Lewisham Total Place

Customer Insight in Total Place - Case Study 'Reducing Re-Offending'

DRAFT

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Table of Contents

About **3**

Background **5**

Objective **6**

Approach **6**

Ethnography **7**

Introduction 7
Methodology 8
Crime 8
Drugs 9
Stress and Stability 9
Sources of Stability: 10
Interventions 10
Rehabilitation 11

Journey Mapping **13**

Participative Inquiry **13**

Findings **17**

Outcomes **20**

Benefits **21**

Governance **21**

Resourcing **22**

Challenges and Lessons Learnt **23**

Next Steps **24**

DRAFT

The Customer Led Transformation Programme
Lewisham's work has been funded under the Customer Led Transformation programme. The fund aims to embed the use of Customer Insight and Social Media tools and techniques as strategic management capabilities across the public sector family in order to support Place-Based working.

The Customer Led Transformation programme is overseen by the Local Government Delivery Council (supported by Local Government Improvement and Development).

The fund was established specifically to support collaborative working between local authorities and their partners focused on using customer insight and social media tools and techniques to improve service outcomes. These approaches offer public services bodies the opportunity to engage customers and gather insight into their preferences and needs, and thereby provide the evidence and intelligence needed to redesign services to be more targeted, effective and efficient.

About…

Some 260,000 people live in the London Borough of Lewisham. Lewisham has a relatively young population with an average age of 35 years. Children and young people aged 0-19 represent about 25% of the population. As a locality, Lewisham is the 15th most ethnically diverse local authority in England. Two out of every five Lewisham residents are from a black or minority ethnic background. There are over 170 languages spoken in the Borough.

Although there is a degree of affluence, the Borough does have high levels of socio-economic deprivation. Lewisham is ranked 39th for deprivation in England, with one in three 'super output areas' (SOAs) in the 20% most deprived.

The rate of Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claimants rose from 3.2% of the working-age population in July 2008 to 5% in December 2009. Lewisham has the highest rate of lone parent households in London, 17.8% of all households.

The complex needs and social challenges faced by Lewisham's residents require public agencies and their partners to have a deep and shared

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understanding of the dynamics of population, place and history. All have an impact on outcomes for citizens.

Tackling disadvantage systematically requires agencies to work together to deliver agile and flexible services to be targeted effectively and personalised around the differing needs of individual citizens, families and communities.[1]

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[1] Adapted from *Total Place in Lewisham* page 2

Background

Lewisham Strategic Partnership's Total Place programme sought to improve public services and to generate efficiency savings across a range of services across the partnership. The management of offenders was one of Lewisham's Total Place work streams. Reducing re-offending was an existing strategic commitment of the Mayor of Lewisham, and is led by the Safer Lewisham Partnership.

Re-offending is a significant issue facing society and public services. Nationally, over one-half of all crimes are committed by people who have previously been through the criminal justice system (Home Office, 2006). The evidence shows that within two years of being discharged from prison 64 per cent of offenders serving over 12 months (and 73 per cent of offenders who receive short-term custody less than 12 months) will re-offend.

Services and interventions for adult offenders (18 years old and above) were the primary focus of this work stream with the aim of reducing crime and the harm caused by repeat offenders as well as improving the life chances for this group. The services involved include those provided by the police, prison service, probation service, the local authority and charity and voluntary organisations.

The Management of Offenders work stream used "client insight" to identify ways in which the partnership could improve the outcomes and efficiency of services to reduce re-offending. The "clients" engaged as part of this work stream, were ex-offenders themselves. With funding support from the Customer Led Transformation programme, Lewisham conducted ethnographic research with offenders in order to hear directly their perspective and experience of services. The Lewisham partnership examined in some depth the interaction between clients, services and agencies locally, from the client perspective and from that of the service providers.

Lewisham's approach generated insights into gaps, overlaps and inefficiencies in service provision. For more in-depth analysis please read Lewisham Strategic Partnerships Offender Management "Final Report", the full report on the ethnography study and view the video at http://www.lewishamstrategicpartnership.org.uk/offendersvideo.asp .

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Objective

The overarching objective of the work stream was to reduce crime and the harm caused by repeat offenders.

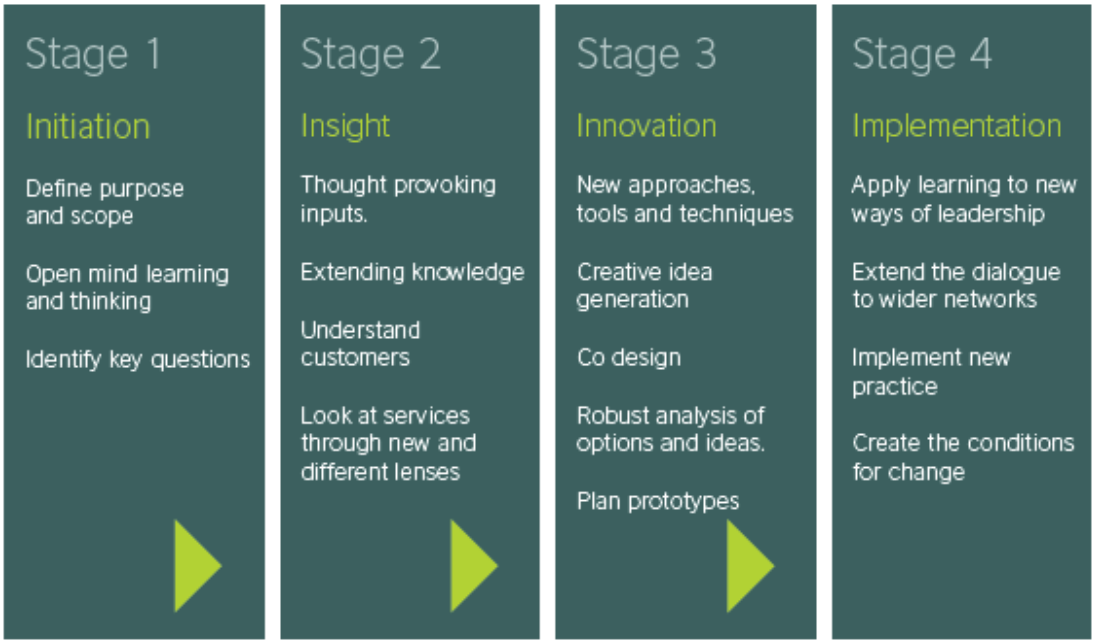
The objectives of the customer insight work was to

- build greater understanding of the behaviours and needs of these clients and the effectiveness of services provided
- develop organisational learning through the collection and circulation of the evidence and discussions between partners
- redesign services in the light of the evidence to be to more effective at reducing reoffending and more efficient in using resources

Approach

Lewisham's Management of Offenders project followed a four stage process, in which insight was pivotal.

Figure 1. Lewisham's Light Touch Insight to Innovation Process



The initiation stage of the project involved defining and agreeing the scope of the project and the particular client group of interest. Lewisham focused on what

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happened to repeat offenders (who had received a sentence of over 12 months) on their release from prison.

The project identified some specific questions that would help guide the research in the insight stage:

- What is the client journey from arrest to rehabilitation?
- What are the drivers of criminal behaviour amongst the target client group?
- What is the client experience of services and interventions?
- What are the range of interventions and services, both enforcement and support related, available to the client group?

The nature of these questions led the project to consider quantitative and qualitative forms of client insight. Quantitative analysis was based on publicly available data on costs of service provision and re-offending rates. The funding from the Customer Led Transformation Programme focused on qualitative methods and in particular Lewisham's use of ethnography alongside client journey mapping.

The ethnographic research sought new insights into client's life experiences and interactions with services. It also sought to take a fresh look at the interfaces between services in order to identify gaps and overlaps. New insights would inform service redesign in the 'innovation' stage (see "Outcomes").

Lewisham used four approaches to developing insight:

- Ethnography and conversations with clients and service providers;
- Client journey mapping; and
- Participative inquiry through learning interviews and workshops
- Case file reviews

Ethnography

Introduction

Ethnography is a form of social research that aims to generate deeper insights into the reality of small numbers of individuals. With ethnography, researchers spend long periods of time with individuals, observing their daily lives, their interactions with services and the wider environmental and social context of their lives. The purpose of ethnography is not to generate findings that can be extrapolated for whole client

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populations but rather to generate fresh insights and new perspectives, based on client experiences.

Ethnography differs from traditional forms of consultation because it gets beyond the self reported observations of a subset of customers who are willing to participate in formal settings. Lewisham commissioned client ethnographies and also short service provider studies to identify whether there were cultural barriers to change.

Methodology

Eight ethnographies were conducted with a range of different individuals to help to understand the customer journey from the perspective of an offender and to generate insight about potential cost-savings and efficiencies. The individuals include:

- Repeat offenders, who have committed crimes including theft and robbery, supply of drugs, ABH and GBH, assault, armed robbery, and possession of firearms, deception and fraud, identity theft.
- Alcohol and substance misusers (and those who do not have a substance addiction)
- Men and women, aged between 24 and 53.
- Individuals living in a variety of different housing types (e.g. hostels, with friends, social housing etc).

The use of ethnography was a key input to this process and supported the development of 'personas'.

Personas are descriptions of clients that consider their current reality, wants, needs and challenges and encourage service providers to put clients and their perspectives at the heart of providers' service offer.

The ethnographers also shadowed a number of individual's working with offenders in Lewisham. These 'service provider' ethnographies have included spending time with probation, at a hostel, with drug intervention workers, at a charity providing support to homeless individuals and offenders and at HMP Belmarsh.

Crime

In the view of the respondents, the distinction between a 'crime' and a 'criminal' is whether or not you have been caught. Almost all those in the project's sample

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outlined numerous crimes that they had committed, often on daily basis, the majority of which they have never been convicted for. Some felt that these 'repeat offences' were 'under the radar' of the authorities. Others felt it was more of an open secret; some crimes were easy to get away with and incurred a low chance of being caught (e.g. shoplifting, low level drug-dealing, fraud, burglary). In many instances the offenders were making calculations about the benefit of committing crime against the chances of being apprehended.

Work and 'entrepreneurialism': Many of those we researched were incredibly resourceful; spending time planning and thinking about ways to commit crime or avoid getting caught. Consideration and thought was often put into committing the most 'petty' crimes. In some cases, individuals were 'successful' in their 'criminal career', often earning substantial amounts of money and status (often despite have drug or alcohol addictions). Whilst some recognised that committing crimes was wrong, they also recognised that to stop committing crime may result in at best, a significant fall in their living standards or at worst, a decline into a desperate state where even their most basic needs were not being met. Few felt that the risk of being caught was a significant deterrent.

Drugs

Drug users or offenders: Whilst the project recognises that not all offenders are drug users, the reverse is thought to be less clearly demarcated. A number of respondents and the service providers that contributed to the research, felt that if an individual was using Class A drugs then it is likely that they would also be committing crimes (often on a daily basis) to fund their habit. The general consensus was that the majority of this criminal activity would go undetected.

Stress and Stability

Sources of stress: Many of those the ethnographers spoke to experienced high levels of stress on a day to day basis. Individuals were regularly involved in disputes relating to family, property, money, accommodation etc. These disputes were often over petty amounts or minor disagreements – but could have significant ramifications. For example, an individual's accommodation could be contingent upon fractious family relationships. Or they may have complex borrowing and lending arrangements with friends and acquaintances, which could result in frustration and violence. Those the ethnographers spoke to often have many of these ongoing disputes or disagreements.

Reaching out: As mentioned above, many offenders are regularly committing crimes without being caught and never coming into contact with the 'system'. However, sometimes an 'offender' will present themselves to an agency for help. Often this is as a last resort and in a moment of extreme 'urgency'. For example, when a drug user hasn't been able to raise the cash for their 'fix' they will attempt to gain a 'methadone' prescription from a drug clinic. Or when they have been made homeless and freezing weather means it is too cold to sleep on the streets. However from first presenting themselves, to receiving help there is often a time lag. During this time, the individual may find another way of 'satisfying their need', which is likely to involve criminal behaviour.

Sources of Stability:

Housing: From those we researched, housing could be a source of stability / instability. Getting into decent, secure housing was often considered a real achievement (and becoming more so). As such, individuals who had been allocated good accommodation often felt that it was worth making an effort to keep. Those who were happy in their accommodation often talked about their efforts at DIY to improve their property and make their life more comfortable (e.g. installing laminate flooring). Others described self-imposed rules relating to their households – e.g. that they did not invite anyone back to the house, or that they did not smoke inside.

Financial stability: Finding an additional (and regular / non-criminal) income source was often described as turning point for many of those we spoke to. Examples include, meeting a financially stable partner or renting a spare room out to a lodger.

Routine: Many described the benefit of routine, one of the participants in our research opted to take methadone as a way of not being reliant on criminal activity. Taking methadone qualified him for disability benefits, considerably increasing his weekly allowance and enabling him to gain some semblance of dignity and normality. It also helped to provide routine and structure to his life (having to go to the pharmacy every day to receive his daily dose).

Interventions

Relationships with key workers: Building quality relationships with key workers was often seen as one of the most important steps for an offender in moving forward. Often the offenders have few contacts with anyone outside of their world of drug use

and crime, and this relationship can bring a sense of normality to their life (having a normal discussion, sitting down, eating food together etc). Offenders we spent time with felt that quality relationships with support workers were of huge importance to their progress.

- Multiple Case Workers: During the course of the research it became clear that Service Users can have up to four key workers, case workers etc working with them. This can cause confusion for both offender and agency, with difficulty in information being passed between different organisations. It also can hinder rapport and trust being established.
- Acronyms and unnecessary complexity: The whole 'world' of offender management is dominated by acronyms (for service providers, types of offenders, types of assessments, different courses, different types of conviction and sentence). The use of acronyms makes navigating of the system incredibly difficult for anyone new (including new offenders). For people who may have drug or alcohol dependency or learning difficulties, this seems to make little sense. (None of those the ethnographers encountered during recruitment or research could give a complete or even partially complete description of their 'journey' through the system – in part because of confusion about acronyms).
- Hitting rock bottom: A point mentioned to the ethnographers by a number of the offenders was that they often needed to have hit rock bottom or reached despair, before they would ask for help. One respondent who had a girlfriend who was a relapsing alcoholic said that there was no point in offering her support before she hit her rock bottom, as she either wouldn't take it, or she would stay in a problematic state for longer. Any help, whilst well intentioned, often meant the individuals could exist in a degree of difficulty for longer – rather than being forced to make their own lives better.

Rehabilitation

- Prison Optimism – Both service providers (including prison officers) and offenders describe the elation and feeling of optimism upon release from prison. Those who went into prison with a drug addiction are often clear of their habit; individual's may have had healthier diets and been regularly using the gym / playing sport; many have undertaken courses, engaged in work, and may have worked hard to obtain qualifications. Upon release, many feel totally different and unlikely that they will relapse into their old ways. This sense of optimism is often short lived – as individuals often return to difficult

situations where it's easy to fall back into your old habits. For example, falling back in with your old networks, or family or friends, who are still living the same lifestyle or having nowhere to live and resorting to desperate methods in order to survive. A prison officer made the point that upon release, prisoners are given back their own clothes and shoes – they literally walk out of the prison in their old shoes and into their old life.

- Rehab is emotionally difficult – For many offenders the idea of detox and rehab is also an exciting one – the chance to get clean, start a new life and get on the right track. However, the reality is somewhat different. Making these sorts of changes to your life is incredibly hard – requiring internal strength, determination and willpower. Residential rehab tackles some of these issues head on, but requires a six-month commitment and an engagement from the individual to want to turn things around. It also often requires a complete change of friendship circle and an ability to distance yourself from your old 'habits' and behaviours. This is not an easy process and relapse is commonplace. Fear of entering into this process (and failing) can mean that many offenders opt for prison instead of rehab – which whilst unpleasant – is not as 'emotionally difficult'.

- Courses and education: The courses that are felt to be the most appealing are those which leave the offender with a 'tangible' skill or qualification at the end – e.g. cooking or mechanics. One offender told of us his NVQ in Social Care – and he was particularly keen to tell us that he had been accepted onto the course in the first instance by virtue of 'life experience'. Many of the offenders we came into contact with were also incredibly proud of having achieved these sorts of qualifications and saw them as a stepping stone into a new life. On the other side, courses such as 'Enhanced Thinking Skills' were felt to be patronising and overly basic, teaching the offender little beyond the bureaucracy and pointlessness of the 'system'.
  "Enhanced Thinking Skills are just something you have to do to get de-categorised. Nobody takes it seriously, not even the people who run it". Some have been referred to them three or four times, successfully completing each time.

Journey Mapping

Client journey mapping is a method that maps out a timeline of interaction between the client and service providers. The process generated insights into service provision from the perspective of clients and highlighted opportunities for alternative ways of delivering services, overlaps, duplication and gaps in provision.

However, clients found it particularly difficult to recall their exact journey which made mapping relatively difficult with this client group. This was partly due to the often repeat nature of the client's offending, ambiguity relating to what agencies provided which services and their acronyms, and for some subjects prison release was some years ago.

To supplement insight generated from ethnography, probation case files were also reviewed to give some indication of a 'typical' journey.

Participative Inquiry

The 'participative inquiry' approach used in this project involved engaging multi-agency service providers, clients and officers in identifying opportunities to improve services through structured conversations and workshops. Those in leadership positions, managers and frontline staff were encouraged to reflect and build a shared perspective on the current reality of partnership working and collaboration.

Learning interviews were also held on a one to one basis with ten senior stakeholders to develop an understanding of current partnership working and collaboration. These interviews also provided an opportunity to constructively challenge the status quo and thus to start to create the appropriate conditions and readiness for change.

The partners worked together to identify what changes people could make individually, what incentives encouraged collaboration and what barriers – individual, institutional and regulatory – were getting in the way.

The project reviewed the evidence generated by the ethnographic research and the input from the service providers to develop journey maps of individual respondents (see "Tracey's Journey" below), as well as process maps of the journey that a typical

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offender might make through the prison and probation systems (see “Summary Process Maps of Prisoners”).

Multi-agency workshops with practitioners provided an opportunity to reflect on some of the emerging findings from the ethnography, and to use this as a base for service improvement recommendations. For example, in one workshop an offenders journey was enlarged and practitioners came together to look at where interventions could have been targeted, and how the process could have been streamlined. In another multi-agency workshop the personas from the ethnography and the themes that had emerged from the project were used to shape discussions around service redesign and to support and challenge ideas relating to service improvements.

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Figure 2.Tracey's Journey

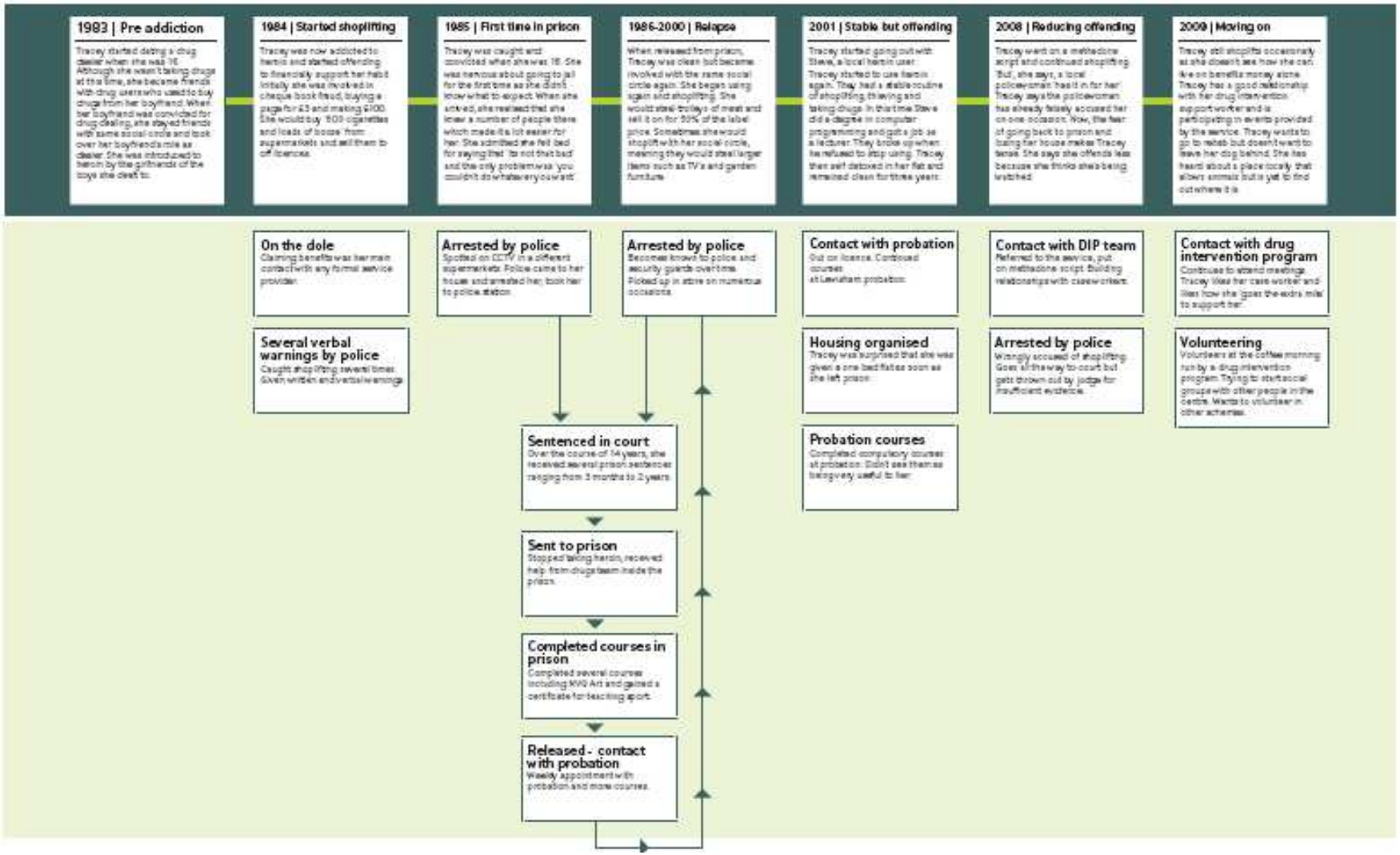
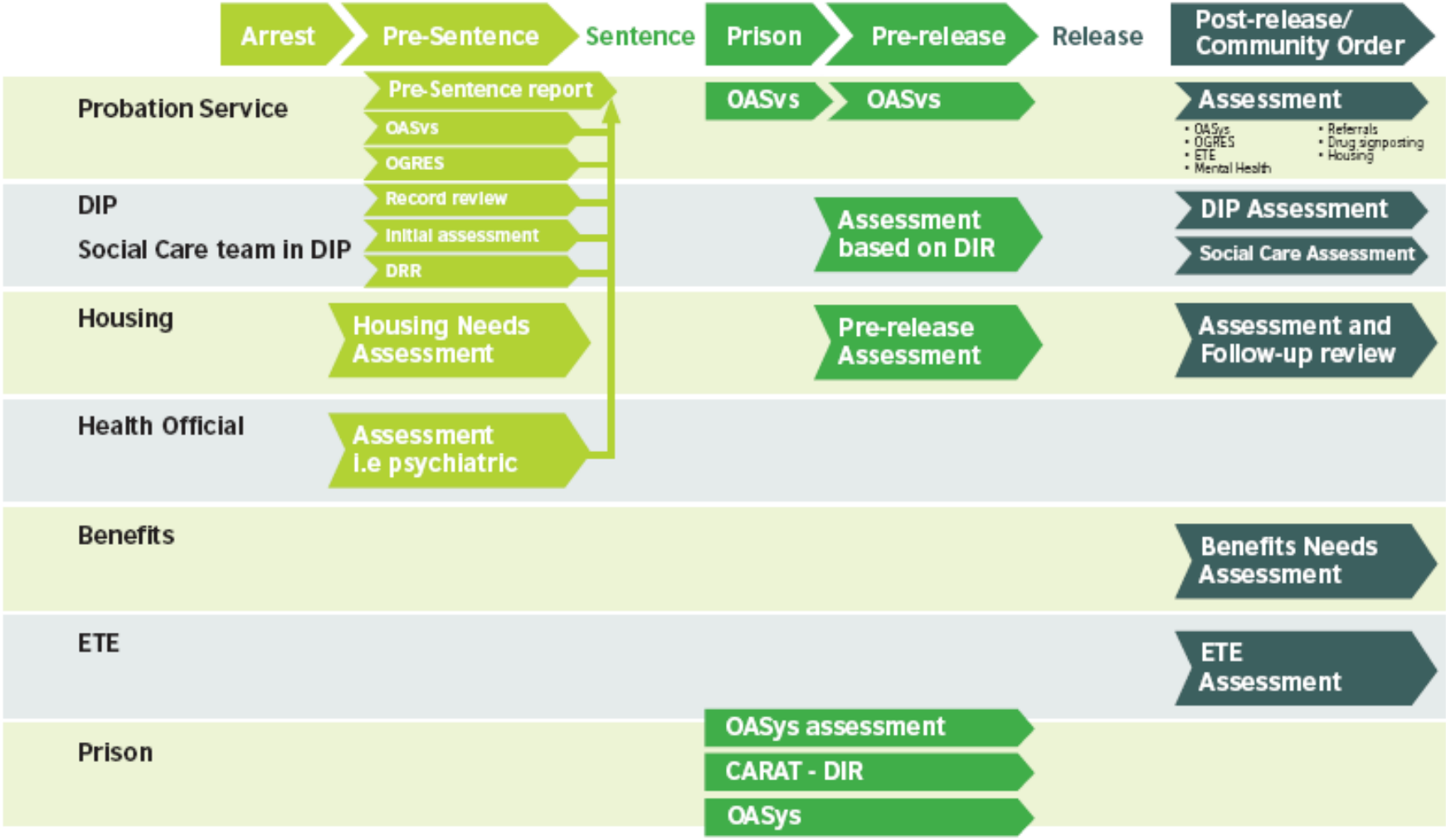


Figure 3. Summary Process Map of Prisoner Journey



Findings

Based on the insight generated by the ethnographers, coupled with the outputs of the learning interviews and participatory enquiry process, the project developed the following findings:

- Lewisham estimate that publicly funded costs relating to post-conviction assessment are in the order of £550,000-£650,000 each year, of which £350,000 relates to post-release, community-based assessments each year. There is considerable scope to rationalise the number of assessments, and the partners estimate that savings of 30% (£100,000) are possible within community-based assessments and that this figure could extend to £200,000-£250,000 if prison-based assessments could be organised differently.

- The first few hours post release is a critical period in terms of risks of reoffending. Ethnographic insight also reveals that this release period is the point at which offenders are most ready and willing to move away from an offending lifestyle.

- Despite this, the transition from prison to the community is not smooth, post-release services are not offered in a systematic or coordinated way and offenders do not leave prison with basic provision in place. For example:
    - Offenders are commonly given enough funds to last up to two weeks upon release, yet it commonly takes four to eight weeks before a benefit application can be processed and funds are accessible.
    - Provisions of emergency scripts are not systematically provided by prison drugs teams (CARATS).
    - Two-thirds of all Londoners in custody are held outside of the region. Service providers would find it easier to ensure the appropriate rehabilitative services are available for offenders if all London offenders were released from London prisons.
    - Release dates are not systematically communicated to relevant agencies, and are often changed, making it difficult to have appropriate provision in place (such as housing and drug programmes). Similarly this transition is hampered by high numbers of

Friday releases when many of the support arrangements are not in place over the weekend.

Resources are targeted towards offenders who commit the most offences and pose the greatest risk, e.g. **Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements** (MAPPA) and **Prolific and Other Priority Offender** (PPO). For our target cohort, who do not fall into these categories, rehabilitative resources are deployed regardless of motivation for change. A proposed opt-in model looks to provide an enhanced and streamlined offer to a number of offenders prioritised by their willingness to address their offending behaviour. This model draws on evaluation from the Diamond Initiative, which suggests that offenders respond well to a structured and more intensive resettlement package upon release, including heightened police supervision.

Information gathering, sharing and use

Police, Probation Service, Drug Intervention Programme (DIP), Single Homeless Intervention Programme (SHIP), mental health providers, Jobcentre Plus (JCP), prison service, court service and third sector providers all hold separate database records on offenders, yet this information is not systematically shared across partners and relies on ad hoc arrangements. As a result front-line staff spend a considerable amount of time chasing and duplicating relevant data.

Resource prioritisation to maximise benefit and reduce costs

When considering the allocation of resources to tackle reoffending and reduce harm it is important to look at how the collective resources of the police, the Probation Service and the Council's Crime Reduction Services are deployed. A considerable level of resource is directed towards the patrolling of the general public realm. This approach centres on public reassurance and opportunistic crime reduction.

It may be that given the inevitable financial constraints that we are now facing that a more targeted policing approach which focuses on known offenders as they are released from prison is the more appropriate course of action.

This concentration on known offenders is likely to result in better risk management and a reduction in the risk of harm to citizens.

- Although it is clear to practitioners that a significant portion of offenders re-offend, systems and practices have been designed with a 'one-way' process

in mind, i.e. that the offender will only ever travel this journey once. As a result, reoffenders receive the same 'management' and interventions time and time again. Ethnographic study shows one prolific offender receiving the same course in prison four times.

- There is no systematic locally delivered evaluation of rehabilitative services that is capable of demonstrating their effectiveness in reducing reoffending rates. In order to know where to target resources in a way that offers effective and meaningful intervention for offenders, longitudinal channels of outcome-based evaluation will need to be explored.

Reduction in overlap and duplication

- The offender pathway post-release is chaotic and not adequately aligned or integrated across agencies. Ethnographic evidence suggests that offenders are, in some cases, engaging with up to four key workers across a number of agencies.
- There are many examples of duplication and overlap of provision and effort. For example, the Probation Service, DIP, JCP, St Giles, and housing needs advisers in prison all provide sign-posting, information and guidance in areas including housing, benefits and employment and training. In addition, some overlap between the caseloads of DIP and contracted treatment agencies was uncovered. There is also some duplication of Employment Training and Education (ETE) provision.
- The Probation Service's interventions are primarily designed to address offending behaviour and are most suitable for offenders where there is a higher risk of harm or reoffending. Despite this, the Probation Service is required to supervise offenders, often for over 12 months, even where they are identified as being low level of risk of harm or reoffending. For this cohort, lengthy supervision periods are often given by the courts where there is high need despite lower levels of risk. As there are fewer appropriate probation-led interventions suitable for this client group alternative options have been explored. For example, offenders with drug dependencies that result in crime (of which there is a group of approximately 150 offenders) may be more appropriately supervised by DIP (within current funding arrangements). This would enable the Probation Service to focus on higher risk offenders.

Outcomes

The insights from the ethnography and client journey mapping were fed into a series of multi-agency service re-design workshops. The workshops developed three key prototypes in outline (an example is included below):

- Opt-in service on prison release
- Single Lead professional
- Single assessment / information sharing

Figure 4. Prototype for a Common Assessment Framework and Central Database for Offenders

Currently offenders are assessed multiple times by multiple agencies. This leads to duplication, is inefficient and creates confusion and uncertainty for the offenders.

Prototype: Introduce an offender common assessment framework so that information is collected once and used many times by the various agencies involved in offender management. The information is collated by the lead professional in consultation with the offender on release from prison. A central case file is held and updated by partner agencies.

Places and Spaces (where is it happening?)	Products and Services (what is included?)	Systems and Processes (how is it delivered?)	Communications (how do people here about It and keep informed?)
The common assessment framework is completed by the lead professional. This is undertaken upon release from prison . The common assessment is centrally held and updated by the lead professional on receipt of information from the offender and client agencies.	An amended assessment framework based on OASys supplemented with enlarged/extended sections on drug and alcohol misuse and housing relevant questions. A platform for sharing the information electronically between agencies, potentially VISOR, or an updated OASys system. The lead professional liaises with the other agencies for a joined up service provision. The assessment framework considers the whole context of the offenders life – family circumstances, children etc and provides a basis for additional family interventions.	The common assessment is completed face to face with the offender upon release from Prison. Information relating to the offenders time in prison, conduct, courses completed, special requirements etc, is passed to the lead professional for inclusion in the assessment. The lead professional for the offender completes the offender common assessment framework in its entirety and co-ordinates the securing of the necessary services for the offender. The lead professional is the key point of contact for the offender and provides access to services from other agencies. The lead professional shares the assessment with other agencies to facilitate the provision of services. The information is held on a central database.	The lead professional completes and shares the information from the common assessment. Information can be updated by other agencies via the lead professional. The offender is provided with information relating to the assessment and the use of the assessment information in a format that can be understood. Updates to an offender's record are flagged.

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The final recommendations are detailed in the Total Place report and include further development of propositions in the following areas:

- A Common Assessment Framework approach is developed to reduce the number of assessments of offenders.
- A pilot is developed locally to introduce a single lead professional and shared database.
- Every London prisoner where possible should be released from a London prison at the end of their sentence, and release dates should be systematically communicated to relevant agencies and single lead professional.
- An enhanced prison release opt-in model is established to ensure rehabilitative support for offenders is targeted at those most likely to benefit.

- A whole system approach to outcome-based performance measurement (positive rehabilitation and reduction in offending) is developed across agencies in order to evaluate the effectiveness of current provision.
- Consideration is given to the balance of crime reduction resources allocated between the targeting of known persistent offenders and other activities.
- The supervision of approximately 150 offenders is transferred from Probation to DIP. This is consistent with the single lead professional model.

Benefits

The ethnographic research provided a fresh look at offender management from the client perspective and from the perspective of the many agencies interfacing with the client group.

The ethnography presented real life stories that engaged the multi-agency team in the complex and inter-related factors affecting the risk of reoffending. The offenders were honest and engaged enthusiastically with the process. The real life story of an individual person seemed to engage people more creatively than standard statistical representations.

The funding received from the Customer Led Transformation programme enabled the partnership to expand the planned at the graphic research to include eight respondents, rather than the original two. This greatly enhanced the range and depth of insight generated.

Governance

This customer insight was part of a wider Total Place pilot (one of four in Lewisham) overseen by the Lewisham Strategic Partnership (LSP). Strategic direction came from the Safer Lewisham Partnership, one of six thematic boards that sit under the LSP. The Safer Lewisham Partnership is the statutory crime and disorder partnership for Lewisham. The Partnership has a duty to conduct an audit of crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour and drug misuse in Lewisham, to consult widely on the findings and set strategies to tackle the issues identified.

During the life-cycle of Total Place, of which customer insight was a key component, a multi-agency project group was set up with lead partners including the Council, Police and Probation.

Following on from the Total Place and building on the customer insight generated, a quarterly reducing-reoffending specific Safer Lewisham Partnership meeting was established comprising the Borough, the Police, Lewisham Fire Service, National Probation Service, Crown Prosecution Service, Victim Support Scheme, Lewisham Homes and Lewisham Homes, London and Quadrant. A Reducing Reoffending Operational Group was also created in support of this work.

Resourcing

Due to the nature of ethnography, and the types of sensitive and detailed information it was looking to identify it is likely that former offenders would have been less willing to be as open if the researcher worked for the Council. The respondents would also have been less assured of their anonymity. As a result this approach relied, in part on, external consultants. However, workshops, case file reviews and journey mapping can all be delivered in house.

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Challenges and Lessons Learnt

There were challenges in applying ethnographic techniques.

Ethnographic research is not intended to provide feedback from a representative sample of the target group. It is intended to provide insight. As such it is a useful feed into a creative innovation and service redesign process. However, the particular experiences, client journeys and identified overlaps identified in individual studies cannot be extrapolated to the entire target client group for the purposes of developing a business case. The ethnography points to areas for further analysis and investigation.

With the repeat offender client group, patience and tenacity were needed to identify research participants and conduct the research. The client group led chaotic lives and were often drug users. This results in at times vague recollection of events.

Gaining access to offenders can be difficult and must be done with care. Researchers must be prepared to take several attempts to connect with offenders and to develop a network of frontline service providers who can provide access to the client group. This means taking time to engage with service providers to explain the purpose and nature of the research and to gain their trust in providing contacts with their client group.

It is always necessary to consider the particular client group and the implications for researchers. For example, researchers working with vulnerable groups should have and provide evidence of acceptable CRB disclosures and risk assessments must be undertaken to ensure that researchers are not put at risk given the client group in question.

While the “light touch” approach (and the pressing timescales) did not result in fully worked up and tested prototypes, it allowed the team to focus quickly on the areas likely to yield the most results in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. This facilitated more focused and targeted analysis on the prototypes that had the support of the partners involved.

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Next Steps

The Lewisham team are now working closely with the Ministry of Justice to identify and address central barriers to improvements in offender management while progressing the improvements identified through the Customer Insight and Total Place projects.

The Reducing Re-Offending sub-group of the Safe Lewisham Partnerships is established and meets every three months. Work, in partnership with the Ministry of Justice, has focused heavily on the development of a financially incentivised model that would deliver both a reduction in offenders and release cashable savings from the existing system. Linked to this, work is also underway exploring the viability of place-based budgeting.

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