

***Necessary but not sufficient:*
housing and the reduction of
re-offending**

June 2008

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**Caroline Humphreys and Tamsin Stirling
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1 Introduction and methodology

1.1 Background

1.1.1 This project was funded under the Welsh Assembly Government's good practice in homelessness programme and was the result of a successful joint bid by the Welsh Local Government Association, Community Housing Cymru and the All Wales Chief Housing Officers Panel.

1.1.2 The project emerged from concerns expressed by housing providers, (local authorities, housing associations and supported housing providers), about the difficulties they faced in housing offenders and ex-offenders appropriately, particularly those identified as high risk. The aim of the project was to address this challenge which was seen as significant and growing.

1.1.3 The overall scope of the project was to examine arrangements and practice for accommodating offenders 18 years old and upwards. It also considered diversity issues including gender, race and sexuality.

1.1.4 In summary, the project set out to:

- identify the key housing and support issues around housing ex-offenders, particularly high risk offenders subject to Multi Agency Public Protection and Prolific and Priority arrangements, from the perspective of the various agencies involved
- look at levels of housing demand from ex-offenders, their routes into housing and the supply of housing for this group across the spectrum of temporary and permanent accommodation, including bail accommodation, approved premises and move-on
- review current practice and provision and identify UK-wide notable practice, including models in other related areas such as victim protection programmes
- identify the current legal duties and powers of all partners
- identify training needs across all sectors
- identify a range of models of provision to address housing, support and supervision issues and arrangements to improve collaboration

1.1.5 The project was overseen by a multi-agency steering group which included:

- representatives from the three organisations that secured the funding for the project
- representatives of local government and housing associations
- representatives of Probation, Prison Service, National Offenders Management Service and the Police

- a representative from the homelessness policy function in the Welsh Assembly Government
- individuals with expertise in community safety, supporting people and homelessness

1.1.6 Steering group members are listed at Appendix 1.

1.1.7 The Welsh Local Government Association, Community Housing Cymru and the All Wales Chief Housing Officers Panel commissioned Caroline Humphreys and Tamsin Stirling to undertake the project which was carried out between September 2007 and June 2008.

1.2 Methodology

1.2.1 The project involved two phases of research as set out below.

Phase one

Phase one comprised three elements:

- a) A literature and web search to identify relevant strategic and policy documents, research, evaluations and examples of projects/initiatives enabling access to appropriate accommodation for offenders, particularly those defined as high risk. The literature and websites reviewed as part of the project are listed at Appendices 2 and 3.
- b) A series of semi-structured interviews with representatives of national stakeholder organisations:
 - Paul Webb – Welsh Assembly Government Housing Strategy Services Unit
 - Peter Lawler and Rowenna Williams – Welsh Assembly Government Mental Health (Mental Health Pathway responsibility)
 - Peter Jones – Welsh Assembly Government Community Safety
 - Earl Smith and Jim Ahearne – National Offender Management Service
 - Ian Lankshear – Chief Probation Officer, South Wales Probation Service (member of Accommodation Pathway group)
 - Sarah Davies – Her Majesty’s Prison Service (reducing re-offending responsibility)
 - Peter Mackie – Shelter Cymru research officer
 - Carl Chapple – Cymorth Cymru, Homelessness Policy and Campaigns Officer
 - Sarah McGill – Chief Housing Officer, Cardiff Council, All Wales Chief Housing Officers Panel
 - Jason Lintern – Home Office Crime Team Manager, Home Office Crime Team (based in the Welsh Assembly Government)
 - Maldwyn Roberts – Wales Association of Community Safety Officers and North Wales Community Safety Co-ordinator

The aim of these interviews was to clarify the role of each of the various organisations/networks in relation to the housing/resettlement of offenders, identify the national strategic, policy and legislative framework and any likely changes to this, identify key strategic and research documents and the main issues/barriers that impact on the effective rehousing of offenders/ex-offenders. In addition, the interviews explored steps that could be taken at national and/or regional strategic levels to improve things and identified examples of initiatives or projects that work well.

- c) A questionnaire survey. Two versions of the questionnaire were developed, one for housing organisations and one for criminal justice and community safety organisations. The questionnaire asked for a wide range of strategic and operational information around resources, supply and demand, areas of concern, partnership working and training needs, what currently works well and barriers to effective working.

The housing questionnaire was sent to:

- Housing Associations – Directors of Housing Services and Directors of Supported Housing Services (where this was a different person)
- local authorities - homelessness, housing management and Supporting People contacts
- Cymorth Cymru members (providers of supported housing)

The criminal justice/community safety questionnaire was sent to:

- local authority community safety contacts
- Welsh prisons
- the four probation services in Wales
- the four police areas in Wales
- Prison Link Cymru contacts

55 completed questionnaires were received from:

- 19 local authorities (24 questionnaires in total)
- 13 housing associations
- 8 support providers
- 3 Probation and 2 other criminal justice contacts (a MAPPA co-ordinator and a police offender management unit)
- 3 Welsh prisons
- 2 individuals with a regional remit (both based in North Wales)

At the end of phase one of the project, a paper identifying a series of emerging issues was drafted for consideration by the project steering group. The first phase also informed the detail of the second phase of the project.

Phase two

Phase two comprised four elements:

- a) Structured discussions with a range of housing, criminal justice and community safety networks/groups:

- Community Housing Cymru Supported Housing Services and Housing Services Forums
- Welsh Association of Community Safety Officers
- National Offender Management Service Accommodation Pathway Group
- National Homelessness Network
- Supported Housing Information Network
- Cymorth Cymru Open Forum
- All Wales Senior Officers Group responsible for MAPPA arrangements
- Prison Resettlement Group
- All Wales Chief Housing Officers Panel

The issues raised with each group were identified from the first phase of the project and were targeted at the particular role/remit /concerns of the group.

- b) Following up a range of practical examples identified during phase one. The examples cover routes into housing, housing and support options and service development/partnership working and are listed at Appendix 4. The detail of these examples have not been provided as appendices to this report, but rather have fed into the housing options report and advice notes (see section 1.4 other outputs below).
- c) Two case studies were identified to represent different contexts as set out in the table below.

Table 1: Case studies - context

<i>Bridgend case study</i>	<i>Wrexham case study</i>
Prison within authority	No prison within authority
No approved premises within authority	Approved premises within authority
Housing stock transferred to a housing association	Housing stock still owned by local authority
Less comprehensive Supporting People provision	More comprehensive Supporting People provision
Borders with Welsh authorities	Borders with England and Welsh authorities

Within each case study, relevant strategic documents and data were reviewed and face-to-face interviews were carried out with the Chief Housing Officer, homelessness and Supporting People lead officers and community safety representatives, including those with a Prolific and Priority offenders remit. Telephone/face-to-face interviews were undertaken with representatives of prison resettlement, probation and housing and support providers.

The focus of the case studies was on:

- demand and supply issues
- commissioning (including joint commissioning, funding, priority for this group etc)

- experience of what has worked and what has not worked well in meeting the housing needs for this client group
 - clarifying the training needs of the various teams
- d) Accessing the views of service users. The resettlement team at Parc Prison enabled interviews to be undertaken with nine prisoners all within a few weeks of their release date. These interviews explored the housing histories of the individuals and what support they had been getting to access accommodation on release. In addition, the project drew on service user voices from two other projects:
- the Shelter Cymru project funded under the Assembly's New Ideas research programme and published in early 2008 as ***This time round: exploring the effectiveness of current interventions in the housing of homeless prisoners released to Wales***. As part of this project, interviews were undertaken with 27 prison leavers in six local authority areas in Wales
 - a project examining the exclusion and re-inclusion of people on housing waiting lists funded by the Welsh Assembly Government Social Housing Management Grant programme and published in May 2008 as ***Am I on the List? Exclusion from and reinclusion on social housing waiting lists***. Of the 17 service users interviewed for this project, nine of them were offenders/ex-offenders who were either currently excluded from social housing or had been excluded and had been recently reincluded on a waiting list or made an offer. Pen pictures of their housing histories and experience were made available to the researchers on an anonymised basis

1.3 Structure of this report

1.3.1 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 sets the context, looking at the link between accommodation and offending, the diversity of offenders/ex-offenders, the current strategic and policy context and future changes to this context
- Section 3 looks at the national picture in relation to demand and supply, practitioner issues and concerns and whether the strategic framework contributes to, or undermines, the reduction of re-offending
- Section 4 examines delivery at local and regional levels looking at the experience of the housing and criminal justice sectors and offenders/ex-offenders
- Section 5 sets out the conclusions of the research and identifies a series of recommendations

1.4 Other outputs from the project

1.4.1 As well as this research report, the project has generated a series of companion documents:

- a housing options report, ***Bringing it all back home***, which sets out practical advice and ideas about routes into housing (access and referrals), housing and support options and service development issues/partnership working
- a series of six advice notes:
 - introduction to housing options – for a criminal justice audience
 - routes into housing – for both housing and criminal justice
 - introduction to criminal justice frameworks – for a housing audience
 - strategic planning and commissioning for high risk offenders/ex-offenders – for both housing and criminal justice
 - managing risk – for both housing and criminal justice
 - useful resources/where to find out more – for both housing and criminal justice

In addition, an executive summary of this report is provided as a stand-alone document along with a document entitled ***Did you know?*** which sets out a small number of facts which put the project in context.

1.4.2 All of the outputs are being made available to practitioners on a CD Rom and the executive summary is also available in hard copy. The documents are also available on the WLGA (www.wlga.gov.uk) and CHC (www.chcymru.org.uk) websites and on the Welsh Housing Notice Board (www.whnb.org.uk).

1.4.3 As a follow-up to the project, funding has been secured from the Welsh Assembly Government to provide regionally-based training jointly for housing and criminal justice professionals based around the themes of the advice notes. This training will be delivered in 2008/09.

A note on definitions and roles

Terminology

Throughout the report and companion documents, we use the term offender/ex-offender as an inclusive term, ie covering those at the point of being released from prison or recently released, Schedule 1 offenders, those subject to MAPPA, those identified as Prolific and Priority Offenders and those living in the community with a history of offending.

Where the text draws on other research/publications that use different terms, we use the term(s) used in the original document.

The term housing association is used in preference to registered social landlord.

Defining high risk

There are a number of groups of offenders who are, by definition, high risk – those that fall within the scope of multi agency public protection arrangements (known as MAPPA) and those that come within the scope of the Prolific and other Priority Offenders programme (referred to as PPOs or POPOs). However, this project has recognised the differences between the housing and criminal justice professions in relation to what is considered as high risk. Therefore other groups of offenders such as:

- Mentally Disordered Offenders (definition as set out in the Mental Health Act 1983 is subject to significant interpretation/clinical judgement)
- offenders with a record of domestic abuse
- those with an offending history from some time ago
- those who present a risk to staff such as violent offenders
- repeat offenders with drug and alcohol problems and/or significant mental health issues

have been considered as part of this project.

Role of key government departments and agencies

Although housing is devolved to the Welsh Assembly Government, criminal justice is not and therefore policy is developed by UK government departments:

- the Home Office is responsible for leading the national effort to protect the public from terrorism, crime and anti-social behaviour. This government department is responsible for policy and guidance relating to the work of the police and crime reduction
- the Ministry of Justice is responsible for policy and guidance relating to prisons, probation, criminal law and sentencing and works to achieve four strategic objectives:
 - to strengthen democracy, rights and responsibilities
 - to deliver fair and simple routes to civil and family justice
 - to protect the public and reduce re-offending
 - to ensure a more effective, transparent and responsive criminal justice system for victims and the public
- the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) comes within remit of Ministry of Justice and is the system through which the highest quality correctional services and interventions are commissioned and provided in order to protect the public and reduce re-offending. The correctional services provided by the National Probation Service and HM Prison Service both come within the remit of NOMS

The Welsh Assembly Government has a role in tackling community safety, domestic abuse, youth offending, the reduction of adult crime, mental health and substance misuse, working with both the UK government departments above, NOMS Cymru and the 22 local authority-level community safety partnerships.

Definitions of other terms and acronyms are included in the advice notes produced as part of the project.

2 Background and Context

2.1 This section of the report sets out the context in relation to:

- the link between accommodation and offending
- the diversity of the offender/ex-offender population
- the current strategic and policy context
- future changes in this context

It draws on the literature and web search and the national stakeholder interviews.

2.1 The link between accommodation and offending

2.1.1 The importance of suitable accommodation and support in helping to reduce re-offending rates is well established in the literature and through research. The Social Exclusion Unit's 2002 report on reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners stated that being in stable accommodation reduces the risk of re-offending by one fifth and this impact has also been noted by NACRO and the Home Office. The March 2008 update from the Housing Corporation's Homelessness Action Team notes that:

- prisoners who have housing arranged on release are four times more likely to also have employment, training or education on release than those who do not have housing in place
- 75% of those offenders most likely to reoffend were found to have a housing need compared to 30% of the general offender population

2.1.2 Securing appropriate accommodation has long been one of the main problems associated with leaving prison as well as a central focus of resettlement work. Research published by the Home Office in 2001, and cited in the Social Exclusion Unit report, noted that around one-third of prisoners do not have a settled home prior to going into prison and around one-third will lose their home during their sentence, making the resettlement role a significant and challenging one. If an offender/ex-offender lacks a suitable place to live, it is more difficult for them to get and keep a job or to engage effectively with any other interventions in relation to their needs. Accommodation is therefore identified as a **necessary, but not sufficient**, condition for the reduction of re-offending.

2.1.3 The argument that the lack of suitable accommodation and support is just one of a number of inter-connected and frequently complex issues for offenders is well-rehearsed.

'The repeated message is, in essence that, not only are many offenders lacking in education or basic skills and already damaged by substance misuse and mental health or emotional problems, but they tend to come out of prison with worse prospects than they went in, having lost accommodation, jobs or relationshipsIn considering practical issues around accommodation for ex-prisoners, it is important not to lose sight of these broad truths about the nature and scale of the problem of resettlement.' (Government Office for the South West/University of Glamorgan (2007))

- 2.1.4 An offender housing survey in Avon and Somerset which sought the views of 405 offenders identified that barriers to accessing housing and related support service were experienced at every stage, from homelessness through to permanent accommodation (Nicholas Day Associates, (2007)). Securing accommodation at any stage was mainly achieved when a professional became involved. The majority of offenders interviewed said they offended when homeless and stopped when housed.
- 2.1.5 For local authorities, a number of legislative requirements in relation to homelessness (homelessness primary and secondary legislation) and community safety (MAPPA and the Crime and Disorder Act 1998) require them to play a significant role in securing accommodation and support for offenders/ex-offenders, including those posing a high risk. As partners of local authorities in respect of meeting housing needs, housing associations also have a key role to play.

2.2 The diversity of the offender/ex-offender population

- 2.2.1 The offender/ex-offender population, even that proportion defined as high risk, is not an homogenous group. Some of the main groupings are identified below. As can be seen, the diversity of the offender/ex-offender population and the different issues that face various groups of offenders/ex-offenders requires understanding and consideration by housing providers in order to provide solutions that meet their needs.

Adult offenders/ex-offenders serving less than a year

- 2.2.2 There is a category of offenders/ex-offenders who commit offences that are deemed to merit less than a year's sentence that do not have any involvement/monitoring from the Probation Service and therefore represent a category of people whose needs are not identified at an early stage. Although this category of offenders/ex-offenders are unlikely to be defined as high risk, there is a strong view from across a range of stakeholders that unless preventative work is carried out, at least a proportion of this group will go on to commit more extreme crimes and therefore end up in a high risk category.

Older offenders/ex-offenders with a history of offending

- 2.2.3 Another group which may not be defined as high risk, but which can pose a significant problem in relation to housing, is a group who are generally older, of poor physical and emotional health and who have committed crimes some time ago. These individuals will often live in hostels and go round the revolving door of becoming homeless as they are too ill and/or find it difficult to develop skills to live independently and maintain their housing for any period of time. The offending records of such people, even though they may have been some time ago, (and also sometimes of a minor nature), often result in them being labelled which can compound their inability to gain access to services to break the cycle.

Women offenders/ex-offenders

- 2.2.4. The Corston report, published in 2007, set out a challenging agenda for reforming the way that women offenders are dealt with and have their needs responded to. It

found that provision designed for men does not necessarily meet the needs of women and concluded that more community-based facilities and options should be available.

2.2.5 Both the Corston report and a report published by the Fawcett Society in 2007 looking at women offenders, identified that housing is a major concern, in particular because women's lives tend to be more disrupted than those of men by custodial sentences, (due to there being fewer women's prisons which are dispersed geographically). Three barriers were identified in relation to accommodation – the application process, a shortage of accommodation options and the issues relating to access to children.

2.2.6 Both reports also identify the complexity of needs presented by women who are high risk offenders, including mental health needs, self harm, substance misuse and access to children issues, as well as a high likelihood of having been a victim of physical, emotional and sexual abuse as a child (this not to say that these issues are not common to other offenders). Other issues specific to women offenders include:

- that their offending is most often associated with poverty and financial difficulties
- that their financial situations are further strained by their having sole responsibility for dependent children

2.2.7 The Corston report found that the accommodation pathway was the most in need of speedy, fundamental, gender-specific reform. In particular, the report noted the need for more supported accommodation to be provided for women on release to break the cycle of repeat offending and custody. The report also recommended that the intentional homelessness criterion for ex-prisoners should be abolished.

2.2.8 Home Office research found that 38% of women leaving prison across England and Wales did not have any accommodation identified for them on discharge. In Wales, a specific piece of work on women offenders published in June 2007 looked at the role of the accommodation pathfinder in reducing re-offending. The work found that:

- during 2006, there were 385 homeless female offenders on community sentences or homeless on release from prison in Wales
- female offenders have multiple and complex support needs (also identified by the Corston report)
- there appears to be a significant proportion rate of women referred to local authority rehousing services do not complete the homelessness assessment process
- there are significant unmet housing needs for female offenders and a range of developments are needed to close the gap, both in terms of assessment and access arrangements and women-only provision

The Turnaround project in Cardiff is a NOMS demonstrator project which aims to provide women offenders and those at risk of offending with a gateway to multi-service support specifically for their needs.

BME offenders/ex-offenders

2.2.9 BME communities are disproportionately represented in offender profiles (24% male and 31% female prisoners are from BME backgrounds). Research suggests that the housing needs of offenders from BME backgrounds are likely to be greater than those of white prisoners. This is due, to some extent, to discrimination in the housing service field as in many other areas of practice. In addition, they can face difficulties in accessing appropriate services as a result of language barriers and services may not be culturally sensitive to faith and religious belief issues.

Disabled offenders/ex-offenders

2.2.10 There are disproportionately high rates of mental illness amongst the prison population. In addition, it is likely that a significant proportion of the prison population has learning difficulties, but there is no systematic procedure for identifying such prisoners. Both types of disability have clear implications for housing and support needs, including the ability to sustain tenancies. In addition older people with a history of offending are often in poor physical health and require sustained medical assistance while in prison and in the community in general as well as accommodation appropriate to any physical disabilities they may have.

High risk offenders/ex-offenders

2.2.11 There has been a significant amount of joint work in relation to MAPPA. However, housing offenders/ex-offenders who are assessed as posing high risk of harm remains a challenging task. In relation to sex offenders, there are dangers in sudden transition from a highly structured and controlled environment to one in which there is little surveillance of their activities.

2.2.12 Home Office research on the operation of MAPPA, published in 2007, found that differential participation by different local authorities within the same probation/police area could lead to those that participated most actively taking a disproportionate responsibility in securing accommodation for offenders subject to MAPPA. Problems securing representation from housing associations were also identified. One of the case study areas had developed a protocol that ten district councils had signed up to with a commitment to sharing accommodation responsibilities across the different authorities, including disregarding the lack of a local connection. The research identified a severe shortage of supervised accommodation for sex offenders in all areas taking part.

2.2.13 A review of the management of a high risk case in Wales published in December 2006 identified a number of issues. Overall, an over-reliance on informal arrangements was identified. In addition, the lack of approved premises or other suitable accommodation to house sex offenders was noted as being a national problem. More specific issues included:

- the management of cross-border movements of offenders subject to MAPPA

- clarification of roles and responsibilities in relation to requesting Multi Agency Risk Assessment Group (MARAG) meetings be held
- capturing, recording and sharing relevant information, including risk assessments and intelligence
- when MARAG meetings should be held and why
- the role of Gwent MAPPA Strategic Management Board

2.2.14 A risk of harm inquiry report on the multi-agency management of risk of harm in a region of Wales published in March 2008 concluded:

‘there has undoubtedly been much well-intentioned activity by probation, police and others to improve those processes which had not previously been working to the best effect Regrettably, these intentions have not been matched by progress on the ground. Leaders and managers had mistakenly believed that improvements initiated at strategy level had been enacted in practice.’

One of the recommendations of the inquiry report is that effective systems are implemented to manage the cross-area rehousing of MAPPA offenders, with appropriate communication and planning between probation areas and with other agencies to ensure effective Risk of Harm management.

2.2.15 For PPOs, the accommodation link is also problematic. An examination of OASys data by the Home Office found that PPOs were:

- less likely than other offenders to be in suitable accommodation
- less likely to be in permanent accommodation
- less likely to be in accommodation that is in a suitable location

In addition, their accommodation needs were judged by OASys¹ assessors to be more strongly linked to their offending behaviour than was the case for other offenders.

2.2.16 People subject to imprisonment for reasons of Public Protection (IPPs) also present a problem within the prison system. They are incarcerated for indeterminate periods as they are deemed by the courts pose a ‘serious risk to members of the public, or risk of serious harm’. In order to reach parole, they need to satisfy a range of requirements as a result of undergoing a training/rehabilitative regime. There is a shortage of resources/capacity within prisons to deliver this programme and therefore a bottleneck situation has developed which ironically worsens the overcrowding of prisons. There are approximately 150 IPP prisoners in Wales. This approach has resulted in legal challenges which, when resolved, may result in more releases from custody of this category of prisoner which in turn will have implications for criminal justice and housing services

2.2.17 A joint inspection of a sample of Probation Approved Premises (formerly probation hostels now used to house high risk offenders/ex-offenders) across England and Wales published in March 2008 found that:

- in most areas, housing authorities had failed to recognise the need to establish joint arrangements to ensure the effective resettlement of offenders residing in

¹ OASys is a standardised process for the assessment of offenders used by the Probation Service.

Probation Approved Premises (under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 - Duty to consider crime and disorder implications and the need to do all that it (the authority) reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area). The need to engage strategically with Supporting People commissioning processes was identified as particularly important

- there were insufficient hostel places to meet the demand
- there was insufficient suitable move-on accommodation to meet the needs of hostel residents and continue the process of protecting the public

2.3 Current strategic and policy context

2.3.1 The national agenda in respect of the rehousing of offenders/ex-offenders in Wales is set out within a number of key strategic documents. A number of legislative developments are also relevant.

Strategic documents

2.3.2 ***Joining Together in Wales: an adult and young people's strategy to reduce re-offending, published in 2007*** and its associated action plan which has a specific section on the accommodation pathway (one of seven NOMS pathways, the others being education, training and employment, health and social care, substance misuse, advice, finance, benefits and debt, children and families attitudes, thinking and behaviour). This regards access to appropriate accommodation as a cornerstone of the successful rehabilitation of offenders and sets out individual tasks in relation to the following actions:

- assessing the housing needs of offenders and contribute to research evidence and data to inform future housing provision
- ensuring access to housing advice and suitable accommodation for offenders on release from custody
- ensuring offenders receive the appropriate level of housing advice and support in the community
- increasing the provision of suitable and sustainable accommodation for offenders

2.3.3 An All Wales Offender Accommodation Steering Group (NOMS Accommodation Pathway), with multi-agency membership, has a key role to play in developing and overseeing the delivery of the action plan.

2.3.4 December 2007 saw a consultation by NOMS and the Ministry of Justice on a strategic plan for reducing re-offending to cover the period 2008-2011. The document retains the seven pathways outlined above, but notes that work needs to focus on developing them further and identifying cross cutting issues. It also notes that the outcome of the consultation will help inform discussions with the Welsh Assembly Government in relation to the existing reducing re-offending strategy for Wales, particularly in relation to its areas of devolved responsibility.

2.3.5 The ***National Homelessness Strategy 2006-08*** sets out a number of actions in relation to people with an offending history. Within the document, the Assembly commits itself to:

- working with Youth Offending Teams and the Youth Justice Board to identify and meet the housing needs of young offenders and those at risk of offending in each area
- monitoring and advising on the development of Supporting People Operational Plans and Local Homelessness Strategies to ensure they reflect joint working with criminal justice agencies to prevent homelessness
- reviewing the implementation of the Prison Link Cymru scheme to ensure it is working effectively to support the prevention of homelessness
- exploring with criminal justice agencies the scope for joint working and commissioning in preventing homelessness amongst ex-offenders

2.3.6 In addition, the Assembly expects:

- local authorities and criminal justice agencies to work in partnership with local planning arrangements to secure appropriate housing and support for ex-offenders, including adoption of protocols in line with Assembly guidance
- the prevention of homelessness among ex-offenders and those at risk of offending to be incorporated as a core theme in criminal justice agencies' prevention strategy
- criminal justice agencies to promote the prevention of homelessness within the Reducing Re-offending Action Plan for Wales

2.3.7 A multi-agency Homelessness Strategy Working Group plays a role in overseeing the implementation of the strategy.

2.3.8 **The Welsh Assembly Government's 10-year substance misuse strategy *Working Together to Reduce Harm***, published in January 2008, has four priority action areas:

- prevention
- supporting substance misusers
- supporting families
- tackling availability of drugs and protecting individuals and communities

2.3.9 The strategy notes that 70% of those serving custodial sentences have substance misuse problems but that for many, there are limited treatment options in prison and little support on release. The strategy highlights the need for the Assembly to work with the Ministry of Justice and the National Offender Management Services in Wales and states that a offender management substance misuse treatment model has been commissioned to provide good practice guidance.

2.3.10 These national strategies are supported by a number of documented processes in place in relation to offenders and accommodation, e.g. MAPPA, the Link Protocol and NOMS' Integrated Model for the Management of Offender Housing and Housing Support².

2.3.11 In relation to women offenders, one of the initial responses to the Corston Report (2007) was to develop a number of demonstrator projects, both at:

- a service commissioning level, e.g. the Commissioning for Women project based in the South West of England which has involved developing a model commissioning accommodation and related services for women offenders which was published in June 2008 as a series of toolkits, and
- a service provision level, e.g. the Cardiff Turnaround Project which aims to provide a multi-functional holistic women's centre and associated accommodation designed to address the needs of women offenders as defined by the women themselves. The project has been successful in securing funding beyond its initial pilot phase and is being evaluated by the University of Glamorgan. As at June 2008, the project had received nearly 50 referrals

2.3.12 In addition, NOMS has developed:

- a National Service Framework for women offenders which aims to improve services to women offenders
- a briefing for housing advice and support providers in prisons about the importance of housing for women prisoners
- a guide to working with women offenders

Legislative developments

2.3.13 The Offender Management Act 2007 separated the commissioning and service elements of working with offenders. The National Offender Management role is to act as a commissioner for services while functions such as Probation and the prisons are seen as service providers. This commissioning function is in the process of being extended on two levels. First, there is a pilot privatisation process being undertaken within Probation, with two Welsh Probation services (Dyfed Powys and South Wales) taking part in the first phase and now established as Trusts. The Probation Trust Service Specification includes accommodation services. Secondly, NOMS Wales consulted on a Commissioning and Business Plan 2008/09 towards the end of 2007 which set out its approach to commissioning a variety of services. The final version of this Plan notes that resources are to be targeted more closely to areas of greatest risk to further underpin public protection and to offender groups offering the greatest return in respect of reducing re-offending. A further commissioning complexity is that a number of prisons (e.g. Parc and Altcourse) are contracted out and are privately managed. Resettlement staff in the contracted out prisons are not necessarily

² Set out in NOMS Reducing Re-offending Housing and Housing Support Framework, 2006

involved in the networks of which those in public sector prisons are automatically part.

- 2.3.14 The Mental Health Act 2007 introduces supervised community treatment orders. These orders will have powers to apply conditions to people released into the community, i.e. about where they live and there is liable to be the ability to recall people to a secure setting if their condition deteriorates

2.4 Future changes to strategic/policy/funding context

- 2.4.1 Whilst there is an established policy context for the provision of accommodation for offenders/ex-offenders, the research has identified significant flux in criminal justice, housing and related policy and funding frameworks. In the paragraphs below, we have attempted to identify the main areas of change. However, we are aware that this is not a definitive list.

Housing

- 2.4.2 The stated intent in the **One Wales** document to develop a 10-year plan to 'confront' homelessness. The development of this new plan is underway with discussions between key stakeholders. As part of the discussions, there is a debate within the Welsh Assembly Government about whether the homelessness persons' legislation should be altered to abolish the restrictions within the legislation, i.e. local connection, priority need and intentionality
- 2.4.3 A new National Housing Strategy is being developed with a timescale for publication of spring 2009, with a consultation to be held in the autumn of 2008.
- 2.4.4 The funding framework underpinning the Supporting People regime is under review in relation to distribution of monies across Wales, the tariffs that apply to different services and ongoing consideration of whether Supporting People Revenue Grant (currently administered by the Welsh Assembly Government), should be transferred to local authorities or regional groupings of local authorities. In addition, a five-year national Housing-Related Support Strategy is being developed which is to be launched in the Spring of 2009. This is the first time that the Assembly will have set out its strategic priorities for housing-related support/Supporting People-funded services.

Criminal justice

- 2.4.5 Lord Carter's review of prisons, published in December 2007, concluded that in addition to the 8,500 additional prison spaces already planned, up to a further 6,500 prison places should be constructed by 2012. In addition, the review recommended that the government should immediately implement a package of measures that could moderate the demand for custody by 3,500 – 4,500 places by 2014 in accordance with the government's strategy to reserve custody for the most serious and dangerous offenders. The review also made a number of recommendations to ensure better value for money from the prison system (costs to the tax payer are an average of £40,922 per prisoner per year).
- 2.4.6 The Bradley Review (2008) of the diversion of offenders with mental health problems or learning difficulties away from prison is due to report to the

Department of Health and Ministry of Justice in the Summer of 2008. Included in the scope of the review is whether there are any specific issues in relation to women offenders, children and young people and people from BME groups.

- 2.4.7 Whatever may emerge in terms of initiatives and partnerships to address the situation of overcrowding in prisons and the use of prisons in general, the judiciary remain fiercely independent in their approach to sentencing.
- 2.4.8 A new approach in relation to youth justice is expected to be announced in the summer of 2008. One of the areas of debate is whether local authorities should have responsibility for youth offenders in their area – such an approach would see the demise of the Youth Justice Board.
- 2.4.9 The NOMS National Service Framework for women offenders notes that Communities and Local Government Department are exploring the issues raised in the Corston report relating to local authority decision-making under the homelessness legislation in England, including decisions on intentionality.
- 2.4.10 During 2008/09, NOMS will be developing accommodation and advice standards for those providing advice within prisons. This project is at an early stage and may result in a protocol setting out what advice should be provided at what stage or a set of standards which could be adapted from an existing housing advice standard.
- 2.4.11 The provision of additional prison spaces within Wales is being considered by the Welsh Assembly Government. It is felt that there is a need for a further 2,500 places and the areas where there are considered to be gaps are North Wales and Heads of the Valleys.
- 2.4.12 The Welsh Assembly Government is also reviewing the secure estate provision for adult offenders with complex needs with a report due for the Summer of 2008. It is likely to conclude that more provision is needed and that such provision needs to be supported by a supply of sufficient and appropriate move-on accommodation.
- 2.4.13 The ***One Wales*** document which sets out the agenda for the 2007-11 Assembly coalition administration notes that the Assembly will aim to prevent offending and re-offending amongst young people and consider the potential for devolution of some or all of the criminal justice system. Leanne Wood AM produced a paper in the Spring of 2008 making the case for the devolution of powers to deal with police, prisons, probation, the courts and sentencing to Wales. Her view is that existing criminal justice policies are not working, with over 60% of prisoners going on to reoffend and that Wales should have the opportunity to determine its own policies in line with overall strategic priorities and principles set by the Welsh Assembly Government.

Related policy areas

- 2.4.14 The agenda of reform of public services as set out in ***Making the Connections*** and the Assembly's response to the Beecham report. One element of this is the establishment of Local Service Boards, which bring the key service planning and delivery agencies together to improve the delivery of local services.

2.4.15 The plan rationalisation agenda means that local authorities will not be required by the Assembly to produce homelessness strategies or Supporting People Operational Plans in the future, (albeit that there is nothing to stop local authorities that wish to continue to do so from producing these strategies). Strategic planning in these areas will be integrated into the community strategy.

2.4.16 Such a degree of change poses a significant challenge to those working at the interface between housing and criminal justice.

Key points

- There is a clear and evidenced link between accommodation and offending – accommodation being a necessary, but not sufficient condition, for the reduction of re-offending
- The offender/ex-offender population is diverse and cannot be treated as an homogenous group
- The strategic and policy framework that surrounds the housing of offenders/ex-offenders, including high risk offenders/ex-offenders, being at the interface of housing and criminal justice policy, is complex and is also subject to significant flux

3 Reducing re-offending? The national picture

3.1 This section of the report looks at the national picture in relation to:

- demand and supply
- whether the strategic framework contributes to, or undermines, the reduction of re-offending
- practitioner issues and concerns relating to the above two points

It draws on the literature and web review, responses to the questionnaire survey and the national stakeholder interviews.

3.1 Demand and supply

Offender numbers

- 3.1.1 The increase in the England and Wales prison population is well-documented. Home Office statistics published in December 2007 note a 13% increase in the total number of offenders sentenced to immediate custody from 85,200 in 1996 to 96,000 in 2006. During this decade, the average length of custodial sentences issued by the Crown Court increased from 22.4 months to 25.2 months, while sentence length issued by magistrates' courts has stayed the same (between 2.7 and 3 months). The rate of re-offending by prison leavers is over 60%. The weekly bulletin on the prison population published on 6 June 2008 showed that 78,322 men and 4,469 women were in prison, up from 75,966 and 4,396 a year before.
- 3.1.2 Home Office statistics on mentally disordered offenders also show increases, with numbers cited as being the highest observed in the last decade. At the end of 2006, 3,601 mentally disordered offenders were in hospital and during 2006, there were 1,266 discharges of restricted patients of whom 472 were discharged into the community. The proportion of those patients discharged for the first time between 1999 and 2004 who reoffended within two years was 7%.
- 3.1.3 The numbers of offenders in Wales as at 30 June 2007 are set out in NOMS Commissioning and Business Plan 2008/09. On that date, there were 13,273 offenders in Wales in custody or on community sentences, of which 2,648 were in custody. 1,448 of the total were women, 414 of those in custody were on sentences of under 12 months, 1,084 were identified as Tier 4³ offenders (excluding PPOs), 298 were PPOs and 149 were IPPs.
- 3.1.4 However, these figures do not provide Welsh housing organisations with a full picture of how many high risk offenders/ex-offenders will need accommodation. Most prisons are treated as a national resource and 42% of Welsh offenders are located in English prisons. In addition, there are no prison places for women in Wales; on 30 June 2007, there were 187 women sentenced from courts in Wales held in custody in England, of which 37 were on remand. The NOMS document noted that an average of 26 women are discharged to Wales each month of which 20 on average will have had sentences of less than 12 months (so will not receive

³ Offenders identified as presenting the highest level of risk of serious harm necessitating high levels of inter-agency work and likely to be high local and national priorities

Probation supervision). The document did not provide the same information for men.

- 3.1.5 Of the 19 local authorities that responded to the questionnaire, 13 were able to identify how many individuals subject to MAPPA their organisation was asked to house during 2006/07. The total number was 488. Eight housing associations noted that they were asked to house 23 people subject to MAPPA during the same year.
- 3.1.6 According to Welsh Assembly Government statistics, in 2006, 798 households were found to be homeless by Welsh local authorities due to being former prisoners with no home to return to (all levels of risk not just high risk) , over 11% of all households found to be statutorily homeless by Welsh local authorities. This proportion rose very slightly in the first three quarter of 2007. By way of comparison, during 2006/07, Welsh local authorities made 10,200 lettings to new tenants.

Supply: prison and probation

- 3.1.7 The use of facilities for housing offenders during their sentence and immediately following release are key to their eventual rehabilitation and reintegration and are set out below.

Prison places in Wales in June 2008

- 250 – HMP Usk – Category C prison for sex offenders (UK national resource)
- 170 – HMP Prescoed (also Usk) – open prison. Houses people in the last 18 months/2 years of long sentences and aims to prepare people to live independently including employment and training support and external placement with employers prior to release
- 750 – HMP Cardiff (designated 'local')
- 480 – HMP Swansea (designated 'local')
- 1100 – HMP Parc, Bridgend (contracted out). This provision also houses sex offenders and has a wing for young male offenders

Over 40% of adult male prisoners from Wales are in English prisons at any one time. English prisons used frequently for prisoners from Wales are:

- 459 – HMP Styal, Wilmslow, Cheshire. Houses women offenders and, in some cases, young offenders.
- 1024 – HMP Altcourse, Liverpool (contracted out and designated 'local'). Houses adult males and young offenders from Merseyside, Cheshire and North Wales.
- 400 – HMP Ashfield, Bristol. Houses young people aged 15-18.
- 690 – HMP YOI Stoke Heath, Shropshire. Houses young people.

- 3.1.8 During 2007/08, an additional 24 adult beds have been commissioned for Parc Prison. In the longer term, an additional facility with a minimum of 330 beds is planned at Parc, with the first admissions planned in 2011.
- 3.1.9 In June 2008 there was no prison provision in Wales for women who tend to be imprisoned in provision in Bristol, Manchester or Cheshire. Also, as can be seen from the above information, there is no prison provision in North Wales, although this issue is the subject of debate within the Welsh Assembly Government. Young offenders can be held in Parc Prison, Bridgend, but in the main are accommodated in Ashfield in Bristol. If additional prison places are to be built in Wales, unless local designation is considered, they may not improve the overall situation in relation to the proportion of Welsh prisoners being placed in English prisons.
- 3.1.10 That prisons come under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice and are seen as a national (UK) resource is problematic in the context of principles and good practice in respect of rehabilitation, inclusion and community integration. The consequences for people with high/complex needs often being removed from their home base means that there is a fracturing of any ability to sustain familial/local links. The task then becomes twofold, i.e. recreating links when/if Welsh prisoners want to return to their locality, or even their home region and conversely, making efforts to re-home/redirect people who have been imprisoned in Wales and want to return elsewhere in the UK. The principles underpinning the current use of the prison resource run counter to notions of good practice in resettlement.

Approved premises

- 3.1.11 There are two approved premises in South Wales and two in North Wales providing 104 bed spaces in total. They are obviously based within the two Probation areas, but are used as both national and local resources. For example, on average approximately a third of spaces in the South Wales premises are occupied by people originally from outside of the area. There is no approved premises provision for women. While some efforts have been made via the Tai Trothwy/Shelter Cymru Prison Link work to improve the housing opportunities of prison leavers, there is little housing expertise and joint work with housing providers within approved premises, despite the clear need for move-on accommodation.

ClearSprings Bail Accommodation Support Scheme

- 3.1.12 The ClearSprings Bail Accommodation Support Scheme (BASS) is aimed at relieving the pressure on prison space and also to allow approved premises to respond to housing those who pose a public protection risk. A total of 67 units of accommodation (in ordinary housing stock) are in the process of being purchased in Wales in Cardiff, Swansea, Bridgend, Wrexham and Tonteg. The provision is being used for people remanded on bail and those leaving prison under the government's early release scheme (Home Detention Curfew) (both categories will be assessed as presenting a low risk). It is proposed that they will receive three contact sessions a week for the first three weeks and then one a week thereafter. There is an expectation that their stay at the premises will be for the duration of their bail or Home Detention Curfew licence and then they will move on which may require them to receive a 28 day notice (unless those on remand are sentenced). Help is to be provided to find move-on accommodation beyond the bail or Home Detention Curfew period.

3.1.13 Given the proposed increase in prison places in Wales (and England) and the development of the ClearSprings provision, it is likely that the demand for housing from people leaving prison and move-on from ClearSprings provision will increase.

Supply: resettlement support

3.1.14 A variety of services are in place across Wales which provide a potential interface between criminal justice and housing services and therefore potentially aid those leaving prison to access appropriate accommodation and support. An example is the Transitional Support Scheme which aims to provide 'through the gate' mentoring support for short sentence prisoners who are not subject to statutory supervision on release up to 12 weeks following their release from custody. This scheme has been running since January 2004 across the four Welsh prisons and is for offenders with a history of substance or alcohol misuse resettling in Wales. The mentoring focuses on support to change previous attitudes and has been evaluated as achieving significant success (Home Office/National Assembly for Wales (2006)). One of the achievements of the scheme was found to be a reduction from 37% of the participants being homeless on entry to prison to 12% remaining so on release. However, this fall in homelessness was accompanied by a corresponding rise in the number of prison leavers going into transient accommodation.

3.1.15 Within each prison, there is a resettlement team whose remit includes accommodation issues. The development of the role of Prison Link Cymru, (interviewing prisoners who anticipate being homeless on release and liaising with the relevant local authorities), has resulted in some adjustment of what the prison-based resettlement officers do to concentrate more on other aspects, e.g. enabling people to keep their existing accommodation where this is possible, or appropriately relinquishing a tenancy before rent arrears can build up.

Supply: housing and support

3.1.16 There are a range of accommodation and support options for people coming out of prison. In summary, they are:

- returning to prior accommodation
- temporary accommodation with family/friends
- presenting as homeless to a local authority/applying for social housing
- referral to a supported housing project
- private rented sector
- leaving as NFA or self-placing in bed and breakfast or a night shelter

Floating or tenancy support may be available as an addition to a number of the options.

3.1.17 The suitability and feasibility of each of the options will depend on the particular circumstances of the individual. In addition, particular challenges may be posed by the desire of the individual to move areas, either back to an area where social networks are already established, or to another area because existing networks present a problem.

- 3.1.18 There is an acute shortage of affordable accommodation in Wales for anyone in housing need. This is compounded for people who have specific needs and/or vulnerabilities and/or who may face additional barriers/discrimination in accessing accommodation.
- 3.1.19 In relation to high risk offenders/ex-offenders, the location and quality of housing are important rather than housing per se and can impact on a person's ability to re-establish family and community links, find employment and have access to appropriate support. Given the overall shortage of affordable accommodation, the outcome for many high risk offenders/ex-offenders is that they end up in inappropriate accommodation in terms of location and sometimes quality.
- 3.1.20 Housing associations specifically noted a shortage of single person's general need accommodation. There are very few single site flat/hostels specifically for offenders/ex-offenders across Wales. Most general single site/hostel accommodation caters for offenders as one of a range of client groups, but providers often find it difficult to manage the risk. There are a small number of floating support schemes designated for offenders/ex-offenders.
- 3.1.21 Generally, there is a dearth of specialist accommodation for high risk offenders/ex-offenders. Historically, this client group has been poorly catered for and during the boom period of supported housing development (Transitional Housing Benefit), other groups were prioritised. This can be linked to the stigma attached to this group of people and related difficulty in getting schemes developed, but also to the fact that high risk was less well defined than it is now, i.e. the boom period was pre PPO and MARAC arrangements being developed.

3.2 The strategic framework: contributing or undermining the reduction of re-offending?

- 3.2.1 In addition to the identified shortage of housing and support options available to high risk offenders/ex-offenders, (which undermines housing's contribution to reducing re-offending), there are a number of ways in which the strategic framework and supporting activity as currently configured, also undermine the principle of the reduction of re-offending.

Complexity

- 3.2.2 The Home Office and Ministry of Justice in England are responsible for legislative and policy development for the criminal justice system and are the main government department links for NOMS, Prisons, the Probation Service, the Police and the judiciary. This can result in the capacity and resources of organisations that work with offenders/ex-offenders in Wales being spent learning about, and reacting to, UK agendas alongside the Welsh political and policy framework.
- 3.2.3 At a practical level, given the number of Welsh offenders in prison in England, there is a need for Welsh housing providers to work with a large number of prisons across England, prisons that are used to working with organisations operating within English policy and legislative frameworks and not necessarily with Welsh priorities or documents such as the Link Protocol.

- 3.2.4 Another way in which this complexity is reflected in practice is that frameworks emerge that ostensibly cover England and Wales, but do not take account of the differences in Welsh legislation or policy context. An example is the NOMS housing and housing support framework which has, as a core element, the development of the housing options approach by Communities and Local Government in England. This has no direct read across to the Welsh context and could serve to confuse those working in the criminal justice sector in Wales who are not aware of the detail of the significant differences between the Welsh and English housing policy context.
- 3.2.5 Given the range of strategic documents that are due to emerge in the coming months on both housing and criminal justice (as outlined in paragraphs 2.4.2-2.4.13), such occurrences are likely to increase unless there is a clear commitment to a process which scrutinises England and Wales documents for their applicability to Wales and ensures that any necessary amendments to content are made.

Criminal justice initiatives

- 3.2.6 There are examples of criminal justice initiatives which run counter to the overall aims of reducing re-offending and maximising community safety. For example, early release, a response to prison overcrowding, requires that the individual has accommodation for a short period after release in order to be eligible for early release. The addresses provided by prisoners are not thoroughly checked in all cases. For many individuals, once the required time post-release has elapsed, the accommodation arrangements (often informally based with family or friends) break down and should the individual then present to the local authority as homeless, they will not be considered as priority need as they were not homeless at the point of being released from prison (the legal requirement). Prisoners housed in the BASS scheme on release will also lose priority need status. Resettlement teams from all Welsh prisons noted that the recidivism rate was higher than the norm for prisoners released on the early release scheme and that, as such, the scheme didn't even serve the purpose of relieving prison overcrowding.
- 3.2.7 The prison performance target of 75% of prisoners to have first night accommodation arranged in time for their release does not encourage an approach which takes a longer-term and more sustainable view of housing and support needs. In fact, this target could actively discourage the exploration of longer-term housing options.

Legislation

- 3.2.8 The use of the homelessness legislation as an access route into housing for many offenders/ex-offenders does not contribute to the effective management of risk or enhance community safety. At a general level, the homelessness legislation does not take into account risk management, i.e. if an individual is accepted as homeless and has a local connection, then that local authority is expected to secure accommodation for them, whether or not this is the best way of managing risk.
- 3.2.9 Where an individual offender/ex-offender is accepted as homeless, the shortage of temporary and permanent accommodation options may mean that they are housed temporarily in bed and breakfast accommodation and the permanent

accommodation they are offered may not be in an appropriate location. Therefore, the overall intention of the homelessness safety net may be undermined.

3.2.10 There are also examples of where housing and criminal justice legislation/ guidance has the potential to conflict or does not adequately take the other agenda into account. For example, Welsh Assembly Government guidance on the Homelessness Act 2002 does not recognise PPOs and does not refer to the statutory duties of local authorities under Section 5 (authorities responsible for strategies) and 17 (duty to do all reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area) of the Crime and Disorder Act.

Too much 'activity', too little 'action'

3.2.11 As noted in section 2.3, there are a number of strategic documents that set the framework for the housing of offenders/ex-offenders in Wales, which contain targets or actions directly or indirectly relating to housing. In addition, there are a multiplicity of national and regional groups and fora in place, some of which focus exclusively on offender/ex-offender accommodation issues, while others consider it as one of a number of issues.

3.2.12 An issue associated with multi-agency groups such as the NOMS Accommodation Pathway Group is the risk of a lack of ownership of the issues and actions to be taken. The Accommodation Pathway Group action plan which ran up to March 2008 set out actions for a range of agencies including housing, probation, NOMS, prisons etc. The result of enquiries about the outcomes of a number of the actions led to the conclusion that a significant proportion of them had not been progressed as indicated. There is a clear need to synchronise the content of the large number of strategic documents so that any actions are clearly articulated within one of the core strategies for that function (e.g. the homelessness strategy for the housing sector). It is not reasonable to expect busy practitioners to negotiate their way around a congested policy and practice agenda to find targets that they are supposed to be meeting, or actions that they are supposed to be implementing, set out across a range of documents.

3.2.13 This issue is directly related to the mismatch that can occur between the strategic framework and frontline delivery (identified as an issue in the Risk of Harm Inquiry Report on multi-agency public protection work in Gwent – see paragraph 2.2.14). It is not enough to simply issue a strategic document and expect it to be implemented. Without putting a range of building blocks in place, (such as funding, appropriate performance measures, audit and inspection regimes, training, dissemination of what works, a recognition of staff capacity to progress new initiatives alongside existing workloads etc), the likelihood is that implementation will be, at best, patchy and at worst non-existent.

3.3 Practitioner issues and concerns

3.3.1 The analysis of the 55 questionnaire responses identified a number of areas on which there was a strong degree of consensus between respondents. These are therefore presented here as part of the national picture. Those issues where differences of opinion or practice emerged are presented in Section 4 of the report which explores local and regional delivery.

Concern about securing accommodation for different types of offender/ex-offender

3.3.2 Table 2 below indicates the number and percentage of respondents to the questionnaire survey who indicated that their organisation/team considers securing appropriate accommodation and support for the identified categories of offender a significant concern, a concern or no concern, or whether the organisation has no view.

3.3.3 There was a high degree of consensus across the sectors (different housing providers and different parts of the criminal justice sector) about which categories of offender/ex-offender present the greatest challenge in housing terms:

- offenders/ex-offenders subject to MAPPA (69%)
- sex offenders (67%)
- mentally disordered offenders (60%)
- PPOs (52%)

3.3.4 Across all sectors, the vast majority of all responses fell into the significant concern (46%) and concern (37%) categories indicating that the rehousing of the full range of offenders/ex-offenders is an area of concern in a general sense, as well as in respect of specific categories.

3.3.5 Offenders/ex-offenders with an offending history from some time ago were seen as the category for least concern from a provider perspective.

3.3.6 A higher proportion of local authorities stated that MAPPA, PPO and mentally disordered offenders were a significant concern than housing associations. This is thought to be because they do not, in general, have the same level of involvement in processes such as MAPPA as local authorities do. Notable exceptions to this trend are stock transfer associations which are closely involved in MAPPA and MARAC processes.

Table 2: Types of offender/ex-offender causing concern in relation to securing appropriate accommodation and support

<i>Offenders with recent offences</i>	Significant concern		Concern		No concern		No view	
Number/%	16	33%	25	51%	4	8%	4	8%
<i>Offenders with an offending history from some time ago</i>	Significant concern		Concern		No concern		No view	
Number/%	6	12%	21	43%	17	35%	5	10%
<i>Sex offenders in general</i>	Significant concern		Concern		No concern		No view	
Number/%	32	67%	13	27%			3	6%
<i>Offenders defined as high risk through MAPPA arrangements</i>	Significant concern		Concern		No concern		No view	
Number/%	33	69%	12	25%			3	6%
<i>Offenders who have a record of domestic abuse</i>	Significant concern		Concern		No concern		No view	
Number/%	15	32%	23	49%	5	11%	4	8%

<i>Mentally disordered offenders</i>	Significant concern		Concern		No concern		No view	
Number/%	29	60%	13	28%	2	4%	4	8%
<i>Prolific and priority offenders</i>	Significant concern		Concern		No concern		No view	
Number/%	24	52%	18	39%	1	2%	3	7%

Factors underlying concerns

3.3.7 Table 3 shows how organisations responding to the questionnaire survey ranked the factors contributing to their concern about securing housing for different types of offender/ex-offender.

3.3.8 There is an overwhelming consensus from respondents in both the criminal justice and housing sectors that the lack of appropriate accommodation is the most important factor underpinning their concerns regarding their ability to rehouse offenders/ex-offenders:

- 27 (56%) of the 48 respondents to this area ranked their response as number 1 i.e. the most important
- 40 (83%) of the responses ranked it 1st, 2nd or 3rd in level of importance
- 13 (72%) of the 18 local authority responses in this area ranked the issue as being of greatest importance
- 4 (33%) of the 12 housing association responses in this area ranked the issue as being of greatest importance, seeing this as a less pressing issue than local authorities

3.3.9 The next most important factor is lack of support/funding for support:

- 11 (25%) of the of the 44 respondents to this area ranked their response as number 1 i.e. the most important
- 28 (64%) of the responses ranked it 1st, 2nd or 3rd in level of importance
- 100% of the Probation and other Criminal Justices responses (excluding the prisons) ranked this issue 1- 3 in terms of importance

3.3.10 The majority of responses on 'ineffective partnership working' gave the issue a medium level rating in terms of importance with 15 (41%) responses of the total of 37 responses to this area falling within the 4 – 7 rankings in importance, with the other responses falling fairly evenly either side of the middle ratings. This is probably a reflection on how well, or poorly, local arrangements work/have been developed.

3.3.11 Likewise 26 (62%) of a total of 42 responses to the 'lack of understanding housing options/systems of criminal justice' representing a contributory factor ranked this issue within the 4 – 7 range.

3.3.12 Lack of information sharing arrangements were not identified as a major concern. 20 (43%) of respondents – all from local authorities, housing associations and support providers ranked staff safety issues within the 1 -3 rankings – a significant minority of the 47 responses to this area.

3.3.13 Publicity/nimbyism issues all received significant high rankings indicating high levels of concern regarding these issues being a contributory factor in the difficulties faced by practitioners in housing offenders/ex-offenders:

- Councillor/Board member concern – 14 (39%) respondents of a total of 36 ranked this within the 1-3 range
- similarly 15 (37%) of 41 respondents ranked community opposition/nimbyism as 1st or 2nd
- media attention was ranked either very high or very low with not much middle ground, perhaps reflecting local experience

Publicity was felt to be a particular issue in relation to sex offenders.

Table 3: Factors contributing to concern about securing housing for different types of offender/ex-offender (ranked)

Lack of appropriate accommodation	Rank (1-10 – 1= most important, 10 = least important)									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Numbers of responses from:										
Local authorities	13	6		1					1	
Housing associations	4		2	3		1		1		
Support Providers	4	1			1					
Probation & CJ	3	2	1							
HM Prisons	1		1							
Other	2									
Lack of support/funding for support available	Rank (1-10 – 1= most important, 10 = least important)									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Numbers of responses from:										
Local authorities	6	4	4	2		1	1	1		1
Housing associations	1	2	2	3	1					1
Support Providers	1		2		2	1				
Probation & CJ	2	1	1							
HM Prisons					1		1			
Other	1		1							
Ineffective partnership working	Rank (1-10 – 1= most important, 10 = least important)									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Numbers of responses from:										
Local authorities	2	2	4	2	1	2	1	1	1	2
Housing associations	2	2		1	1			2	1	1
Support Providers	1			2	1			1		
Probation & CJ			1	2			1			
HM Prisons							1		1	
Other								1		1
Lack of understanding of housing options/systems or criminal justice systems	Rank (1-10 – 1= most important, 10 = least important)									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Numbers of responses from:										
Local authorities	1		2	2	3	2	2	3	2	3
Housing associations			1	1	3	1	2			1
Support Providers					2	3				
Probation & CJ			1		1		2			
HM Prisons	1				1					
Other					1			1		
Lack of effective data protection/information sharing arrangements	<i>Rank (1-10 – 1= most important, 10 = least important)</i>									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Numbers of responses from:										
Local authorities	1	2	1	1	1	1		6	3	2
Housing associations	2		2	1	2	1	2		1	1
Support Providers		1		2	1		1			
Probation & CJ						1		2		
HM Prisons	1								1	
Other										2
Staff safety issues/ risk management within housing organisation	<i>Rank (1-10 – 1= most important, 10 = least important)</i>									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Numbers of responses from:										
Local authorities	4	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	
Housing associations	3	4	1			1		8		2
Support Providers	2	1	1	1			1			
Probation & CJ					2					
HM Prisons										
Other							1	1		
Councillors/board members concerns within housing organizations	<i>Rank (1-10 – 1= most important, 10 = least important)</i>									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Numbers of responses from:										
Local authorities	1	2	3	4	1	2	2	1		3
Housing associations	2		1					1	1	
Support Providers	1			1			1	1	1	
Probation & CJ		1	1			1				
HM Prisons	1								1	
Other	1			1						
Community opposition/NIMBYism	<i>Rank (1-10 – 1= most important, 10 = least important)</i>									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Numbers of responses from:										
Local authorities	2	2	3	4	1	2	2	1		1
Housing associations	1	2			1	3				2
Support Providers	1	1					2	1		
Probation & CJ	2					2				
HM Prisons	1									1
Other	1	2								
Media Attention	<i>Rank (1-10 – 1= most important, 10 = least important)</i>									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Numbers of responses from:										
Local authorities	3			1	4		3	4		2
Housing associations	2		1				1	1	1	1
Support Providers	1	1						1	2	
Probation & CJ	2			1					1	
HM Prisons	1								1	
Other	1								1	
Other issues:	<i>Rank (1-10 – 1= most important, 10 = least important)</i>									
Numbers of responses from:										
Local authorities	Inappropriate use/interpretation of the Homeless Persons legislation (1)									
Housing associations	Welfare of tenants and other service users (6)									

Support Providers	
Probation & CJ	Lack of problem solving at a multi agency level (3) Not knowing the victims whereabouts (1)
HM Prisons	
Other	Lack of appropriate funding levels for support (4)

3.3.14 The concern with the shortage of accommodation was also reflected by the interviews with stakeholders in which a number of specific shortages were identified:

- emergency and temporary accommodation for people leaving prison which can result in offenders being placed outside the area or in them being concentrated in a small number of bed and breakfast establishments
- supported housing for people leaving prison, particularly for those with higher/more complex needs which was felt to be directly related to a lack of revenue funding for such initiatives
- places not being available when people need them. In respect of supported housing, this may result in people going into direct access homeless hostels as opposed to floating support services or other single site, non direct access, provision
- a shortage of specialist accommodation – lack of Approved Premises spaces, no adequate options for arsonists, juvenile sex offenders and very few adequate options for women offenders/ex-offenders

3.3.15 In addition to this, many stakeholders felt that there is a general lack of capacity and expertise within the supported housing sector to meet the needs of offenders/ex-offenders with higher, more complex needs. Housing-related support may, or may not, address some of the issues that underpin the offending behaviour.

3.3.16 Even within the supported housing sector, some stakeholders felt that people with the 'offender' label are treated less favourably than other types of needs/client groups, evidenced by exclusions policies, evictions as a result of being overly risk averse or as a result of prejudice and/or a lack of understanding. Stakeholders (commissioners and providers) also felt that this situation is a consequence of a lack of financial resources (via the SPRG tariff system) to enable them to establish staffing levels appropriate to the complex needs presented by some offenders/ex-offenders.

3.3.17 Stakeholders felt that nimbyism and public fears often posed a barrier to developing new services for this group, particularly services that require planning permission. There was also a view that national frameworks and funding systems do not adequately support local authorities, particularly those with a high number of MAPPA cases, to deliver effectively on their responsibilities.

3.3.18 The private rented sector was felt to be under-utilised. Private sector landlords can often choose who they accommodate and for a range of reasons, including prejudice, see offenders/ex-offenders as being likely to be problematic tenants.

However, examples of successful initiatives enabling offenders/ex-offenders to be housed in the private rented sector were identified during the project.

3.3.19 The shortage of accommodation and support options for offenders is well summarised by this comment from Ynys Mon Supporting People questionnaire response:

'Stakeholders' evidence highlights a service provision characterised by a lack of choice, lack of accessible accommodation, lack of specialist services integrated into accommodation and training needs, and an insufficient number of single units for a number of offenders and ex-offenders.'

3.3.20 Move-on from all forms of temporary and supported housing was also identified as an issue across all client groups. Where an offender/ex-offender has specific housing and support needs, these difficulties are compounded. Given the short time for which it aims to provide accommodation, the ClearSprings Bail Assessment and Support Scheme is likely to exacerbate move-on issues.

3.3.21 Many stakeholders noted that offenders/ex-offenders as a category are still viewed as an 'undeserving' group of people, more so than other groups of people who may be homeless and have support needs. This was felt to be due to the range of punitive government initiatives, public attitudes and the media portrayal and scaremongering in respect of offenders, generally resulting in a lack of public awareness about the complexity of the issues and a lack of understanding about the management of risk.

3.3.22 Stakeholders also highlighted that prejudice at a corporate/member level within local authorities often negatively impacted on a local strategic approach being developed to meet the needs of offender/ex-offenders. This was felt to be most often expressed in terms of the emphasis on using local resources for local people and ideas about rationing. In the housing of offenders/ex-offenders, this is most often applied to the allocation of housing, application of the homeless persons' legislation and also within strategic-level decision making. Difficulty can be experienced when trying to devote resources to develop specialist services internally to enhance the approach of a local authority in responding to people whose needs are complex and problematic.

'it is also a near impossible task to get support accommodation for this type of client group through the planning group'
(local authority questionnaire response)

'it is difficult to develop any provision within local communities for homeless people generally. Projects for offenders often appear to be non-starters before they get off the ground.'
(local authority questionnaire response)

Key points

- Demand for housing that meets the range of needs presented by offenders/ex-offenders in Wales exceeds the supply
- There are key gaps in appropriate provision of housing and support – in both type and amount – and in the availability of move-on accommodation
- The shortage of supply undermines housing's contribution to the reduction of re-offending
- The current strategic framework is overly complex, with too many documents, contains contradictions and tensions and does not aid implementation
- Practitioners expressed concerns about the rehousing of offenders/ex-offenders in general, but these were particularly significant in relation to those subject to MAPPA, sex offenders, mentally disordered offenders and PPOs
- The most significant factors underlying practitioner concerns were lack of appropriate accommodation, lack of support/funding for support and publicity/nimbyism (within the general public and reflected corporately within organisations)

4 Local and regional delivery

4.1 This section of the report looks at the experience of organisations at a local and regional level in housing offenders/ex-offenders, in particular those defined as high risk. It considers the experience of offenders/ex-offenders themselves and also looks at advice and practical ideas. It draws on all elements of the research and is structured around the following themes:

- access routes to housing
- access to what?
- who does what: roles and responsibilities
- gaps in information, knowledge and understanding
- a closer look

For each of the first four themes, practitioner and service user experience is explored, followed by advice and practical ideas (the latter being explored more fully in the companion housing options report). The fifth theme considers summary data and overall issues arising from the two case studies.

4.1 Access routes to housing

Practitioner and service user experience

4.1.1 None of the nine prisoners interviewed at Parc, all of them within a fairly short time of their planned release date, were clear about where they were going to live on release, albeit that two or three of them could go to stay with family as a stop gap.

'I'm not sure what will happen when I'm released'
(Prisoner HMP YOI Parc)

4.1.2 Most of them had been in prison before and had therefore been through prison release before, but only one had any real understanding of the housing system or housing options that were available to them. A significant proportion of them could have benefited from housing case work both at the beginning and during their sentence to prevent difficulties arising, or to respond to circumstances that arose. For example:

- advice to prevent repossession of a home due to a partner having difficulties in paying the mortgage
- advice in relation to illegal eviction by a private sector landlord
- advice to prevent the loss of a tenancy

4.1.3 One of the prisoners had not managed a tenancy well at the age of 16 (five years previously) and had accrued significant rent arrears and rechargeable repairs which had led to his exclusion from the waiting list of the landlord concerned. The experience of being excluded from housing waiting lists was something that those offenders/ex-offenders interviewed for the exclusion/reinclusion project felt was not fair.

'I served my sentence in jail so I shouldn't be punished twice by the Council....I feel it's unfair that there is double discrimination, first in prison, then to be excluded.'

(individual excluded from a housing waiting list)

- 4.1.4 In addition, the system of exclusion and reinclusion was not clear to people who had been excluded from waiting lists, even where they have been reincluded.

'I would like to have known what you have to do to stop being excluded I don't know how I got back on the list, they just made me an offer'.

(individual recently reincluded on a housing waiting list)

- 4.1.5 As noted in paragraph 3.2.6, the system of early release does not help access to suitable and sustainable accommodation.

'In prison they said give us an address you can stay at and you can have parole. So I gave my mother's address, but my mother and I don't get on, so (on release) she wrote me a letter saying I had to leave. I took it to the Council but they said they couldn't help me because I had told them in prison that I had an address to go to.'

(individual excluded from a housing waiting list)

- 4.1.6 A significant proportion of the prison leavers interviewed for the Shelter Cymru project noted that their experience of homelessness usually resulted from prison release.

'I've been in and out of prison 2-3 times a year and always end up staying with friends. Only once have I had accommodation as a prison leaver for 28 days'

(individual interviewed for Shelter Cymru research)

- 4.1.7 As noted in paragraph 4.1.2, the level of knowledge of housing system and options amongst the prisoners interviewed was low. The way that advice and assistance is provided to prisoners on housing issues is not empowering:

'I've been referred to the Gateway – do you know what the Gateway is?'

(Prisoner HMP YOI Parc)

'I talked to resettlement ... not sure what they are doing'

(Prisoner HMP YOI Parc)

- 4.1.8 The difficulties encountered by prisoners were reflected by the experience of professionals. There was consensus that the homelessness legislation was not devised as a gateway for rehousing offenders/ex-offenders and is not an effective method of either providing suitable accommodation for this group, or for managing risk. For example, there is no guarantee that an offender/ex-offender identified as high risk will be accepted as homeless, (due to intentionality and local connection tests). The homelessness route was felt to be particularly inappropriate for those subject to MAPPA.

'Rehousing of offenders tends to work best when homelessness legislation is not the key thing but risk management and public safety are the drivers of the discussion'

(local authority questionnaire response)

'MAPPA requires more than the homelessness legislation to effectively manage risk and ensure safety'

(local authority homelessness officer)

4.1.9 The mismatch between the homelessness legislation and the management of risk has a number of elements:

- offenders/ex-offenders who use this route to obtain housing can be shunted around different local authorities through being given to understand that their chances of rehousing via a local connection may be better elsewhere
- where people are rehoused under the homelessness legislation, for example in bed and breakfast, they may be placed in another area as local authorities spot purchase or block purchase bed and breakfast accommodation in areas outside of their locality in order to satisfy their duties under the legislation. This is particularly likely in relation to bed and breakfasts that will take high risk offenders/ex-offenders
- the permanent accommodation provided may or may not contribute to the effective management of risk
- interpretations of the homelessness legislation, e.g. some local authorities conclude that if an offender is recalled on licence, they have made themselves intentionally homeless

4.1.11 The use of the homelessness route for the rehousing of offenders/ex-offenders was identified by housing professionals as a revolving door.

'This group often gets into repeat homelessness because of a lack of options'

(local authority questionnaire response)

The Welsh Assembly Government's Code of Guidance on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness indicates that any period of custody creates a priority need in relation to the homelessness legislation. A small number of repeat offenders go in and out of prison on a regular basis and present as homeless on release each time. However, depending on the circumstances of the individual case, they may be found intentionally homeless and therefore only be provided with a short period in temporary accommodation.

4.1.12 People presenting as homeless at short notice also pose a significant challenge in terms of risk management.

'High risk cases leaving custody often present as homeless with little or no notice. In these circumstances appropriate safe placement is difficult or not achieved'

(local authority questionnaire response)

4.1.13 There were mixed views in relation to whether the homelessness legislation should be altered in relation to prison leavers or other offenders/ex-offenders. The majority view was that extending priority need to PPOs, or removing the local connection requirement from offenders/ex-offenders, would do little to improve the

rehousing of offenders/ex-offenders and could exacerbate existing problems. A minority view was that such changes would address existing problems. This was countered by the view that, if more people become a priority, this would simply put even more pressure on a system that is already inappropriately seen as a 'quick fix' and there would be less time to focus on risk and individual needs and support requirements. The majority of participants in the project felt that there is a need for a more sophisticated approach which is less dependent on homelessness legislation and focuses more on pre-planning and effective partnership working.

4.1.14 High risk offenders with rent arrears from previous tenancies and/or a history of anti-social behaviour were felt to be particularly difficult to house. The way that organisations deal with exclusions from the waiting lists varies significantly, with some approaches being very rigid and others more flexible. A joint approach to exclusions between local authorities and housing associations (such as in place in Cardiff) was felt to have the capacity to enable access to more housing association stock, but could also lead to offenders/ex-offenders being excluded from all social housing providers in an area. Exclusion from housing extended to supported housing projects with some excluding offenders/ex-offenders on the basis of past behaviour and some on the basis of level of risk posed.

'Those who are excluded from housing lists are not fully integrated into the community. This may lead to more re-offending if in a hostel for a long period of time'.

(supported housing provider questionnaire response)

4.1.15 The experience of practitioners in relation to MAPPA and PPOs and access to housing is summarised in table 4 below.

Table 4: MAPPA, PPOs and access routes – summary issues

MAPPA	PPOs
<p>Multi-agency partnerships and processes in place at Probation area level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - housing authorities duty to co-operate with the Responsible Authority (Police, Prison and Probation) - housing associations duty to co-operate locally determined with the Responsible Authority 	<p>Multi-agency partnerships in place at local authority level linked to Community Safety Partnerships – housing is at the table</p>
<p>Local authorities and stock transfer housing associations more closely involved in process than other housing associations</p>	<p>Accommodation seen as the missing link – PPOs not necessarily a priority in relation to homelessness or allocations policy</p>
<p>Exclusions processes can derail things – those involved in exclusions panels not also involved in MAPPA</p>	<p>Some authorities have carried out work to identify needs and set out issues</p>
<p>Need more flexibility in allocations processes, e.g. to enable pre-allocation</p>	<p>Some schemes emerging specifically for PPOs – most floating support but one</p>

	example of single site scheme
	Some authorities looking at securing a greater priority for PPOs within allocations policies

4.1.16 There were mixed views about the operation of Prison Link Cymru (PLC), a national service funded by the Welsh Assembly Government as a referral access point for prison leavers. Prison resettlement officers noted that the development of PLC had enabled them to focus on enabling prisoners to retain existing accommodation or relinquish their tenancies appropriately. The flip side of this is that the resettlement teams felt that their knowledge of local housing options was not well developed and their direct contact with housing options, advice and homelessness services had reduced.

4.1.17 The majority of local authorities that responded to the questionnaire noted that PLC was one of a range of partner organisations they worked with in relation to rehousing of offenders/ex-offenders. A number of local authorities noted that the information provided by PLC was not always complete or accurate and the timing of receipt of the information (a short period of time before release) did not aid planning. In addition, it was noted that a significant proportion of prisoners for whom PLC complete an assessment do not turn up for an interview at the relevant homelessness department and that there is no requirement for them to do so, e.g. as part of their licence.

4.1.18 There was a general view that PLC should take a housing options approach exploring the full range of possible options with prisoners and only making a homeless application if other options are not available. It is acknowledged that the problem solving approach required to deliver housing options advice is more time consuming and resource intensive than the processing of homeless applications.

Advice and practical ideas

4.1.19 Guidance from Communities and Local Government on the prevention of homelessness identifies the following practice that works well to minimise the use of the homelessness route for prison leavers:

- taking actions to save existing accommodation, e.g:
 - production orders to attend hearings
 - suspension of rent or mortgage payments
 - arranging lodgers or renting out of property
 - budgeting
 - rent arrears repayment schemes
 - Housing benefit claims and backdates
 - Discretionary housing payments
- addressing lack of ID for prisoners (an example being the HMP Altcourse prisoner discharge card initiative)

- enabling access to the private rented sector through bond schemes which, not only fund rent guarantees or deposits, but also a number of weekly payments per prisoner. One example from Bristol set up such a scheme on a loan basis repayable over a two year period, making the scheme financially self-sustainable over time
- taking a genuinely housing options approach to advising prisoners rather than relying on the homelessness route, with pre-release action to find accommodation including (as appropriate for each individual):
 - referrals to hostels/supported accommodation and interviews
 - arranging private rented accommodation
 - rent deposit schemes
 - shared ownership
 - local authority housing waiting lists
 - transfers/exchanges

4.1.20 Examples identified around access routes for offenders/ex-offenders accessing accommodation include:

- the South West Accommodation Gateway – operating in Bristol, Plymouth and Dorset - providing a single access point to all accommodation options for offenders/ex-offenders. The precise way in which each of the three gateways prioritises service users differs but all are based around the principle of prioritising those for whom the provision of accommodation is most likely to reduce re-offending and therefore high risk offenders are prioritised
- a unified referral system developed in Dyfed Powys for service users with high and complex needs to enable them to move across authority boundaries and make best use of the range of supported housing schemes. This is not an offender-specific initiative, but given that it is aimed at those with high and complex needs, it will inevitably cater for high risk offenders/ex-offenders. Probation have been involved in the development of the system
- the Cardiff Housing and Safety Unit which takes the role of informing and carrying out duties related to exclusion, MAPPA and the housing element of resettling and managing offenders in the community

What is common to all the three examples is the development and concentration of expertise within a unit or team in relation to the housing and support needs of offenders/ex-offenders and to the housing options available in a particular area.

4.1.21 An alternative approach is one taken by Wiltshire Council. They have commissioned floating support flexibly so that support can be provided from the point of someone being charged with an offence onwards, enabling a robust case-work approach to maintaining existing accommodation or accessing alternative accommodation at the point of release from prison.

4.1.22 Other practice identified by questionnaire respondents and stakeholders as working effectively and exemplifying a housing options approach include:

- early identification of need using an assertive outreach approach to make contact prior to the individual leaving prison/becoming homeless and accessing other key services alongside housing (Swansea)
- assessing applications that are received from prisons prior to release and using 'spend to save' fund which can give bonds and rent in advance (Neath Port Talbot)

4.2 Access to what?

Practitioner and service user experience

4.2.1 There were three main issues for the prisoners interviewed at Parc in relation to the housing that might be available to them when they were released from prison:

- the type of accommodation that they felt they were likely to be offered

'I don't want to go to a hostel – who else is going to be there ... I will have to stay with my sister instead'

(Prisoner HMP YOI Parc)

- the timing of the availability of the accommodation

'I think that for anyone who has a sentence of more than 12 months – should be able to sort out somewhere to go when they are released'

(Prisoner HMP YOI Parc)

- the location of the accommodation. For most of prisoners interviewed, there was a desire to move away from previous networks and associates

'I don't want to go back to my home area'

(Prisoner HMP YOI Parc)

4.2.2 The concern about the type of accommodation they may get (or already had had) access to was also expressed by offenders/ex-offenders currently excluded from waiting lists.

'in the hostel, I had to sleep on the floor, and it was full of drink and drug users'

(individual excluded from a housing waiting list)

4.2.3 Practitioners were equally concerned about the shortage of accommodation that could be deemed as appropriate for high risk offenders/ex-offenders in both general needs and supported housing sectors and the impact that this has on where individuals are housed.

'appropriate meaning in the right place, risk assessed with low level support packages'

(probation representative)

'25 of the 37 households currently in bed and breakfast are offenders'

(local authority homelessness officer)

'there are examples of hotels being used to house high risk offenders/ex-offenders temporarily because there were no other options'
(probation representative)

'we prioritise the cases coming through MAPPA for non-bed and breakfast temporary accommodation and other offenders are in bed and breakfast'
(local authority chief housing officer)

'there is a lack of (Supporting People) funding to develop the scope and depth of partnership working that is needed and to provide the necessary intensity of support'
(supported housing provider questionnaire response)

4.2.4 A number of aspects of 'appropriateness' of accommodation were identified by practitioners:

- location – many local authorities expressed concern about finding an appropriate location for housing high risk offenders, in particular sex offenders. A number indicated that they felt that in some cases there isn't anywhere that an individual offender could be housed
- quality - living in poor quality accommodation can have an impact on the likelihood that the individual offender will engage with other services such as probation, employment/training etc
- the availability of support – a particular issue was felt to be how support flows to people to meet their needs – it was felt that support needed to be more 'nimble'

'we can find accommodation but without support, people often lose it/re-offend - then you get the revolving door'
(local authority questionnaire response)

'without integrated support services which target the causes of the offending, then the tenancy will inevitably break down'
(supported housing provider questionnaire response)

- timing – it was felt that the issue of housing not being available at the time people need it was compounded by prison service release practices such as early release and Friday afternoon releases

'we need additional units and a service level agreement to enable us to sustain a certain level of voids to ensure appropriate supported accommodation is available for women leaving custody or as an alternative to custody'
(supported housing provider questionnaire response)

4.2.5 The issue of boundaries and borders is a significant barrier to effective rehousing of offenders/ex-offenders. It impacts adversely on the ability of organisations to work in partnership to address needs, particularly where a cross boundary move is required or wanted.

'local authorities hang onto local connection so it's difficult to facilitate cross border moves'
 (prison resettlement officer)

'there are difficulties in getting good information when we house someone who has moved across a boundary'
 (housing association questionnaire response)

It was felt that having some level of certainty about the numbers of cross-border moves likely to be needed would be helpful.

4.2.6 The boundaries and borders issue is further complicated by the nature of statutory responsibilities operating at different geographical levels, e.g. MAPPA and Probation boundaries are co-terminus with the police, but are different to local authority boundaries. This can frustrate the ability to work effectively across boundaries.

4.2.7 A number of stakeholders noted that, while there has been a lot of progress in some areas at a strategic level (national and regional), it is often difficult to interpret and make this work at a local level. The main obstacles seem to revolve round varying local approaches, views about how to cater for so called problematic groups, the rationing of resources and differing views as what the entitlements of people are (largely linked with the issue of local connection). A particular issue in relation to MAPPA is where authorities will not accept reciprocal cases where there is a need for the offender to move across local authority boundaries.

4.2.8 The private rented sector was felt to have significant potential in relation to greater flexibility around moving across local authority boundaries. However, the challenge of working with private sector landlords to house high risk offenders/ex-offenders was seen as significant.

'some private sector landlords won't take offenders at all'
 (probation questionnaire response)

In addition, it was noted that the quality of private rented sector accommodation is very variable and that sometimes high risk offenders/ex-offenders were housed in poor quality private rented sector accommodation.

4.2.9 A lack of move-on accommodation was noted by a range of stakeholders. Individual offenders can get stuck in supported housing projects or approved premises, limiting the ability of organisations to reduce overall risk to the public.

4.2.10 The experience of practitioners in relation to MAPPA and PPOs and accommodation outcomes is summarised in table 5 below.

Table 5: MAPPA, PPOs and accommodation outcomes – summary issues

MAPPA	PPOs
Lack of a continuum of support/surveillance options	Lack of designated accommodation in some areas but schemes being developed in other areas

There are no bedspaces in approved premises for disabled MAPPA offenders	Need to have a planned approach to enable PPOs to move area where this would be beneficial
Using the homelessness legislation to enable cross authority moves is difficult	
Where Probation area arrangements are in place to enable cross authority moves, not all local authorities involved co-operate – local connection/meeting local need seen as the priority	
Agreed mechanism for transfer of MAPPA cases between probation areas is in development, but not currently available	

Advice and practical ideas

4.2.11 The multi-agency witness protection mobility scheme was cited by a number of participants in the research as something worth exploring. Originally developed through a Housing Corporation innovation and good practice grant, it is instructive as a scheme which enables cross authority movement. The scheme aims to provide safer housing for intimidated witnesses who are tenants of local authorities or housing associations. Private sector tenants or owner occupiers have access to the scheme via police referrals. The scheme involves:

- a national co-ordinator
- a designated officer within each Community Safety Partnership
- a duty on local authority housing to assist in rehousing referrals
- the principle of like for like housing (unless overcrowding exists at the point of referral in which case this will be dealt with on relocation)
- clear guidance on information sharing and data protection
- agreed referral and risk assessment paperwork and processes
- specified timescales to ensure fast-track rehousing
- a protocol which sets out processes and responsibilities

4.2.12 Given that offenders/ex-offenders are an unpopular group and that all authorities are concerned about becoming net importers of offenders/ex-offenders, a national system for enabling cross authority movement for this group would need to be reciprocal in nature (which the witness mobility scheme is not).

4.2.13 Examples identified in relation to accessing appropriate accommodation and broadening housing options (including move-on) included projects specifically developed to address the needs of particular groups of offenders:

- the Bardsey Project in Ceredigion (commissioned by the council and managed by The Wallich) is a single site scheme for Prolific and Priority Offenders which includes intensive support and a link to units of move-on accommodation. The

development of the project has involved multi-agency working including the police and funding has come from a number of sources

- Llamau Limited worked in partnership with the Youth Offending Service in Cardiff to develop a supported housing project for young people who have offended or who are at serious risk of offending. A small proportion of funding is provided by the Youth Offending Service

4.2.14 An example was identified of a scheme for young offenders fully funded by Safer Communities monies. Gwynedd Council Supporting People team worked in partnership with the Council's Community Safety section to develop a floating support project for young people who have offended. The funding arrangement enables a greater flexibility than with Supporting People Revenue Grant schemes, e.g. support can be provided to young people living with family or friends.

4.2.15 As has been noted earlier, the private rented sector has significant scope for both extending the options available to high risk offenders/ex-offenders and to enabling cross border moves. However, such schemes need to be very robust in order to attract private sector landlords. Agorfa, a charity based in North West Wales, has successfully developed a scheme that enables access to the private rented sector for offenders/ex-offenders with substance misuse issues. Agorfa supports both landlords and tenants within the overall aim of achieving sustainable tenancies. Some funding for the scheme comes from the Drugs Intervention Programme. Referrals to the scheme include offenders who are subject to MAPPA. Agorfa has seen significant success; since April 2006 78 units of accommodation have been created in the private rented sector for service users referred by Probation, Prison resettlement teams and the Drug Interventions Programme with only three failed tenancies during that time.

4.2.16 Move-on was identified by a wide range of agencies as a significant issue which can reduce the effectiveness and value for money of the relatively small number of schemes that have been developed to cater specifically for high risk offenders/ex-offenders. A number of authorities in Wales have developed structured approaches to move-on from supported and temporary accommodation. For example:

- Cardiff Council have developed a resettlement strategy – housing associations have been asked to contribute 5% of their lettings to rehouse people moving on from hostels over and above agreed percentages of lettings going to nominations from the local authority
- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council has established a multi-agency move-on panel to which people ready to move-on are referred. If accepted by the panel, the individual then has a high priority within the common allocations policy in place between the authority and the three community-based housing associations

Although these approaches are different, the similarity is that people ready to move-on from supported or temporary accommodation are accorded some priority within the rehousing system (either by allocation of points or by top slicing a proportion of lettings).

4.3 Who does what: roles and responsibilities

Practitioner and service user experience

4.3.1 While the prisoners in Parc Prison, Bridgend, who were interviewed as part of the project did not have anything specific to say about the roles and responsibilities of different agencies, the following comments from individuals with offending histories currently excluded from housing registers indicate that, despite the range of individuals within various agencies whose role includes providing advice and assistance to offenders, sometimes the help that is needed doesn't get provided.

'I wasn't given any help in prison, I didn't see a housing officer in prison, I was just put in a hostel on release'

(individual currently excluded from a housing waiting list)

'I just got a list of private landlords from probation and was told to look in the Echo for a private place'

(individual currently excluded from a housing waiting list)

4.3.2 The overall picture in respect of roles and responsibilities is complex but can be summarised as follows:

- Prison – in prisons defined as 'local', (see paragraph 3.1.7), housing needs are identified within 4 days of reception into prison. Resettlement teams work to sustain existing accommodation. The role set out in Prison Service Order 2325 Housing Needs and Assessment and Prison Service Order 2300 Resettlement
- Probation – Offender Managers undertake an OASys assessment as part of the sentence planning exercise for each individual to identify housing need. Offender Managers work with specialist housing interventions staff (where these are in place), to make necessary referrals to local authorities/housing providers. (Probation works with those who are sentenced to 12 months and over)
- Prison Link Cymru – homeless interview and risk assessment of prisoners going to be homeless on release (generally focused on those with sentences of 12 months and less, but some evidence of duplication of referrals with those made by Probation to local authorities)
- local authority homelessness/housing options teams – a number of Welsh local authorities have dedicated posts within their teams for liaison with prisons/dealing with homeless applications from prison leavers, e.g. Neath Port Talbot where the post focuses on high risk offenders. A number of authorities noted that they have direct contact with prison resettlement teams and go to prisons to undertake interviews
- housing providers – access arrangements to individual housing providers differ. There are some common approaches (common waiting lists/referral systems) in place, but most have individual access points. Some have contact with prisons through resettlement fairs

4.3.3 Despite this range of roles, the majority of which are aimed at enabling a degree of pre-planning in relation to housing high risk offenders/ex-offenders, a significant proportion of organisations participating in the research noted a lack of pre-planning to meet the housing needs of prisoners prior to release. Some of this was put down to variable implementation of the roles set out above. In particular, the level of attention paid to housing within prisons was identified as being variable and influenced by resources/capacity and knowledge. Despite national frameworks and standards, the service provided can be person dependent, i.e. where there is a person who either has housing knowledge or becomes knowledgeable in this aspect, significant progress can be made.

'Some prisons do provide some housing services to prisoners, but others are very limited. Moreover they do not link up in any meaningful way with Probation or Supported People Planning Groups'
(probation service questionnaire response)

4.3.4 The way in which organisations target their services can also pose challenges. A number of local authorities and housing providers raised the difficulties encountered in rehousing offenders/ex-offenders who do not receive a service from Probation (i.e. those who have had sentences of less than 12 months). The ending of the period of supervision by Probation for those who have had longer-term sentences can also be difficult for housing providers and their ability to manage risk.

4.3.5 In addition to the roles summarised in paragraph 4.3.2, there are a range of formal (e.g. MAPPA and PPO) and informal partnerships between organisations. In their responses to the questionnaire, local authorities listed far more partnership arrangements than any other sector followed by Probation and support providers. Housing associations, unless they have supported housing provision, (or are a stock transfer association), list less and more disparate arrangements. This indicates that the presence of statutory duties is associated with more well developed/closer working relationships with other organisations.

'there tend to be good relationships with housing officers who sit on MAPPA panels'
(probation service representative)

4.3.6 In general, from their questionnaire responses and those of local authorities, housing associations seem to be more remote from the processes involved in the rehousing of high risk offenders/ex-offenders than local authorities. The exception to this is stock transfer associations and also where multi-agency approaches have been developed by the local authority in partnership with associations e.g. Cardiff's common exclusions approach.

'Housing associations are reluctant to assist'
(local authority questionnaire respondent)

4.3.7 From an association perspective, sporadic participation in MAPPA was seen as an issue.

'Discussion of cases at MAPPA does not always work well - inconsistency of arrangements which are based on personal networks rather than an overall framework'.

(housing association questionnaire response)

- 4.3.8 In the context of stock transfer, there are issues about whether all associations play a part. While the stock transfer association is likely to be part of MAPPA, other associations working in the area may not be, resulting in a disproportionate number of high risk offenders being housed by the stock transfer association.
- 4.3.9 The use of non-offender specific supported housing projects to house high risk offenders/ex-offenders was identified as highly variable. Some projects would not take high risk offenders/ex-offenders as they were deemed to be too high a risk in relation to staff and other residents. Access to sheltered housing for older high risk offenders/ex-offenders, e.g. those with physical disabilities, was felt to be particularly problematic.
- 4.3.10 Other supported housing providers were able to accept such referrals for their projects and seemed to be more prepared to manage the risk involved. This is clearly dependent on the skills and expertise of the organisation concerned and their confidence in working with offenders/ex-offenders who may present a high risk. However, such providers noted that this could result in projects being over-used for the high risk offender/ex-offender group which could work against management of risk and community safety.
- 4.3.11 There is an overall question about what skills and expertise organisations providing supported housing should be expected to have in relation to high risk offenders/ex-offenders. Alongside this runs a question as to whether housing should be funding the total costs of high level support which also involves monitoring and surveillance of high risk offenders/ex-offenders. Supported housing providers themselves noted a lack of consistency in the approach of homelessness and probation officers. Probation noted the need to match up housing-related support and offender management supervision to enable the most to be made of the expertise of the support provider.
- 4.3.12 Issues of trust between agencies were evident. For example, the issue of whether information completed by one agency (using their housing assessment or referral form) is accurate and useable by another agency was raised by a number of respondents to the questionnaire. Such issues can result in duplication of effort and multiple processes for service users. The issue of what information was shared with which organisations was also raised, in particular by housing associations which are, as noted above, not always linked formally to MAPPA. Supported housing providers also noted a lack of information sharing in respect of risk.

'There is a clear need for us to be able to have full disclosure of a persons offending history, in order to make sure that the accommodation they are considered for is appropriate, and so that we can ensure the right level of support is in place to enable the tenancy to be sustained. It can also help us to look out for the 'trigger' signs that a problem might be starting to reoccur so that we can bring others in help or support. We are too often not given this information, as the

assumption is wrongly made we think that we will use it to find an excuse not to house someone, and that is not correct.'

(housing association questionnaire response)

4.3.13 The role of the Welsh Assembly Government in achieving progress in relation to housing of high risk offenders/ex-offenders was raised by a number of stakeholders. It was felt that the funding arrangements between the Welsh Assembly Government and local authorities means that, while the Assembly can promote guidance and issue legislation, it is limited in its powers to address the level of resources applied to groups of people who are seen as problematic or undeserving, or to enforce cross boundary and national co-operation to make progress in this area. A view was expressed that the Assembly needs to be more interventionist on some issues, e.g. addressing difficulties in relation to cross boundary issues and encouraging regional commissioning.

4.3.14 The debate on roles and responsibilities extends in two other directions. Firstly, whether service users can be supported/empowered to take on more responsibility to deliver services themselves, e.g. peer mentoring and advice schemes. There is also scope for linking such initiatives to social enterprise and skills development, particularly in the context of the availability of European Convergence and Competiveness funding.

4.3.15 There is also potential for the use of volunteers as part of the picture of reducing risk and levels of re-offending.

Advice and practical ideas

4.3.16 The Link Protocol, published by the Welsh Assembly Government in 2006, sets out a process in relation to housing individuals sentenced to custody. It includes a single housing referral form developed by Dyfed Powys Probation and partner agencies and a risk assessment form. For the majority of the actions, a number of lead agencies are identified which means that the document is not as clear as it could be. The research found that the protocol is not widely used and a specific question was raised as to whether the relevant organisations have the resources to implement it as set out, in particular Probation. There is also a question of the legitimacy of such documents, i.e. are they perceived as a requirement, a helpful way forward or an optional way of doing things? In North Wales, agencies have worked together using the Link Protocol as a starting point to develop a Prisoner Housing Protocol that is acceptable to all relevant agencies working across the region. The North Wales version was developed through a series of multi-agency workshops with Offender Managers, prison staff from Altcourse, Styal and Stoke Heath, local authority homelessness managers, the DAWN project, Shelter Cymru and the housing association..

4.3.17 There is a major issue about the implementation of multi-agency frameworks developed at a national level. The joint development by the All Wales Chief Housing Officer's Panel and the four probation areas of an all-Wales MAPPA protocol to enable movement between areas has encountered significant resistance within some authorities and, at the time of writing, has yet to move to implementation. For any such development, it is important to think about what is needed in order for the framework to be implemented, e.g. training, additional resources, appropriate monitoring arrangements etc.

4.3.18 Examples identified in relation to clarifying roles and responsibilities included the HARP (Housing and Returning Prisoners) protocol, developed in 2005 in Tyne and Wear to bring together statutory and voluntary sector housing providers with the prison and probation services, to create a common approach to planning for the housing of returning offenders. As well as setting out roles and responsibilities (much like the Link Protocol), it includes a range of standard letters and forms to be used when agencies communicate with each other in relation to the housing and support needs of people being discharged from custody.

4.3.19 Examples at a local level where specific roles have been developed and defined include:

- the Cardiff Housing and Safety Unit comprising four members of staff who work on five main areas – the common exclusion policy, MAPPA level 1 and 2, domestic violence MARAC, National Witness Mobility Scheme and protection of vulnerable adults and children
- designated officers within the local authority housing options service who work with the Probation service housing interventions officers and offender managers (Carmarthenshire)
- a high risk officer within the homelessness team (Neath Port Talbot)

4.3.20 An example of a well-resourced prison resettlement service is the Community Resettlement Team at Doncaster Prison (a contracted out prison with a total capacity of 1,135 male prisoners). The team works to address accommodation and other needs of prisoners. The focus of the team includes retaining existing accommodation where this is possible and the CAB and a local organisation specialising in mortgage and debt advice are brought into the prison to assist in this task. A homelessness officer from Sheffield City Council also visits the prison on a regular basis.

4.3.21 The resettlement team at HMP Altcourse work in partnership with a range of other agencies in relation to prisoners being discharged from the prison to North Wales. DIP has provided funding for a resource in the prison where support services and a machine that produces the ID card for prisoners being discharged are located.

4.3.22 A number of peer mentoring and peer advice projects have emerged in prisons, such as the St Giles prison peer advice and Meet at the Gates projects which both involve prisoners/ex-prisoners being trained to NVQ level 3 to provide advice and guidance.

4.3.23 An example of the use of volunteers in reducing the risk posed to communities by sex offenders is the Circles of Support and Accountability concept. Circles usually consist of four to six volunteers who agree to befriend a released sex offender and offer support, advice and a challenge to signs of inappropriate behaviour. Whilst no specialist or expert knowledge is required, volunteers need to be responsible and practical and are trained and given support in their role. This concept has been implemented with some significant success in the Thames Valley area and is being developed in North Wales.

4.4 Gaps in the system

Practitioner and service user experience

4.4.1 The research has identified a number of gaps in 'the system' which include:

- lack of knowledge about the housing options available and unrealistic expectations of offenders, ex-offenders and practitioners
- incomplete information about need which impacts on decisions about priorities and commissioning
- lack of mutual knowledge of systems and processes between housing and criminal justice practitioners
- lack of shared understanding between housing and criminal justice practitioners of core issues such as how decisions are made and the management of risk

4.4.2 We have already noted prisoners' lack of knowledge about the housing system and housing options. This lack of knowledge also extends to the prison resettlement staff.

'we don't know about all the options available – a directory would help'
(prison resettlement representative)

4.4.3 Stakeholders noted that there is variable knowledge in prisons and approved premises about housing and a lack of knowledge about provision and services that exist. Local authorities noted the existence of unrealistic expectations within the criminal justice sector in relation to the amount, type and availability of housing resources.

4.4.4 There are gaps in the evidence of need for services for high risk offenders/ex-offenders. Some authorities along with partner agencies have very good evidence of need which has led to services being commissioned while others say that the Supporting People Needs Mapping Exercise generates very little evidence of need from this group and therefore other groups have been, and will be, prioritised in relation to developing new services or reconfiguring existing ones. Participation by criminal justice agencies in Needs Mapping was not consistent.

4.4.5 Given the complexities outlined in this report and the constant state of flux of relevant policy frameworks, it is perhaps not surprising that the housing and criminal justice agencies, with notable exceptions in relation to individuals who have moved between the two sectors and areas where partnership working is particularly robust, do not feel that they understand each other that well. Such lack of mutual knowledge can contribute to suspicion and lack of trust.

4.4.6 This lack of knowledge includes:

- lack of knowledge by frontline housing officers about the criminal justice field e.g. sentencing definitions, licensing issues, ability/constraints on sharing

information, the level of probation involvement and other issues such as MAPPA arrangements

- lack of knowledge within criminal justice agencies of Supporting People arrangements such as commissioning, as well as service provision and how services can be accessed
- lack of clarity about the roles and responsibilities of different agencies. As noted in the previous section, this is not aided by the potential for duplication of roles

'partners involved in the provision of housing, support and long term involvement with the individual such as Police and Probation, are not always aware of one another's responsibilities and this can cause problems and provide an uncoordinated service. This is particularly relevant in serious cases where sensitivity of information and managing the expectations and issues within the community is most important.'

(housing association questionnaire response)

- 4.4.7 As with many examples of cross sector working, language and terminology is also an issue. For example, in criminal justice, the term 'support' is used to mean 'support and supervision.'
- 4.4.8 There is a lack of a shared understanding about core processes such as decision making and management of risk. Probation MAPPA leads noted their need to make 'defensible decisions' about cases involving a high level of risk. If a local authority/housing provider decides that there is nowhere that a high risk offender/ex-offender can be housed due to the level of risk they present, the fact that they may then be housed out of area or in inappropriate temporary accommodation may actually increase the overall level of risk to the general public from that individual.
- 4.4.9 This is an extremely difficult and contentious area, particularly given the lack of any sensible public debate about how risk is best managed in such cases, along with an awareness of the fact that risk cannot be eliminated. This plays out in the political arena with elected members often understandably reacting to public opinion. Elected members may well lack knowledge about the detail of how risk is managed in relation to high risk offenders/ex-offenders and what processes and decisions reduce or exacerbate levels of risk.
- 4.4.10 A wide range of information and training needs were identified by participants in the research and were taken into consideration in the identification of the topics for the six advice notes produced as part of the project. These will include information for both housing and criminal justice staff on terminology and key processes and contexts in relation to housing and criminal justice systems.
- 4.4.11 Training needs that were identified included:
- issues around key frameworks, processes, roles and responsibilities, legislative requirements and related guidance in both housing and criminal justice
 - availability of housing/housing options

- assessing and managing risk

Advice and practical ideas

- 4.4.12 The Accommodation Gateways established in three areas through the South West Accommodation Gateway project have proved to be a catalyst for dialogue between housing and criminal justice and have served to improve understanding and knowledge, including on the housing options available and how these can be accessed.
- 4.4.13 An example which has served to reduce the gap in information about the need of offenders/ex-offenders for supported housing is the development of Gwent NME Lite. This is specifically aimed at enabling Probation to contribute relevant information. Discussions at the Gwent Criminal Justice and Supporting People Forum resulted in the NME form being reduced from eight to four pages, with some questions more relevant to offenders added. After a trial period, as at June 2008, the form is in its first year of implementation and more information on support needs is being received across Gwent from Probation.
- 4.4.14 There are examples of multi-agency groups that have facilitated the sharing of expertise and knowledge between organisations. The North Wales Substance Misuse Forum has a sub group which focuses on homelessness and accommodation issues. The group has a broad membership including representatives from local authority housing strategy and Supporting People functions, housing associations, private landlords, bond schemes, other housing providers, health, HMP Altcourse and Styal, the voluntary sector, Police, Probation and relevant partnership schemes such as DIP and DAWN.
- 4.4.15 The Group has consolidated multi agency work across various agencies. For example, it has increased awareness of the accommodation needs of the client group across agencies other than housing that have capital or revenue funding available. It has also increased awareness that an affordable private sector tenancy can be more appropriate than social housing.

4.5 A closer look

- 4.5.1 Table 6 below sets out in summary the main features from the two case studies. There are a number of similarities and a number of significant differences between the two areas in addition to the differences in context. Similarities experienced by both case study areas include:
- an acute shortage of accommodation and a view that, although the private rented sector needs further development, it has limited scope to contribute to meeting the needs of this client group
 - the further development of direct access accommodation for homeless people which it is felt will contribute to meeting the needs of offenders/ex-offenders
 - an increasing focus on the prevention of homelessness and a wish to reduce the number of people in bed and breakfast accommodation

- difficulties experienced in enabling cross border moves
- difficulties in enabling offenders/ex-offenders who have experienced problems with previous tenancies to access social housing (this is despite the stock ownership being different)
- an increase in the extent and scope of joint working both within and cross authority

4.5.2 The key difference between the case study areas is that a greater priority has been accorded to offenders/ex-offenders by Wrexham in relation to its Supporting People services. Although both authorities experience difficulties in getting partner statutory agencies to complete needs mapping forms, Wrexham receive a significant amount of needs information from NACRO which has contributed to the case for developing and commissioning services for offenders/ex-offenders.

4.5.3 The overall conclusion from the case studies is that despite significant differences in context, the overall difficulties faced are very similar and therefore sharing of learning and experience of what works is relevant and valuable.

Table 6: Case study overview

Bridgend	Wrexham
<i>Key local data/features</i>	
Population base 64,800 households (mid year estimate 2006)	Population base 64,300 households (mid year estimate 2006)
Borders with Neath Port Talbot, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Vale of Glamorgan	Borders with Flintshire, Denbighshire, Powys, Cheshire and Shropshire
Housing and Community well-being function within Regeneration Team based in Communities Directorate – housing brief includes Communities First and community safety	All strategic and landlord housing services within Housing and Public Protection Department – broadly based strategic housing function Wrexham Housing Alliance (includes partner housing associations and Home Builders’ Federation) work jointly to produce the Local Housing Strategy
Stock transfer in September 2003 Around 80% owner occupation Limited private rented sector Sum of all rented tenures below Welsh average	Council retains its housing stock 68% owner occupation 7% private rented sector - large pressure on the sector due to migrant labour and student population
Focus on developing the housing strategic role and partnerships	Current housing focus challenge of meeting and maintaining Welsh Housing Quality Standard

Shifting of focus of homelessness service more to prevention	Continuing shift to more prevention within homelessness service
Parc Prison (not designated 'local') – little direct impact identified No approved premises	No local prison Approved premises – little direct impact identified (relevant links via MAPPA in place) although negative publicity can add to stigma and impact on development of proposed schemes for vulnerable people
<i>Demand and supply data</i>	
Number of lettings through nominations to housing associations 2006/07 - 384	Number of lettings to new tenants plus nominations to housing associations 2006/07 – 797
Number of homelessness acceptances 2006/07 - 489 (down from 782 previous year)	Number of homelessness acceptances 2006/07 – 285 (up from 266 previous year)
Number coming through MAPPA where accommodation identified as an issue 2006/07 – 6	Number coming through MAPPA where accommodation identified as an issue 2006/07 – 5
Number of homeless priority need offenders 2006/07 - 68	Number of homeless priority need offenders 2006/07 – 24
Number of PPOs as at end of September 2007 - 42	Number of PPOs as at end of September 2007 – 25
NME numbers identified as lead need criminal offending – 52 (76 where lead need alcohol or substance misuse)	NME numbers identified as lead need criminal offending – 82 (73 also with drug and alcohol problems)
Rank order of lead need criminal offending issues – 8	Rank order of lead need criminal offending issues – 2
<i>Supporting People funded provision</i>	
Number of SP funded units specifically for ex-offenders – 0	Number of SP funded units specifically for ex-offenders – 4
Number of SP funded units specifically for people suffering from alcohol/drug dependency - 5	Number of SP funded units specifically for people suffering from alcohol dependency - 10
	Number of SP funded units specifically for people suffering from drug dependency - 8
Number of SP funded units specifically for homeless or potentially homeless people – 70	Number of SP funded units specifically for homeless or potentially homeless people – 256

Numbers of floating support – 119 Numbers of direct access - 24	Numbers of floating support – 332 Numbers of direct access – 5
<i>Strategic issues/joint working</i>	
Cross boundary service developed for women with high needs including offending history – Bridgend contribute general needs/dispersed units	England/Wales border is not really an issue - a positive is that some English associations are coming to develop without grant – stimulating competition
Some experience of reciprocal arrangements for offenders	Movement between areas seems to be difficult, even with protocols in place
Stock transfer association plays a more active role re MAPPA and MARAC than the other associations	Housing have done briefing sessions with YOS etc and distribute SP directory widely amongst partner agencies
<i>What's working well</i>	
Developing closer links with probation and other agencies	Multi-agency work within PPO group is working well, a shortage of resources in relation to accommodation is the issue
Close working with Parc Prison – housing staff attend monthly resettlement fairs, link with supporting family group and plan with YOS around young offenders being discharged from Parc	Housing staff on variety of multi-agency planning and commissioning groups
Housing are a member of the PPO group and are able to put in place Housing Plans for prolific offenders	Priority accorded to date to offenders/ex-offenders in relation to Supporting People funded schemes
Move-on process aids moves from supported accommodation to independent living	
<i>Key issues/problems</i>	
Acute shortage of housing options	Biggest issue is shortage of affordable housing
Unplanned presentations to homelessness	Offenders can be excluded from social housing due to arrears/problems with previous tenancies, in particular recharges for damage
Particular issue around middle level offenders/repeat offenders representing to homelessness	PPOs scheme felt to be undermined due to lack of priority accorded to PPOs in relation to accessing social housing/homelessness legislation – the housing issue is more evident in Wrexham because the PPO partnership is so robust

Difficulties in moving offenders on from temporary accommodation	Synchronising Social Housing Grant and revenue funding to get new supported housing schemes up and running
Lack of need information as not collected consistently by support providers or other statutory agencies	Huge waiting lists for offenders schemes
	Getting other agencies to complete Needs Mapping forms
<i>Future plans</i>	
Homeless hostel required	Nightshelter planned – will create additional need for move-on
Developing a move-on strategy	Have prioritised offenders to date in relation to Supporting People – other priorities now need attention
Need for specific accommodation for offenders/ex-offenders – single site and floating support	Want to reduce use of B&B for offenders – looking at a leasing scheme for single people
Looking to develop more strategic approach to a range of groups including offenders to develop more of a pathway/continuum of supply	Supporting People looking to move towards outcomes based commissioning – might ease some of the issues around eligibility of individuals for services
Need and want to work more closely with Probation to develop solutions	
Worth exploring a regional commissioning approach to this client group	

Key points

- There is an over-reliance on the homelessness legislation as the access route into housing for offender/ex-offenders including high risk offenders and a lack of a housing options approach
- Exclusions processes result in many offenders not being able to access social housing and a proportion of supported housing schemes
- The key issues around appropriateness of accommodation are timing of the availability of the accommodation, the type of accommodation and the ability to move between areas
- There is potential for confusion, duplication and gaps in regard to the roles and responsibilities of various organisations

- There are major issues in relation to local implementation of frameworks developed at a national level
- There are significant gaps in mutual knowledge and understanding between the housing and criminal justice sectors

5 Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

- 5.1.1 There is a clear and evidenced link between accommodation and offending – stable and appropriate accommodation being a necessary, but not sufficient condition, for the reduction of re-offending. For some high risk offender groups, in particular those subject to MAPPA and those defined as PPOs, the link between accommodation and offending is stronger than for the whole offender/ex-offender group. This makes an even more robust case for providing appropriate housing in order to reduce re-offending rates and therefore enhance community safety.
- 5.1.2 Although the logic of providing housing and support to offenders/ex-offenders in order to reduce re-offending is clear, there are significant challenges in doing so, in particular where the risk is high. These stem from a range of issues, including government policy towards offenders/ex-offenders, societal views of this group as largely undeserving, the general shortage of affordable housing options, which is even more acute for those who have particular needs, and the practicalities of multi-agency and cross boundary working.
- 5.1.3 The offender/ex-offender population is diverse and cannot be treated as an homogenous group. Some parts of the offender/ex-offender population are considered by practitioners to be particularly challenging in respect of their housing and support needs. These include the following high risk groups:
- offenders/ex-offenders subject to MAPPA
 - sex offenders
 - mentally disordered offenders, and
 - PPOs

However, practitioners also indicated that the rehousing of offenders/ex-offenders per se is a significant concern to them. Key practitioner concerns were lack of appropriate accommodation, lack of support/funding for support, and publicity and nimbyism within the general public and within organisations.

- 5.1.4 The strategic and policy framework that surrounds the housing of offenders/ex-offenders, including high risk offenders/ex-offenders, is at the interface of housing and criminal justice policy. It is complex and also subject to significant flux. There is currently a large number of policy developments in relation to both housing and criminal justice that could impact on the ability of housing organisations to provide appropriate accommodation and support for high risk offenders/ex-offenders.
- 5.1.5 The demand for housing to meet the needs of offenders/ex-offenders in Wales exceeds the supply. The prisoner population is growing which will mean more prisoners being released that are likely to have accommodation needs. Other initiatives such as the Bail Accommodation and Support Service are also likely to create additional demand on housing providers due to the need for move-on accommodation. The demand from high risk offenders/ex-offenders is just one of many demands on social housing providers at a time when pressures in the housing market are increasing the general demand on social housing.

- 5.1.6 There are key gaps in the appropriate provision of housing and support for high risk offenders/ex-offenders. This includes both type and amount as well as in the availability of move-on accommodation. Shortages of emergency and temporary accommodation for people leaving prison, supported housing for those with high/more complex support needs, places not being available when people need them, a shortage of specialist accommodation such as Approved Premises and accommodation for women high risk offenders/ex-offenders were identified. A continuum of provision is needed in relation to levels of surveillance and support, including opportunities for offenders/ex-offenders to move from higher to lower levels of support, whether in the same accommodation or different accommodation.
- 5.1.7 The shortage of supply undermines the ability of housing providers to contribute to the reduction of re-offending amongst the high risk offender/ex-offender group, as well as in relation to the whole population of offenders/ex-offenders. The shortage of housing and support specifically designed to meet the needs of high risk offenders/ex-offenders is linked to difficulties in gathering information on the level of need of this group across the range of agencies that might be expected to contribute to this.
- 5.1.8 A range of examples of schemes for high risk offenders/ex-offenders jointly commissioned by agencies were identified during the research. Such schemes had experienced challenges in relation to joining up capital and revenue funding and in working across the different geographical boundaries of the various agencies.
- 5.1.9 Where schemes have been developed for high risk groups which involve very high levels of support, there is a question as to how they should be funded, i.e. whether all the costs should come from Supporting People budgets. Some examples exist of schemes where funding has been accessed from other budgets, but these have been locally negotiated, and such funding arrangements are often short-term and fragile.
- 5.1.10 From a practitioner perspective, the current strategic framework is overly complex, contains contradictions and tensions and does not aid implementation. This complexity contributes to the 'implementation gap' in respect of key strategic multi-agency documents such as the Link Protocol which have not been implemented by agencies in the way that was intended. This points to the need for a more sophisticated approach to supporting the implementation of multi-agency guidance.
- 5.1.11 The way that high risk offenders/ex-offenders access housing and support is not effective. There is an over-reliance on the homelessness legislation as the route for rehousing people leaving prison and many high risk offenders/ex-offenders find themselves excluded from housing waiting lists due to problems with a previous tenancy. Many people leaving prison come out to a waiting list, not to a service. In accommodation terms, this may mean staying in insecure housing such as with family/friends or in bed and breakfast which can increase the risk of re-offending and therefore reduce community safety. In addition, prisoners are disempowered in the process, having very little direct contact with housing advice services or housing providers and little knowledge of the options available.

- 5.1.12 The homelessness route was described by many practitioners and prisoners as a revolving door. In addition, the detail of the legislation is not based around the management of risk. The housing options approach, which has been well-developed in relation to many other groups of people in housing need, does not appear to have been developed in the same way for this group (despite the availability of a range of practical advice and examples). The way in which the Prison Link Cymru service is configured and resourced appears to contribute to this lack of a housing options approach.
- 5.1.13 The accommodation and support that high risk offenders/ex-offenders do access is often not appropriate. It can be the wrong type of accommodation, in the wrong place. In particular, the lack of ability of high risk offenders/ex-offenders to move area, either within or between local authority areas, is problematic.
- 5.1.14 There is a general under-use of the private rented sector as an option for high risk offenders/ex-offenders. The challenges presented in expanding the use of the private sector are not inconsiderable, but there are examples of highly effective practice in place in Wales which could be extended/built on.
- 5.1.15 Tackling the gaps in provision identified by this research will require innovation and the ability to try new ways of working which needs an enabling national framework.
- 5.1.16 There is a lot of activity in relation to the rehousing of high risk offenders/ex-offenders. Prison, probation, Prison Link Cymru, housing advice and homelessness services all play a role in identifying the housing and support needs of high risk offenders/ex-offenders. However, roles and responsibilities are not always clear and there can be duplication and/or gaps in services experienced by individual high risk offenders/ex-offenders. In addition, it appears that the expertise that clearly exists within the system, (e.g. on housing options in any one area, housing advice to prevent homelessness etc), frequently does not get to where it is needed and generate an appropriate intervention that helps to retain a home or appropriate access a new one. There are potential roles for offenders themselves and for volunteers in contributing to appropriate accommodation and support options for high risk offenders/ex-offenders.
- 5.1.17 There are a number of gaps in the 'system' at present. These include accurate information about need, knowledge of housing options and mutual understanding across the housing and criminal justice sectors. The lack of a shared understanding of risk and the management of risk was noted as a concern. The lack of mutual knowledge of commissioning arrangements used by the different sectors was also identified as an issue.
- 5.1.18 The two case studies provided useful local detail. They demonstrated that, although there were significant differences in the context of the two areas, the overall difficulties faced in providing for offenders/ex-offenders, in particular high risk groups, were very similar.
- 5.1.19 A wide range of training needs were identified in the questionnaire responses and by stakeholders and the case study authorities. These included the need for joint training between housing and criminal justice staff to increase mutual awareness/knowledge. The advice notes produced as part of this project aim to help this process and the second phase of the project is to provide such joint

training based around the content of the advice notes and the companion housing options report.

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 Recommendations from the research are set out below under the following themes:

- joining up strategic priorities
- access routes
- enabling mobility
- a housing options approach
- increasing the options available
- developing options to meet immediate/emergency needs
- increasing mutual knowledge between the housing and criminal justice sectors
- taking the agenda forward

Actions at national and local level are identified. The recommendations are measures which are based on the principle of maximising the contribution of housing to the reduction of re-offending and its potential to contribute to community safety.

Joining up strategic priorities

National level actions

Recommendation 1

- The Welsh Assembly Government (housing, community safety and crime reduction teams) and NOMS Cymru should work in partnership to align strategic priorities between housing and criminal justice by ensuring that:
 - strategic documents are effectively linked and cross referenced
 - relevant guidance addresses issues across housing and criminal justice agendas, e.g. including in the Code of Guidance reference to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (and subsequent amendments to the Act) responsibilities of local authorities

Recommendation 2

- The Welsh Assembly Government and NOMS Cymru should review the remits of relevant national groups, consolidate the groups and work to develop ownership of multi-agency action plans. Actions required by different functions/organisations need to be clearly articulated to the functions/organisations concerned

Recommendation 3

- The Welsh Assembly Government and NOMS Cymru should work in partnership with relevant government departments in England (through concordats and other relevant mechanisms) to:
 - ensure sufficient understanding within English government of the differences in the legislative, strategic and policy context in Wales

- put in place a process which scrutinises 'England and Wales' documents for their applicability to Wales and ensures that any necessary amendments to content are made before they are circulated to practitioners in Wales

Local level actions

Recommendation 4

- In order to meet Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requirements in relation to the reduction of crime and enhancing community safety. Local authorities should review their allocations policies with a view to awarding high priority to those on the PPO scheme. Housing associations should play a role in meeting the demand of PPOs through nominations or common waiting list/allocations policy arrangements

Recommendation 5

- Local authorities should ensure that their strategic housing planning and Supporting People planning processes are co-ordinated and integrated in order to best meet national and local priorities

Access routes

National level actions

Recommendation 6

- The emphasis on homelessness as an access route to social housing for high risk offenders/ex-offenders leaving prison should be reduced. One way in which this could be done is through a reconfigured central resource along the lines of Prison Link Cymru, better resourced to enable more detailed advice to be given to prisoners at all stages in their sentence. Such a service should be funded jointly by housing and community safety in recognition of the contribution it would make to the reduction of crime. Such a national scheme would:
 - support prison-based resettlement workers to build their knowledge of housing options and referral routes
 - liaise closely with local authority-based housing options services to ensure accurate advice and signposting is provided to individuals
 - be knowledgeable about all housing options available in a given area, including referral arrangements for supported housing and private rented sector options, to minimise the use of the homelessness route
 - work to empower prisoners/ex-prisoners to play a role in the provision of general advice (rather than detailed case work)

Recommendation 7

- Relevant local and national directories of housing and support services should be co-ordinated at an all Wales level and made available electronically and/or on CD rom to all prisons that have prisoners from Wales. This resource would need to be regularly updated

Local level actions

Recommendation 8

- Housing advice and homelessness services should have more direct contact with prisons to build knowledge within resettlement teams of the range of housing options available and have direct contact with prisoners in relation to their housing circumstances

Recommendation 9

- Housing providers should develop systems and processes that enable people to go on waiting lists and be referred to supported housing projects while they are still in prison

Recommendation 10

- Landlords should review their approach to exclusions in line with the recommendations of the Social Housing Management Grant funded 2008 report ***Am I on the list? Exclusion from and reinclusion on social housing waiting lists***

Recommendation 11

- Local authorities should use their strategic housing relationship with housing associations to ensure that associations contribute to providing accommodation for offenders/ex-offenders. One way of doing this is through the development of a lettings plan which sets out the proportion of vacancies to be let to households coming from the waiting list, transfer list and homelessness route, and for specified groups

Recommendation 12

- Local authorities should make the most of IT/technology to enable effective communication with prisoners and reduce the need to travel long distances, e.g. video links

Enabling mobility

National level actions

Recommendation 13

- A national transfer prisoner mobility and resettlement scheme should be established along the lines of the Homes Mobility Scheme. Local authorities and housing associations should contribute to the scheme on the basis of an agreed percentage of lettings with clearly defined eligibility criteria, supported by an IT system and co-ordinated nationally

Local level actions

Recommendation 14

- Local authorities and housing associations should participate in the national transfer prisoner mobility and resettlement scheme

A housing options approach

National level actions

Recommendation 15

- A housing options approach for offenders/ex-offenders including high risk groups should be proactively implemented. Such an approach could be resourced through a reconfigured Prison Link Cymru as set out above (in access routes section) and would need to involve significant expertise to work with people in prison to:
 - provide advice to individuals on actions that can be taken to save existing accommodation and taking such actions as appropriate – this is likely to involve detailed case work which will require detailed legal knowledge
 - provide advice on relinquishing tenancies and dealing with arrears/other debts to reduce the chance of the individual being excluded from waiting lists on release
 - provide advice for partners of prisoners where their accommodation (previously shared with the prisoner) is at risk
 - take steps to address lack of ID
 - take pre-release action to find accommodation across the range of sectors

An important principle of the housing options approach will be enabling and empowering prisoners. This is likely to involve direct contact between prisoners and experts in both housing advice and housing options and exploring the potential for peer advice/mentoring projects.

Local level actions

Recommendation 16

- Social landlords should ensure that they respond effectively and promptly to requests from those in prison to relinquish tenancies

Recommendation 17

- Social landlords should review their approach to repayment of arrears by high risk offenders/ex-offenders where the provision of accommodation would contribute to community safety

Recommendation 18

- Social landlords should work with a reconfigured Prison Link Cymru to minimise duplication of effort and ensure the effective use of resources

Increasing the options available

National level actions

Recommendation 19

- The Welsh Assembly Government should increase investment in the supply of affordable housing to rent. This is particularly important given the credit crunch and the impact that this is having on rates of building and therefore the amount of affordable housing likely to be secured via section 106 agreements

Recommendation 20

- The Welsh Assembly Government should fund an expansion of effective schemes that use the private rented sector as an appropriate option for high risk offenders/ex-offenders. This should build on the effective practice that already exists in Wales

Recommendation 21

- The Welsh Assembly Government should work with NOMS Cymru to establish a criminal justice funding stream to contribute to the cost of high level housing-related support schemes where the support goes beyond housing-related support and includes surveillance and monitoring, as well as addressing criminogenic behaviour (this could incorporate the retained Probation Accommodation Grants funding which, during 2008/09 is around £200,000 across Wales, but which is due to come to an end in March 2009)

Recommendation 22

- The Welsh Assembly Government, NOMS Cymru and other relevant agencies should support a climate where agencies and commissioners of services can try and test out new models of provision and ideas such as those set out in the housing options report. This might include peer led approaches and/or the use of volunteers

Recommendation 23

- The Welsh Assembly Government should commission the collection of evidence about who is housed by social landlords (along the lines of the CORE system in England)

Local level actions

Recommendation 24

- Local authorities and their partner organisations should ensure bond schemes are accessible to those leaving prison. This may involve bond scheme staff going into prisons

Recommendation 25

- Local authorities should work more closely with Probation to make better use of existing systems of information and develop new ways of identifying the level of need for accommodation from the high risk offender-ex-offender group, e.g. using snapshot information

Recommendation 26

- Local authorities and their partner organisations should use the advice and examples set out in the housing options report to support the commissioning and development of schemes for high risk offenders/ex-offenders where there are gaps in provision

Recommendation 27

- Local authorities should establish strategic approaches to move-on from all supported and temporary accommodation

Developing options to meet immediate/emergency needs

Local level actions

Recommendation 28

- Local authorities and housing associations should consider making a small number of void properties available at short notice to meet emergency need, where doing so

would contribute to community safety. Such a system would need to have clearly defined parameters, linked to MAPPA and PPO processes and would need to ensure that void properties were not held empty for long periods of time

Recommendation 29

- In specific cases, local authorities and Probation should consider paying housing providers to hold a bedspace in a supported housing scheme empty pending the release of a high risk offender/ex-offender from prison where a service has been identified that is able to meet the person's needs and reduce their likelihood of re-offending

Increasing mutual knowledge between the housing and criminal justice sectors

National level actions

Recommendation 30

- Clear information should be provided to the housing and criminal justice sectors to increase the mutual knowledge of the main systems and processes used by each sector

Recommendation 31

- The Welsh Assembly Government should support the provision of joint training for housing and criminal justice practitioners

Both of the above points will be addressed by the second phase of this project.

Recommendation 32

- National organisations that provide training, e.g. Chartered Institute of Housing Cymru, Community Housing Cymru and Cymorth Cymru, should review their training programmes in the light of the findings of this research and consider what additional training might be provided. In particular, Community Housing Cymru and Cymorth Cymru should liaise with the Wales Probation Training Consortium in relation to their modular training resource for those working with high risk offenders with the aim of making this training more widely available to those working in supported housing

Local level actions

Recommendation 33

- Local authorities, housing associations, Probation, community safety etc should consider ways in which mutual knowledge and understanding between housing and criminal justice can be enhanced through:
 - briefings
 - providing opportunities for job shadowing
 - joint training/seminars

Taking the agenda forward

National and local level actions

Recommendation 34

- Where approaches are developed nationally or regionally as a basis for more effective multi-agency working, such as the all Wales MAPPA protocol, all relevant agencies need to sign up to and participate in such arrangements

Recommendation 35

- Welsh Assembly Members should consider the issues raised by this report, in particular whether current frameworks and structures are effective in identifying and meeting the needs of high risk offenders/ex-offenders in Wales and promoting the safety of Welsh communities

Recommendation 36

- The Welsh Assembly Government, (housing, community safety and crime reduction teams), NOMS Cymru, Probation Services/Trusts in Wales, the resettlement teams in Welsh Prisons and the full range of housing providers should:
 - consider the issues, recommendations and ways forward set out in this research report and the companion housing options report
 - use the advice notes produced as part of this project as practical tools to improve levels of knowledge and understanding within their own organisations, including on the management of risk in relation to high risk offenders/ex-offenders
 - as appropriate, participate in the joint regional training to be provided as the second phase of this project

Appendix 1: Project steering group

Sarah McGill	All Wales Chief Housing Officers Panel Head of Housing, Cardiff County Council
Amanda Oliver	Community Housing Cymru Research and Policy Manager
Graham Holmes	Community Housing Cymru Housing Management Forum Chief Executive, Pembrokeshire Housing Association
Mark Sheridan	Community Housing Cymru Supporting People Adviser
Rachel Morgan	Welsh Local Government Association Community Safety Policy Officer
Sue Finch	Welsh Local Government Association Housing Policy officer
Mike Denman	Welsh Local Government Association Special Adviser
Naomi Alleyne	Welsh Local Government Association Director of Equalities and Social Justice
Geoff Marlow/Stacey Holland	Welsh Assembly Government Housing Strategy Services Unit: Homelessness Policy Team
Alyson Hoskins	Supporting People Information Network (SPIN) Supporting people Lead Officer, Blaenau Gwent
Steve Harvey	Homelessness Network Head of Homelessness, Wrexham County Borough Council
Chris Price	National Homelessness Network Co-ordinator
Maldwyn Roberts	Wales Association of Community Safety Officers North Wales Community Safety Co-ordinator, North Wales Police
Ian Lankshear	Probation Service and NOMS Accommodation Pathway Steering Group Chief Officer, South Wales Probation Service
Sarah Davis	Her Majesty's Prison Service Reducing Re-offending, Public Protection & Business Change Lead Officer
Martyn Jones/David Edwards	South Wales Police

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National Probation Service	http://www.probation.justice.gov.uk
NOMS	http://noms.justice.gov.uk
PPO minisite	http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/ppo/ppominisite01.htm
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Welsh Assembly Government	http://new.wales.gov.uk/?lang=en

Appendix 4: Practical examples sourced

Each of the practical examples was categorised into one of three types:

- R = routes into housing
- HS = housing and support options
- SD = service development/partnership working, including commissioning

However, many of the examples include an aspect of two or all three types.

Organisation(s)	Summary	Category
Agorfa	Scheme that enables offenders to access and sustain tenancies in the private rented sector	HS
Cardiff Council and partner housing associations	Resettlement strategy	HS
Cardiff	Housing and Safety Unit	R
Ceredigion Council	Bardsey project for Prolific and Priority Offenders aged 16 and over	HS
Dyfed Powys local authorities and partner supported housing providers	Unified referral system for supporting people projects taking people with high support needs across the four authorities in Dyfed Powys	R
Exeter Community Initiatives	Prolific Offenders Resettlement through Co-ordinated Housing Project (PORCH) - floating support for Prolific and Priority Offenders in Exeter, East and Mid Devon	SD
Gloucester	Gloucester Allocations Provision Support – panel of supported housing providers to which referrals are made and considered jointly on a fortnightly basis	R
Gwent local authorities/Tai Trothwy	Accommodation and risk management scheme for high risk offenders coming through MAPPA	HS
Gwent local authorities	Cross authority Prolific and Priority Offenders floating support scheme	SD
Gwent local authorities	NME lite - cross authority approach to enabling non-housing organisations to participate in Supporting People needs mapping	SD

Gwynedd Council	Supported accommodation project for young people engaged with YOS funded through Safer Communities/Community Safety Partnership	HS
HMP Altcourse	Provision for prisoners returning to North Wales	SD
HMP Altcourse and DAWN	Prisoner discharge card providing proof of ID	R
HMP Doncaster	Partnership working in relation to resettlement	SD
Llamau Limited	Clive Street - young persons' project in partnership with Youth Offending Service	HS
North Wales Substance Misuse Forum	Sub group which focuses on homelessness and accommodation issues – shares expertise and identifies solutions.	SD
Prison Link Cymru (Shelter Cymru and Tai Trothwy)	Access route for prisoner discharge	R
Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council and partner housing associations	Move-on panel	HS
South West Accommodation Gateway	Piloting of three local gateways providing a single point of access to/one stop shop for offender accommodation for offenders, universal referral form developed	R
Taff Housing	Forensic service – housing-related support for high risk and multiple need individuals	HS
Tyne and Wear multi-agency	HARP – Housing and Returning Prisoners protocol - statutory and voluntary sectors, prison and probation	SD
City and County of Swansea and partner housing associations	Move on strategy	HS
Wiltshire County Council	Floating support intelligently procured to give flexibility around prison release to work with people pre-release and even at the point of being charged	R