

Improving service transitions for people experiencing multiple disadvantage: Prison release

Webinar questions

Question 1: “We are very keen for people to go from prison to rehab for our Luton Housing First project. How realistic is this, and which commissioned substance misuse service would arrange this? The one in the prison area, the home area or the release area?”

“In Birmingham we do not have a commissioned rehab and provision is solely by local charities and CICs. This is helpful in that it is an easier process to access their rehabs and they will visit beneficiaries in prison to assess them. There are also less complications regarding funding as housing benefit will cover their stays in the rehab.

When we did have a commissioned rehab service the only substance misuse service in the area had a lengthy process for accessing the rehab unit, not including waiting lists, which meant that it would not be feasible to arrange while someone was in prison. We relied on making referrals ourselves to other local rehabs in this situation.”

Question 2: “Did you have people on release day moving straight into their accommodation, including their own tenancy, if they entered prison as homeless?”

Response 1

“I haven’t had personal experience of this however with the introduction of Housing First in Birmingham this is a lot more common now. The Housing First navigators will visit beneficiaries in prison and make arrangements for this ready for release.”

Response 2

“Yes – we have examples in Stoke-on-Trent:

1: Through the Fulfilling Lives programme Service Coordinators have had contact with beneficiaries’ pre-prison release, been able to communicate their needs and advocate/act on their behalf with consent to identify accommodation for day of release. The personal budget has helped with this, in that it can be accessed to secure accommodation by way of paying deposit etc.

2: Housing First has also linked with beneficiaries prior to prison release and organised accommodation with support for day of release.

3: One of the VOICES partnership organisations – Restart at Saltbox in Stoke-on-Trent – provides shared accommodation for prison leavers – this also can be organised for day of release. They are currently expanding their property portfolio.

While there are several examples of the above, in Stoke-on-Trent the demand for property outweighs the properties available so we are currently unable to accommodate all in these circumstances”.

Question 3: “Did Sameer or Earl find any problems getting into the secure estate as people with lived experience?”

Response 1

“Good question, I have not had any issues with entering the secure estates whether this be prison or forensic hospitals. I believe this is due to the groundwork that has been done before I came into post and the fact that I am employed by the NHS BSMFT Liaison and Diversion service. Whilst working for Liaison and Diversion we now get to visit beneficiaries on the landings.

Whilst working for Birmingham Changing Futures Lead Worker Peer Mentor service, again, I had no issues entering prisons around the country, although with the Lead Worker Peer Mentor service we tended to visit beneficiaries in the legal visit area.”

Response 2

“I have had issues regarding my prison vetting where is I was asked to leave the establishment due my clearance not being done properly. I have no issues going into the prison estate as I had to go through the Standard Plus clearance which you have re-do yearly with the support of the Governor.

I have also been involved in work on a national level with the Ministry of Justice, and Health and Justice NHS England on the prison vetting processes which is looking to get signed off soon. It is important that you have the backing of the Governor and clear definition of what your role is and that risk to managed collectively.

I have had no issues going into forensic medium secure estate in the Birmingham and Solihull mental health trust.”

The Unlock [website](#) has more information on the prison vetting process.

Question 4: “Do you link in with any services to support clients to re-establish their roles within their family?”

Response 1

“Changing Lives are based in a number of areas of the country and as part of their work supporting women in the CJS they do a lot to reconnect people with families, particularly children.” <https://www.changing-lives.org.uk/services/women-children/>

Response 2

“Yes we do depending on needs and support or link in with the family prison team to help with that process that are working part of the 7 Pathways out of HMP Birmingham.”

Question 5: Is there currently a peer supporter scheme operating in London?

Response 1

“I am not aware of any specific peer support schemes in London, however I am sure there are some in place as it is becoming a common model.”

Response 2

“Yes, there are a load of different models that have peer mentor or peer support for prison leavers.

The reconnect model also will be introducing peer support/ peer mentors/ lived experience link workers in all establishment in the country.

The Liaison and Diversion teams also have peer support workers working in the CJS and some will be having a prison pathway too if they want to be on the Reconnect model.”

Question 6: What is in place for Rastafari faith service users?

“In Stoke-on-Trent we do have faith services, however, they do not distinguish between religions/chosen faith in criteria for acceptance to accommodation or support”.

Question 7: Are Fulfilling Lives, or the Lead Worker Peer Mentor service working with other agencies to encourage them to not close services to people when they are given short custodial sentences or recalls?

Response 1

“Yes, this is something they will advocate strongly for if it is in the best interest of the client (with mixed success, but there were some cases of this working)”.

Response 2

“Yes, we do as its important to bridge the gap and make sure clients are supported without discrimination, advocacy and system change is at the forefront of our care”.

Response 3

“Yes – in Stoke on-Trent the Service Coordination Team and Peer Mentors support customers in effectively communicating their circumstances and needs – we also have the partnership member of North Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent CAB service in which we have embedded support in the local system to support people with Housing and Welfare Benefit Law. We co-design and co-deliver bespoke workshops to

- Raise awareness of difficulties and barriers as well as ‘what works well’ based on actual lived experiences
- Provide legal literacy learning to enhance the understanding, knowledge, and skills of the citywide workforce.”

Question 8: Will the Prison Leavers project use KPI's as an initiative for service provision?

“We have not yet developed all of the interventions that will be delivered through the Prison Leavers Project, and so cannot yet confirm all of the performance measurement tools that we will use as an initiative for service provision. We will look at the most appropriate way of measuring performance based on the individual interventions themselves. However, we can confirm that we are not currently using KPIs in the services which have begun development and delivery.”