, St Giles Trust provides formal introductory training to enhance work performance only once an employee has been recruited:

"Numeracy and literacy is ideal, but what is far more important as an employer is that employees have the softer skills needed to be a good colleague in the work place. If they have these soft skills we can largely support and train them in any other skills shortages."

St Giles Trust Manager.

The key 'character capabilities' required by BeOnSite are specified online to potential employees via its website. These are clearly shown to be more important than possessing current vocational skills or educational qualifications. In effect, enthusiasm and attitude represent the trigger for initial employment and

the subsequent on-the-job training provided by BeOnSite acts as a kind of extended interview for new employees. In doing so, a 'place then train' approach to employment is adopted, where suitable but untrained individuals are recruited and trained 'on the job'. This is very different to the traditional 'train then place' approach to employment, where people are given long periods of vocational training before being given the chance to get a job.

Research in mental health services shows that a person's clinical diagnosis or symptoms of mental illness are not a good guide to their employability and that paid employment can itself bring about improvements in their health (Burns *et al.*, 2008). This contrasts with the usual assumption, even among some mental health professionals, that full symptomatic recovery needs to have taken place before people are even considered for employment. This focus on attitudes and behaviours is congruent with the research on predictors of employability (Grove & Membrey, 2005, Campell, *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, the IPS principle of including in programmes anyone who is keen to get a job should be applied to offenders with mental health problems.

Constructive risk taking

Employers and criminal justice agencies alike need to be prepared to take constructive risks at point of recruitment in order to see beyond the nature of an individual's offence and to recognise their personal qualities and capabilities.

The Forestry Commission reports that when it started to offer employment opportunities to prisoners at HMP Dartmoor, it took a long step outside its 'comfort zone' by initially employing two offenders with serious index offences who subsequently proved to be highly successful employees and who later secured permanent employment on release.

An ability to accept and accommodate for possible failure of employment is also identified as a key issue in recruitment:

"If out of every 10 referred you get one success, that's good. We happen to have more like a 30-40% success rate."

Manager, Measoms.

This approach to risk taking – and of ensuring support is provided to turn unsuccessful placements into positive learning experiences – is also congruent with the principles of IPS.

Integrating ex-offenders as equal colleagues

All employers said it was vital for them to create a re-integrative and normalising working environment for ex-offenders. This is important so that they are not subjected to labelling and are treated as a full and equal member of their organisation.

In a move to promote re-integration prior to release from prison, Timpson's trainees at HMP Wandsworth are required to wear company uniforms while they undergo training, as would any employee in the community.

Prisoners gaining work experience with the Forestry Commission are treated as full colleagues and attend events such as staff conferences with their peers:

“The guys are part of the squad... I just don't think of these guys as prisoners ... We see a side of them that probably no one else ever does ... they are just glad to be out.”

Forestry Commission Team Manager.

“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)

Support for employees and their managers

Recognising the specific needs and challenges experienced by ex-offenders in the workplace, employers have developed a number of methods to provide in-work support to employees and their managers; particularly around professional boundaries and conduct, as well as the specific personnel and practical support needs for people recently released from prison i.e. establishing a bank account.

“These people (ex-offenders) are here as paid members of staff. They do receive supervision like all staff but they are not our clients. This can sometimes be tough.”

Manager, St Giles Trust.

Establishing a management focus

Managers reported the need to establish a clear understanding with employees about appropriate professional boundaries and conduct in the workplace.

A project manager for Measoms described the need to provide a combination of 'discipline and love' in day to day management of employees from BeOnSite. On the one hand, they had to be clear with employees about what was expected of them, but also to be respectful and mindful of their specific circumstances and personal needs:

“You have to be able to deal with staff at the right level. Don't belittle them or put them down – be a good manager but be credible in their eyes.”

Manager, Measoms.

One important function for employers was that of supporting employees in the management of personal and professional boundaries in the workplace. It was observed that many ex-offenders once employed can be extremely enthusiastic about their role and loyal to their employers to the point of working excessive hours or 'taking work home' at the end of the day. It was noted that such strong levels of attachment need to be managed to ensure that employees maintain an appropriate balance between personal and professional lives.

Responding to specific needs of ex-offenders

Employers highlighted the need to be aware of some of the specific needs of ex-offenders and to respond in a supportive manner. One practical area identified was financial management for prison leavers, many of whom do not have a bank account, full identification or a permanent address.

St Giles Trust reported that, in their first days of work as an employee is establishing these things, employers can be asked to provide payment by cheque as paid to 'cash'.

Employers also recognised that ex-offenders can face a range of complex issues which may need additional attention or support, for example accommodation, benefits, financial management, family or relationship problems, or access to health care services, in order for them to be managed or resolved.

“Basic needs must be met, such as secure housing, finances and supported move away from benefits. Help may be needed in this area and employers need to go the extra mile regarding housing for example.”

Manager, BeOnSite.

It was also acknowledged that individuals leaving the criminal justice system will frequently experience difficulties on the way and that employers will need to respond flexibly to support people to stay in employment in these circumstances. For example, it was observed that some offenders returning to live in the community may display an outward appearance of confidence to cover up underlying concerns and anxieties, which may need to be understood and addressed by employers.

A ‘crunch point’ has been identified in the period immediately following release. Employees are overwhelmed by the changes to their environment and their new levels of personal responsibility. This can lead to powerful emotional responses, drug or alcohol misuse or risk of re-offending. Managers and support agencies need to act flexibly and pragmatically to help sustain the employee in work.

“We know that ex-offenders often have a ‘wobble’ shortly after leaving prison. In these circumstances we normally try and get them to take a break/holiday rather than stay in work for obvious reasons.”

St Giles Trust Manager.

“I can talk to civilians now... I can actually go to a shop and not be afraid ... and I can ..., well, look after myself in a way.”

“For me, I’ve only been in a short time so like meeting new people, with my old job I was used to that and going to shops wasn’t a problem. People that have been in (prison) a long time, it’s getting them out and learning life again, basically.”

(Employees quoted in Forestry Commission Report, 2008)

Support for managers

While managers, with encouragement from their employer, are often very ready to go the extra mile, managing ex-offenders with multiple needs can be very demanding. Employers need to ensure that managers are not overwhelmed with issues that affect performance but which cannot be resolved in the workplace. The principles of IPS require time-unlimited support for both employer and employee. Where outside intermediaries are involved, this can be part of their remit. If not, other solutions are required.

Timpson’s employs a single manager who combines responsibility for HR management and welfare issues. This person acts as a single point of contact with criminal justice agencies including probation and prisons and local managers and shops, thereby ensuring that any needs or difficulties, for example with performance, timekeeping or attitude, can be quickly addressed. The company recognises that ex-offenders frequently have needs relating to accommodation and finances, particularly post release, and provides loans or grants where considered appropriate, for example to fund a deposit on a flat.

Based on its particular business model where employees are involved in construction projects managed by subcontractors, BeOnSite is able to affect a split between in-work management roles and what is considered to be a necessary support function:

“Support is important – at BeOnSite, your line manager does not have to be bothered by your offending history or issues that go with it such as financial problems ... (the team) ... deal with that and it’s good to keep that separate. Managers shouldn’t have to put up with those issues.”

Employee, BeOnSite.

In-work mentoring

All the employers adopted some form of in-work mentoring.

At the Forestry Commission, this took the form of qualified foresters both supervising employees and supporting them to understand the requirements of working in the timber industry. In this model, contact between mentor and employee is intensive and based upon the imparting of knowledge about work in a particular trade, without focus upon ‘offender-specific’ themes.

BeOnSite enables mentoring to take place in three ways. First, it provides trade-based mentoring via apprenticeships, similar to Measoms. Second, practical help and support is offered via the Probation Liaison Manager to help to sustain employment and address any requirements linked to community sentences. Third, ongoing peer-mentoring relationships are provided through the St Giles Trust's Through the Gates service.

St Giles Trust provides advice and counselling for its ex-offender employees on non-management related issues. It is also enlisting support from private sector organisations to provide specialist support to employees in specific fields, for example, staff from Pricewaterhouse Coopers recently provided guidance on gaining employment.

Mentoring is perceived to be effective because of the shared link and mutual respect between mentor and mentee:

"It does not necessarily need to be peers but someone who understands and is credible in the eyes of the ex-offender and is someone with whom they can identify."

Manager, Measoms.

Nevertheless, it was observed that frequently the attachment between mentor and mentee is strengthened through a shared experience of offending and contact with the criminal justice system:

"That comes from personal experience – being older, being 'like them' in some way and providing a role model for them to aspire to ... 'if he can do it so can I'."

Manager, Measoms.

Effective mentoring relationships appeared to work because they foster positive attachments on the part of the ex-offender, not just towards their mentor, but towards their employer, their task and also wider society.

Skills development

The need to offer opportunities for skills development at both 'pre-employment' and 'in-work' stages was stressed strongly by both employers and criminal justice agencies.

"It is about people understanding that they can develop skills which can allow them to get paid work in the community. It is also about helping people understand that the sorts of work they are doing in prison can lead to career progression on the outside."

Manager – HMP Wandsworth.

The key difference, however, between this and much of the training provided within the criminal justice system, is that the employer provides training and on-the-job experience linked to specific employment opportunities and are uncompromising about it being to the appropriate industry standard with equivalent expectations as regards the commitment and self-discipline of trainees. Mechanisms for personal skills and career development can take place whatever a person's current employment status or their position within the criminal justice pathway. Involving offenders in appropriate training or other activities represents both a realistic and valid opportunity for development leading to the eventual aim of open, paid employment.

"The responsibility of that job was the thing that saved me."

Employee, BeOnSite.

The Forestry Commission, in partnership with Moor Trees, is seeking to establish a project to develop NVQ qualifications in forestry both for detained prisoners and those released on temporary licence.

The vocational services team at Brockfield House offers a developed 'ways into work' programme to all interested patients which provides comprehensive information and support to seek and sustain employment.

Peer-mentor training

St Giles Trust operates its 'Open Roads' project at HMP Wandsworth and other prisons to train prisoners to work as 'peer mentors' to NVQ Level 3 in Information, Advice and Guidance. This provides trainees with an opportunity for relevant skill development and enables other prisoners to benefit from the information, advice and guidance it offers. The Trust recognises that those who take up the opportunity are among the more able prisoners:

“The people we have working here are by no means the most chaotic ex-offenders. By the time they get here they have already gone through a lot of hoops. They tend to be the ‘top group’ of offenders while in prison, with red bands and special privileges.”

Manager, St Giles Trust.

Nevertheless, in enabling peer-mentor training to take place within prison, St Giles Trust in effect creates an ‘escalator’ which allows individuals to benefit from peer-mentoring and to potentially progress to training to be a mentor themselves, or other training or employment opportunities as and when they feel able.

Release on Temporary Licence

Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) is the mechanism by which prisoners are enabled to conduct unpaid work experience or paid work in the community with a designated employer while still serving their sentence.

The Forestry Commission is capable of providing up to three work experience placements at a time for prisoners referred via HMP Dartmoor’s resettlement wing. It recognises the value of ROTL opportunities both for the prisoner concerned and also for the Commission by providing it with additional productive capacity. It also recognises that some employment skills training, for example around the use of a chainsaw, cannot be done in custody effectively. A prisoner completing similar training in custody would need to be re-trained to apply the skills in a real work environment.

In order to comply with requirements, individuals undertaking ROTL have to maintain strict timekeeping and reporting requirements. As prisons may be located some distance from an actual workplace, individuals may also have to spend long hours travelling to and from employment each day, requiring a very strong commitment to the job.

“ROTL is good because it gives you a taster from a safe and sheltered environment and you get a picture of what an alternative life could be and also whether the industry is for you.”

Manager, Measoms.

ROTL also presents an opportunity for career progression and skill development:

“When you come out of prison you have to change your career. Nobody will employ me in the career I was doing before so I have had a total change and now work here. I had no experience doing this sort of thing so was happy to volunteer to get the experience.”

Employee, St Giles Trust.

Probation services also value the opportunities provided by ROTL as a pathway to sustained employment:

“We find it relatively easy to place people who are in prison and released on temporary licence. These placements usually work really well and can sometimes lead to a job immediately on release.”

Regional Probation Worker,
Yorkshire and Humberside.

The role of statutory agencies

The basic remit of criminal justice agencies is to secure public protection and manage offenders. Within that role, however, there is a variety of ways in which criminal justice and other statutory agencies can support and facilitate pathways into paid competitive employment.

Although the importance of employers leading the process wherever possible has been emphasised, they are not queuing up to get involved. It is important therefore for criminal justice agencies to recruit suitable employers, stressing the business benefits as well as the corporate social responsibility contribution they can make to their communities.

Statutory bodies need to be proactive with employers, enabling them to meet individuals with an offending history who have successfully made the transition to employment and a life without offending. One way of encouraging this is to participate in local and national fora where employers are already engaged in economic and community development, such as local chambers of commerce or economic development groups.

“We spend a lot of time with inmates and a lot of time developing relationships with employers.”

Manager, HMP Wandsworth.

All the partners in this project had found ways of making their presence felt ‘out there’ in the wider community and therefore of being in a position to take up opportunities for employment placements as they arose.

Facilitating individual employment pathways

Criminal justice agencies can provide pathways to employment by identifying offenders’ work needs and aspirations and then developing appropriate service responses.

Burnley Integrated Offender Management Unit assesses people’s Employment, Training and Education (ETE) needs on entry into the service. An employment specialist is based in the unit and provides advice and support to those referred. The specialist also has an outreach role, working with Jobcentre Plus, substance misuse services, young people’s services and voluntary sector agencies to maximise people’s developmental and employment opportunities. This approach explicitly acknowledges that employment is a way to protect the public and to reduce re-offending.

West Yorkshire Probation Service is preparing to strengthen its ETE provision through the establishment of multi-agency hubs in key localities, where staff from a range of different agencies, including employment and training specialists, will be based. It also prepares a ‘local employment partnership list’ which identifies employment opportunities for offenders and facilitates access to interviews. A regional probation employment lead covering the whole of Yorkshire and Humberside also maintains contact with employers to secure permanent and temporary employment opportunities for offenders.

Creating a space for employers

Prisons can clearly support pathways to employment by supporting employers to bring their practices into establishments.

HMP Wandsworth has supported Timpson’s to establish an industry-standard employment academy within the prison covering shoe repairs and engraving. It also seeks to keep up with industry innovation to identify possible future areas of involvement:

“At the moment I use my own time to go to trade fairs and places to keep up to date about the latest technology and what current needs are.”
Manager, HMP Wandsworth.

Supporting employers in the community

Criminal justice agencies and secure mental health services can also reach out into the community to facilitate access to employment, for example by maintaining contact with former prisoners and patients when they leave custody and begin employment.

Brockfield House’s vocational services team provides outreach support to patients who have left the unit to live in the community. It also works directly with employers to secure employment opportunities for patients and provides appropriate support to them when they take on a current or former patient.

A designated regional probation employment lead covering Yorkshire and Humberside, and linking with West Yorkshire Probation, engages with employers, including private sector companies and local authorities, to develop employment opportunities.

“I don’t think the recession/unemployment rates actually affect the employment of ex-offenders. There has always been competition for jobs and ex-offenders will always struggle against that competition. It’s about finding employers who actively want to employ ex-offenders and working with them. That’s the only way we can secure the outcomes.”

Regional Probation Employment Lead –
Yorkshire and Humberside.

HMP Wandsworth’s ETE team is able to provide post-release follow-up with agencies in the community for a period of 8-12 weeks.

“In many cases, people begin to disengage with services only three days after release, so it is essential that the right level of support is offered at this time.”

Manager, HMP Wandsworth.

Conclusions

The evidence collected from partners has demonstrated that, given the right approach, it is possible to help many more people with offending histories to get and maintain paid competitive employment than are being helped today. Also none of the elements of effective practice precludes the participation of offenders with a history of mental ill health.

It has been known for many years, and from substantial research evidence, that real jobs are a realistic aspiration, even for those with the most severe mental health conditions, as long as that is what they want and they are offered the right support. The evidence from the mental health field is that the most effective approach to employment is IPS.

There is no equivalent evidence base within the criminal justice field, but it is now apparent that many of the principles of IPS, if suitably adapted, are relevant to the employment of offenders and other groups who face considerable disadvantage and discrimination when it comes to entering the labour market.

As so few offenders with significant mental health conditions are currently offered help to get into employment, there is no detailed evidence about how to adapt IPS to the criminal justice system. For example, it is not known how to integrate health care and employment support within prisons. However, experience from other mental health services suggests that in-reach teams may find that providing employment support enhances their engagement with clients and provides a purpose to their work which improves both clinical and vocational outcomes for individuals.

Centre for Mental Health will continue to work with its partners and others to develop and evaluate these ideas, with the eventual aim that employment for offenders with mental health conditions who want to change their lives becomes an expectation rather than an impossible dream.

Recommendations

1. Employers should, wherever possible, hold the key role in developing effective employment pathways for people with offending histories. Criminal justice agencies should proactively seek employers to get involved with offenders and demonstrate the business benefits of doing this.
2. Existing employment programmes for offenders need a change of emphasis, with a focus on paid employment instead of job preparation or training alone. The principles of IPS should inform the design and delivery of employment support in the criminal justice system.
3. Offenders with mental health problems should be included in all employment programmes in the criminal justice system. A pragmatic approach should be taken to recruitment to prevent the unnecessary exclusion of people with mental health problems or those with a lack of formal training or qualifications.
4. Employment programmes in prisons need to extend ‘through the gate’, providing in-work support for as long as it is needed, not just with work but with, for example, housing, health and benefits.
5. Further investigation is needed to understand the crucial role prison mental health teams have in ensuring open access to prison vocational services for people with mental health problems as an integral part of their treatment and recovery.

St Giles Trust

Since our research was carried out, St Giles Trust has been appointed as one of the key delivery partners in the recent project – launched at Peterborough prison – that aims to cut re-offending among prisoners by offering intensive support on release. St Giles Trust is offering ‘through the gates’ support to male prisoners serving less than 12 months, focusing on accommodation and support into employment, education and training.

The project is financed using a new funding arrangement known as Social Impact Bonds, which are being piloted by social investment organisation Social Finance. St Giles Trust has received some initial funding to cover start up costs and will receive future payments by results if its service successfully reduces re-offending among its clients. Under the Social Impact Bond arrangement, if re-offending drops by more than 7.5% within six years investors receive a payment representing a proportion of the cost of reoffending.

(St Giles Trust, 2010 and Ministry of Justice, 2010)

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Briefing 42: Beyond the gate

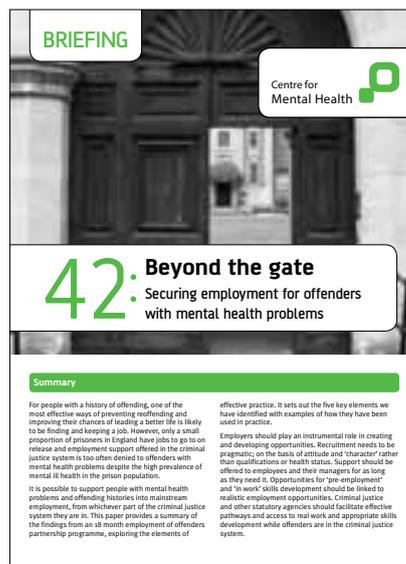
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