

Research Plus+

Contemporary Social Issues and Business Research

The Accommodation and Related Support Needs of Offenders in Norfolk

2004

Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements	
Executive summary	1
Section 1. Introduction	8
Section 2. The research methodology	12
Section 3. Statistical overview	15
Section 4. Offenders in prison	23
Section 5. Homeless offenders	29
Section 6. Offenders with substance misuse problems	32
Section 7. Offenders with mental health problems	37
Section 8. Women offenders	44
Section 9. Offenders from black and minority ethnic groups	51
Section 10. Young offenders	55
Section 11. Older offenders	59
Section 12. Offenders with disabilities	61
Section 13. Offenders convicted of particular offences	65
Section 14. Offenders returning to Norfolk on release from prison outside the county	70
Section 15. Accommodation advice for Norfolk offenders	72
Section 16. Accommodation for offenders in Norfolk	79
Section 17. Projections	88
Section 18. Conclusions and recommendations	93
References	98
Definitions and Glossary	103

		Page
Appendices		
Appendix 1	List of organisations contacted	105
Appendix 2	Focus group methodology and details of the participants	108
Appendix 3	Statistics from the Eastern Region prisons	110
Appendix 4	Crime statistics and Home Office prison population projections	116

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank everyone who helped us with this study:

- Staff working in organisations in Norfolk who gave their time to share their views and experiences with us. We trust that we have represented their views fairly and accurately.
- Staff at selected projects for helping to set up the focus groups with offenders and providing the venue for them.
- The offenders who took part in these focus groups and shared their views and experiences with us. We trust that we have represented their views fairly and accurately.
- Andrew Wright and Nicola Reed at Norfolk Probation Area, Fraser Bowe at the Norfolk Youth Offending Team, Anita Bell at Eastern Area Prison Service and Tom Walton at Norfolk Constabulary for the provision of statistics.

Particular thanks are due to Claire Leborgne, Supporting People Team, and Stuart Macdonald, Norfolk Probation Area for the initial work in setting up and commissioning of the research.

We are also grateful for the support and guidance provided by members of the Steering Group during the course of the research (Leigh Booth, Broadland District Council, Chris Greenhill, Supporting People Team, Claire Leborgne, Supporting People Team and Stuart Macdonald, Norfolk Probation Area).

Research Plus+

2004

96 St Clements Hill
Norwich, Norfolk NR3 4BY

Telephone: 01603 408289

Email: info@research-plus.co.uk

Website: www.research-plus.co.uk

Executive Summary

E1 The purpose of the research

The purpose of the research was to obtain up to date, accurate information regarding the provision of housing and related support services for offenders in Norfolk and to identify unmet need and future priorities.

The research brief stated that the research was to:

- Map existing provision of accommodation, housing support services and housing advice for offenders in Norfolk (within the context of other related services), highlighting good practice and positive outcomes.
- Identify current unmet need and gaps in service provision and project this over a 5 year period.
- Investigate the particular housing and related support needs of people subject to statutory supervision by the probation service (including those in prison for 12 months or more, those serving community-based sentences or released from prison on licence), short term prisoners (sentenced to less than 12 months), and people in custody on remand, with recommendations for future action.
- Identify existing and potential sources of funding for accommodation and housing related support services for offenders in Norfolk.
- In conducting the research, the needs of the following groups should receive specific attention:
 - Homeless Offenders
 - Women
 - People from Black and Minority Ethnic Groups
 - Young Offenders (16-18 years)
 - Older Offenders (65+ years)
 - Alcohol and Substance Misusers
 - Offenders with Mental Health Problems (to include “Dual Diagnosis” and Mentally Disordered Offenders)
 - Offenders with Learning Difficulties
 - Domestic Violence Offenders
 - Offenders returning to Norfolk on release from prison outside the county.

E2 The research methodology

The research was based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative data obtained from a number of sources. These included:

- Recent national and local reports / research and other documentation
- Statistical information from key agencies
- Interviews with a range of voluntary and statutory agencies that provide housing related support and advice to offenders
- Interviews with a range of accommodation providers that provide housing related support and accommodation to offenders
- Focus groups with offenders.

E3 The statistical overview

- It is very difficult to accurately estimate how many offenders have accommodation and related support needs.
- Prison statistics do not identify which area offenders come from or which areas they are released to.
- This research used data from the Norfolk Probation Area caseload, these provide a partial picture of adult offenders.
- For younger offenders, the research used data from the Norfolk YOT assessments.
- The data showed that accommodation is an issue for many adult offenders in Norfolk, and in a fifth of cases accommodation is linked to their offending behaviour.
- The data showed that accommodation is also an issue for young offenders in Norfolk and accommodation is associated with their offending behaviour in approaching a third of cases.

E4 Offenders in prison

- When people first go into prison they risk losing their accommodation, household and personal belongings.
- On entering prison, prisoners need assessment, advice and assistance to keep or end their tenancies.
- Some prisoners were already receiving this service, but it was not universal. Preparation for securing accommodation on release, for those who do not already have a place to return to, needs to start well in advance of release.
- A number of challenges with finding accommodation were identified. These related to the prison sentence and the operation of the prison service, prisoners' expectations and attitudes, particular needs of individuals and the availability of different types of accommodation.

E5 Homeless offenders

- Only a small proportion of offenders have absolutely nowhere to stay. Many people without a place of their own will stay with friends or relatives.
- In both cases they are vulnerable and are more likely to re-offend.

E6 Offenders with substance misuse problems

- The research identified that substance misuse was one of the biggest problems affecting offenders in Norfolk. This reflects the national picture.
- The most critical time for offenders to resume their substance misuse was immediately after release from prison.
- If offenders were released without accommodation arranged this increased the risk that they would resume their substance misuse.
- Substance misuse affects offenders' ability to obtain and maintain accommodation, particularly for those with a chaotic lifestyle.
- Some accommodation providers have a no drugs policy and some will not accept offenders who are misusing drugs unless they are on a treatment programme.

- Local Authorities may consider offenders with substance misuse issues as vulnerable due to 'other special reasons' under the homelessness legislation.
- The need for more substance misuse treatment and support services for offenders was identified. These need to be available immediately offenders are released from prison and on a longer term basis.

E7 Offenders with mental health problems

- A large proportion of people going into custody have mental health problems of varying degrees of seriousness. These were not always diagnosed or treated in prison.
- A large proportion of offenders in hostel accommodation have mental health problems of varying degrees of seriousness. They do not necessarily receive any specialist support.
- There appears to be a general shortage of mental health resources in Norfolk, especially for offenders with low level mental health problems.
- In the long term, the recently agreed countywide definition of dual diagnosis could lead to a significant increase in the availability of mental health support services for offenders with substance misuse problems and / or personality disorder.

E8 Women offenders

- Women offenders account for only a small proportion of offenders. However the number of women in custody has risen dramatically in recent years.
- Women offenders were portrayed as having more complex problems than their male counterparts.
- A higher proportion of women offenders had mental health problems compared with male offenders.
- Those supervised by Norfolk Probation Area had a high level of drug misuse problems.
- Girls/young women assessed by the Norfolk YOT had more accommodation problems than boys/young men.
- A similar level of women and men offenders supervised by Norfolk Probation Area were NFA, but fewer women offenders had accommodation issues linked with their offending behaviour.
- Most women only accommodation providers, including refuges for those fleeing domestic abuse, do not accept women with substance misuse problems.
- Nearly all sex workers were reported to be misusing drugs and many had accommodation problems.

E9 Offenders from black and minority ethnic groups

- Norfolk has a small and diverse black and minority ethnic population.
- Nationally and locally, people of black and minority ethnic origin are over represented in the criminal justice system.
- Offenders of black and minority ethnic origin on the Norfolk Probation Area caseload had more accommodation problems than the general caseload and were the group most likely to be NFA.

- More offenders of black and minority ethnic origin on the Norfolk Probation Area caseload had drug misuse issues linked to their offending than white offenders.
- The Norfolk YOT assessments presented a slightly different picture: there were few significant differences between offenders of black and minority ethnic origin and white offenders in relation to accommodation; but mental health and substance misuse associated with offending were both higher for offenders of black and minority ethnic origin.
- Practitioners had limited awareness of the needs of offenders of black and minority ethnic origin.

E10 Young offenders

- There were a higher proportion of girls / young women and people of black and minority ethnic origin amongst 16 – 18 year old offenders compared with adult offenders.
- The percentage who had committed offences of violence against the person was similar to older offenders.
- The proportion of young people aged 16 to 18 years who were NFA and who had accommodation issues associated with offending were higher than for adult offenders.
- Young offenders aged 16 – 18 years had complex needs: a third had mental health problems, substance misuse problems or had been identified as having special educational needs.
- A significant proportion of 16 to 18 year old offenders were Schedule 1 offenders under the Children and Young Persons Act 1933.
- Young offenders aged 16 – 18 years had fewer accommodation options available to them due to legislation and hostel accommodation policies and practices.
- Young offenders aged 16 – 18 years, and to some extent those aged up to 21 years, needed more care and support than older offenders.

E11 Older offenders

- Hostel upper age limits restrict the number of places available for offenders aged 65 years and over.
- The types of offences committed by older people further restrict the number of hostel places available to them.

E12 Offenders with disabilities

- The research confirmed that offenders often had literacy and numeracy difficulties and a smaller proportion had learning difficulties and / or special educational needs.
- Those with 'some' numeracy and literacy problems or 'some' learning difficulties appeared to have more unmet accommodation needs than those with 'significant' problems.
- The need to help offenders with literacy and numeracy difficulties and / or learning difficulties with completing forms was identified.
- Some of this group of offenders also benefit from someone accompanying them to interviews with housing and other agencies.

- The Broadland Clinic is not currently funded to provide support to people after release.

E13 Offenders convicted of particular offences

- A particularly high proportion of offenders with a current conviction for arson had substance misuse and emotional well-being issues linked to their offending behaviour.
- Accommodation options available to offenders with offences related to domestic violence, arson or sex offences and Schedule 1 offenders are limited. This may be due to restrictions placed on them on release from prison, criteria for access to hostels or criteria for obtaining social housing.
- Offenders with a current conviction for arson or sex offences posed particular problems for accommodation providers. These related to safety of the individual, other residents and the premises.

E14 Offenders returning to Norfolk on release from prison outside the county

- There is no routine recording of the numbers of offenders from Norfolk who are released from prisons outside the county.
- All women offenders are in prisons outside of Norfolk
- Offenders in prison outside of Norfolk have less access to information about accommodation available in Norfolk.

E15 Accommodation advice for Norfolk offenders

- Accommodation advice services within the prisons have increased in recent years, but they have developed on an ad hoc basis in response to various time limited funding opportunities and their long term future is uncertain.
- There is more support available for specific groups of prisoners such as drug users. However, some prisoners still do not receive sufficient support on entering prison and in preparation for leaving prison to maintain or obtain accommodation. The extent to which this is due to the lack of suitable accommodation for offenders is not known.
- The amount of specialist training and support provided to accommodation advisers within the prisons was not clear.
- Within the community, there are a variety of agencies that assist offenders with finding accommodation. Key workers in hostels and other supported accommodation are also an important source of advice on future accommodation options.
- Offenders were not well informed about where they could go to for advice.

E16 Accommodation for offenders in Norfolk

- The Supporting People Programme currently only funds limited bed spaces specifically for offenders. Due to their complex needs, some offenders access other accommodation funded by Supporting People, which is targeted at different client groups.
- Many hostels for homeless people have restrictions on whom they will accept. This may mean that they are not able to accommodate some offenders.

- The 'silting up' of direct access and other hostels was partly attributed to the need for people to remain in a more supported environment for a substantial period of time and partly due to a shortage of move on accommodation.
- The research revealed that whether or not an individual offender was assessed as 'vulnerable' and / or in 'priority need', and therefore eligible for social housing, was variable within and across different authorities.
- The temporary housing used by local housing authorities could place homeless offenders seeking social housing in a more vulnerable position.
- The impact on offenders of the 'choice based' letting system for the allocation of social housing is not yet known.
- Rent deposit schemes can provide a route into privately rented accommodation.
- Other possible funding opportunities include creative use of Section 106 funding and self build projects.

E17 Projections

- Based on the crime figures for the last five years, it is likely that the number of crimes detected in Norfolk will stay the same or increase.
- Home Office projections state that the prison population will increase by between 22% and 46% in the next five years. This is considerably higher than the 16% increase in the last five years.
- Initiatives within the criminal justice system are designed to increase co-ordination between the prison and probation services and lead to more emphasis on meeting the accommodation needs of offenders on reception into custody and prior to release from prison.
- All these factors are likely to increase pressure on all housing providers to accommodate offenders.
- However, wider changes in society, especially action to reduce social exclusion and to decrease substance misuse, may reduce offending.
- Specific accommodation needs identified through this research include:
 - Emergency 24 hour accommodation for offenders on release from prison. This would probably need to be in Norwich
 - Direct access accommodation west of Norwich
 - More move on accommodation in all areas of the county
 - More accommodation that caters for substance misusers
 - More accommodation with support for those with less severe mental health problems or mild to moderate learning difficulties
 - More and better quality accommodation for single people in Great Yarmouth
 - More accommodation for women, especially in Great Yarmouth
 - More accommodation for young offenders, especially in Norwich, Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn
 - More accessible social and privately rented housing.
- Due to the lack of complete data on offenders in Norfolk, and the number of unknown factors influencing the demand and supply of accommodation, it did not prove possible to provide accurate estimates of the projected need for accommodation for offenders over the next five years. However, based on the findings of this research, there is currently considerable unmet need and a likelihood of increased demand for both accommodation and accompanying support.

E18 Conclusions and recommendations

Section Eighteen of the report provides overall conclusions and includes recommendations for:

- The Norfolk Offender Accommodation Forum
- The NOMS
- The Prison Service and those working in prisons
- Accommodation advisers
- Accommodation providers
- Local housing authorities and social housing providers
- The Norfolk YOT
- Providers of mental health and substance misuse services
- Providers of learning disability services
- The Broadland Clinic
- The VHG
- The Norfolk Supporting People Team.

Section One

Introduction

Background to the research

Prisoners accommodation needs

1.1 Around one in three prisoners are not in permanent accommodation prior to imprisonment and a third of prisoners lose their house during imprisonment (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). Between a quarter and a third of prisoners have no accommodation arranged when they leave prison (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002 and Home Office, 2004). Stable accommodation can make a difference of over 20% in terms of reconviction (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002).

1.2 A joint thematic review by Her Majesty's Inspectorates of Prisons and Probation identified that more than four fifths of all offenders sentenced to imprisonment are released within twelve months of sentence (Her Majesty's Inspectorates of Prisons and Probation, 2001). Therefore, the prison population has a very high turnover and the probation service has no statutory responsibility to work with the majority of offenders post release.

1.3 The Prison Service has now identified accommodation as a key area for action and has recently (April 2004) introduced shadow KPTs (Key Performance Targets) for accommodation on release. In 2005 they will become core targets with the aim of ensuring that 75% of prisoners have accommodation arranged when they leave prison.

The Homelessness Act 2002

1.4 The Homelessness Act 2002 extended the definition of 'priority need' to homeless people who are 'vulnerable' due to an institutional background as a result of spending time in prison. It also extended the category of 'priority need' to include 18 – 20 year olds, who are vulnerable due to being in care, and homeless 16 and 17 year olds who are not the responsibility of social services. The Act also created a stronger duty to provide advice and assistance to individuals who are not in priority need.

1.5. The legislation included new duties for local authorities to carry out and publish a homelessness review and formulate a homelessness strategy by July 2003. The strategy was required to include all categories of homeless people and not just those, who under the legislation, are eligible for direct assistance.

1.6 Under the requirements of the Homelessness Act 2002, seven homelessness strategies have been produced at District Council level. There are also seven district housing strategies and three sub regional housing strategies in development which will inform the Regional Housing Strategy. All these are crucial in informing future capital expenditure on housing in Norfolk, including housing for offenders.

The Supporting People Programme

1.7 The Supporting People Programme started in April 2003 and brought together nine different funding streams including the Probation Accommodation Grant Scheme. It provides a strategic framework for planning and funding housing related support services which aim to assist vulnerable people to live independently in their own accommodation. The Supporting People Programme aims to deliver high quality services that are strategically planned, needs led, represent value for money and complement existing care arrangements. They include accommodation based and floating support services.

1.8 Supporting People is a working partnership of local government, probation, health, voluntary organisations, housing associations, support agencies and service users. The client groups include ex offenders and people at risk of offending and imprisonment (ODPM, 2004).

Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategies

1.9 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires that local authorities and the police (extended by the Police Reform Act 2002 to include Primary Care Trusts, Fire Authorities and Police Authorities) work together with key agencies such as probation and health to develop and implement strategies for reducing crime and disorder at district level.

1.10 Each of the seven Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in Norfolk has produced a strategy (based on an extensive audit of local crime and consultation with the community) which outlines an action plan and crime reduction targets for the three year period 2002 – 2005. Key issues identified were:

- Reducing levels of burglary, vehicle crime, anti social behaviour (including violent crime, criminal damage, disorder and racial harassment), domestic violence and youth crime
- Ensuring that there is adequate accommodation for offenders in the appropriate area and with appropriate levels of support
- Developing supported accommodation for young offenders.

1.11 The seven Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships are in the process of developing new strategies for 2005 - 08

East of England Strategy for the Rehabilitation and Resettlement of Offenders

1.12 Whilst the research was being carried out, the Government Office for the East of England was developing an East of England Strategy for the Rehabilitation and Resettlement of Offenders in consultation with the Prison Service and The National Probation Service (Government Office for the East of England, 2004). Draft versions of the strategy were circulated for consultation. In relation to accommodation, the draft strategy identified two broad aims with detailed pathways to achieve them.

1.13 The aims were:

- Offenders receive timely and accurate housing advice and support services
- The development of effective strategic partnerships to enhance offenders access to housing and support.

Reducing Re-offending – National Action Plan

1.14 Towards the end of the research, the Home Office produced 'Reducing Re-offending' (Home Office, 2004) which included an Action Plan for tackling the accommodation needs of offenders.

1.15 This research report needs to be read in conjunction with the above two reports. All the above research, legislation and initiatives made it timely to undertake a study of the accommodation and related support needs of offenders in Norfolk.

The purpose of the research

1.16 This report presents the findings of research on the housing and related support needs of offenders in Norfolk. The research was commissioned by the Norfolk Supporting People Team, in conjunction with the Norfolk Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, Norfolk Probation Area and Broadland District Council. The research was undertaken between March and November 2004.

1.17 The purpose of the research was to obtain up to date, accurate information regarding the provision of housing and related support services for offenders in Norfolk and to identify unmet need and future priorities. The research brief stated that the research was to:

- Map existing provision of accommodation, housing support services and housing advice for offenders in Norfolk (within the context of other related services), highlighting good practice and positive outcomes.
- Identify current unmet need and gaps in service provision and project this over a 5 year period.
- Investigate the particular housing and related support needs of people subject to statutory supervision by the probation service (including those in prison for 12 months or more, those serving community-based sentences or released from prison on licence), short term prisoners (sentenced to less than 12 months), and people in custody on remand, with recommendations for future action.
- Identify existing and potential sources of funding for accommodation and housing related support services for offenders in Norfolk.
- In conducting the research, the needs of the following groups should receive specific attention:
 - Homeless Offenders
 - Women
 - People from Black and Minority Ethnic Groups
 - Young Offenders (16-18 years)

- Older Offenders (65+ years)
- Alcohol and Substance Misusers
- Offenders with Mental Health Problems (to include “Dual Diagnosis” and Mentally Disordered Offenders)
- Offenders with Learning Difficulties
- Domestic Violence Offenders
- Offenders returning to Norfolk on release from prison outside the county.

1.18 The research was to complement the draft East of England Resettlement Strategy and its findings would inform the following:

- Norfolk Supporting People Five Year Plan
- Norfolk District Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategies 2005-8
- District Council and Sub-Regional Housing Strategies
- Norfolk Housing and Support Strategy for Offenders
- District Council Homelessness Strategies.

Format of the report

1.19 the format of the report is as follows:

- Section Two describes the research methodology
- Section Three provides an overview of the statistics and a summary of some of the statistics in relation to key groups
- Sections Four to Fourteen present information related to the needs of specific groups of offenders
- Section Fifteen presents an overview of the accommodation advice for offenders in Norfolk
- Section Sixteen presents an overview of the accommodation available for offenders in Norfolk
- Section Seventeen discusses projections for the next five years
- Section Eighteen presents the conclusions and recommendations.

1.20 Definitions and a glossary can be found at the end of the main report, after the references.

1.21 The appendices provide a list of the agencies contacted during the research, more detailed information about the focus groups and more detailed statistical information.

Section Two

The Research Methodology

2.1 The research was based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative data obtained from a number of sources. These included:

- Recent national and local reports / research and other documentation
- Statistical information from key agencies
- Interviews with a range of voluntary and statutory agencies that provide housing related support and advice to offenders
- Interviews with a range of accommodation providers that provide housing related support and accommodation to offenders
- Focus groups with offenders.

These are described in more detail below.

Recent national and local reports / research and other documentation

2.2 Reports and policy documents related to the accommodation needs of offenders in Norfolk were examined. The Supporting People Team provided copies of various national, regional and local reports related to offenders and accommodation. These included copies of national reports, some previous local surveys, the Suffolk report 'Not only Bricks and Mortar' (Jones and Magna, 2003), the seven Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships' Crime Reduction Strategies and the seven District Council's Homelessness Strategies. Further information was obtained from Nacro (National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders), the Youth Justice Board and other sources.

2.3 During the research period, the East of England Strategy for the Rehabilitation and Resettlement of Offenders was further revised and the researchers met with the authors. The Home Office issued the National Action Plan for Reducing Re-offending (Home Office, 2004).

Statistical information from key agencies

2.4 Specific statistical information on the numbers of people with accommodation needs was sought from the prison service, Norfolk Probation Area and the Norfolk Youth Offending Team (YOT). Other agencies provided additional statistics. This complements the more qualitative data on the nature of the housing and support needs of offenders obtained from the agencies and offenders.

Interviews with a range of voluntary and statutory agencies that provide housing related support and advice to offenders

2.5 A range of organisations that provide housing related advice services to offenders were contacted to obtain more qualitative information on current housing need and provision for offenders. This included agencies providing advice in prisons, Norfolk Probation Area, the Norfolk YOT, other agencies working with offenders as their primary client group, other housing advice agencies and agencies providing specialist support e.g. to mental health users or substance misusers. It was not possible to speak to all advice services in

Norfolk but 30 agencies were interviewed face to face and others were contacted by telephone. An interview schedule covering a range of topics, including the needs of specific groups, was used for each interview. Other agencies, particularly prisons outside Norfolk, were contacted by telephone. A list of all those contacted is provided in Appendix 1.

Interviews with a range of accommodation providers that provide housing related support and accommodation to offenders

2.6 A range of voluntary and statutory housing providers in Norfolk were contacted to obtain qualitative information on current housing need and provision for offenders. This included agencies providing supported accommodation with offenders as their primary or secondary client group, specialist accommodation providers, e.g. for mental health users or substance misusers, District Council homelessness sections, Housing Associations and other housing providers. It was not possible to speak to all the accommodation providers in Norfolk but a total of 24 were interviewed face to face and others were contacted by telephone. An interview schedule covering a range of topics including the needs of specific groups was used for each interview. A list of all those contacted is provided in Appendix 1.

Focus groups with offenders

2.7 It was considered essential to include the views and experiences of offenders themselves. A number of methods for doing this were considered. Postal questionnaires would probably have elicited a very low response rate. Based on previous experience, using probation or prison staff as unpaid interviewers would not work well. There were insufficient funds to carry out a large number of one to one interviews. It was therefore concluded that focus groups would be the most effective means to obtain offenders' views. It was considered that it might be difficult to get the normal 8 – 12 people together for a focus group, therefore groups of 5 – 8 offenders were aimed for. The assistance of local agencies was sought to help organise these. Further information on the focus groups is provided in Appendix 2.

2.8 The focus groups explored:

- People's views on the assistance and support they had received
- Their experiences of finding and keeping suitable accommodation
- Their ideas to improve the services and support available.

2.9 Five focus groups were held and 35 people participated. The views of the offenders have been incorporated throughout this report.

Amendments to the research methodology

2.10 Soon after the research commenced, two further groups were added to the original list of groups to receive specific attention, as these were identified by the interviewees:

- People convicted of Schedule 1 offences (both sex offenders and others)
- People convicted of arson.

2.11 During the research a few people also commented on the needs of people with physical disabilities. Some information on this is therefore included in the section on the needs of specific groups.

Data analysis

2.12 The formal interviews were recorded and/or notes were taken. The interviews were then written up in note form and, in most cases, were sent back to the interviewees for checking. Due to time constraints, the key points from some interviews were summarised.

2.13 The focus groups were recorded and notes were taken on a flip chart. The focus groups were then written up in note form.

2.14 The quantitative data provided by Norfolk Probation Area and the Norfolk YOT were analysed using Excel and SPSS, a computer package for the analysis of statistical data. The qualitative data from the interviews and focus groups were analysed with the assistance of MAXqda, a computer package for the analysis of textual data.

Section Three

Statistical Overview

Limitations of the statistical data available

3.1 It is very difficult to accurately estimate how many offenders have accommodation and related support needs. The statistics that are available each provide a partial picture. There are a number of reasons for this:

- Statistics from Norfolk prisons include information on people who do not live in Norfolk, and only a small proportion of them will stay in Norfolk on release. This is particularly true of HMP Wayland, which contains only a small percentage of offenders from Norfolk.
- The Norfolk prisons also include a small number of Norfolk people who will not stay in Norfolk on release. There may be reasons related to their offending that make it desirable for them to relocate, or they may choose to make a 'fresh start' somewhere else.
- Although many Norfolk offenders will begin their sentence in HMP/YOI Norwich, many of those with longer sentences will be moved on to different category prisons and many others will be moved around between prisons during their sentence due to pressures on prison accommodation.
- It is difficult to obtain information on the number of Norfolk offenders in prisons outside of Norfolk. This figure changes frequently due to pressures on prison accommodation. There are no prisons that accommodate women in Norfolk. The nearest is HMP Edmunds Hill in Suffolk, but women from Norfolk can be in prisons much further away.
- The official figures on the numbers leaving prison with no fixed abode do not necessarily reflect what happens once a person is released. Accommodation that has been arranged may fall through or offenders may unexpectedly be able to find accommodation. It has also been suggested that as the discharge grant for leaving prison is higher for those with no fixed abode there is an incentive for offenders to say they have no address to go to when possibly they do.
- Statistics from Norfolk Probation only cover those aged 17 years and over who have a supervised community sentence or are in prison for 12 months or more. They exclude those with a sentence of less than 12 months.
- Statistics from the Norfolk YOT assessments cover all those aged 10 – 17 years who have a supervised community sentence or a custodial sentence.
- It is difficult to obtain a clear understanding of people's accommodation status, the level of their housing need and the significance of factors associated with their offending behaviour due to a lack of common definitions and differences in the terminology used (and its interpretation) by different organisations and statutory bodies.

3.2 Consideration was given to obtaining statistics from the Norfolk courts on the numbers of custodial and community supervision sentences. However, not all offenders in Norfolk courts come from or will return to Norfolk, and not Norfolk offenders are convicted in the Norfolk courts.

Number of offenders in the eastern region prisons

3.3 The total number of people in the prisons in the Eastern Region in August 2004 was 5,985. There were 1,446 in Norfolk: 755 were in HMP/YOI Norwich and 691 were in HMP Wayland.

Norfolk Probation Area statistics

3.4 The Norfolk Probation Area supplied considerable data to inform this research. This was based on their caseload as at 30th June 2004. Demographic details were provided as well as some more detailed information from the OASys (Offender Assessment System) database related to criminogenic factors (see the Definitions and Glossary for an explanation of OASys and criminogenic factors).

3.5 The total caseload was 3,865 offenders. Information from OASys was available on 2,852 offenders (74%). Some of the missing OASys information was due to individuals being on the probation caseload before the introduction of the electronic version of OASys. The percentage figures for the criminogenic factors are based on the 2,852 offenders for whom information was available, and not all 3,865 offenders on the probation caseload.

3.6 The OASys data provided information on offenders' accommodation status, an accommodation score based on several accommodation factors and an assessment on whether accommodation issues were linked to offending behaviour.

All offenders on the Norfolk Probation Area caseload

- 69% were in permanent accommodation
- 3% were in supported accommodation
- 20% were in short term accommodation
- 5% were NFA

- 44% had significant accommodation problems
- 20% had accommodation issues linked to offending

- 54% had drug misuse issues linked to offending
- 49% had alcohol misuse issues linked to offending
- 46% had emotional well-being issues linked to offending

3.7 When they were assessed using OASys, about two thirds of the offenders on the Norfolk Probation Area caseload were in permanent accommodation, A quarter of the offenders were in short term accommodation or had no fixed abode (NFA). Only 3% were in supported accommodation.

3.8 An examination of this information by whether offenders had been sentenced to a custodial or non custodial sentence showed that those sentenced to a custodial sentence were more likely to be NFA.

3.9 Accommodation scores are calculated within OASys based on an offender's accommodation situation. They provide a measure of whether offenders have 'no problems', 'some problems' or significant problems'. Overall 60% of offenders had accommodation problems: 44% had 'significant problems' and a further 16% had 'some problems'.

3.10 Based on national research and the prison statistics, it is probable that Norfolk offenders sentenced to less than twelve months in prison and therefore not subject to probation supervision, also experience significant accommodation problems on release.

3.11 Within OASys a range of information is collected in relation to each criminogenic factor and a calculation is then made to assess whether or not that factor is linked to the person's offending. The overall figure for accommodation issues linked to offending behaviour was 20%. For those sentenced to a custodial sentence the figure for accommodation issues linked to offending behaviour increased to 26%. Around half of the offenders had substance misuse and / or emotional well-being issues linked to their offending behaviour.

Norfolk YOT statistics

3.12 The Norfolk YOT supplied considerable data to inform the research. This was based on assessments carried out between 1st July 2003 and 30th June 2004. A total of 964 assessments were undertaken.

3.13 Using the national Youth Justice Board ASSET form, Norfolk YOT Officers record information in relation to a series of criminogenic factors, and rate the extent to which each factor is associated with the likelihood of further offending.

All offenders assessed by the Norfolk YOT:

- 5% were NFA
- 15% had living arrangements that were not suitable
- 31% had living arrangements associated with their offending
- 29% had substance misuse issues associated with their offending
- 35% had mental health issues associated with their offending

3.14 Information from the Norfolk YOT assessments showed that 5% of young offenders were NFA and 15% were in accommodation that was not suitable. Approaching a third were assessed as having living arrangements associated with their offending behaviour. A significant proportion had substance misuse or mental health issues associated with their offending (29% and 35% respectively).

Summary tables

3.15 The data provided by Norfolk Probation Area and the Norfolk YOT are used throughout the report to explore the needs of specific groups of offenders. Tables 3.1 to Table 3.4 provide an overview of these statistics for specific groups. The statistics are explored in more detail in Sections Six to Thirteen, but are provided here for easy reference.

Conclusions

- It is very difficult to accurately estimate how many offenders have accommodation and related support needs.
- Prison statistics do not identify which area offenders come from or which areas they are released to.
- This research used data from the Norfolk Probation Area caseload, these provide a partial picture of adult offenders.
- For younger offenders, the research used data from the Norfolk YOT assessments.
- The data showed that accommodation is an issue for many adult offenders in Norfolk, and in a fifth of cases accommodation is linked to their offending behaviour.
- The data showed that accommodation is also an issue for young offenders in Norfolk and accommodation is associated with their offending behaviour in approaching a third of cases.

Recommendations

- The NOMS (National Offender Management Service, created by the integration of the Prison Service and the National Probation Service) collects accommodation data on offenders in prison and offenders on community supervision and passes the information on to local housing authorities and the Supporting People Team to provide them with up to date information on the accommodation needs of Norfolk offenders. This information will enable them to plan services accordingly.
- Agencies and practitioners discuss the potential for adopting standard terminology and definitions to facilitate the collection on accurate statistical information.

Table 3.1 Norfolk Probation Area Caseload – summary statistics 1

	All	Men	Women	White	BME	Aged 65+	Literacy / numeracy difficulties		Learning difficulties		Arson offence
							Some	Significant	Some	Significant	
Percentage of total caseload	100%	90%	10%	96%	4%	1%	24%	12%	10%	8%	1%
Accommodation status											
Permanent	69%	68%	75%	69%	48%	78%	59%	71%	71%	65%	58%
Bail/probation hostel	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	0%	3%	1%	1%	1%	16%
Supported housing	3%	4%	4%	1%	2%	11%	2%	8%	8%	9%	11%
Short term housing	20%	21%	15%	20%	33%	0%	27%	17%	17%	22%	11%
NFA	5%	5%	5%	5%	14%	11%	9%	3%	3%	4%	5%
Significant accommodation problems	44%	44%	42%	43%	66%	21%	58%	44%	44%	47%	65%
Criminogenic factors linked to offending											
Accommodation issues	20%	20%	16%	20%	26%	16%	28%	24%	30%	22%	40%
Drug misuse issues	54%	52%	73%	53%	75%	0%	59%	41%	48%	50%	91%
Alcohol misuse issues	49%	51%	36%	50%	48%	22%	57%	48%	47%	46%	78%
Emotional well-being issues	46%	44%	61%	46%	40%	35%	51%	41%	51%	41%	80%

Source: Norfolk Probation Area caseload statistics 30th June 2004, caseload and OASys data

Table 3.2 Norfolk Probation Area Caseload – summary statistics 2

	All	Accommodation issues linked to offending	Drug misuse issues linked to offending	Alcohol misuse issues linked to offending	Emotional well-being issues linked to offending
Percentage of total caseload	100%	20%	54%	49%	46%
NFA	5%	17%	7%	7%	7%
Significant accommodation problems	15%	87%	55%	43%	51%
Accommodation linked to offending	31%	–	27%	21%	29%

Source: Norfolk Probation Area caseload statistics 30th June 2004, caseload and OASys data

Table 3.3 Norfolk YOT Assessments – summary statistics 1

	All	Men	Women	White	BME	Aged 16-18	SEN identified	SEN statement issued	Arson
Percentage of total caseload	100%	76%	24%	95%	5%	51%	41%	24%	1%
NFA	5%	3%	10%	4%	9%	6%	3%	4%	0%
Accommodation not suitable	15%	15%	16%	15%	13%	18%	15%	15%	50%
Criminogenic factors associated with offending									
Living arrangements	31%	31%	33%	31%	33%	30%	38%	42%	9%
Substance misuse issues	29%	31%	23%	29%	44%	38%	32%	33%	18%
Mental health issues	35%	33%	42%	34%	47%	35%	47%	50%	9%

Source: Norfolk YOT assessments 1st July 2003 and 30th June 2004.

Table 3.4 Norfolk YOT Assessments – summary statistics 2

	All	Living arrangements associated with offending	Substance misuse issues associated with offending	Mental health issues associated with offending
Percentage of total assessments	100%	31%	29%	35%
NFA	5%	11%	5%	8%
Accommodation not suitable	15%	27%	22%	23%
Living arrangements associated with offending	31%	–	47%	55%

Source: Norfolk YOT assessments 1st July 2003 and 30th June 2004.

Section Four

Offenders in Prison

'I know people who do crime to go back into prison so that they get a longer sentence so that they can get some help on release.' (offender)

4.1 Research in 1994/5 by the Centre for Housing Policy, University of York (Carlisle, 1996) found that offenders faced a range of problems in trying to find and maintain accommodation after release from prison and frequently found themselves in a revolving door between prison, inadequate accommodation or sleeping rough. Research for the Rough Sleepers Unit (Greater London Authority Research Group, 2000) showed that the prisoners most likely to experience housing problems were:

- Those who had insecure accommodation or were homeless on reception into prison
- Social housing tenants serving more than thirteen weeks who did not have anyone living with them to maintain a benefit claim
- People with substance misuse or mental health problems
- People who did not have adequate social or family support outside of prison.

4.2 In 2002, the Social Exclusion Unit reported that up to a third of prisoners lose their housing during custody. This was often caused by Housing Benefit regulations or poor communication with housing providers. Swift action on reception into custody could prevent some people losing accommodation and, for others, it could minimise rent arrears, debt, eviction, loss of documents and possessions and subsequent exclusion from housing. The report noted however, that 'good practice on this is exceptionally rare'. (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). The national figures show that the situation is improving; a resettlement survey in April 2003 showed that 71% of prisoners had accommodation arranged on release compared with 67% in December 2001 (Home Office, 2004).

Statistics on accommodation on release from eastern region prisons

4.3 Statistics supplied by the Prison Service Eastern Area Office showed that there is a continuing problem with people leaving prison with no accommodation arranged. The total number of people in the prisons in the Eastern Region in August 2004 was 5,985. There were 1,446 in Norfolk. Between April and June 2004, 1,580 people were released from prison. Overall 64% of them were released to permanent accommodation and 19% had no address. 70% of those released from HMP/YOI Norwich were released to permanent accommodation and 19% had no address. 58% of those released from HMP Wayland were released to permanent accommodation and 23% had no address. The detailed statistics are provided in Appendix 3.

Accommodation and related support needs of offenders on going into prison

'When someone is first in prison their head is spinning and the last thing that they are thinking about is their tenancy. Before you know it there are arrears and there is the threat of eviction.' (practitioner)

4.4 Prisoners on remand are entitled to 52 weeks of Housing Benefit. Once sentenced, a prisoner is only entitled to 13 weeks of Housing Benefit (providing their sentence does not exceed 13 weeks) and this includes any time spent on remand.

4.5 The practitioners interviewed for the research confirmed the national picture, when people first go into prison they risk losing their accommodation, household and personal belongings. The interviewees stressed that people needed timely advice on keeping their tenancy.

4.6 If Housing Benefit was being claimed, the local authority needed to be informed. The prisoner's landlord also needed to be advised of the situation. In some cases the landlord might be willing to hold a tenancy until the person was released. Alternatively the tenancy could be transferred to a partner or it might be possible to arrange for a 'caretaker'. These actions would enable the prisoner to return to their accommodation on release. If a tenant's accommodation situation was not addressed at the beginning of their sentence, they were likely to build up rent arrears with the possible threat of eviction and loss of their home. This could then create difficulties in obtaining future accommodation. For mortgage holders, action is needed to ensure that mortgage payments are kept up to date or other arrangements are made.

'Rent arrears are a problem. I had no help in filling the forms to stop the rent arrears building up.' (offender)

'You lose your housing when you go into prison. There is too much paperwork to try and get a place saved.' (offender)

4.7 The focus group participants, who had been in prison and were now living in a hostel, had become aware of the benefit rules but not necessarily at the right time. Some did not have the help they required in filling out forms to prevent arrears from building up. Others said that they were charged rent because they could not hand the keys back in person. Some had not received any advice due to the brevity of their sentence.

'I have lost everything five times over by going to prison.' (offender)

4.8 Securing personal possessions was an important issue for those who had been in prison. The focus group participants had had a mixture of experiences.

They mentioned that some private landlords would look after their property, whilst others had left their possessions with friends or partners. Some had lost all their possessions, including essential documents needed to obtain accommodation and employment on release.

4.9 The research highlighted that each prisoner's accommodation situation needed to be individually assessed and that an accommodation adviser located in the prison needed to assist and ensure that the individual took action and completed all the necessary forms to secure their accommodation. Some prisoners were already receiving this service, but it was not universal.

4.10 In the public sector, there was no consistency between different social housing providers in the type of forms, procedures and documents required to complete this process, which further complicated matters. This increased the challenge for those who had poor literacy skills. Nationally Nacro has produced some booklets for advisers and prisoners that include standard letters to notify landlords and Housing Benefits departments of their situation (Nacro, 2003b). These could be reviewed to see if they are appropriate for use by Norfolk offenders.

4.11 The Probation Service has used OASys (an offender assessment system that includes accommodation issues) for some time, and its use is being extended into the Prison Service. The National Action Plan to reduce re-offending (Home Office, 2004) proposes that a single housing needs assessment tool to underpin OASys is developed for use by prisons, probation and local authorities. The Action Plan also proposes the development of a tool to be used at the induction stage of imprisonment to establish whether existing tenancies have been maintained or ended. The recommendations in this report complement the proposals in the National Action Plan.

Accommodation and related support needs of offenders in preparation for leaving prison

'The biggest gap is the short sentence prisoner who does not get supervision on release. They have hardly touched the prison system before it is time for them to go out. They do not get anything.' (practitioner)

4.12 The people interviewed for this research stressed that preparation for securing accommodation on release, for those who do not already have a place to return to, needs to start well in advance of their release date. A number of challenges with finding accommodation were identified.

4.13 There were challenges related to the prison sentence and the operation of the prison service:

- Offenders may not be in a prison long enough to access some of the accommodation support services.
- Prisoners are sometimes moved between prisons at short notice. This makes it difficult to provide continuity of advice and support.
- A prisoner's actual release date can change at short notice.

- When offenders are in prison, it is difficult to communicate with potential accommodation providers. Offenders are encouraged to communicate with potential accommodation providers themselves. This usually has to be done by letter as telephone contact is restricted. However, some accommodation providers visit people in custody.

4.14 There were challenges related to prisoners' expectations and attitudes:

- Some prisoners have unrealistic expectations of what accommodation is available and have to be persuaded that they need to go to a hostel initially.
- Many prisoners are not keen on going to a hostel as they view this as going to another institutional situation.
- Some prisoners view hostels as places where there are substance misusers and violence or people they would not wish to live with.

4.15 Offenders may also have particular needs:

- In some cases, living independently on release from prison may not be appropriate, as individuals may need more intensive support.
- Offenders who are assessed as being a risk to the public will require greater supervision once released and have limited accommodation choices.
- Offenders with substance misuse, mental health problems or a learning disability may need to be referred to specialist accommodation providers.
- Offenders who are vulnerable or are recovering from substance misuse might need to be accompanied to their accommodation, GP or drug rehabilitation clinic.
- Residential drug rehabilitation programmes need to be planned well in advance especially as social services funding is usually required. Relevant substance misuse workers need time to visit people in prison to assess their suitability for a rehabilitation programme, jointly identify with the offender the appropriate place for them and obtain approval for the funding.

4.16 There were challenges related to the availability of different types of accommodation:

- Direct access hostels do not operate waiting lists. If hostels are full when someone arrives, the individual maybe left without accommodation. This is especially relevant for those prisoners released from prisons outside of Norfolk who cannot get to a hostel early in the day.
- Many hostels need to maintain a high occupancy rate to satisfy their funders. Therefore, holding a bed for a newly released prisoner is not always practical.
- Offenders who have already been evicted from hostel accommodation may not be welcomed back.
- Obtaining accommodation through the local Housing Register straight from prison is not always feasible due to the high demand for limited resources.
- A small minority of offenders may be ineligible for housing through the Housing Register due to previous unacceptable behaviour. Each case should be judged on its merits and the applicant must be advised what they can do to become eligible for housing. In the case of rent arrears, this could be by making regular reducing payments off the debt for an agreed period of time.

- Many prisoners cannot afford the deposit and advance rent required for privately rented accommodation.

4.17 Many of the practitioners interviewed identified a need for some emergency 24 hour accommodation for offenders on release from prison. This would prevent people from being released to sleep on the street.

‘You need a long time to plan and find a place. It took me seven months to get a place.’ (offender)

4.18 The focus group participants were very aware that it took time to obtain accommodation on release and that preparation needed to start early. However not everybody had received help with finding accommodation.

4.19 In recognition of some of these difficulties, the local housing authorities in the Greater Norwich Housing Partnership (Norwich City Council, Broadland District Council and South Norfolk Council) are currently working with agencies working in HMP/YOI Norwich to establish a sub-regional referral protocol for homelessness applications.

4.20 Some of the focus group participants emphasised that they did not only need money for accommodation and food on release. They explained that they needed money for keeping themselves and their clothes clean and other essential items, especially after a long sentence.

‘Prison only take into account food. There are other things such as toiletries, cleaning products etc. At least the pack that you get [at this hostel] has washing powder and things in it.’ (offender)

Conclusions

- When people first go into prison they risk losing their accommodation, household and personal belongings.
- On entering prison, prisoners need assessment, advice and assistance to keep or end their tenancies.
- Some prisoners were already receiving this service, but it was not universal. Preparation for securing accommodation on release, for those who do not already have a place to return to, needs to start well in advance of release.
- A number of challenges with finding accommodation were identified. These related to the prison sentence and the operation of the prison service, prisoners’ expectations and attitudes, particular needs of individuals and the availability of different types of accommodation.

Recommendations

In order to ensure that people on remand and sentenced prisoners receive timely advice and support in respect of their accommodation situation on entering the prison and in preparation for release, it is recommended that:

- When people are remanded in prison and / or sentenced to custody, action is taken to address their accommodation needs and secure their household and personal belongings as part of the induction process.
- Local authorities and social housing providers review the documentation required to end a tenancy, with a view to developing standard procedures and documentation across Norfolk.
- Before leaving prison, action is taken to secure accommodation for people on release. This needs to start at the beginning of their sentence and constitute an integral part of sentence planning.
- The Prison Resettlement Governor in each prison ensures that there is co-ordination between different advice agencies to ensure that all prisoners receive appropriate support and advice in respect of their accommodation needs. The methods for doing this and the different staff responsible for carrying it out will vary according to individual prisons. The important requirement is that no individual falls through the net.
- Consideration is given to establishing mentor schemes to support offenders leaving prison to obtain accommodation and access other services.
- The possibility of providing emergency 24 hour accommodation for offenders on release from prison is explored.

These recommendations are in line with and complement the East of England Strategy for the Rehabilitation and Resettlement of Offenders (Government Office for the East of England, 2004 draft) and the Home Office National Action Plan 'Reducing Re-offending' (Home Office, 2004).

Section Five

Homeless Offenders

'It is bad but you get used to being homeless.' (offender)

5.1 Homelessness is commonly used to describe a wide range of circumstances where people have no secure home. Although only a small proportion of homeless people sleep rough, they represent the most extreme form of homelessness and the group with the highest concentration of multiple support needs (Randall and DrugScope, 2002).

5.2 In 2002 the Social Exclusion Unit reported that 'prisoners who are homeless are more likely to be reconvicted' (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002).

Homeless offenders

From the Norfolk Probation Area caseload data:

- 5% were NFA
- 20% were in short term accommodation.

5.3 In Norfolk 5% of those on the Norfolk Probation Area caseload were NFA. Many more were in short term accommodation.

Homeless offenders

From the YOT assessments:

- 5% were NFA
- 15% had accommodation that was not suitable

5.4 Five percent of those who had been assessed by the Norfolk YOT were NFA and 15% were in accommodation that was not suitable.

5.5 There are different degrees of homelessness. People may not have anywhere to stay or they may be staying temporarily with friends or family or at a hostel. The research revealed that many offenders may not have their own home but very few offenders have absolutely nowhere to go.

'When you are homeless you take drugs to numb the mind. You lose your self respect.' (offender)

5.6 Homeless offenders are particularly vulnerable. If they are staying with friends (sofa surfing) or are sleeping rough, this increases the danger of them re-offending. They are also at greater risk of substance misuse.

5.7 Some people are homeless prior to going into prison, others become homeless as a result of time spent in prison. If the number of people on shorter prison sentences increases at the expense of community sentences, this is likely to increase the number of homeless people.

5.8 Some offenders are homeless as a result of long prison sentences. They may have split up or been divorced from their partner. If they have lost all their connections with any local area they can then present as homeless to any local housing authority.

5.9 The offenders who participated in the focus groups shared their experiences of homelessness and sofa surfing. Those who had been without anywhere to live had found some imaginative alternatives to a park bench or shop doorway.

‘I was living in a garage. The only thing I didn’t have was running water.’
(offender)

‘I used to live on a bus. It was warm and safe.’ (offender)

5.10 Participants also described the distrust and violence aimed at homeless people by members of the public.

‘Shops will hassle you if you look homeless. The store detective will follow you around or you will be asked to leave.’ (offender)

5.11 Some people said that when they had been without anywhere to stay they had committed a crime so that they were either sent to prison or spent a night in a police cell. One person had purposely lost remission in order to remain in custody.

‘You are better off in jail as you get food and a shower.’ (offender)

‘I commit offences so that I can have a roof over winter’. (offender)

‘I have lost remission deliberately when in prison if the weather was bad when I was due for release.’ (offender)

5.12 The focus group participants described what it was like to have to stay with friends. It was clear that there were unwritten rules associated with sofa surfing. They were aware that they were imposing on their friends and that if it became an obligation then the friendship would suffer. The homeless person would therefore only sleep in one place for a few nights at a time. They described what it was like to not have their own space and said that they could not relax. One person said that s/he was expected to go shoplifting regularly in return for staying with friends.

'You feel like you are invading their house. You leave to be polite. You do not want to overstay your welcome. You are not able to treat it like your own home.'
(offender)

'It is not your own space. You have to live by others' rules.'
(offender)

5.13 One person said that the council's attitude changed once when they knew the person was staying with friends.

'Once you are doing it [staying with friends] the councils don't care.'
(offender)

5.14 The focus groups revealed that staying with friends or 'sofa surfing' is a precarious form of accommodation. The offenders' experiences indicate that when people are released from custody, temporarily staying with friends should be viewed as transient accommodation.

Conclusions

- Only a small proportion of offenders have absolutely nowhere to stay. Many people without a place of their own will stay with friends or relatives.
- In both cases they are vulnerable and are more likely to re-offend.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- When measuring progress on the prison service KPT for prisoner accommodation on release, 'staying with friends' should be viewed as 'transient accommodation'.
- When assessing applications for the Housing Register, "staying with friends/family" should be viewed as not having secure accommodation.

Section Six

Offenders with Substance Misuse Problems

‘Some housing providers prefer to not have someone who has been in prison as a tenant. This is especially so if they have a drugs and alcohol problem.’
(practitioner)

6.1 Nationally, the Social Exclusion Unit reported that the majority of prisoners have a history of drug or alcohol misuse. Around two thirds of prisoners used illegal drugs in the twelve months prior to imprisonment. Around a quarter of men and a third of women admitted to using heroin or crack in the twelve months prior to imprisonment. Around three fifths of male and two fifths of female sentenced prisoners admitted to hazardous drinking which carried a risk of physical or mental harm. For many offenders, prison offered them the first opportunity to begin to tackle their substance misuse problems. Much of the positive drugs work started in prison was not sustained in the community, so many resumed their substance misuse. Work on alcohol was identified as the poor relation and needed improvement (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002).

6.2 Home Office research found that around half of ex-prisoners were using heroin daily four months after release and less than half had somewhere secure to live (Burrows et al, 2001).

Substance misuse

Drug misuse

From the Norfolk Probation Area caseload:

- 17% had previously used heroin
- 8% were currently using heroin, of whom 72% were using on a daily basis
- 13% had previously used crack
- 4% were currently using crack, of whom 37% were using on a daily basis
- 54% had drug misuse issues related to their offending

Of the 54% who had drug misuse related to their offending:

- 7% were NFA
- 55% had significant accommodation problems
- 27% had accommodation issues linked to offending

Alcohol misuse

From the Norfolk Probation Area caseload data:

- 49% had alcohol issues linked to their offending behaviour

Of the 49% with alcohol problems linked to their offending:

- 43% of had significant accommodation problems
- 21% had accommodation issues linked to offending

6.3 This research identified that substance misuse was one of the biggest problems affecting offenders in Norfolk. Over half of the offenders on the

Norfolk Probation Area caseload had drug misuse issues related to their offending. This group were more likely than the overall caseload to be NFA, have significant accommodation problems and have accommodation problems linked to their offending. Approaching half of the offenders on the Norfolk Probation Area caseload had alcohol issues linked to their offending behaviour.

Substance misuse

From the Norfolk YOT assessments:

- 29% had substance misuse issues associated with offending (38% for those 16 years and over)

Of the 29% with substance misuse issues associated with offending:

- 5% were NFA
- 22% were in accommodation that was not suitable
- 47% had living arrangements associated with offending

6.4 The Norfolk YOT data do not distinguish between drug and alcohol misuse. A significant proportion of offenders had substance misuse problems, and this group was more likely than other young offenders assessed by the Norfolk YOT to have accommodation that was not suitable and their living arrangements were more likely to be associated with offending.

6.5 As part of the research, additional statistics on substance misuse in Norfolk were obtained from the Arrest Referral Scheme run by the Matthew Project and the CARATS (Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare Services) team in HMP/YOI Norwich. Between April 2000 and mid June 2004, the Arrest Referral Scheme saw over 2,600 people. The main substances misused were alcohol (29%), heroin (23%) and cannabis (18%).

6.6 In most prisons there are CARATS teams and other initiatives which aim to reduce substance misuse on release. In January 2004 the CARATS team in HMP/YOI Norwich had a caseload of 301. It received an average of 90 referrals per month. For offenders from Norfolk, the majority of people on the CARATS team's caseload were returning to Norwich and Great Yarmouth.

6.7 The practitioners contacted the research confirmed that many offenders had substance misuse problems. At least 70% of the focus group participants had experience of drug misuse and at least half had experience of alcohol misuse. Both the practitioners and focus group participants identified that the most critical time for intervention and support is on release, particularly for offenders who had successfully detoxed while in prison. It is essential, therefore, that all offenders with substance misuse issues are referred to GPs and community-based specialist agencies prior to release. If offenders are released without accommodation arranged, they were also more likely to resume their substance misuse.

‘Organisations have to have drug policies but they are reluctant to take anybody with a drug problem - even recreational cannabis use.’ (practitioner)

6.8 The research revealed some variation in accommodation providers’ policies and practices on substance misuse. Some accommodation providers would take substance misusers, others had a strict exclusion policy and would not take drug users at all or only if they were on a treatment programme. However, some providers who had a policy of not accepting drug users, would not evict people if they subsequently found out that they were using drugs. They would then provide support and referral to drug treatment services. As the drug policies were not consistent across accommodation providers some offenders said that they did not know when to tell the truth about their substance misuse and when to lie to get a roof over their head and risk later eviction. When drug misusing offenders did obtain a place in a hostel, they often risked eviction due to not keeping to the rules and their chaotic lifestyle.

‘If you are known to have taken drugs then you are shunned by people. Heroin is a stigma.’ (offender)

6.9 Given the large percentage of offenders on drugs, a no drugs policy means that many offenders do not meet the criteria for the accommodation available for homeless people. In line with national thinking (Randall and DrugScope, 2002), NORCAS, a local drug and alcohol service, has been promoting the need for drug tolerance policies, rather than a no drugs policy, for accommodation providers.

6.10 Blanket bans could be replaced by drug tolerance policies, with individual accommodation providers deciding what levels of tolerance are suitable for their establishment. NORCAS can offer guidance and training to accommodation providers on developing a drug tolerance policy ranging from ‘rare tolerance’ to ‘high tolerance’. They suggest that a ‘zero tolerance’ policy is not appropriate given the prevalence of substance misuse.

6.11 Some of the accommodation providers interviewed for the research were concerned about Section 8 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, which states that organisations should not knowingly permit or suffer drug use on the premises. There was some lack of understanding about this area of the law, which may prevent accommodation providers from having inclusive drug policies. The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 now covers closure notices in relation to the use of drugs. This Act is designed to be used principally against ‘crack houses’ (see Annex C of the Notes of Guidance for the Act) and makes it less likely that a hostel or other forms of supported housing would be closed due to substance misuse. However, this has yet to be tested in court.

6.12 The practitioners contacted during the research suggested that substance misuse was on the increase. The need for increased specialist provision, especially rehabilitation units and detoxification places, was identified. A

number of people commented that it was very difficult to obtain funding for residential rehabilitation places. As already stated, residential drug rehabilitation programmes need to be planned well in advance of release from prison as places need to be arranged and funding needs to be organised. It was also pointed out that if offenders attend a residential drug rehabilitation programme and then return to their previous location and social contacts it can be difficult for them to remain drug free.

6.13 The main agencies that offenders were referred to in relation to their substance misuse were NORCAS, the Bure Centre, the Matthew Project, CADS (Community Alcohol and Drugs Service) in West Norfolk, the ADAPT (Alcohol and Drug Addiction Prevention and Treatment) Link Resettlement Team or a GP. In addition to its clinical, counselling and advice services, NORCAS has a Homeless Outreach Team which provides considerable support to offenders who are substance misusers. This can include meeting people as they are released from prison. In recognition of the accommodation and support needs of substance misusers, NORCAS opened a new accommodation based service for people who have completed detoxification and rehabilitation in Kings Lynn in April 2004. There are five units of accommodation.

6.14 The practitioners contacted during the research had very little to say about alcohol abuse specifically.

‘Substance misuse is an ever growing problem in rural areas as well as the city.’
(practitioner)

6.15 A growing drug problem in some rural areas was identified, for example in Dereham where there are no specialist drugs and alcohol services. Focus group participants from Dereham said they did not wish to go to Norwich as they were trying escape from drugs. They pointed out that as there were no specialist drug facilities locally to support them in getting off drugs, they had to go into Norwich.

6.16 Under the homelessness legislation, substance misuse is not included as a specific reason to consider an applicant as ‘vulnerable’, but local authorities may consider applicants with substance misuse issues under ‘other special reason’. This was decided on a case by case basis. A particular problem identified was local authorities sometimes housing single people who had stopped their substance misuse in the same block of flats as people who were still misusing drugs and alcohol. This increased the risk of a relapse.

6.17 The practitioners said that some offenders had debts with drug dealers and the focus group participants confirmed this. In some cases they left the area to avoid conflict with the drug dealers, even when they had established accommodation. They also moved to other towns and cities when they had exhausted their local accommodation opportunities. It was pointed out that, although it might seem like a good idea to move to a new area, it often did not turn out well as a support network of family and friends was lacking. As drugs are available anywhere in the country, instead of avoiding them, they went back to drugs more quickly than they might have done if they had stayed in their home town.

Conclusions

- The research identified that substance misuse was one of the biggest problems affecting offenders in Norfolk. This reflects the national picture.
- The most critical time for offenders to resume their substance misuse was immediately after release from prison.
- If offenders were released without accommodation arranged this increased the risk that they would resume their substance misuse.
- Substance misuse affects offenders' ability to obtain and maintain accommodation, particularly for those with a chaotic lifestyle.
- Some accommodation providers have a no drugs policy and some will not accept offenders who are misusing drugs unless they are on a treatment programme.
- Local Authorities may consider offenders with substance misuse issues as vulnerable due to 'other special reasons' under the homelessness legislation.
- The need for more substance misuse treatment and support services for offenders was identified. These need to be available immediately offenders are released from prison and on a longer term basis.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- Accommodation providers should seek legal advice and training in order to review their substance misuse policies to ensure that offenders with substance misuse problems can access accommodation for homeless people.
- Accommodation providers' support plans for offenders include an assessment of both drug and alcohol misuse and, where appropriate, refer them to specialist treatment and support services.
- Substance misuse agencies explore how to increase community support for offenders with substance misuse problems, including alcohol misuse.
- The Norfolk DAAT (Drug and Alcohol Action Team) and the Supporting People Team consider the level and type of housing related support needed by offenders who are substance misusers.
- Outcomes from the recently established accommodation based service run by NORCAS in Kings Lynn for people with drug and alcohol problems, who have completed detoxification and rehabilitation, are monitored to ascertain whether their service users include offenders and whether the service should be duplicated in other parts of the county.

Section Seven

Offenders with Mental Health Problems

'We have people [in the hostel] with mental health problems including people who are psychotic, schizophrenic or have a personality disorder. However not all people with mental health problems can access services.' (practitioner)

7.1 The Social Exclusion Unit reported that 'many prisoners have significant mental health problems. Some will have received treatment before entering prison, but others will have serious undiagnosed conditions. Untreated, such problems can be made worse by imprisonment and will make the chances of finding or keeping a home or a job much more difficult' and 'even if severe mental health disorders were treated appropriately, there would still be a majority of prisoners for whom less severe disorders would pose real problems.' (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002).

7.2 The Social Exclusion Unit report also provided the following statistics on prisoners' mental health:

- 72% of male and 70% of female sentenced prisoners suffer from two or more mental health disorders; this is 14 and 35 times the level in the general population respectively.
- 64% of male and 50% of female sentenced prisoners have a personality disorder; this is twelve and fourteen times the level in the general population.
- 95% of young prisoners aged 15 – 21 suffer from a mental disorder, 80% suffer from at least two. (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002)

Offenders with mental health problems

From the Norfolk Probation Area caseload:

- 32% reported 'self harm, attempted suicide, suicidal thoughts or feelings'
- 24% had 'ever been on medication for mental health problems in the past'
- 41% had 'current psychological problems/depression'
- 20% had 'current psychiatric problems'
- 7% were receiving 'current psychiatric treatment or treatment pending'
- 46% had emotional well-being issues linked to offending behaviour

Of the 46% who had emotional well-being issues linked to offending behaviour:

- 7% were NFA
- 51% had significant accommodation problems
- 29% had accommodation issues linked to offending

7.3 The Norfolk Probation Area OASys database uses the term 'emotional well-being' which includes mental health issues and wider aspects of emotional well-being. An analysis of the data from the OASys database indicated that there was a high level of mental health problems amongst offenders supervised by Norfolk Probation Area and suggested that few of them were receiving

psychiatric treatment. This was based on probation officer assessments, rather than a clinical assessment. Overall, approaching half had emotional well-being issues linked to their offending behaviour. It was significantly higher for some groups: women (61%), those aged 17 – 18 years (59%) and those who described themselves as Black or Black British (58%). These are commented on in more detail in later sections.

7.4 There was also a significant variation between the different probation teams. Emotional well-being issues linked to offending behaviour were highest for the Norwich field team, the Norwich SPART (Sentence Planning and Resettlement Team) and the Great Yarmouth field team (62%, 55% and 50% respectively). This suggests that offenders in Norwich, Great Yarmouth and those released from prison have more mental health problems than the overall caseload.

7.5 In relation to accommodation, the Norfolk Probation Area caseload statistics showed that for the 46% of offenders where emotional well-being issues were linked to their offending behaviour, they were more likely to have accommodation problems than the overall caseload.

Offenders with mental health problems

From the Norfolk YOT assessments:

- 35% had mental health issues associated with their offending

For the 35% who had mental health issues associated with their offending:

- 8% were NFA
- 23% had accommodation that was not suitable
- 55% had living arrangements associated with their offending

7.6 In the data from the Norfolk YOT, officers identified an association between mental health issues and offending in a third of cases. This was based on officer assessments, rather than a clinical assessment. This group were more likely to have accommodation problems than the other young offenders who had been assessed.

7.7 The Norfolk Probation Area and the Norfolk YOT data support the views of practitioners that many of the offenders that they work with have mental health problems. The data also indicate that offenders' mental health is often linked to offending behaviour and adversely impacts on their accommodation situation.

7.8 The Criminal Justice Mental Health Team is provided by the Norfolk and Waveney Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust, and is jointly commissioned by the Norfolk Social Services Department and the Norfolk PCTs (Primary Care Trusts). It comprises two senior social workers and two senior nurses. The team covers the localities of Norwich, North Norfolk, Broadland and Great Yarmouth working within the police stations, magistrates courts and Norwich Crown Court. Two senior nurses fulfil a similar role in King's Lynn and Thetford.

7.9 The team offers an assessment service and specialist advice. They assist the courts and referring agencies to make informed decisions through both oral and written reports with recommendations. This includes specialist advice on

the Mental Health Act 1983. They also offer advice, education and training to partner agencies, the private and voluntary sector, clients and their carers. In some cases, offenders with mental health problems are still sentenced to custody so the team also liaises with the prison healthcare service, especially concerning suicide risk and deliberate self harm.

'There are people in prison on short term sentences or on remand that we [a specialist mental health service] should be aware of. The CPA [Care Programme Approach] should be carried out in prison.' (practitioner)

7.10 Many of the practitioners interviewed stated that a large proportion of people going into custody have mental health problems of varying degrees of seriousness. Jones and Magna (2002) identified a lack of provision for people who consistently offend but serve short prison or community based sentences and who had mild to moderate mental health problems together with drug and or alcohol problems.

'The doctors inside do not know what they are doing. They don't take you seriously or do anything because too many people go and try and get stuff to get high. They should be independent of the prison system.' (offender)

7.11 Changes are underway in the provision of healthcare in prisons. Guidance from the Home Office and Department of Health requires a transfer of responsibility for health care in prisons to the local NHS by March 2006. This will make it easier for health records to be transferred from the GP surgery to prisons and it should facilitate continuity of treatment for offenders whilst they are in custody. From April 2005, the Norwich PCT will be taking over responsibility for the provision of healthcare in HMP/YOI Norwich and the Southern Norfolk PCT will be doing the same in HMP Wayland. The prisons are already working closely with the PCTs and recognise the need to identify and provide treatment for offenders with mental health problems.

7.12 A new screening questionnaire and procedure at reception into prison, including the identification of mental illness, has been introduced in HMP/YOI Norwich (Brambleby 2003). A Prison Mental Health Inreach Service, provided by the Norfolk and Waveney Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust, has recently been established in HMP/YOI Norwich to help address mental health issues. Discussions are underway with the Norfolk and Waveney Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust about the best way forward in HMP Wayland, particularly as many people will not stay in Norfolk on release. The aim is to enhance the management of mental health problems of people in prison. It is recognised that there is considerable work to be done to improve mental health services in the prisons.

7.13 Some offenders with more serious mental health problems are detained in a regional secure unit such as the NORVIC Clinic just outside Norwich, which is a medium secure facility. Routes into a regional secure unit are directly from the courts, from more secure mental health provision as part of the process towards

release, from psychiatric hospital or transfer from a prison. These facilities are part of the NHS not the prison service. The research revealed that some people sentenced to prison were subsequently diagnosed with severe enough mental health problems to transfer to the NORVIC Clinic. The need to identify the most appropriate type of facility for offenders with mental health problems at the earliest opportunity was therefore emphasised.

7.14 People with mental health problems who go into psychiatric hospital are entitled to 52 weeks of Housing Benefit. Offenders going into hospital were less likely to lose their accommodation and this usually occurred when agencies were not kept informed.

7.15 NORVIC Clinic patients follow the same routes for discharge from Mental Health Act Section as in other areas, namely, through Mental Health Tribunal routes. In those cases subject to Home Office restriction, the Home Office will be involved in the decision making process. Patients leaving the NORVIC Clinic use some of the usual accommodation providers although, for those clients subject to Home Office restrictions, the suitability of the placement needs to be agreed. The NORVIC clinic have tended to use providers with whom they have an established relationship and who historically have had a degree of success in meeting their clients' needs. The NORVIC Clinic provides a specialist aftercare service to people when discharged. Some of the accommodation provides more structured support than others and some of the accommodation is in the private sector. When the specialised support provided by the NORVIC Clinic is not needed, patients may be transferred to support workers from other sources e.g. Julian Housing Support. Staff at the NORVIC Clinic stated that there was a need for more accommodation provision for their patients on release.

7.16 The Norfolk Probation Area Resettlement Team (SPART) covering the Norwich area have a mental health social worker seconded to the team so that packages of support can be developed for people supervised by probation who are being released from prison. The NHS, Norfolk County Council Social Services and the Norfolk Probation Area fund this post.

7.17 A number of issues were identified relating to when people with mental health problems leave prison. They may not receive sufficient medication, they may have no medication or they may not take their medication, leading to a crisis post release. If offenders have no address, they may have problems with registering with a GP. If offenders have a history of violence towards GPs they may be allocated a GP through the Special GP Allocation Scheme. If the GPs are 'full', the offender may get a temporary GP for three months, which would hinder continuity of care. The City Reach service, funded by Norwich PCT, provides outreach medical services for vulnerable groups, including people who are homeless. Regular surgeries are held at a variety of locations in Norwich.

7.18 One of the main specialist providers in Norfolk for people with mental health problems is Julian Housing Support. They provide some accommodation themselves and are contracted to provide floating support for a number of accommodation providers. Julian Housing Support only provide support for people with severe and enduring mental health problems who are in contact with secondary mental health services.

7.19 There are a variety of registered care homes across the county for people with enduring mental health problems. These are not part of the general provision for homeless people and, unless an individual's place is funded privately, all new placements above a certain monetary value need to go before a Social Services panel to obtain funding.

7.20 Mind, the mental health charity, has three local organisations which cover the county. Their residential and day care provision can, for the most part, only be accessed via the multi agency mental health teams. However, Mind also provide some services for people with mental health problems, which can be accessed more easily.

'Access to statutory organisations – social services and mental health are the big ones for the clients. We could make more use of private accommodation but there is no money for the [housing] support workers.' (practitioner)

7.21 Hostels accommodate people with a range of mental health issues. Although the multi agency mental health teams visit a number of the hostels and other supported accommodation on a regular basis, access to mental health services was identified as a problem. A number of the accommodation advisers and providers commented on the shortage of mental health resources. One accommodation provider stated that since their specific community mental health nurse had become unavailable, they had not been able to obtain the services of a replacement.

7.22 Offenders diagnosed as having a personality disorder, were considered by accommodation providers to be in need of specialist support. However, until recently, this diagnosis has been viewed as untreatable. The Department of Health has issued guidance on personality disorder (Department of Health, 2003), which includes specific recommendations for including and treating people diagnosed with a personality disorder. In response to this, the new Norfolk definition for dual diagnosis also includes those with a personality disorder (see below). There is, therefore, potential for change in obtaining services and support for offenders diagnosed with a personality disorder.

7.23 Under the homelessness legislation, 'mental illness or disability' is specified as a possible reason to consider an applicant as 'vulnerable'. Some of those interviewed for the research suggested that it was easier to get accommodation for offenders with mental health issues as there was more accommodation available for them. However, others suggested that once somebody had been diagnosed as having a mental health problem it could be more difficult to obtain housing for them and some councils did not consider 'depression' be a sufficiently serious mental health problem for individuals to be deemed as 'vulnerable'.

7.24 A number of comments were made in relation to young people and mental health. There is still work to be done to achieve a smooth transition between adolescent and adult mental health services. Mental health professionals are reluctant to label young people as having mental health problems, so individuals may not be diagnosed or treated. Norwich and District Mind and the Norfolk and Waveney Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust's Early Intervention Team have

recently set up a new young people's recovery house, funded by the central Norfolk PCTs. It aims to help young people so they do not have to go into hospital.

Dual diagnosis

'It is difficult for the professionals to make a clear diagnosis if people are using drugs or alcohol.' (practitioner)

7.25 Many of the people interviewed during the research stated that offenders often had both mental health and substance misuse problems, and some offenders self medicated themselves with drugs or alcohol to cope with their mental health challenges. This created difficulties in obtaining diagnosis and treatment of their mental health problem. It was stated that some mental health agencies did not provide a service until the person had ceased their substance misuse, thus preventing people from accessing these services. People diagnosed as having a personality disorder, alongside other mental health problems or substance misuse, were also not able to access services. Many people identified the need for a service to cover people with both mental health and substance misuse problems. When mental health was linked with substance misuse, people often had chaotic lifestyles. This increased the level of support they required.

7.26 A snapshot survey by Julian Housing Support showed that a substantial number (45% – 50%) of mental health users receiving their services were also substance misusers, mainly alcohol misusers (Julian Housing Support internal monitoring 2003/4, unpublished). Julian Housing Support has two dedicated dual diagnosis workers. They provide advice to other Julian Housing Support staff and some direct support to clients.

7.27 The Department of Health has issued guidance on dual diagnosis: 'Dual Diagnosis Good Practice Guide' (Department of Health, 2002). In response to this, a Norfolk wide definition of dual diagnosis has been developed under the auspices of the Norfolk PCTs. In the background papers leading up to the agreement of the definition it was argued that a broad definition of dual diagnosis should adopted:

'To only include those with severe and enduring mental illness is to deliberately exclude the rest. Those who are undiagnosed or whose dependency is so chaotic as to make a diagnosis impossible are as hard to engage as those already mainstreamed through mental health and quite possibly harder to retain in treatment. The resource implications on health, the criminal justice system and statutory housing providers are great and whilst the 'severe and enduring' DD's are thus receiving a service the remainder are still impacting severely on primary care and statutory and voluntary providers alike.' (Pike, 2004a).

7.28 The definition of dual diagnosis agreed for Norfolk encompasses people with a wide range of mental health problems, not just those diagnosed with a severe and enduring mental illness, and also includes personality disorder. The definition is:

‘An individual who presents with co-existing mental health (and/or Personality Disorder) and substance misuse problems (drugs and/or alcohol).’

7.29 The accompanying partnership statement states that:

‘Norfolk DAAT and LIT’s support the implementation of provision for this client group using the Integrated model of service delivery approach. Integrated care is taken to mean the concurrent provision of both psychiatric and substance misuse services. These services are to be provided in partnership with other organisations to meet the presenting and ongoing needs of the individual.’

7.30 This definition has only recently been agreed (November, 2004) and the first stage of implementation will be concentrating on the training of staff. In the long term it could lead to a significant increase in the availability of mental health support services for offenders with substance misuse problems and / or personality disorder. This would then have impact on their ability to find and sustain accommodation.

Conclusions

- A large proportion of people going into custody have mental health problems of varying degrees of seriousness. These were not always diagnosed or treated in prison.
- A large proportion of offenders in hostel accommodation have mental health problems of varying degrees of seriousness. They do not necessarily receive any specialist support.
- There appears to be a general shortage of mental health resources in Norfolk, especially for offenders with low level mental health problems.
- In the long term, the recently agreed countywide definition of dual diagnosis could lead to a significant increase in the availability of mental health support services for offenders with substance misuse problems and / or personality disorder.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- The relevant agencies explore how access routes to GPs and multi agency mental health teams can be improved for offenders with mental health problems.
- The relevant agencies explore the need to increase community mental health support for offenders with mental health problems who, at present, are not recognised as having severe and enduring mental health problems.
- The relevant agencies explore the need to increase community support for offenders with dual diagnosis, including personality disorder.

Section Eight

Women Offenders

'I was in [a hostel]. It was very male. I did not feel safe there being a woman.'
(offender)

8.1 Women represent 51% of the overall population in England and Wales but only account for about 6% of the total prison population in England and Wales. However, the number of women in prison has been steadily rising. In 1993 the female prison population was 1,580, by March 2004 it was 4,589, an increase of 190% (HM Prison Service website, August 2004).

8.2 In 2002 the Social Exclusion Unit reported that around one third of women prisoners lost their homes, and often their possessions, whilst in prison. Only 11% of women had received help with housing matters whilst in prison, compared to 14% of men. Women were less likely than men to leave prison with accommodation arranged. 55% of women prisoners had at least one child aged under 16 years and 33% had a child aged under 5 years. Only 5% of women's children remained in their own homes once their mother had been sentenced. Around three quarters of women prisoners served sentences of less than twelve months and were therefore not supervised by probation on release (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002).

8.3 Over 50% of sentenced women prisoners had used drugs in the year before imprisonment and over 40% of sentenced women prisoners could be diagnosed as harmful or dependent users of alcohol. Fifteen percent of sentenced women prisoners had previously been admitted to a mental hospital and over a third of sentenced women prisoners had previously attempted suicide. Women offenders are more likely to be victims of domestic violence than women in the general population and one survey suggested that as many as half have experienced domestic violence. One survey suggested that up to a third of women prisoners have been victims of sexual abuse (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002).

8.4 The Prison Service has identified a number of important differences in women's offending behaviour and their needs whilst in prison, compared with men. These are summarised on the Prison Service website (HM Prison Service website, August 2004) and some of them update the information in the Social Exclusion Report. They include:

- Distance from Home: Due to the smaller number of women's prisons, women tend to be further away from their homes which makes the important links with family more difficult.
- Resettlement: Whilst for men the first priority is getting employment, for women accommodation normally ranks higher.
- Offences: Women tend to commit less crime and their offences are generally less serious.
- Drugs: Women tend to have a different type of drug use from men with a higher level of hard drug use.

- Mental Health: In one study over 66% of women in prison were assessed as having a neurotic disorder such as depression, anxiety and phobias. The comparable figure in the community is less than 20%.
- Ethnic Origin: In 2003, 31% of women in custody were from minority ethnic groups compared to 24% of men. This may in part be accounted for by the higher level of female foreign nationals (20% of the women in prison).
(HM Prison Service website, August, 2004)

8.5 There are two women's prisons in the Eastern region, neither are in Norfolk. These are HMP Edmunds Hill in Suffolk (which is due to change to an all male prison but the date for this is still uncertain) and HMP Bullwood Hall in Essex. A new prison in Peterborough, due to open in 2005, will accommodate women prisoners and will include a mother and baby unit.

8.6 Women offenders from Norfolk go to a range of prisons around the country, including those in the Eastern region and HMP Holloway in London. Due to the smaller number of women's prisons, women tend to be further away from their homes than imprisoned men. When HMP Edmunds Hill changes to an all male prison, women offenders from Norfolk may be even further away from their home.

8.7 Women accounted for 10% of the Norfolk Probation Area caseload. They had similar rates to men of convictions for offences of violence against a person (23% compared with 21% of men). Fewer women than men supervised by Norfolk Probation Area had been sentenced to a custodial sentence, 16% of women compared to 27% of men. Therefore, the accommodation needs of women supervised by Norfolk Probation Area were less likely to be linked to spending time in prison. Women offenders appeared to be over represented in the area covered by the Great Yarmouth probation team compared to men offenders. The reasons for this were not clear.

Women offenders

From the Norfolk Probation Area caseload data:

- 75% were in permanent accommodation
- 5% were NFA
- 42% had significant accommodation problems'
- 36% were living with children
- 16% had accommodation issues linked to offending
- 73% had drug misuse issues linked to offending
- 36% had alcohol misuse issues linked to offending
- 61% had emotional well-being issues linked to offending

8.8 In relation to accommodation, the Norfolk Probation Area caseload statistics showed that women were more likely to be in permanent independent housing than men but there was no difference in the proportion who were NFA, both 5%. Similar proportions of men and women had 'significant accommodation problems' but women were more likely to have 'some accommodation problems' (25% of women compared to 15% of men). Just over a third of the women were living with children compared to 18% of the men. Women were

less likely to be assessed as having accommodation issues linked to their offending than their male counterparts.

8.9 Women offenders on the Norfolk Probation Area caseload were over represented amongst those misusing drugs. They accounted for 10% of the caseload but were 13% of those convicted of drugs offences, 12% of those who had ever misused drugs, 20% for those currently using heroin and 27% for those currently using crack. Approaching three quarters had drug misuse issues linked to offending and a third had alcohol misuse issues linked to offending. Over 60% had emotional well-being issues linked to offending.

8.10 Thus, the data for women offenders supervised by Norfolk Probation Area indicated that women had a higher level of mental health and drug misuse problems but a lower level of alcohol and accommodation problems than men.

Girls / young women offenders

From the Norfolk YOT data:

- 10% were NFA
- 16% had living arrangements that were not suitable
- 33% had living arrangements associated with their offending
- 23% had substance misuse issues associated with their offending
- 42% had mental health issues associated with their offending

8.11 Girls / young women accounted for 24% of the Norfolk YOT assessments and were more likely to be NFA than the boys/young men (10% compared with 3% respectively). There were no statistically significant gender differences in the association between living arrangements and offending or in the proportion of those with living arrangements that were not suitable.

8.12 The data from the Norfolk YOT assessments showed that substance misuse (i.e. drugs and alcohol together) associated with offending was lower for girls/young women than for boys/young men. Girls / young women were more likely to have mental health issues associated with offending than their male counterparts.

8.13 Almost a third of the girls / young women assessed by the Norfolk YOT had committed offences of violence and 20% were Schedule 1 offenders (under the Children and Young Persons Act 1933), although none of them had a current conviction for a sex offence. Therefore, hostels that exclude people with convictions for or a history of violence or Schedule 1 offences may not be available to a significant proportion of girls / young women.

8.14 The gender differences amongst those assessed by the Norfolk YOT were less clear cut than for those on the Norfolk Probation Area caseload, but the percentage who were NFA was particularly high.

8.15 The prevalence of drugs and alcohol problems and mental health problems amongst women offenders was commented on by many of the people interviewed. It was suggested that many of the women with mental health problems had experienced abuse as children and / or had a deprived childhood.

This could lead to depression and other mental health problems, including self harm.

8.16 Women were viewed as particularly vulnerable and as having 'complex' or 'multi layered' problems. They were seen as having different needs from men and being particularly vulnerable to abuse from men. It was suggested that some women committed offences due to the influence of their male partners and that some crimes were committed under duress, e.g. stealing to fund purchase of illegal drugs. Some women were victims of domestic abuse. This could lead to low self esteem, learned helplessness and a pattern of seeking out a similar partner in the future, all of which contributed to the continuation of domestic abuse.

8.17 Some, but not all, of the hostels for homeless people are for women as well as men. However, most hostels for homeless people are geared towards men and women will normally be in a predominantly male environment. Women may find this difficult, especially if they have just been released from prison and especially when there are issues related to abuse/exploitative relationships, which is often the case. Also, most of the mixed hostels do not include any provision for children to stay. One of the smaller accommodation providers said they did not take women because of the problems of having a mixed house.

8.18 The approved premises run by Norfolk Probation Area has two places designated for women. However, it was recognised that the hostel was not the ideal place for women offenders, firstly because it accommodated high risk male offenders and, secondly, because the women offenders referred to them often had offences that relate to men in some way or they had experienced exploitation / violence from men. Very few other approved premises run by Probation Areas around the country cater for women. The approved premises in Bedford does not take such high risk men so women from Norfolk are more likely to be placed there than in Norwich.

8.19 Some accommodation is available for women only (see Box 8.1). However, many of the places available have restrictions on them, particularly in relation to substance misuse and violence, which means that many women offenders may be excluded from them.

'Women are referred to Archway or Hinde House. If they are escaping domestic violence they will be referred to a refuge often out of county if they need to get away. '(practitioner)

8.20 There are five women's refuges in Norfolk for women fleeing domestic abuse. However all the refuges stated that they would not take people with a history of violence and they have restrictions on those who are substance misusers.

Box 8.1 Accommodation available for women only

This includes:

- Hinde House in Norwich, run by the Orwell Housing Association for women aged 16 – 40 years. Staffed 24 hours, 7 days a week. They accept women with mental health or substance misuse problems, care leavers and ex offenders. Pregnant residents have to leave when they are seven months pregnant.
- Archway in Norwich, run by the Stonham Housing Association for women aged 16 – 24 years. They will not accept sex offenders or those unable to manage their own medication. Women with a history of violence, substance misusers and arsonists are assessed on an individual basis.
- Great Yarmouth Young Women’s Project for pregnant women. They accept children up to 3 years old and do not operate any automatic exclusions.
- Hebron House is a drug and alcohol rehabilitation service in Norwich run by the Hebron Trust. They take referrals from social service departments nationally for women with serious drug and alcohol problems, including those with children, but will not accept women with a history of violence, self harm or arsonists.
- Ashcroft Project in Wymondham for women aged 16 – 65 years with severe and enduring emotional distress. They will not accept drug and alcohol users.
- Some of the accommodation run by Julian Housing, for people with severe and enduring mental health problems, is for women only. They will not accept people who are drug and alcohol dependent and may not accept those with a history of violence or arson.

8.21 Recent local research on domestic abuse revealed that ‘there is a real lack of resources for victims with substance misuse and with mental health issues’ (Arthurton et al, 2004). If women offenders are escaping domestic abuse they often need to get away from the area and may therefore be referred to a refuge out of Norfolk. A research project is currently underway to assess the level of need for housing and related support services for victims of domestic violence across the eastern region. It is funded by the ten Supporting People teams and regional crime reduction monies.

8.22 For some women offenders sex work is used to fund a drug habit. The Matrix Project provides an outreach service to sex workers five evenings a week in the red light district of Norwich. They have a mobile unit where they see both male and female sex workers. Many are homeless and living in other people’s homes. The Matrix Project have staff from other agencies on their mobile unit, including the NORCAS Homelessness Outreach Team. The mobile unit provides a way to link the sex workers to other agencies in a confidential setting. This increases their confidence to visit the agencies themselves. The Matrix workers also accompany sex workers to appointments.

'It is rare for them [sex workers] not to be using drugs.' (practitioner)

'We just have to let them go when we are unable to find them accommodation. If the resources are not there we have no other option. In these situations we offer a 24/7 mobile contact because we are concerned for their lives.'
(practitioner)

8.23 The Magdalene Group, based in Norwich, also offers support, guidance, and care to those working in prostitution and/or at risk of being involved in abusive or exploitative relationships. They work with women and a few men. They offer a drop in centre, with the provision of shower facilities, change of clothes and washing and street outreach services. The support is ongoing and consistent. They reported that 98% of the people they work with have a drug or alcohol problem and a large proportion have mental health problems. Most have experienced abuse – sexual, emotional and/or physical. The Magdalene Group signpost people to various supportive agencies in Norfolk and will accompany women to meetings and appointments (NORCAS, the Bure Centre, Pregnancy Crisis, the Matthew Project). They also link in with social services concerning people under the age of 16. They are able to provide long-term support and offer an 'open door' approach and 34 people (32 women and 2 men) with whom they have worked in the past ten years have exited prostitution. The Magdalene Group have identified a need for similar support work in Great Yarmouth.

8.24 The women mainly used bed and breakfast places in Norwich run by private landlords. The Magdalene Group had experienced difficulties in finding hostel accommodation for women. This was attributed to the women's drug and alcohol problems and an insufficient number of places available for women. The women often needed to move out of the area, but again there were few places for women on drugs.

8.25 There were some contradictory views on women offenders and accommodation. On the one hand it was suggested that women received more help with ensuring accommodation on release and on the other it was suggested that not enough was done for women offenders because of their small numbers and complex problems. It was also suggested that local authorities are more lenient towards women than men when assessing their 'vulnerability'. This research identified that there is unmet need in relation to accommodation for women offenders. More research is needed on the accommodation needs of and provision for women offenders. This has already been commissioned regionally by the Probation Service.

Conclusions

- Women offenders account for only a small proportion of offenders. However the number of women in custody has risen dramatically in recent years.
- Women offenders were portrayed as having more complex problems than their male counterparts.
- A higher proportion of women offenders had mental health problems compared with male offenders.

- Those supervised by Norfolk Probation Area had a high level of drug misuse problems.
- Girls/young women assessed by the Norfolk YOT had more accommodation problems than boys/young men.
- A similar level of women and men offenders supervised by Norfolk Probation Area were NFA, but fewer women offenders had accommodation issues linked with their offending behaviour.
- Most women only accommodation providers, including refuges for those fleeing domestic abuse, do not accept women with substance misuse problems.
- Nearly all sex workers were reported to be misusing drugs and many had accommodation problems.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- Ways to increase places for women offenders with complex problems, including substance misuse, mental health problems and those fleeing domestic abuse are explored.
- Women's refuges in Norfolk review their substance misuse policies.
- Floating support services are specifically targeted to meet the needs of sex workers, building on existing work with this client group.
- The findings of this report are drawn to the attention of the researchers investigating the accommodation needs of women offenders in the Eastern region and the regional research on domestic violence.

Section Nine

Offenders from Black and Minority Ethnic Groups

9.1 People of black and minority ethnic origin are over represented in the criminal justice system. The reasons for this are complex. In 1988/9 arrest rates per 10,000 of the population were 117 for Black people, 44 for people of Asian origin and 27 for White people. In 2000, 19% of the male prison population and 25% of the female prison population, excluding foreign nationals, was of black and minority ethnic origin (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). In February 2003, 17% of both the male and female prison population, excluding foreign nationals, was of black and minority ethnic origin (Cross and Olowe, 2003). A recent report by the Youth Justice Board demonstrated differences at various points in the criminal justice process that 'were consistent with discriminatory treatment'. (Youth Justice Board, 2004).

9.2 Norfolk has a small and diverse black and minority ethnic population. The latest official statistics (from the 2001 Census) showed that just over 12,000 people or 1.5% of the population were of black and minority ethnic background. This compares with 4.9% for the East of England and 9.1% for England.

9.3 Just under 2,000 people, 0.5% of the population, identified themselves as being of Irish origin. This compares with 1.1% for the East of England and 1.3% for England. Over 14,000 people, 1.8% of the population, identified themselves as being of Other White ethnic origin. This compares with 2.5% for the East of England and 2.7% for England.

9.4 There have been some changes since the 2001 Census. The ethnic minority population includes people who have arrived as asylum seekers/refugees and migrant workers before and since the 2001 Census. Norfolk also has a well established gypsy/traveller community.

9.5 The percentage of people of black and minority ethnic origin at the two Norfolk prisons and on the Norfolk Probation Area and Norfolk YOT caseloads is shown below.

Offenders of black and minority ethnic origin	
• HMP Wayland, as at April 2004	37%
• HMP/YOI Norwich, as at May 2004	19%
• Norfolk Probation Area caseload, as at 30 th June 2004	4%
• Norfolk Youth Offending Team assessments, July 2003 to June 2004	5%

9.6 These figures indicate that people of black and minority ethnic origin are over represented in the criminal justice system in Norfolk. The greater overrepresentation of people of black and minority ethnic origin in Norfolk's prisons is partly due to the presence of offenders from outside Norfolk in the prisons.

Offenders of black and minority ethnic origin

From the Norfolk Probation Area caseloads

- 14% were NFA
- 33% were in short term accommodation
- 66% had significant accommodation problems
- 26% had accommodation issues linked to offending
- 75% had drugs misuse issues linked to offending
- 48% had alcohol misuse issues linked to offending
- 40% had emotional well-being issues linked to offending

9.7 An examination of the Norfolk Probation Area caseload revealed that offenders of black and minority ethnic origin had more accommodation problems than the general caseload. At 14%, the percentage that were NFA was the higher than for any of the other sub groups examined during the research, and two thirds had significant accommodation problems.

9.8 More offenders of black and minority ethnic origin on the Norfolk Probation Area caseload had drugs misuse linked to offending than white offenders. People of black and minority ethnic origin accounted for 4% of the caseload but were 13% of those convicted of drugs offences, 4% of those who had ever misused drugs, 5% for those currently using heroin and 10% for those currently using crack. The figures for alcohol misuse linked to offending were similar for each group and emotional well-being linked to offending was somewhat lower for offenders of black and minority ethnic origin.

Offenders of black and minority ethnic origin

From the Norfolk YOT assessments:

- 9% were NFA
- 13% had accommodation that was not suitable
- 33% had living arrangements associated with offending
- 44% had substance misuse issues associated with offending
- 47% had mental health issues associated with offending

9.9 The accommodation data from the Norfolk YOT assessments did not reveal many significant differences between offenders of black and minority ethnic origin and other offenders in relation to accommodation. Although more offenders of black and minority ethnic were NFA this difference was not statistically significant.

9.10 Mental health issues and substance misuse issues associated with offending (47% and 44% respectively) was higher for offenders of black and minority ethnic origin than for white offenders.

9.11 All the practitioners who were interviewed were asked about the needs of people of black and minority ethnic origin. Many said they had little or no experience of meeting the needs of people of black and minority ethnic origin due to the low numbers in the general population in Norfolk.

9.12 Some of the prison based advisers said that their experience of people of black and minority ethnic origin mainly related to people from London. Most did not identify any particular needs of black and minority ethnic origin. They stated that obtaining accommodation in London was far more difficult than in Norfolk, and that this was a bigger issue than ethnicity.

9.13 A few advisers provided some information on the needs of people of black and minority ethnic origin or how they were meeting them. One adviser based in a prison said that they always checked whether people had any cultural needs or wanted to be near a place of worship. NORCAS reported that when they employed a Portuguese speaking worker, the number of referrals from Portuguese people increased, but this worker had now left and the number of referrals had not been sustained.

9.14 The housing providers stated that they had equal opportunity policies and did not discriminate. However, only a few provided evidence of the ways in which they were meeting the needs of people of black and minority ethnic origin. A few providers made clear statements that they would not tolerate racist comments or discrimination by or against residents or staff. Some housing providers identified the need for appropriate food, spiritual support, church networks, interpreters and translations. One hostel used a computer programme to translate between English and Portuguese to facilitate communication with their Portuguese residents.

Conclusions

- Norfolk has a small and diverse black and minority ethnic population.
- Nationally and locally, people of black and minority ethnic origin are over represented in the criminal justice system.
- Offenders of black and minority ethnic origin on the Norfolk Probation Area caseload had more accommodation problems than the general caseload and were the group most likely to be NFA.
- More offenders of black and minority ethnic origin on the Norfolk Probation Area caseload had drug misuse issues linked to their offending than white offenders.
- The Norfolk YOT assessments presented a slightly different picture: there were few significant differences between offenders of black and minority ethnic origin and white offenders in relation to accommodation; but mental health and substance misuse associated with offending were both higher for offenders of black and minority ethnic origin.
- Practitioners had limited awareness of the needs of offenders of black and minority ethnic origin.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- There is more training for accommodation advisers (in both the prison and the community) and accommodation providers on equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice in relation to people of black and minority ethnic origin. This should be aimed at increasing awareness of the housing and

support needs of black and minority ethnic offenders and assist practitioners in developing good practice.

- Practitioners are more pro-active in contacting people of black and minority ethnic origin. One approach would be for outreach services to employ people from different ethnic backgrounds and / or who are multi lingual, as this has already proved to have had a positive effect in Norfolk.

Section Ten

Young Offenders

'It is a constant problem trying to find accommodation for young people'.
(practitioner)

Young Offenders aged 16-17 years

10.1 Responsibility for accommodating young people under 16 years lies with Social Services through the Looked After Children Team. Those aged between 16 – 18 years may be assisted by Social Services (depending on their current and/or previous contact with the department) or accommodated by local housing authorities in line with their responsibilities under the Homelessness Act 2002.

10.2 Under the homelessness legislation, 16 and 17 year olds are regarded as a 'priority need' and local housing authorities therefore have a duty to house them unless social services has a responsibility for them. However people under 18 years require a guarantor in order to hold a tenancy. The Housing Benefit single room allowance for those under 25 years is lower than for those aged 25 years and over. This further restricts availability and access to accommodation for young people in the private sector.

10.3 The Youth Justice Board paper on accommodation and young people (Renshaw, 2000) states that 'Many young people lack suitable housing. It is not uncommon for the most vulnerable 16 and 17 year olds without a family home to move around between a series of friends' floors, bed and breakfast and other unsuitable accommodation. Some of these young people are already known to youth justice services and many others are at risk of becoming offenders.' The paper identified the need for a range of accommodation options as young people have different needs at different times.

10.4 In November 2003, young prisoners (mainly aged 15 – 20 years) accounted for 15% of the total prison population (Cross and Olowe, 2003). A survey carried out for Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (Challen and Walton, 2003) revealed that 37% of boys and 43% of girls had been in care or foster homes. 1 in 6 reported having an alcohol problem and 40% admitted to a drug problem.

16 to 18 year old offenders

From the Norfolk YOT assessments:

- 18% were women
- 6% were of black and minority ethnic origin
- 6% were NFA
- 18% had accommodation that was not suitable
- 30% had living arrangements that were associated with offending
- 38% had substance misuse issues associated with offending
- 35% had mental health issues associated with offending
- 35% had had special educational needs identified
- 24% had had a special educational need statement issued
- 22% had committed violence against the person

10.5 Between July 2003 and June 2004, the Norfolk YOT carried out 490 assessments on young people aged 16 to 18 years. These showed that there were more women offenders and more offenders of black and minority ethnic origin in the 16 to 18 year old age group than amongst older offenders supervised by the Norfolk Probation Area. The proportion of 16 to 18 year olds who were NFA and who had accommodation issues associated with offending were both higher than for adult offenders. A third had substance misuse issues and / or mental health issues associated with their offending. About a third had had special educational needs identified and about a quarter had been stated. The percentage who had committed offences of violence against the person were similar to older offenders. In addition, 13% were Schedule 1 offenders under the Children and Young Persons Act 1933, although less than 1% were on the sex offenders register. These figures indicate that young offenders aged 16 – 18 years have complex needs.

10.6 The policy of the Norfolk YOT is to support young offenders in their own neighbourhoods. Connexions and the Norfolk Youth and Community Service offer support to young people across the county. The research identified a number of gaps in terms of accommodation for young offenders aged 16 to 18 years. There is a general lack of accommodation for the 16 to 18 age group across the county, especially in Great Yarmouth, where a fifth of the 16 – 18 year olds assessed by the Norfolk YOT lived. In Great Yarmouth 27% of the 16 to 18 year olds were assessed as living in accommodation that was not suitable. Living arrangements linked to offending for this age group were highest in Norwich and Great Yarmouth (40% and 36% respectively).

10.7 A number of hostels across Norfolk do accommodate people from age 16 onwards but some accommodation providers (including the two direct access hostels) only take people aged 18 years and over. In practice, most hostels limited the number of young people they accepted. They tried to keep a balance of the type of residents that they had at any one time as they found that too many young people together became difficult to manage. If the accommodation providers were accommodating a sex offender or someone with a history of domestic violence they might not accept a young person, as they could be placed at risk. For some young offenders, their offences of violence, substance

misuse and Schedule 1 offender status would also act as additional barriers to obtaining hostel accommodation.

10.8 In King's Lynn, NCH Action for Children used to provide eight units of accommodation for care leavers (aged 16 – 25) in two premises. Social Services originally funded this accommodation and Supporting People later assumed responsibility for it. The two services closed in October 2003 and March 2004 as both premises were not fit for purpose.

'It is good that Supporting People are funding the support costs. It makes it possible for young people to get into supported lodgings when their income is limited. '(practitioner)

10.9 The Norfolk YOT said that their preferred option for young offenders would be for them to start with supported lodgings and graduate from there to their own tenancy with a social landlord or in privately rented accommodation. Young people needed to develop life skills and a sense of responsibility to be able to hold a tenancy. It was important not to set them up to fail.

10.10 Local housing authorities reported a challenge with finding suitable accommodation for this age group. They recognised that the young people needed accommodation that offered an element of care. Some local housing authorities stated that reconciliation with parents could be effective. However if a young person tried living with their parents again and it subsequently broke down there was then a risk that the council would say that they did not have a responsibility to re-house them as the young person had voluntarily left their accommodation and become intentionally homeless. In some cases this could place the young person at risk.

10.11 One local housing authority identified an issue with 'missing' 12 – 16 year olds. These young people stayed with friends during their early teens and were not in contact with social services or education. When they were 16 years they approached the council and asked to be housed.

10.12 Private landlords were said to be less keen to accommodate younger offenders both because of the lower Housing Benefit rates and because they often had greater support needs.

Young offenders aged up to 21 years

10.13 When discussing the needs of those aged 16 – 18 years, many of the practitioners identified specific needs of young people up to 21 year old rather than just 18 years. These mainly related to their education and personal development. It was pointed out that young people still needed to develop life skills and needed more structure than older people. The young people were no longer automatically vulnerable due to their age, but still needed considerable support.

10.14 Under the Children Leaving Care Act 2000, if an offender is a care leaver, social services have a responsibility for them up to at least 21 years of age. The Pathway Plan, which is developed by social services with the young person

from the age of 16 years, includes accommodation and is reviewed every six months. Social Services have supported lodgings for some care leavers but places are limited. In some cases, social services provide rent in advance, rent guarantees and top up payments.

Conclusions

- There were a higher proportion of girls / young women and people of black and minority ethnic origin amongst 16 – 18 year old offenders compared with adult offenders.
- The percentage who had committed offences of violence against the person was similar to older offenders.
- The proportion of young people aged 16 to 18 years who were NFA and who had accommodation issues associated with offending were higher than for adult offenders.
- Young offenders aged 16 – 18 years had complex needs: a third had mental health problems, substance misuse problems or had been identified as having special educational needs.
- A significant proportion of 16 to 18 year old offenders were Schedule 1 offenders under the Children and Young Persons Act 1933.
- Young offenders aged 16 – 18 years had fewer accommodation options available to them due to legislation and hostel accommodation policies and practices.
- Young offenders aged 16 – 18 years, and to some extent those aged up to 21 years, needed more care and support than older offenders.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- Ways to increase the availability of different types of accommodation for 16 – 18 year olds are explored. This needs to include the particular needs of those on remand, young Schedule 1 offenders and those with mental health and substance misuse problems.

Section Eleven

Older Offenders

11.1 Only 1% of the probation caseload was 65 years and over, with a further 1% aged between 60 and 64 years. All but one person aged 65 and over was male. The majority of offences committed by this group were sex offences or offences of violence against the person. This reduced the availability of accommodation for older offenders.

Offenders aged 65 years and over

From the Norfolk Probation Area caseload data:

- 11% were NFA
- 21% had significant accommodation problems
- 16% had accommodation issues linked with offending

11.2 The percentage, aged 65 years and over, that was NFA was particularly high (11%) and a fifth had significant accommodation problems. However the proportion with accommodation, substance misuse or emotional well-being issues linked to offending was lower than for other adult offenders.

11.3 In the interviews there were few comments about older people. Some of the accommodation providers have an upper age limit so do not come into contact with older offenders. Hostels upper age limits further restrict the number of places where those of 65 and over can be accommodated.

11.4 Some older people may need accommodation that takes into account their decreased mobility. They may need sheltered housing or additional health and social support. Where older offenders had health problems, they were more likely to be assessed as 'vulnerable' under the homelessness legislation or given priority on the Housing Register. The ability of social housing providers to supply suitable accommodation will depend on their plans to meet the needs of an ageing population.

11.5 A lifer unit for older people has recently been established in Norwich prison. This is a national resource for older people who have health needs that cannot be catered for in general prison accommodation. Offenders in this unit are unlikely to need accommodation in the community.

Conclusions

- Hostel upper age limits restrict the number of places available for offenders aged 65 years and over.
- The types of offences committed by older people further restrict the number of hostels places available to them.

Recommendations for older offenders

It is recommended that:

- Hostel providers consider whether their upper age limits are always necessary.
- Local authorities should give careful consideration to older offenders with regard to their age, health and institutional background when assessing vulnerability under the homelessness legislation.

Section Twelve

Offenders with Disabilities

'We often get people with a learning difficulty. They are not bad enough for services from social services department but they are bad enough for it to cause them a challenge.' (practitioner)

Offenders with learning difficulties

12.1 When the subject of learning difficulty was introduced in the interviews there was often a discussion about what this meant. For some this could be poor education and dyslexia, for others it was a more profound disability that would require specialist provision. Within OASys there is a section that deals with education, training and employability. This includes questions on whether people have literacy / numeracy problems and whether people have learning difficulties.

Offenders with learning difficulties

From the Norfolk Probation Area caseload:

- 36% had problems with literacy and numeracy
- 17% had learning difficulties
- 26% had education, training and employability issues linked to offending

12.2 Information from the Norfolk Probation Area OASys database revealed that a third had problems with literacy and numeracy, including 12% who had 'significant' problems. Seventeen percent had learning difficulties (defined as: learning or behavioural problems or attended a special school).

12.3 Those with 'some' numeracy and literacy problems had more accommodation problems than those with 'significant' numeracy and literacy problems, and were more likely to be NFA (9% and 3% respectively). Those with 'some' learning difficulties were more likely to have accommodation linked to offending than those with 'significant' learning difficulties (30% and 22% respectively). This suggests that those with 'some' numeracy and literacy problems or 'some' learning difficulties have more unmet accommodation needs than those with 'significant' problems.

Offenders with learning difficulties

From the Norfolk YOT assessments:

- 41% had Special Educational Needs identified
- 24% had a Special Educational Needs Statement

12.4 The YOT data revealed that 41% of offenders had had Special Educational Needs identified and 24% had had a Special Educational Needs Statement

issued. The latter group were the most likely to have their living arrangements associated with their offending (42%).

12.5 Most of the practitioners interviewed confirmed that offenders often had literacy and numeracy difficulties. This was evidenced to them by the number of offenders who required help in filling out forms.

'There is again a problem over diagnosis. Lack of communications skills is one of the reasons that they cannot behave normally.' (practitioner)

12.6 It was pointed out that some people with a learning difficulty found it hard to communicate and easily became frustrated. If they were aggressive to housing staff this was not tolerated. They therefore benefited from having support workers present to help them at housing interviews.

12.7 Some of the practitioners interviewed suggested that those with a moderate to severe learning difficulty usually received enough support not to offend but those with a mild to moderate learning difficulty, who were not supported, were more likely to offend. Issues around the thresholds for services, especially from social services who have a threshold of an IQ of 70, were identified. It was suggested that the group of people with an IQ of 70 to 75 was quite large.

'There will always be the need for supported housing especially for those people with severe mental health problems or learning difficulties that may never be able to maintain a tenancy without additional support.' (practitioner)

12.8 There is specialist provision in registered care homes for offenders with a moderate to severe learning difficulty. Other hostels were wary of taking offenders with learning difficulties because they felt that they did not have the facilities or skills to give the person the support that they needed. Supporting People has made a significant change in the support available especially for those with a mild to moderate learning difficulty. Some offenders with a learning difficulty need long term supported housing to function independently.

Broadland Clinic

12.9 The Broadland Clinic provides a 20 bed regional medium secure unit for offenders with a learning difficulty detained under the Mental Health Act. There is also a pre-discharge house of four beds. Like the NORVIC Clinic, people go to the Broadland Clinic direct from the courts or from more secure units as part of their preparation for release. Staff at the clinic build links with social services, care providers and probation from the beginning of people's detention in order to plan for their release. Some of their patients have an IQ of 70 to 80. In the community, the learning difficulty teams' eligibility criteria for services is an IQ of 70 and below. Potentially, patients from the Broadland Clinic could fall between the gap between the two thresholds when they are released. Some of the offenders in the Broadland Clinic had been involved with substance misuse, which was linked to their offending.

12.10 On release, people will usually go to a staffed residential unit before moving on to independent living. Many of these are privately run specialist provision. Some offenders return to live with their families. The Broadland Clinic is not currently funded to provide support to people after release. It was suggested that if they did have an outreach facility, this would provide continuity of support and could prevent some re-admissions.

12.11 Some patients from outside the county are referred to the Broadland Clinic for specialist treatment and wish to remain in Norfolk upon discharge. This places an additional burden on local resources.

Complex needs

12.12 Learning difficulty also can be part of a dual diagnosis with mental health, substance misuse or older age. It was suggested that some people could fall between the mental health and learning difficulty services and do not receive any support.

Offenders with a physical disability

12.13 Offenders with a physical disability were not on the original list of specific groups to be looked at in the research, however a number of the people interviewed mentioned their needs. The VHG (formerly the Voluntary Hostels Group) Directory identifies whether or not hostels have disabled facilities.

12.14 Some accommodation providers were not able to take anyone, or only a limited number of people, with a physical disability. The need for more places for people with a physical disability was identified. From October 2004, all public buildings have to consider, and wherever possible provide, disabled access under the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. This will affect both practitioners and advisers.

Conclusions

- The research confirmed that offenders often had literacy and numeracy difficulties and a smaller proportion had learning difficulties and/or special educational needs.
- Those with 'some' numeracy and literacy problems or 'some' learning difficulties appeared to have more unmet accommodation needs than those with 'significant' problems.
- The need to help offenders with literacy and numeracy difficulties and / or learning difficulties with completing forms was identified.
- Some of this group of offenders also benefit from someone accompanying them to interviews with housing and other agencies.
- The Broadland Clinic is not currently funded to provide support to people after release.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- Use is made of simplified tenancy agreements such as the pictorial tenancy agreement produced by the National Housing Federation.
- The thresholds for offenders in the community with a learning difficulty and the support needs of offenders with a 'mild to moderate' learning difficulty are reviewed.
- Consideration is given to funding an outreach service to provide continued support to Broadland Clinic patients after release.
- Accommodation providers review their facilities for people with a physical disability in line with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Section Thirteen

Offenders Convicted of Particular Offences

‘Those who are traditionally difficult to house will always be difficult to house – violent, dangerous people and arsonists in particular.’ (practitioner)

Offenders convicted of offences related to domestic violence

13.1 In 2003/4, there were 8,282 recorded incidents of domestic violence in Norfolk (figures supplied by Norfolk Constabulary). A third of these (2,764) were recorded as involving alcohol use by the perpetrator. Information was not provided on either the number of cases that led to prosecution and conviction nor the number of offenders involved. No specific data on domestic violence offenders were obtained from the Norfolk Probation Area or the Norfolk YOT.

‘If they are going out on licence there are issues about the victim and where the victim lives. They can lose their home if they are not allowed to return. If they do leave the area they are then able to re-offend in a new area, often where their history is not known. Going to live with a partner whom they had not lived with before would be a risk issue. These are all issues that have to be taken into account.’ (practitioner)

13.2 In the prison system offenders involved in offences related to domestic violence tend to be seen by probation. A MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements) meeting might be held before they are released to assess risks and any housing restrictions.

13.3 Some accommodation advice agencies would offer advice to either the offender or the victim but not both, depending on who contacted them first.

‘If someone receives a custodial sentence they can go back to the same address on their release unless it is a part of their licence conditions that they cannot. When children are involved, an offender could go back to the same address. Sometimes there can be a certain amount of emotional blackmail on the victim to have them back.’ (practitioner)

13.4 Domestic violence can limit the accommodation options available to the offender. In some cases, domestic violence offenders could lose their tenancy and might have to move areas. Consequently, they might have difficulty obtaining social housing as they could be regarded as intentionally homeless and might have no connection with the new local area. In other cases, not being allowed to go back to their old residence would increase their ability to be housed away from their usual place of residence by a local housing authority. In some cases the offender might return home, but there might be risks related to re-offending and child protection.

13.5 Some hostels said that if a person had been convicted of domestic violence it would prevent them from housing any women. Others said that it was rare for domestic violence offences to be the reason why people were housed with them, but it could be part of their history. It was pointed out that some offenders may have been victims of domestic violence as children and some may have been victims as adults, especially women.

Offenders convicted of arson

13.6 Offenders who commit arson were not on the original list of specific groups to be looked at in the research, however specific issues related to accommodating them were mentioned by a number of the people interviewed and they were therefore included in the research. Later interviews included a question on arsonists.

13.7 National research identified that the most common motives for arson were revenge attacks (19%), mental health problems (17%) and alcohol and drugs (17%). It also showed that 20% of arsonists prosecuted in the criminal courts were said to be suffering from mental health problems of varying severity (Arson Prevention Bureau, 1998). This emphasises the need to provide help and support to people with mental health and substance misuse problems, as already discussed. Difficulties associated with accommodating arsonists have been highlighted (Carlisle, 1996) and guidance is available for hostel managers on accommodating known or potential arsonists (Arson Prevention Bureau, 1998).

Offenders with a current conviction for arson

From the Norfolk Probation Area caseload:

- 1% had a current conviction for arson

Of those with a current conviction for arson:

- 16% were in a probation/bail hostel
- 5% were NFA
- 65% had significant accommodation problems
- 40% had accommodation linked to offending
- 91% had drugs issues linked to offending
- 78% had alcohol issues linked to offending
- 80% had emotional well-being issues linked to offending

13.8 An examination of the data on the Norfolk Probation Area caseload revealed that 1% of the offenders had a current conviction for arson. The data on accommodation indicated that they had considerable accommodation problems. The relationship of substance misuse and emotional well-being to their offending was particularly high.

Offenders with a current conviction for arson

From the Norfolk YOT assessments:

- 1% had a current conviction for arson

Of those with a current conviction for arson:

- 0% were NFA
- 50% were in accommodation that was not suitable
- 9% had living arrangements associated with offending
- 18% had substance misuse associated with offending
- 9% had mental health associated with offending

13.9 The Norfolk YOT data also revealed that 1% of the offenders had a current conviction for arson. Although no one was NFA, half were in accommodation that was not suitable. However living arrangements, substance misuse and mental health issues associated with offending were low compared with other offenders assessed by the Norfolk YOT.

13.10 Although offenders with a current conviction for arson are not a large group, they do pose particular problems for practitioners and it can therefore be difficult to find accommodation for them. A number of the hostels stated that they would not accept known arsonists. They cited issues related to insurance and the safety of staff and residents. Other hostels said that insurance is not always a problem and it would be possible to arrange special insurance cover for a limited period, whilst a known arsonist was in residence.

13.11 The local authorities also identified difficulties in finding suitable temporary accommodation for those convicted of arson as they have a duty of care for other people sharing the accommodation.

Offenders convicted of Schedule 1 offences and sex offenders

13.12 Schedule 1 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 lists a wide range of offences against children and young people under 18 years of age. These are generally referred to as Schedule 1 offences, they include sex offences and other offences of maltreatment, cruelty, neglect and violence against children and young people. Thus, a person who when they were younger had a fight in the playground with a young person under 16 years, could be classified as a Schedule 1 offender. This status is normally for life and local authorities usually keep a register of Schedule 1 offenders in their area. This process is separate from the requirements under Schedule 1 of the Sex Offenders Act 1997, which requires sex offenders to register with the police. The resulting sex offenders register lists all those who have committed sex offences against children, young people and adults. Offenders are not necessarily kept on this register for life.

13.13 Schedule 1 offenders under the Children and Young Persons Act 1933, and sex offenders, were not on the original list of specific groups to be looked at in the research, however issues related to accommodating them were mentioned by a number of the people interviewed and they were therefore

included in the research. Later interviews included a specific question on Schedule 1 offenders and sex offenders. Difficulties associated with accommodating sex offenders have been highlighted in earlier research (Carlisle, 1996).

13.14 The Norfolk Probation Area caseload statistics showed that the age profile of the sex offenders on probation caseloads was considerably older than for other offenders. Accommodation, drug misuse, alcohol misuse and emotional well-being issues linked to offending were lower than for the general caseload. No figures were provided on the number of Schedule 1 offenders under the Children and Young Persons Act 1933.

13.15 The Norfolk YOT statistics showed there were Schedule 1 offenders under the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 but very few had current convictions for sex offences or were on the sex offenders register. This highlights the need to distinguish between different types of Schedule 1 offences. At a national level, Nacro has highlighted some of the issues associated with children and young people convicted of non sexual Schedule 1 offences (Nacro, 2003f).

13.16 Living arrangements, mental health issues and substance misuse issues associated with offending were higher for the Schedule 1 offenders (under the Children and Young Persons Act 1933) than for the total offenders assessed by the Norfolk YOT.

‘We will look at the circumstances. We are aware that our neighbours have children, we look at what the situation is in each case. We look at this risk and see if it will be the good of the whole. There is not a blanket policy.’
(practitioner)

13.17 Issues associated with accommodating both Schedule 1 offenders and sex offenders were discussed in the interviews with practitioners. A number of the hostels stated that they would not accept referrals from Schedule 1 offenders and/or known sex offenders. Some had a policy of not accommodating any Schedule 1 offenders and did not distinguish between sexual and non sexual offences. Sometimes this was because they had residents under 18 years. Some hostels said that they would take Schedule 1 offenders and/or sex offenders, but each case would be individually assessed. In some cases there may have been a confusion over which Schedule 1 offences were being referred to (those under the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 or those under the Sex Offenders Act 1997).

13.18 The local authorities stated that finding suitable accommodation for sex offenders could be a challenge as the number of suitable properties available was restricted. The risk assessment would include consideration of the risk of re-offending and the risk of them becoming a victim of an offence themselves.

Conclusions

- A particularly high proportion of offenders with a current conviction for arson had substance misuse and emotional well-being issues linked to their offending behaviour.
- Accommodation options available to offenders with offences related to domestic violence, arson or sex offences and Schedule 1 offenders are limited. This may be due to restrictions placed on them on release from prison, criteria for access to hostels or criteria for obtaining social housing.
- Offenders with a current conviction for arson or sex offences posed particular problems for accommodation providers. These related to safety of the individual, other residents and the premises.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- The concept of Schedule 1 offenders, under the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 and Schedule 1 offenders under the Sex Offenders Act 1997, is unpacked to distinguish between sex offenders and non sex offenders.
- Training is provided for practitioners on Schedule 1 offences.
- Accommodation providers revisit their exclusion policies, including their policies on offenders convicted of arson or sexual offences and Schedule 1 offenders.
- Accommodation providers review their Health and Safety policies and training to protect staff and residents.
- Local authority social housing providers consider the need to accommodate those convicted of arson and sex offenders when expanding their temporary and permanent accommodation resources.

Section Fourteen

Offenders returning to Norfolk on release from prison outside the county

14.1 A joint thematic review by Her Majesty's Inspectorates of Prisons and Probation identified the need for 'the prison service to pay much more attention to locating prisoners close to home, at least towards the end of their sentence, so that links can be retained or built up with family, probation and other services, and accommodation and employment opportunities maximised. We recognise, of course, the difficulty faced by the prison service, given that it has no control over the number of prisoners sent by the courts.' (Her Majesty's Inspectorates of Prisons and Probation, 2001).

14.2 Not all prisoners from Norfolk are released from Norfolk prisons and all the women's prisons are outside the county. There is no routine recording of the numbers involved. Most offenders in prison outside of Norfolk rely on advisers in the prisons they are in. Housing advisers in prisons outside of Norfolk are likely to have less knowledge of accommodation provision in the county than those based in Norfolk.

14.3 The sources of support provided vary across the country. In the eastern region, the prisons have a variety of housing advisers (for further details see Section Fifteen). Offenders who will be supervised by probation on release would normally be referred to their home probation officer. These offenders may then be referred to Project 91.

14.4 A few agencies and individuals do visit offenders in prisons outside of Norfolk. For example, the Norfolk Alcohol and Drug Services of the Norfolk and Waveney Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust visit offenders all over the country to assess them for residential rehabilitation places. The mental health social worker in the Norwich Probation SPART is also able see people outside of Norfolk prior to release.

14.5 People released from out of county may not arrive back in Norfolk until late in the day when direct access hostels may be full. Other hostels often require an interview or assessment before they will accept an application. Some of the hostel providers said that they could not remember a person from a prison outside Norfolk coming to them.

14.6 As already stated, someone returning to Norfolk would have to show a local connection to be eligible for social housing. Alternatively, if they have lost all their connections with any local area, they can then present as homeless to any local housing authority.

Conclusions

- There is no routine recording of the numbers of offenders from Norfolk who are released from prisons outside the county.
- All women offenders are in prisons outside of Norfolk
- Offenders in prison outside of Norfolk have less access to information about accommodation available in Norfolk.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- Prior to release, the prison service considers moving prisoners to the closest prison to where they plan to live in order to facilitate finding accommodation.

Section Fifteen

Accommodation Advice for Norfolk Offenders

'There are problems for short term prisoners, especially revolving door prisoners, with mental health and drugs and alcohol problems and poor record with landlords. They have been everywhere and been evicted – all the doors are closed. There is no one we can make a referral to.' (practitioner)

15.1 A wide range of agencies provide accommodation advice to offenders. Some are based in the prison and offer a service to prisoners only. Others are based in the community and offer a service to both prisoners and offenders in the community.

Accommodation advice services within prisons

15.2 Not all offenders who normally live in Norfolk are imprisoned in or are released from Norfolk or Eastern Region prisons. Within the prison service, each prison has a governor responsible for resettlement and a range of services are provided within the prisons, which address prisoners' accommodation issues. Across the Eastern Region, the focus for accommodation advice has moved to the Nacro workers. In addition, Norfolk YMCA, the Foundation Training Company, Probation and CARATS also provide accommodation advice. A regional initiative by Nacro is funded by the prison service. In ten of the prisons across the Eastern region, there are Nacro workers who address accommodation issues with prisoners. This initiative is currently funded until March 2005. There is also Prison Service Plus, a joint initiative by the prison service, Nacro and SOVA (Supporting Others through Volunteer Action), which addresses accommodation and employment issues on release. It operates in three prisons in the Eastern region including HMP Wayland. Nacro also have a worker in the CARATS team in 2 prisons. In some prisons there is input from the chaplaincy.

15.3 High risk offenders receive specific attention through the MAPPA. Probation plays a key role in identifying which offenders are likely to pose a risk to the public on release and their associated accommodation issues. They identify any offenders who need to be discussed at the Inter Departmental Risk Management Team in the prison, which has been operating since April 2004. This team assesses whether they need to refer the offenders to the MAPPP (Multi Agency Public Protection Panel), which considers where high risk or dangerous prisoners can be accommodated taking into consideration any need for protection of the public.

15.4 A summary of the agencies that provide advice and support on accommodation issues in HMP/YOI Norwich and HMP Wayland are listed in Box 15.1 and Box 15.2. This shows that there is a range of agencies providing accommodation advice in the two prisons. Some of it is targeted at specific groups, such as those with substance misuse problems. Therefore, certain groups of prisoners, such as prisoners on remand, those on short sentences and those without specialist needs, are less likely to receive accommodation

advice. Some of the community based advice services also visit the prisons (see Box 15.3).

'The new workers in the prisons are to be welcomed as they are addressing the resettlement needs of prisoners. They come on the basis of ESF funding or government money. There is a concern as to what happens when or if that money dries up.' (practitioner)

15.5 Staff in the prisons generally considered that the accommodation related support provided to prisoners was better than in the past. However they expressed concern about the uncertain long term funding of some initiatives. The services are funded through a variety of sources, some of which are short term. An example of what might happen is provided by the experiences of the Anglia Care Trust Links Project in HMP/YOI Norwich, which was funded by the National Lottery. Their work included assisting prisoners to retain or terminate tenancies and helping them manage their debts and finances during and after their sentences. The project received nearly 80 referrals a month and managed the tenancies of 50% of those prisoners with no added debt. The project started in 1998 but, when the funding ran out in March 2002, the project had to be suspended (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002).

15.6 HMP Holloway, a women's prison that takes some women offenders from Norfolk, has a different support system. Nacro and the Foundation Training Company do not have a presence in the prison. There is a Housing Manager, employed by the prison, who provides a direct service to women prisoners. The Housing Manager is supported by Shelter and Women in Prison who visit regularly. CARATS is also involved with finding accommodation for substance misusers.

'There are specific challenges in that the prison does not always understand the provision in the community.' (practitioner)

15.7 A number of general communication issues were identified:

- A lack of communication between the accommodation advisers within the prison and with the outside agencies.
- Difficulties for outside agencies in telephoning some prisons if they do not have a direct line number.
- Difficulties for prisoners in communicating with practitioners outside of the prison.

15.8 Staff at the NORVIC Clinic and the Broadland Clinic, medium high secure units for people with mental health problems and learning disabilities respectively, organise accommodation for their patients on release.

Accommodation advice services within the community

‘There is a need for councils to come to the prison 28 days prior to the release date to assess the eligibility of the person. They will then see if they are homeless or not and be able to prioritise the need.’ (practitioner)

15.9 The Homelessness Act 2002 places a general duty on housing authorities to ensure that advice and information about homelessness and preventing homelessness is available to everyone in their district free of charge. The advice must be available not only on housing options but also on the broader range of factors that contribute to homelessness such as social security benefits, tenancy support services, budgeting as well as signposting to other specialist services. In some areas, the housing authority has contracted out this service. Norwich City Council has recently funded a prison link worker based with Project 91 (run by Norfolk Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders) to provide accommodation advice to prisoners from HMP/YOI Norwich. However, other local housing authorities in Norfolk do not appear to provide advice to offenders whilst they are in prison.

15.10 There are a range of other agencies that provide accommodation related support and advice to offenders, both prisoners and those on community sentences. These are summarised in Box 15.3. Several advisers reported that demand for accommodation exceeded supply, and agencies were competing to find places. No one suggested that there are insufficient agencies providing advice and support on accommodation for offenders in Norfolk, although some individual agencies said that they could expand their services. The main shortage identified was the provision of suitable accommodation.

‘We need a central database for us to be able to tap into to know how to get into certain addresses or hostels.’ (practitioner)

15.11 In Norfolk, the VHG Homelessness Directory provides a useful resource which details accommodation for homeless people and accommodation providing specialist support. However, as it is a paper document, it does not provide any information on current vacancies. In order to find a place for an offender in hostel accommodation, an accommodation adviser or the offender often have to make many telephone calls to find where there is a vacancy. The Resource Information Service, who assisted the VHG in producing the Norfolk Homelessness Directory, also operates a web based directory. For some areas, including London, they provide information on current vacancies. Accommodation advisers and offenders seeking accommodation can therefore find out where accommodation is available. The advantage of this for hostels is that they do not receive so many telephone enquiries when there are no places available.

'If it was a Monday I might go to the YMCA.' (offender)

'Project 91 for education, accommodation and catering.' (offender)

15.12 The focus group participants described how they had had found out about their current accommodation. They had used a variety of sources including:

- Prison workers
- Staff at direct access hostels
- Accommodation advice agencies, including Project 91
- Key workers from drug agencies
- Probation
- Police
- By word of mouth.

15.13 In order to assess offenders' knowledge of sources of advice and which ones they would consider approaching, the focus group participants were asked where they would go for assistance if they needed to find a place to live in the next week. Some of the participants found this an unsettling question. They became agitated and could not answer the question. This demonstrated the importance of the support they were currently receiving especially as several participants said they would ask the key worker in their existing accommodation. Each person could only think of one or two places to go to but between them they covered a range of possible sources of advice. They included other hostels, a specialist mental health support agency, other specialist support and advice agencies, the District Council and the CAB. This underlines the importance of having a variety of sources of advice.

Conclusions

- Accommodation advice services within the prisons have increased in recent years. However, they have developed on an ad hoc basis in response to various time limited funding opportunities and their long term future is uncertain.
- There is more support available for specific groups of prisoners such as drug users. However, some prisoners still do not receive sufficient support on entering prison and in preparation for leaving prison to maintain or obtain accommodation. The extent to which this is due to the lack of suitable accommodation for offenders is not known.
- The amount of specialist training and support provided to accommodation advisers within the prisons was not clear.
- Within the community, there are a variety of agencies that assist offenders with finding accommodation. Key workers in hostels and other supported accommodation are also an important source of advice on future accommodation options.
- Offenders were not well informed about where they could go to for advice.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- The funding for accommodation advice services in Norfolk prisons is developed on a secure financial footing.
- The staff providing accommodation advice services in prisons receive specialist training in housing needs and homelessness legislation.
- There is better co-ordination between the different accommodation advice agencies within the prison and in the community.
- The possibility of the Norfolk Homelessness Directory being online is explored, in consultation with the Resource Information Service.
- The possibility of the Norfolk Homelessness Directory provide information on current vacancies online is also explored, in consultation with the Resource Information Service.

Prison based accommodation advice services in Norfolk

Box 15.1 Agencies providing advice/support on accommodation in HMP/YOI Norwich

- Resettlement staff employed directly by the prison have overall responsibility for coordinating resettlement functions in the prison.
- Probation staff receive enquires about accommodation and refer prisoners to the agencies within and outside the prison that are best placed to deal with them. Probation staff in prison are contacted directly by field probation staff and other agencies in the community. Probation staff also play a key role in identifying offenders who are likely to pose a risk on release.
- A Nacro worker, based in the adult prison, is part of a larger project covering the Eastern region, which is managed by Nacro and funded by the prison service. The post is currently funded until March 2005.

- Two workers, who work with prolific offenders with substance misuse problems, as part of the Link Worker Resettlement Scheme. It is funded by the Norfolk CDRPs and the Norfolk DAAT for two years and is managed by ADAPT. The funding is due to end December 2004.
- The CARATS team leader whose job includes resettlement work. The CARATS team works with people with substance misuse problems. The resettlement post is managed by ADAPT and is funded by the lottery for three years which was scheduled to finish in September 2004.
- A member of the Foundation Training Company provides accommodation support alongside a five week pre-release course.
- A YMCA employee based in the YOI (Young Offender Institution). The post was originally funded through European Social Fund money by Connexions and the prison service. Since 2003, this funding was taken on by Connexions. It is now a permanent project, with funding for five years.
- A Citizens Advice Bureau worker is based in the prison three days a week. The worker is employed by the Citizens Advice Bureau and HMP/YOI Norwich funds the work in the prison.
- In addition, following referrals from agencies (predominantly CARATS), Anglia Care Trust interviews offenders with Suffolk links with a view to establishing accommodation in Suffolk.

Box 15.2. Agencies providing advice/support on accommodation in HMP Wayland

- Resettlement staff employed directly by the prison have overall responsibility for coordinating resettlement functions in the prison.
- The prison Resettlement Manager sees all prisoners due for discharge. The manager does not normally directly advise prisoners on accommodation, but will do so if a prisoner arrives with too short a time before release to access Prison Service Plus or get onto the Foundation Training Company course. S/he will also see prisoners who are considered too dangerous to be seen by civilian staff.
- Probation staff receive enquires about accommodation and refer prisoners to the agencies within and outside the prison that are best placed to deal with them. Probation staff in prison are contacted directly by field probation staff and other agencies in the community. Probation staff also play a key role in identifying offenders who are likely to pose a risk on release.
- A Nacro housing worker. The worker is part of a larger project covering the Eastern region, which is managed by Nacro and funded by the prison service. The post is currently funded until March 2005.
- A Nacro housing worker who is part of Prison Service Plus. This project is funded by Nacro for the accommodation work and by SOVA for the employment and training work. It is funded by European Social Fund money and the long term funding is uncertain
- A Nacro housing worker attached to the Foundation Training Company which provides a 5 week pre-release course.
- The CARATS team works with people with substance misuse problems. They only work on accommodation issues in relation to placing people in substance misuse residential rehabilitation programmes.
- Information is also available through two recently established drop in centres. These are run by prisoners themselves.

Community based accommodation advice services for offenders in Norfolk

Box 15.3. Agencies providing advice/support on accommodation in Norfolk

These include:

- Project 91, managed by Norfolk ACRO, and working in partnership with Norfolk Probation Area. It offers advice and information on accommodation, employment and training for offenders. It operates in Norwich, Thetford and Great Yarmouth. The staff also visit prisons across the region. Their staff include a prison link worker funded by Norwich City Council to provide support and advice to prisoners in HMP/YOI Norwich.
- With the exception of the King's Lynn team, Norfolk Probation Area staff tend to refer offenders seeking accommodation to Project 91.
- Norfolk YOT has an accommodation officer for Norfolk who liaises with housing providers and housing departments across the county.
- The Matthew Project manages the Arrest Referral Scheme, which is funded by the Norfolk DAAT. It sees people with substance misuse problems whilst they are in police custody.
- Three workers, who work with prolific offenders with substance misuse problems, as part of the Link Worker Resettlement Scheme. They are based in Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn and Cromer in North Norfolk, The Scheme is funded by the Norfolk CDRPs and the Norfolk DAAT for two years and is managed by ADAPT. The funding is due to end December 2004.
- CAPS (Contact, Assessment and Prevention Service) managed by St Martin's Housing Trust, provides accommodation advice and support to homeless people including offenders in Norwich and HMP/YOI Norwich.
- Shelter provides accommodation advice to the general public, including offenders.
- NORCAS Homelessness Outreach Team provides accommodation advice and support to substance misusers.
- The Salvation Army visits offenders in prison and provides some accommodation advice at the ARC drop in centre in Norwich. There is also a soup run for those who are roofless.
- Mancroft Advice Project provides accommodation advice and other support to young people aged 11 to 25 years.
- The Magdalene Group provides support to sex workers in Norwich.
- The Matrix Project provides support to substance misusers, who are also sex workers, in Norwich.

Section Sixteen

Accommodation for Offenders in Norfolk

'A place to live is the answer to a lot of problems.' (offender)

Norfolk Supporting People Programme

16.1 The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister oversees the Supporting People Programme and allocates the Supporting People grant to Norfolk County Council (the Administering Authority). The Administering Authority is responsible for implementing the Supporting People Programme locally and contracts with providers who deliver housing related support services. The local Commissioning Body provides the strategic direction. It comprises an equal partnership between the Norfolk local authorities, health and the Norfolk Probation Area. The involvement of the Norfolk Probation Area is one way that the interest of offenders is kept on the agenda.

16.2 The annual Supporting People grant for Norfolk in 2004/5 was £17.1 million and is funding services for over 18,000 people countywide. Offenders and those at risk of re-offending have been identified as one of the first priority client groups within the draft Norfolk Supporting People Strategy. The priorities identified in the five year strategy 2005 – 2010 will be based on this and other research.

16.3 Norfolk Supporting People currently funds only a limited number of bed spaces for offenders. Only three Supporting People funded providers in Norfolk have identified offenders as their primary client group – St Edmunds Society, Orbit Housing Association and the House of Genesis. They provide 29 bed spaces, which include 11 bed spaces previously funded through the Probation Accommodation Grant. They are located in three of the seven District Council areas – Norwich, Broadland and Breckland.

16.4 As part of their Supporting People contract, four other agencies – Stonham Housing Association, St Matthews Housing, Herring House Trust and St Martins Housing Trust – provide accommodation targeted primarily at single homeless people. Some of these bed spaces are subject to an ongoing agreement to provide bed spaces for probation clients and this accounts for an additional 32 units of supported accommodation for offenders. Recent monitoring suggests that the quotas are not being met in some cases. It has also highlighted the difficulty in reserving bed spaces whilst maintaining satisfactory occupancy levels. Supporting People have concluded that these agreements need to be revised in the light of changes to the funding and contracting arrangements for the services concerned.

16.5 Further accommodation based support may be being accessed through other organisations who have offenders as a secondary client group. These providers have 150 bed spaces in total. Due to the complex needs of many offenders, they may be accessing other supported accommodation targeted at different client groups, for example people with a mental illness or those who misuse substances.

16.6 In addition, Supporting People fund 'floating support' services to vulnerable people regardless of their housing tenure.

Hostels for homeless people

16.7 The Norfolk Homelessness Directory contains 'comprehensive details of 782 bed spaces in 32 hostels and supported housing projects for homeless people and others requiring supported accommodation, including people with mental health, drug or alcohol problems, ex offenders, single parents and women escaping domestic violence' (VHG, 2003).

16.8 There are two direct access hostels in Norfolk – Bishopbridge House run by St Martins Housing Trust in Norwich and Bauleah House run by the Herring House Trust in Great Yarmouth. They accept self referrals, they do not operate waiting lists and they provide 24 hour cover. Bishopbridge House has ten direct access beds, plus 20 more move on accommodation beds. Bauleah House has 26 direct access beds, plus 19 more move on accommodation beds.

16.9 The main hostels in Norfolk for homeless people are detailed in Table 5.1. As can be seen from the table, each accommodation provider has their own criteria. There is less accommodation available for those under 18 years or over 40 years. Many accommodation providers have restrictions in relation to substance misusers and many exclude people with a history of violence or arson or who are Schedule 1 offenders. This may mean that they are not able to accommodate many offenders.

'Supporting People is good. It has made a real difference here. Because they have got the funding right we have been able to employ another worker.'
(practitioner)

16.10 Hostels that receive Supporting People funding are required to provide structured support plans for their service users. Some of the accommodation providers are quite small but this enables them to provide more personal support to people and to be flexible in meeting their needs.

16.11 In addition to the accommodation shown in the table, there is also a range of specialist accommodation, which provides accommodation for specific groups. These include the Great Yarmouth Young Women's Project for homeless young women and the Umbrella Housing Group, for single parent families aged 16 and over, who have social services support.

16.12 Merchants' Terrace run by the Purfleet Trust in King's Lynn is the only non private establishment that will accept people with acute drug and alcohol problems in the area. Some new provision has recently been opened in King's Lynn by NORCAS, but this is only available to people who have completed a drug detoxification and rehabilitation programme.

16.13 There is considerable provision for people with mental health problems, in both the public and private sector. However, most of these can only be accessed by people with severe and enduring mental health problems who are receiving formal support from health or social services. There is similar provision in both the public and private sector for those with a learning disability who are receiving formal support from health or social services.

'It is a shame that the old night shelter had to close. There are people who do not want to have a tenancy or are not capable of holding one and coping with the responsibility that it involves. The old night shelter was good at picking them up.' (practitioner)

16.14 The replacement of the old 'night shelter' in Norwich with a direct access hostel has in effect raised the 'bottom rung of the ladder' in terms of accommodation for homeless people in Norwich. There is a lack of accommodation for those who break the rules for one reason or another or for those whose lives are more chaotic. One proposed solution was a 'wet hostel', which provides very basic accommodation for people who would otherwise be roofless.

'There is need for more direct access accommodation and more hostels and more move on accommodation as well as the long term rental accommodation. People need a key worker or link worker that links all the suppliers.' (practitioner)

16.15 Many of the practitioners interviewed said that there was a need for more direct access beds. There is no direct access accommodation in Norfolk west of Norwich (in King's Lynn and West Norfolk and Breckland) and the direct access hostel in Great Yarmouth said that there was sufficient demand to open a second hostel in the area. The lack of appropriate hostel places for women and young offenders (16 – 18 years) was also commented on. Providers pointed out that some of their service users needed considerable support before they would be ready to move on. The hostel providers said that had difficulty with finding places for people who were ready to live more independently. This reduced turnover in the hostels and limited the number of places available to new people with higher support needs. This highlighted the need for more move on accommodation and independent social housing.

'Probation hostels have moved towards taking the more serious offenders. There are good reasons for this and it is appropriate but there is less provision for medium / low risk offenders.' (practitioner)

16.16 The role of the approved probation premises has changed in recent years. They now take more offenders on licence and fewer people on bail. The research identified the need for increased bail hostel accommodation so as to reduce the numbers held on remand.

'It is safe and you have keys to your own room.' (offender)

'This is the best place it is clean and well organised.' (offender)

'I would be lost without this place. They help you so much.' (offender)

16.17 Many of the focus group participants expressed a genuine gratitude for the hostels where they were now living. People in King's Lynn pointed out that they had to go into Norwich to find a direct access hostel. Great Yarmouth people said that there were very few places to go and there were a lot of homeless people in the town. People from Dereham expressed a strong desire to stay in the town. Other comments indicated that some of them would need considerable support before they were ready to move on to more independent living.

'You do not know how to run a flat.' (offender)

'It is hard and scary to live on your own in the city.' (offender)

'There is pressure that you don't want to fail again.' (offender)

Local authority / social housing

16.18 All local authority housing departments reviewed their allocation policies in 2003 and must introduce 'choice-based lettings' by 2010. Great Yarmouth and Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Councils have already introduced 'choice-based' lettings systems, but it is still too early to assess the impact of these new schemes on offenders.

16.19 Local authorities that have not already transferred their housing stock are required to carry out stock option appraisals. Where a stock transfer has taken place, the responsibility for assessing homelessness applications remains with the local housing authority.

'The [council] is not always consistent in its interpretation of the rules especially around vulnerable people and leaving prison and making themselves intentionally homeless.' (practitioner)

16.20 The research revealed that whether or not an individual offender was assessed as 'vulnerable' and / or in 'priority need', and therefore eligible for social housing, was variable within and across different authorities. Often release from prison was not sufficient for a person to be deemed 'vulnerable' and therefore eligible for housing. Other reasons for 'vulnerability' also had to be presented thus making it harder to find accommodation for those leaving prison.

16.21 While individuals in 'priority need' are awaiting the outcome of a homelessness application, the local authority has to provide them with temporary accommodation. Some local authorities use their own housing stock and housing association properties and hostels for this. Some District Councils temporarily house people out of their area because they do not have enough temporary accommodation themselves. It was suggested that some of the accommodation used was of a poor quality. This increased the applicants' vulnerability as they were on their own and out of their usual environment. There was also no check on whom else had been placed in the accommodation by another council. This could place offenders in a more vulnerable position.

'The councils have nothing. There is a nomination system. Some people have been re-housed. You have to have your name on the list. There can be up to six people though for the same flat.' (offender)

'You lose contact with the council when you are in prison. I was on the list for three years. Whenever I was offered a place I was in jail.' (offender)

'Money rent arrears can go back 10 years. They have to have proof that the debts are paid off before you can get a flat.' (offender)

16.22 Some of the focus group participants were well aware of the pressure on housing in their area and some of the local authority housing policies. They did not think that it would be easy for them to obtain social housing. Some people's application had been disrupted by prison sentences and rent arrears were seen as an additional barrier to obtaining a tenancy. Some felt no personal ownership of long outstanding debts.

16.23 The District Councils have identified a shortage of social housing for single people. Local housing authorities themselves are unable to build new properties. Some District Councils are therefore taking a broader view of 'planning gain' to increase social housing using Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Act, see Box 16.1 for further details.

Box 16.1

Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

'Section 106 Agreements can be used to add conditions to development where it is not appropriate to use a condition in the planning permission. They also enable the Local Authority to secure provision or improvement of existing infrastructure necessary to meet the needs of the occupiers or users of new development. This is done by way of land or finance contributions.

Section 106 Agreements may enhance the quality of development and enable proposals to go ahead which might otherwise be refused. Such Agreements should be relevant to planning, directly related to the proposed development and necessary to make it acceptable in land-use planning terms.'

Source: http://www.horsham.gov.uk/council_services/council_services_961.asp

The privately rented sector

'Housing Benefit is at a set rate. Bed and breakfast places will not take DSS but it is guaranteed money. Those that do are dives, they are often closed by health and safety people, raided by the police or you are broken into by the other people who live there.' (offender)

'I would like to move on to a flat but where are you going to find the deposit? For a flat it is £280, for a bed and breakfast it is £20.' (offender)

16.24 The rental rates for the privately rented sector are affected by changes in the wider housing market. It was suggested that some private landlords have taken the opportunity to cash in on the increasing housing prices and this has reduced the amount of property available for rent in the private sector. Many of the focus group participants felt that obtaining privately rented accommodation, other than poor quality bed and breakfast places, was out of their reach.

'There is a need for a damage fund. It is hard to get the money together for rent in advance plus a damage retainer. Often these people have to go for a crisis loan or a budget loan. Housing Benefit will only pay out for the rent in advance.' (practitioner)

16.25 A number of District Councils in Norfolk operate rent deposit schemes. Under the Smart Move Scheme, which operates in King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth, councils put up money for a deposit for privately rented accommodation. The private sector landlords receive money if there is any damage to the property. Tenants are encouraged to save money to get their own deposit so that they can move on. One of the accommodation providers who manage a rent deposit scheme said that they would welcome an expansion of the scheme and had private landlords who were interested in participating. In order to expand, more funding was needed for the floating support, which is an integral part of the scheme.

16.26 Figures from one of the rent deposit schemes showed that few of the tenants had been referred from a hostel. The rent deposit schemes were also not mentioned in the focus groups. This indicates that they may not be widely known about by those in hostel accommodation.

16.27 Opportunities for self build projects could also be explored. Although not suitable for everybody, not only do they provide accommodation for people at the end of the project, they also provide people with new skills and opportunities for employment and self development. Although it requires considerable commitment to participate in a self build project, most people taking part find it very worthwhile.

16.28 A number of housing issues that went beyond Norfolk were commented on.

‘Put simply, there is not enough affordable housing. The introduction of tenants’ Right to Buy has seen Councils’ housing stock diminish.’ (practitioner)

‘House prices remain out of reach of many would-be buyers. They in turn rent, which keeps private sector rents high and out of the reach of others who see ‘a council house’ as their best / only option.’ (practitioner)

Conclusions

- The Supporting People Programme currently funds only limited bed spaces specifically for offenders. Due to their complex needs, some offenders access other accommodation funded by Supporting People, which is targeted at different client groups.
- Many hostels for homeless people have restrictions on whom they will accept. This may mean that they are not able to accommodate some offenders.
- The ‘silting up’ of direct access and other hostels was partly attributed to the need for people to remain in a more supported environment for a substantial period of time and partly due to a shortage of move on accommodation.
- The research revealed that whether or not an individual offender was assessed as ‘vulnerable’ and / or in ‘priority need’, and therefore eligible for social housing, was variable within and across different authorities.
- The temporary housing used by local housing authorities could place homeless offenders seeking social housing in a more vulnerable position.
- The impact on offenders of the ‘choice based’ letting system for the allocation of social housing is not yet known.
- Rent deposit schemes can provide a route into privately rented accommodation.
- Other possible funding opportunities include creative use of Section 106 funding and self build projects.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- Supporting People review the need for more offender bed spaces, especially in the Great Yarmouth and King’s Lynn local authority areas.
- Providers of hostel accommodation review their eligibility and exclusion criteria to ensure that they are as inclusive as possible of offenders.
- The scope for expanding the provision of bail bed places within hostels is explored.
- The local housing authorities’ Homelessness Units review their interpretation of the legislation in relation to ‘vulnerability’ of offenders in line with new guidance due to be issued by the government.
- Local housing authorities review their practice of placing offenders in temporary accommodation away from the area where they will eventually live.

- Local housing authorities closely monitor the new choice based lettings schemes to ensure that they do not reduce the housing opportunities for offenders, particularly single people who are offenders.
- District Councils explore the possibility of using Section 106 funding to provide more social housing for single people.
- The operation of rent deposit schemes is monitored to ensure that they are available for offenders.
- The scope for expansion of rent deposit schemes is explored together with more advertising of the schemes to offenders.

Table 16.1 Summary of hostel accommodation for homeless people in Norfolk

Name of provider	Location	Age range	Gender	Type of Accom. + no. of beds		
				Hostel	Move on	Other
Direct access hostels						
Bishopbridge House, St Martins Housing Trust	Norwich	18+	♂+♀	10	20	
Bauleah House Herring House Trust	Great Yarmouth	18+	♂+♀	26	19	
Hostels for homeless people						
YMCA	Norwich	16-35	♂	90		
Hinde House, Orwell Housing	Norwich	16-40	♀	20	11	
Ripley Project, Stonham Housing Association	Norwich	16+	♂	12	8	
St Edmunds Society	Norwich	16-30	♂	13	5	
Archway Housing Project, Stonham Housing Association	Norwich	16-24	♀	8		
House of Genesis	Broadland	21-80	♂	4		
Merchants' Terrace, The Purfleet Trust	King's Lynn KL & WN	17+	♂+♀	18	3	
Barnabas House	King's Lynn KL & WN	16-30	♂+♀	18		
St James Lodge, Broadland Housing Association	King's Lynn KL & WN	16+	♂+♀			20 bedsits / flats
Wellington Road, Orbit Housing Association	Dereham Breckland	16-55	♂	7		
The Dawe Charitable Trust	Dereham Breckland	16+	♂+♀	8 Work with accomm. attached		
Wilkinson House, Stonham Housing Association	Wymondham South Norfolk	18+	♂	9		
Steven Newing House, Benjamin Foundation	Fakenham North Norfolk	16-25	♂+♀	11	4	
Winston Court, Benjamin Foundation	North Walsham North Norfolk	16-25	♂+♀	9		
Victoria House, Solo Housing	Diss South Norfolk	18+	♂	7		
St Matthew Housing	Across Norfolk	16+	♂+♀	245		

Table 16.1 Summary of hostel accommodation for homeless people in Norfolk (continued)

	Referral routes	Substance misusers	Take people with convictions for / history of:		
			Schedule 1	Arson	Violence
Direct access hostels					
Bishopbridge House, St Martins Housing Trust	Self + agencies	Yes	Individual assessment	Individual assessment	No
Bauleah House, Herring House Trust	Self + agencies	Yes	Yes	Not if aware	Yes
Hostels for homeless people					
YMCA	Self + agencies	No	No	No	No
Hinde House, Orwell Housing	Self + agencies	Yes	No	Individual assessment	Individual assessment
Ripley Project, Stonham Housing Association	Self + agencies	Yes	No	Individual assessment	Individual assessment
St Edmunds Society	Self + agencies	Yes	Yes, but not convicted rapists	No	Yes
Archway Housing Project, Stonham Housing Association	Self + agencies	Individual assessment	Not sex offenders	Individual assessment	Individual assessment
House of Genesis	Self + agencies	No	Individual assessment	Individual assessment	Individual assessment
Merchants' Terrace, The Purfleet Trust	Agencies only	Yes	Individual assessment	Individual assessment	Individual assessment
Barnabas House	Self + agencies	Not if acute	Not sex offenders	No	Not if serious
St James Lodge, Broadland Housing Association	KLWNBC only	No	No	No	No
Wellington Road, Orbit Housing Association	Self + agencies	Yes	Individual assessment	No	Individual assessment
The Dawe Charitable Trust	Self + agencies	Previous users only	Individual assessment	Individual assessment	Individual assessment
Wilkinson House, Stonham Housing Association	Self + agencies	Yes	Not sex offenders	No	Individual assessment
Steven Newing House, Benjamin Foundation	NN DC only	Not intravenous drug users	No	Individual assessment	Individual assessment
Winston Court, Benjamin Foundation	Self + agencies	Not intravenous drug users	No	Individual assessment	Individual assessment
Victoria House, Solo Housing	Self + agencies	Yes	Individual assessment	Individual assessment	Individual assessment
St Matthew Housing	Self + agencies	Only if on methodone	Individual assessment	Individual assessment	No

Note: All the accommodation providers also indicated that they were able to accept offenders subject to a Home Detention Curfew (also known as 'tagging').

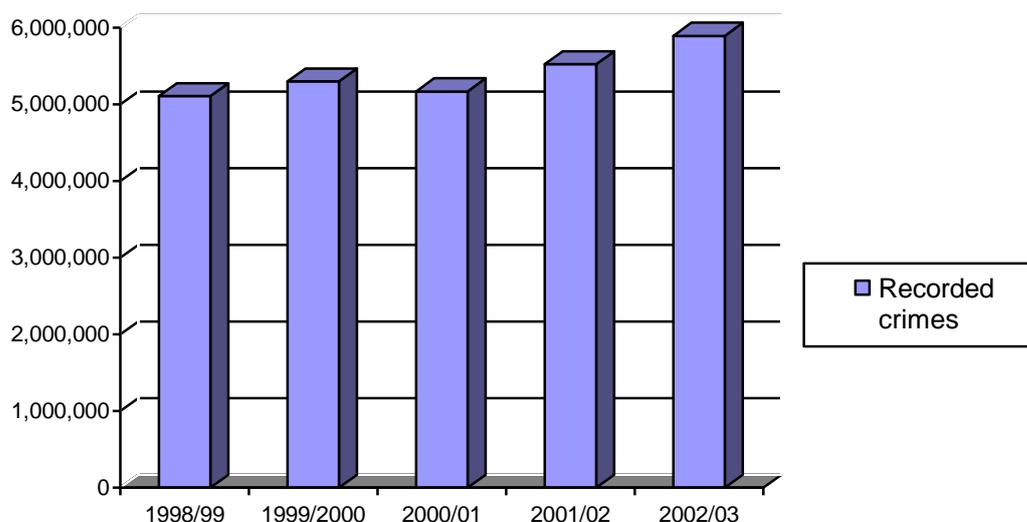
Section Seventeen Projections

17.1 The research brief included projecting the demand for accommodation for offenders over the next five years. This created some challenges due to a number of unknown factors. These included the lack of precise information on the future size of the offending and prison populations. This section sets out some of the factors that will influence future demand for and supply of housing and related support services. More detailed figures are provided in Appendix 4.

National crime figures

17.2 The recorded crime figures in England and Wales increased by 15% between 1998/9 and 2002/3 (see Chart 17.1). In contrast, data from the British Crime Survey indicated that crime increased between 1981 and 1995 but has decreased each year since then. It has therefore been suggested that the increase in recorded crime is due to more crimes being reported rather than an actual increase in crimes committed. (Thorpe and Wood, 2004). However, only reported crimes can lead to detection and conviction.

Chart 17.1 Number of recorded crimes in England and Wales between 1998/9 and 2002/3

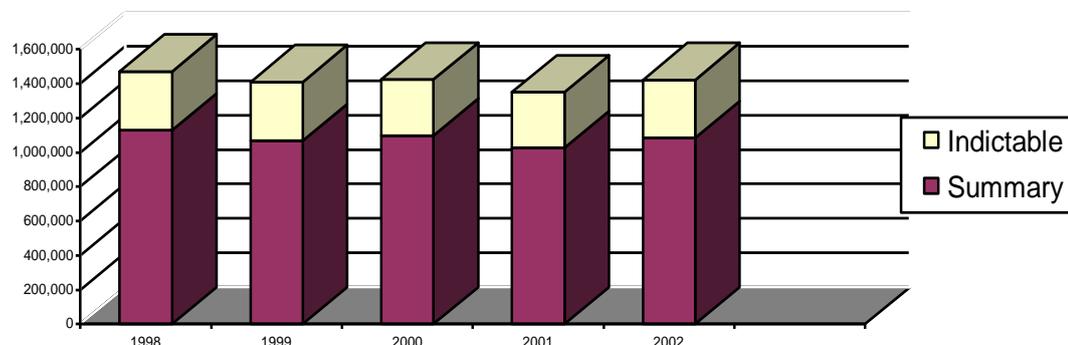


Source www.homeoffice.gov.uk

National conviction figures

17.3 The number of people found guilty of indictable and summary offences in England and Wales between 1998 and 2002 have fluctuated slightly (see Chart 17.2).

Chart 17.2 Number of people convicted of summary and indictable offences in England and Wales 1998 - 2002

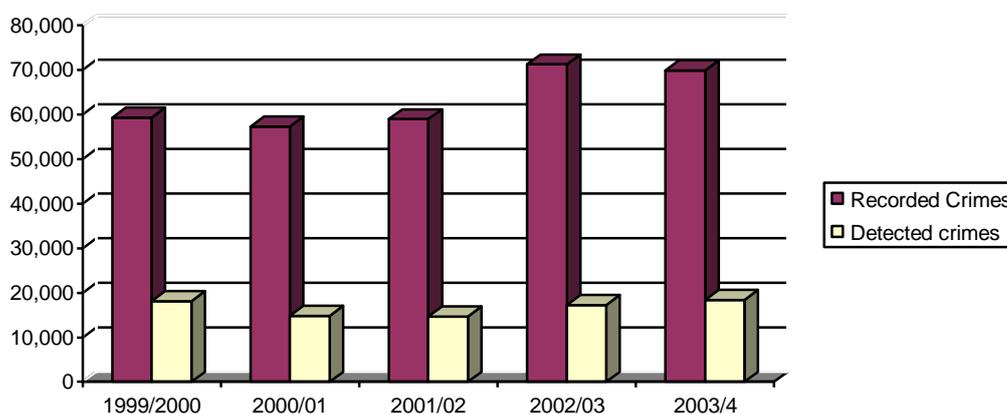


Source www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Norfolk recorded and detected crimes

17.4 The recorded crime figures in Norfolk increased by 18% between 1999/2000 and 2003/4 (see Chart 17.3). The percentage of crimes detected in Norfolk decreased between 1999/2000 and 2003/4 but, due to the increase in the number of crimes recorded, the number detected increased slightly.

Chart 17.3 Number of recorded and detected crimes in Norfolk between 1999/2000 and 2003/4



Source: Norfolk Constabulary Blue Book 2000/1 to 2003/4

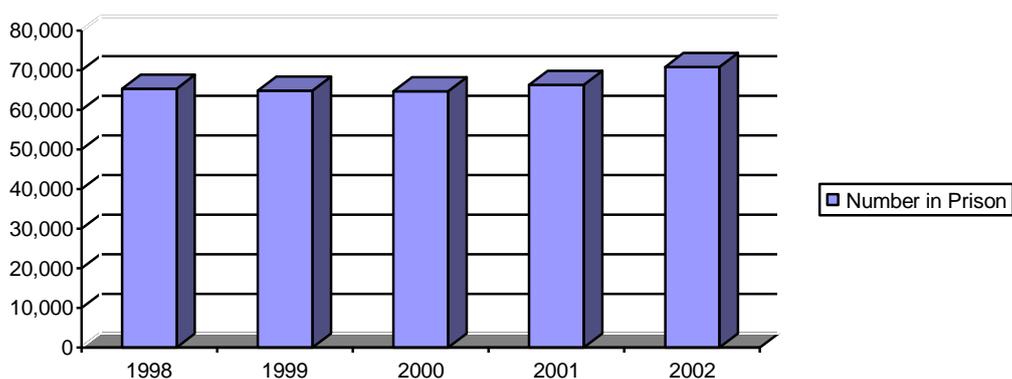
National prison projections

17.5 The Prison Service Bulletin for July 2004 puts the current prison population in England and Wales at 75,146. The total operational capacity is 78,324. The two male prisons, HMP/YOI Norwich and HMP Wayland, house 749 and 695 prisoners respectively. The nearest women's prison, HMP Edmunds Hill, housed 152 prisoners in July 2004. People from Norfolk can be placed in

prisons throughout the eastern region and further away. This is especially true for women prisoners as there are fewer prisons for women.

17.6 Looking at the national figures for those in prison, the figures increased from 65,298 in 1998 to 70,861 in 2002, an increase of 9% (see Chart 17.4). A further calculation (based on the monthly prison figure for July 2004 and the average prison population figure for 2000) provides an increase of 16% over the last five years.

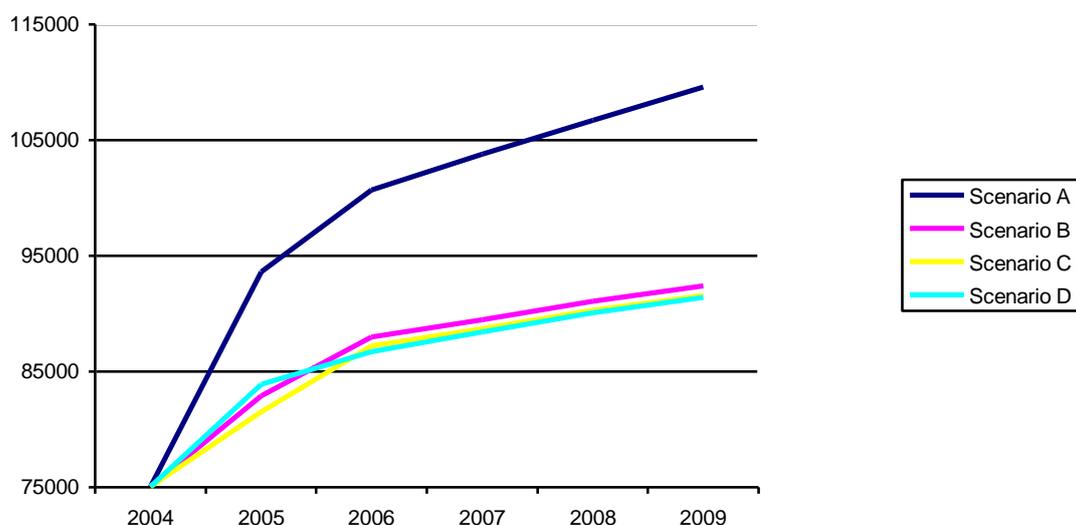
Chart 17.4 Average number of people in custody 1998 – 2002 in England and Wales



source www.homeoffice.gov.uk

17.7 Detailed figures on the projected prison population are regularly updated (Cross and Olowe, 2003 and Hollis and Goodman, 2002). These projections incorporate known legislative and policy changes. The figures from the Home Office released in November 2003 show four different projections for the prison population up to 2009. The explanation of the different scenarios and the full figures are given in Appendix 4. The prison population is projected to rise to between 91,400 and 109,600, see Chart 17.5. These give a percentage increase in the projected prison population of between 22% and 46%.

Chart 17.5 Projected rise in prison population Aug 2004 - 2009



Source: Cross and Olowe, 2003 and Hollis and Goodman, 2002

Other factors

17.8 The accommodation needs of offenders in 2009 will depend on various factors. The number of crimes committed and detected, the number of people convicted and the numbers sent to prison are affected by changes in the criminal justice system and wider changes in society.

17.9 Recent and pending changes in the criminal justice system include:

- Changes in sentencing policy and practice as a result of the Criminal Justice Act 2003. The Act introduces radical changes to the structure of prison and community sentences.
- Recent changes in the structure of the probation and prison service to create the National Offender Management Service. This is being accompanied by a move towards more regional rather than county based services.
- The introduction of CJIP (Criminal Justice Intervention Programme), a new programme within the national Updated Drug Strategy offering support to drug misusing offenders with the aim of reducing drug related crime. It is being introduced incrementally in Norfolk.
- The implementation of the Prolific and Other Priority Offender Strategy (POPOS), from September 2004, for offenders aged 18 years and over. This is a multi agency initiative, led by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, to tackle and resolve the root causes of prolific offending. The programme aims to identify, target, monitor and rehabilitate the small number of offenders who cause the most harm to themselves and their local community. The actual priorities in a particular area are subject to local negotiation.
- The handover of responsibility for the provision of medical services in prisons to local Primary Care Trusts. This process has already commenced. It could lead to changes in the level of support provided to offenders with mental health and substance misuse problems.
- Changes to make more effective use of the discharge grant given to offenders on release from prison.
- Introduction of the prison KPT on offenders' accommodation on release.
- Implementation of the Home Office Reducing Re-offending National Action Plan (Home Office, 2004) and the East of England Regional Strategy for the Rehabilitation and Resettlement of Offenders (Government Office for the East of England, 2004).

17.10 Wider changes in society include:

- The medium and long term effects of policies such as Sure Start, New Deal and Supporting People are not yet known. These may reduce offending.
- National targets for decreasing substance misuse. These may reduce offending.

17.11 Factors on the supply side affect the availability of accommodation for offenders. These include:

- Pressure on hostels and move on accommodation influenced by the trends in other causes of homelessness, such as relationship breakdown.

- The amount of Local Authority / Housing Association social housing available and offenders' ability to access it.
- The transfer of local authority housing to registered social landlords.
- Fluctuations in the housing market affecting the amount of housing available to rent in the private sector.
- The amount of new single person accommodation available.
- Government guidance to local authorities on the Homelessness Act. This is due to be re-issued to provide clear advice on when offenders are in 'priority need'. This could increase the number of homeless offenders eligible for social housing.
- The impact of this research. The implementation of the recommendations in this report could lead to greater availability of advice, support and accommodation for offenders.

Conclusions

- Based on the crime figures for the last five years, it is likely that the number of crimes detected in Norfolk will stay the same or increase.
- Home Office projections state that the prison population will increase by between 22% and 46% in the next five years. This is considerably higher than the 16% increase in the last five years.
- Initiatives within the criminal justice system are designed to increase co-ordination between the prison and probation services and lead to more emphasis on meeting the accommodation needs of offenders on reception into custody and prior to release from prison.
- All these factors are likely to increase pressure on all housing providers to accommodate offenders.
- However, wider changes in society, especially action to reduce social exclusion and to decrease substance misuse, may reduce offending.
- Specific accommodation needs identified through this research include:
 - Emergency 24 hour accommodation for offenders on release from prison. This would probably need to be in Norwich
 - Direct access accommodation west of Norwich
 - More move on accommodation in all areas of the county
 - More accommodation that caters for substance misusers
 - More accommodation with support for those with less severe mental health problems or mild to moderate learning difficulties
 - More and better quality accommodation for single people in Great Yarmouth
 - More accommodation for women, especially in Great Yarmouth
 - More accommodation for young offenders, especially in Norwich, Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn
 - More accessible social and privately rented housing.
- Due to the lack of complete data on offenders in Norfolk, and the number of unknown factors influencing the demand and supply of accommodation, it did not prove possible to provide accurate estimates of the projected need for accommodation for offenders over the next five years. However, based on the findings of this research, there is currently considerable unmet need and a likelihood of increased demand for both accommodation and accompanying support.

Section Eighteen

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

18.1 There are still gaps in dealing with accommodation issues when people first go into prison. There is input on accommodation prior to release, by both advisers within the prison and outside, but people are still coming out of prison homeless. No one identified a need for more accommodation advisers.

18.2 Many practitioners said there is a need for more accommodation – particularly direct access hostels and move on accommodation. There is also a need for more permanent accommodation in both the public and private sector for offenders. If this is accompanied by more floating support, it will enable people to move on earlier and maintain subsequent accommodation.

18.3 The main issues that hinder people in obtaining and sustaining appropriate accommodation are:

- Substance misuse
- Mental health problems
- Rent arrears
- A poor record with accommodation providers, often due to the above
- Accommodation providers' policies, especially re substance misuse
- Accessibility of local authority / social housing
- The initial cost of moving into privately rented accommodation.

18.4 If people do not have appropriate accommodation on release from prison they are at greater risk of resuming substance misuse and re-offending. There is a need for more support for substance misusers and people with less serious mental health problems, especially if they are dual diagnosis, or if they do not meet current health or social services thresholds for a service.

18.5 Low literacy and numeracy skills, sometimes combined with poor communication skills, exacerbate the situation and mean that people require additional support.

18.6 There are variations in practice within and across local authority housing providers' assessments of whether offenders are 'vulnerable', 'unintentionally homeless' and / or in 'priority need'.

18.7 There are a number of numerically smaller groups of offenders, who have their own specific challenges, but do not account for a large percentage of offenders. Accommodation providers' policies often mean that the choice of accommodation available to them is limited. These are:

- Young offenders
- Women offenders
- Offenders convicted of offences related to domestic violence
- Schedule 1 offenders (under both the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 and the Sex Offenders Act 1997)
- People convicted of arson
- Older offenders.

18.8 People of black and minority ethnic origin are over represented in the criminal justice system in Norfolk. Practitioners were often not very aware of their existence or their needs.

18.9 The support offered through Supporting People has made a difference to offenders obtaining and sustaining accommodation.

Recommendations

Recommendations for the NOMS

- The NOMS (National Offender Management Service, created by the integration of the Prison Service and the National Probation Service) collects accommodation data on offenders in prison and offenders on community supervision and passes the information on to local housing authorities and the Supporting People Team to provide them with up to date information on the accommodation needs of Norfolk offenders. This information will enable them to plan services accordingly.

Recommendations for Norfolk Offender Accommodation Forum

- The Norfolk Offender Accommodation Forum takes a lead in disseminating the findings of this research and discussing the recommendations with appropriate agencies.
- The findings of this report are drawn to the attention of the researchers investigating the accommodation needs of women offenders in the Eastern region and the regional research on domestic violence.
- The concept of Schedule 1 offenders, under the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 and Schedule 1 offenders under the Sex Offenders Act 1997, is unpacked to distinguish between sex offenders and non sex offenders.
- Training is provided for practitioners on Schedule 1 offences.
- The scope for expanding the provision of bail bed places within hostels is explored.
- Agencies and practitioners discuss the potential for adopting standard terminology and definitions to facilitate the collection on accurate statistical information.
- Consideration is given to establishing mentor schemes to support offenders leaving prison to obtain accommodation and access other services.

Recommendations for the Prison Service and those working in prisons

- When people are remanded in prison and / or sentenced to custody, action is taken to address their accommodation needs and secure their household and personal belongings as part of the induction process.
- Before leaving prison, action is taken to secure accommodation for people on release. This needs to start at the beginning of their sentence and constitute an integral part of sentence planning.
- The Prison Resettlement Governor in each prison ensures that there is co-ordination between different advice agencies to ensure that all prisoners receive appropriate support and advice in respect of their accommodation

needs.

The methods for doing this and the different staff responsible for carrying it out will vary according to individual prisons. The important requirement is that no individual falls through the net.

- When measuring progress on the prison service KPT for prisoner accommodation on release, 'staying with friends' should be viewed as 'transient accommodation'.
- Prior to release, the prison service considers moving prisoners to the closest prison to where they plan to live in order to facilitate finding accommodation.
- The funding for accommodation advice services in Norfolk prisons is developed on a secure financial footing.
- The staff providing accommodation advice services in prisons receive specialist training in housing needs and homelessness legislation.
- There is better co-ordination between the different accommodation advice agencies within the prison and in the community.

Recommendations for accommodation advisers

- There is more training for accommodation advisers (in both the prison and the community) on equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice in relation to people of black and minority ethnic origin. This should be aimed at increasing awareness of the housing and support needs of black and minority ethnic offenders and assist accommodation advisers in developing good practice.
- Practitioners are more pro-active in contacting people of black and minority ethnic origin. One approach would be for outreach services to employ people from different ethnic backgrounds and / or who are multi lingual, as this has already proved to have had a positive effect in Norfolk.

Recommendations for accommodation providers

- Providers of hostel accommodation review their eligibility and exclusion criteria to ensure that they are as inclusive as possible of offenders, especially with regards to substance misuse, offenders convicted of arson or sexual offences and Schedule 1 offenders.
- Hostel providers consider whether their upper age limits are always necessary.
- Ways to increase places for women offenders with complex problems, including substance misuse, mental health problems and those fleeing domestic abuse are explored.
- Accommodation providers' support plans for offenders include an assessment of both drug and alcohol misuse and, where appropriate, refer them to specialist treatment and support services.
- There is more training for accommodation providers on equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice in relation to people of black and minority ethnic origin. This should be aimed at increasing awareness of the housing and support needs of black and minority ethnic offenders and assist accommodation providers in developing good practice.
- Accommodation providers review their facilities for people with a physical disability in line with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

- Accommodation providers review their Health and Safety policies and training to protect staff and residents.

Recommendations for local housing authorities and social housing providers

- The local housing authorities' Homelessness Units review their interpretation of the legislation in relation to 'vulnerability' of offenders in line with new guidance due to be issued by the government.
- When considering whether people are eligible for social housing, 'staying with friends' should be viewed as 'temporary accommodation'.
- Local authorities should give careful consideration to older offenders with regard to their age, health and institutional background when assessing vulnerability under the homelessness legislation.
- Local housing authorities review their practice of placing offenders in temporary accommodation away from the area where they will eventually live.
- Local housing authorities closely monitor the new choice based lettings schemes to ensure that they do not reduce the housing opportunities for offenders, particularly single people who are offenders.
- Local authorities and social housing providers review the documentation required to end a tenancy, with a view to developing standard procedures and documentation across Norfolk.
- Use is made of simplified tenancy agreements such as the pictorial tenancy agreement produced by the National Housing Federation.
- Accommodation providers' support plans for offenders include an assessment of both drug and alcohol misuse and, where appropriate, refer them to specialist treatment and support services.
- Local authority social housing providers consider the need to accommodate those convicted of arson and sex offenders when expanding their temporary and permanent accommodation resources.
- District Councils explore the possibility of using Section 106 funding to provide more social housing for single people.

Recommendation for the Norfolk YOT

- Ways to increase the availability of different types of accommodation for 16 – 18 year olds are explored. This needs to include the particular needs of those on remand, young Schedule 1 offenders and those with mental health and substance misuse problems.

Recommendations for commissioners and providers of mental health and substance misuse services

- The relevant agencies explore how access routes to GPs and multi agency mental health teams can be improved for offenders with mental health problems.
- The relevant agencies explore the need to increase community mental health support for offenders with mental health problems who, at present, are not recognised as having severe and enduring mental health problems.

- The relevant agencies explore the need to increase community support for offenders with dual diagnosis, including personality disorder.
- Substance misuse agencies explore how to increase community support for offenders with substance misuse problems, including alcohol misuse.
- The Norfolk DAAT (Drug and Alcohol Action Team) and the Supporting People Team consider the level and type of housing related support needed by offenders who are substance misusers.
- Women's refuges in Norfolk review their substance misuse policies.
- Outcomes from the recently established accommodation based service run by NORCAS in Kings Lynn for people with drug and alcohol problems, who have completed detoxification and rehabilitation, are monitored to ascertain whether their service users include offenders and whether the service should be duplicated in other parts of the county.

Recommendations for commissioners and providers of learning difficulties services

- The thresholds for offenders in the community with a learning difficulty and the support needs of offenders with a 'mild to moderate' learning difficulty are reviewed.
- Consideration is given to funding an outreach service to provide continued support to Broadland Clinic patients after release.

Recommendation for the VHG

- The possibility of the Norfolk Homelessness Directory going online is explored, in consultation with the Resource Information Service.

Recommendations for the Supporting People Team

- The Norfolk DAAT (Drug and Alcohol Action Team) and the Supporting People Team consider the level and type of housing related support needed by offenders who are substance misusers.
- Ways to increase places for women offenders with complex problems, including substance misuse, mental health problems and those fleeing domestic abuse are explored.
- Floating support services are specifically targeted to meet the needs of sex workers, building on existing work with this client group.
- The possibility of providing emergency 24 hour accommodation for offenders on release from prison is explored.
- Supporting People review the need for more offender bed spaces based on the findings of this report, especially in the Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn local authority areas.
- The operation of rent deposit schemes is monitored to ensure that they are available for offenders.
- The scope for expansion of rent deposit schemes is explored together with more advertising of the schemes to offenders.

References

Documents referred to in the report or consulted during the preparation of the report.

- Arson Prevention Bureau (1998) 'Accommodating Arsonists in the Community. Guidance for Hostel Managers' Arson Prevention Bureau. Also available via the website: www.abi.org.uk.
- Arthurton, Christina, Pascoe, Lucie and Coggle, Eddie (2004) 'One Voice. Developing a Dedicated Centre for Domestic Abuse' Norwich Voices Against Violence Forum.
- Blunkett, David (2004) 'Reducing Crime – Changing Lives' Home Office.
- Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk (2003) 'Homelessness Strategy' Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.
- Brambleby, Dr Peter (2003) 'The Health of Norwich Annual Report of the Director of Public Health' Norwich Primary Care Trust.
- Breckland Crime Reduction Partnership (2002) 'Breckland Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy 2002 – 2005' Breckland Crime Reduction Partnership.
- Broadland Community Safety Partnership (2002) 'Broadland Community Safety Partnership Strategy 2002 – 2005' Broadland Community Safety Partnership.
- Broadland District Council (2002) Papers relating to the Housing Provider Questionnaire on the Accommodation and Support Services for Ex-Offenders. Broadland District Council
- Broadland District Council (2003) 'Homelessness Strategy 2003' Broadland District Council.
- Burrows, J., Clarke, A., Davison, T., Tarling, R. and Webb, S. (2001). 'Research into the nature and effectiveness of throughcare' RDS Occasional Paper No. 68, Home Office.
- Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group (undated) 'Housing Offenders in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.' Cambridgeshire County Council.
- Carlisle, Jane (1996) 'The Housing Needs of Ex-prisoners' Centre for Housing Policy, University of York.
- Carter, Patrick (2003) 'Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime. A new approach' Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, Cabinet Office.

- Cash, Helen M. (2001) 'Housing Needs Assessment Guidance' National Probation Service.
- Challen, Mark and Walton, Thea (2003) 'Juveniles in Custody' Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons.
- Comptroller and Auditor General, The (2002) 'HM Prison Service Reducing Prisoner Re-offending' The Stationery Office.
- Cross, Ian and Olowe, Tesleem (2003) 'Prison Population Brief England and Wales: November 2003' Home Office. Also available via the website: www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk.
- Department of Health (2002) 'Dual Diagnosis Good Practice Guide' Department of Health.
- Department of Health (2003) 'Personality Disorder – no longer a diagnosis of exclusion' Department of Health.
- Government Office for the East of England (2004) 'East of England Strategy for the Rehabilitation and Resettlement of Offenders' Final consultation August 2004. Government Office for the East of England.
- Greater London Authority Research Group (formerly London Research Centre) (June 2000) 'Blocking the fast track from prison to rough sleeping' Rough Sleepers Unit.
- Great Yarmouth Borough Council (2003) 'The Homelessness Review' Great Yarmouth Borough Council.
- Great Yarmouth Borough Crime Reduction Partnership, The (2002) 'Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy 2002 – 2005' Great Yarmouth Borough Crime Reduction Partnership.
- Harper, Angela (2003) 'Supported Lodgings for Young People' Master of Arts in Housing Policy Studies thesis, School of Environment and Development, Sheffield Hallam University.
- Her Majesty's Inspectorates of Prisons and Probation (2001) 'Through the Prison Gate. A joint thematic review by Her Majesty's Inspectorates of Prisons and Probation'. Home Office.
- HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales (2001?) 'Follow up to Women in Prison. A Thematic Review' Home Office.
- Hollis, Veronica and Goodman, Michelle (2002) 'Prison Population Brief England and Wales: December 2002' Home Office. Also available via the website: www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk.
- Home Office (2004) 'Reducing Re-offending. National Action Plan' Home Office.

- James, Kate, Curteis, Sarah and Griffiths, Sarah (2004) ‘ “Just surviving” The housing and support needs of people on the fringes of homelessness and/or the criminal justice system in West Yorkshire’ Supporting People West Yorkshire.
- Jones, Mandy and Magna, Joy (2002) ‘Not Just Bricks and Mortar – The housing support needs of offenders and ex offenders in Suffolk.’ Involve Associates.
- Kobielus, Caroline (2001) ‘Links Survey – Interim Report’ Anglia Care Trust.
- Lewis, Sam; Vennard, Julie; Maguire, Mike; Raynor, Peter; Vanstone, Maurice; Raybould, Steve and Rix, Andrew (2003) ‘The resettlement of short-term prisoners: an evaluation of seven Pathfinders’ Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate.
- Morgan, Rod and Owers, Anne (2001) ‘Through the Prison Gate – A Joint Thematic Review by HM Inspectorates of Prisons and Probation’ HM Inspectorate of Prisons.
- Nacro (2003a) ‘Just Imprisoned?’ Sorting Yourself Out Guide, Nacro.
- Nacro (2003b) ‘Keeping Your Home. Information for prisoners on getting housing costs paid’ Sorting Yourself Out Guide, Nacro.
- Nacro (2003c) ‘Finding a Home’ Sorting Yourself Out Guide, Nacro.
- Nacro (2003d) ‘Finding a Home. Information for people working with prisoners’ Resettlement Practitioner Guide, Nacro.
- Nacro (2003e) ‘Women and Street Sex Work’ Research Briefing 7. Nacro.
- Nacro Youth Crime (2003f) ‘Youth Crime Briefing: Children and Young people who commit Schedule 1 offences’ Nacro Youth Crime.
- Norfolk Supporting People Team (2003) ‘Norfolk Supporting People Strategy 2004-09. Planning for Housing Related Support in Norfolk. Consultation Draft November 2003’ Norfolk County Council.
- Norfolk Supporting People Team (2004) ‘Norfolk Supporting People Strategy 2004-09. Planning for Housing Related Support in Norfolk. Consultation Draft October 2004’ Norfolk County Council.
- North Norfolk Crime Reduction Partnership (2002) ‘A Time To Feel Safe Crime Reduction Strategy 2002 – 2005’ North Norfolk Crime Reduction Partnership.
- North Norfolk District Council (2003) ‘Homelessness Review and Strategy’ North Norfolk District Council.

- Norwich Community Safety Partnership (2002) 'A Community Safety Strategy for Norwich 2002 – 2005' Norwich Community Safety Partnership.
- Norwich City Council (2003a) 'Homelessness Strategy' Norwich City Council.
- Norwich City Council (2003b) 'Work with Norwich Prison – briefing note, September 2003' Norwich City Council.
- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2002) 'Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities' The Stationery Office.
- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2004) 'What is Supporting People?' Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
- Pike, Jocelyn (2004a) 'Dual Diagnosis – Definition. Working Paper for the Dual Diagnosis Steering Group' Norfolk PCTs working document.
- Pike, Jocelyn (2004b) 'Dual Diagnosis Good Practice Guide – Briefing Paper' Norfolk PCTs working document.
- Randall and DrugScope (2002) 'Drug services for homeless people. A good practice handbook' Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
- Renshaw, Judy (2000) 'Advice on accommodation' Youth Justice Board.
- Resettlement Link Workers Project (undated) 'Norfolk Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. Resettlement Link Workers Project Report' ADAPT.
- Social Exclusion Unit, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2002) 'Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners' The Stationery Office.
- Shelter (unpublished, 2004) Email to Research Plus+ from Shelter providing advice on closure notices for drug misuse.
- South Norfolk Crime Reduction Partnership (2002) 'Crime Reduction Strategy 2002 – 2005' South Norfolk Crime Reduction Partnership.
- South Norfolk District Council (2003) 'Homelessness Strategy 2003' South Norfolk District Council.
- Thorpe, Katherine and Wood, Martin (2004) 'Crime in England and Wales 2003 / 2004 Home Office Statistical Bulletin' The Home Office.
- VHG (2003) 'Norfolk Homelessness Directory. The directory of hostels, supported housing and advice services in Norfolk' VHG and Resource Information Service.
- Walker, John et al, Breckland Council Social Housing Services (2003) 'Homelessness Strategy 2003 including The Homelessness Review for Breckland Council' Breckland Council.

- Webster, Russell and Cheston, Len (May 1998) 'A Strategic Analysis of Offender Accommodation in Norfolk' Norfolk Probation.
- West Norfolk Crime Reduction Partnership (2002) 'West Norfolk Crime Reduction Strategy 2002 – 2005' West Norfolk Crime Reduction Partnership.
- Young, Nick (2003) 'Detecting and Convicting the Arsonists: Lessons from the United States' Arson Prevention Bureau. Also available via the website: www.abi.org.uk.
- Youth Justice Board (2004) 'Differences or discrimination? The summary of the report on minority ethnic young people in the youth justice system' Youth Justice Board.

Definitions and Glossary

Offenders as covered in this report includes people subject to statutory supervision by the Norfolk Probation Area (including those in prison for 12 months or more, those serving community-based sentences or released from prison on licence), short-term prisoners (sentenced to less than 12 months) and young people supervised by the Norfolk Youth Offending Team (YOT). It also includes people in custody on remand, even though they have not been convicted as offenders.

Homeless covers situations where an individual does not have a home or a place to stay of their own. They could be staying with a friend or in a hostel. Those who are roofless do not have either of these and are sleeping rough e.g. in doorways or on a park bench.

Sofa surfing is a term often used to describe someone who is sleeping at a friend's place. It often involves staying only a few nights in one place before moving on to another friend.

MAPPA stands for Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements. The MAPPA meeting consists of a Senior Probation Officer, a Senior Police Officer of Inspector level or above, a representative of social services department, plus others can be called in to join. This can include housing providers / local authority housing departments. The MAPPA considers where high risk or dangerous prisoners can be accommodated taking into consideration any need for protection of the public. Once released, the offenders are subject to licence and supervised by Probation or the YOT. It is also referred to as the **MAPPP** Multi Agency Public Protection Panel.

OASys is the Offender Assessment System. It is a national system for assessing the risks posed by an offender and the identification of the factors which have contributed to the offending. OASys has been developed for use in both probation and the prisons. It assesses factors which lead to the calculation of a risk of reconviction score based on a range of criminogenic and other factors.

Criminogenic factors in OASys include information on accommodation, education, training and employability, financial management and income, relationships, lifestyle and associates, drug misuse, alcohol misuse, emotional well-being, thinking and behaviour, attitudes and health and other considerations. They are regarded as some of the factors which have a causal or contributory role in offending behaviour. There are a series of questions within each factor which contribute to scores relating to that factor. For the purpose of this research, data relating to the following criminogenic factors were provided: accommodation, education, training and employability, drug misuse, alcohol misuse and emotional well-being.

Glossary

ADAPT	Alcohol and Drug Addiction Prevention and Treatment. A charity that works with people with substance misuse problems.
CAPS	Contact Assessment and Prevention Service
CARATS	Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare Services. CARATS teams work with prisoners with substance misuse problems.
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
CPA	Care Programme Approach
DAAT	Drug and Alcohol Action Team
LIT	Local Implementation Team for the National Service Framework for Mental Health for Adults of Working Age
MAPPA / MAPP	Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements / Multi Agency Public Protection Panel
NACRO	National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders * This is a national charity not the local organisation Norfolk ACRO
NHS	National Health Service
NOMS	The National Offender Management Service, created by the integration of the Prison Service and the National Probation Service in June 2004
OASys	Offender Assessment System
PCT	Primary Care Trust
POPOS	Prolific and Other Priority Offender Strategy. This is a multi-agency initiative (for offenders aged 18 years and over), led by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, to tackle and resolve the root causes of prolific offending. The programme aims to identify, target, monitor and rehabilitate the small number of offenders who cause the most harm to themselves and their local community. The actual priorities in a particular area are subject to local negotiation.
SPART	Sentence Planning and Resettlement Team, a Norfolk Probation Area team that works with people from Norwich on release from custody.
YOI	Young Offenders Institution
YOT	Youth Offending Team

Appendix 1

List of Organisations Contacted

The following organisations were contacted during the research:

A. Agencies interviewed face to face

A1. Housing advisers

A1a. Based in HMP/YOI Norwich

- ADAPT Link Resettlement Team
- CARATS Team
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Foundation Training Company
- Nacro worker
- Norfolk YMCA
- Prison Service Resettlement Staff
- Probation Team

A1b. Based in HMP Wayland

- Foundation Training Company
- Nacro worker
- Prison Service Plus / Nacro Housing Officer
- Prison Service Resettlement Staff
- Probation Team

A1c. Based in Regional Secure Units

- NORVIC Clinic
- Broadland Clinic

A1d. Based in the community

- Arrest Referral Scheme, The Matthew Project
- Contact Assessment and Prevention Service (CAPS)
- Magdalene Group
- Mancroft Advice Project (MAP)
- NORCAS Homelessness Outreach Service
- Norfolk County Council Social Services
- Norfolk Youth Offending Team
- Probation Approved Premises
- Probation Team, Great Yarmouth
- Probation Team, King's Lynn
- Probation Team, SPART Norwich
- Probation Team, Whitefriars Norwich
- Project 91
- Salvation Army
- Shelter

A2. Accommodation providers / providers of floating support

- Barnabas House
- Bauleah House, Herring House Trust
- Bishopsbridge House, St Martins Housing Trust
- Breckland District Council
- Broadland District Council
- Great Yarmouth and Waveney MIND
- Great Yarmouth Borough Council
- Hinde House, Orwell Housing Association
- House of Genesis
- Julian Housing Support
- Kings Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council
- Morrell and Ballard community support homes
- Norfolk YMCA
- North Norfolk District Council
- Norwich City Council
- Orbit Housing
- Solo Housing
- South Norfolk District Council
- St Edmunds Society
- St Matthews Housing
- Stonham Housing
- The Dawe Charitable Trust
- The Purfleet Trust
- Wherry Housing Association

B. List of other contacts

B1. Less formal telephone interviews / contacts

- ADAPT Link Resettlement Co-ordinator
- Alexandra House, King's Lynn
- Area Manager for Resettlement, Nacro Regional Office
- Ashcroft Project
- Benjamin Foundation
- CARATS team, HMP Wayland
- Carrow Hill Home
- Community Safety Team, Norfolk County Council
- Flagship Housing Group
- Haven Project, Women's Refuge
- Matrix Project
- Norfolk and Waveney Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust Alcohol and Drug Service (formerly the Norfolk County Council Social Services County Substance Misuse Team)
- Norfolk and Waveney Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust Prison Inreach Team
- Norwich and District Mind
- Norwich PCT
- Oak House, Julian Housing Support
- Olive Tree Project, Women's Refuge

- Omnia, Norwich and District Mind
- Orwell Housing Association
- Probation, HMP Blundeston
- Probation, HMP Edmunds Hill
- Probation, HMP Highpoint
- Probation, HMP/YOI Hollesley Bay
- Probation Team, Thetford
- Resettlement Staff, HMP/YOI Holloway
- Southern Norfolk PCT
- St James Lodge, Broadland Housing Association
- St Martin's House, St Martin's Housing Trust
- St Paul's Lodge, Great Yarmouth Young Women's Project
- Umbrella Housing Group
- Victoria House, Solo Housing

B2. Other meetings

- Government Office East, Cambridge
- Norfolk Probation Area Head Office
- Norfolk YOT

B3. Other contacts

- Head of Regimes and Resettlement, HMP/YOI Norwich
- Norfolk Connexions
- Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Action Team
- Prison Service Eastern Area Office
- Research Department, Youth Justice Board
- VHG

Appendix 2

Focus Group Methodology and Details of the Participants

Introduction

A2.1 This appendix provides additional information on how the focus groups were organised and conducted and presents details of the characteristics of the focus group participants.

Focus group methodology

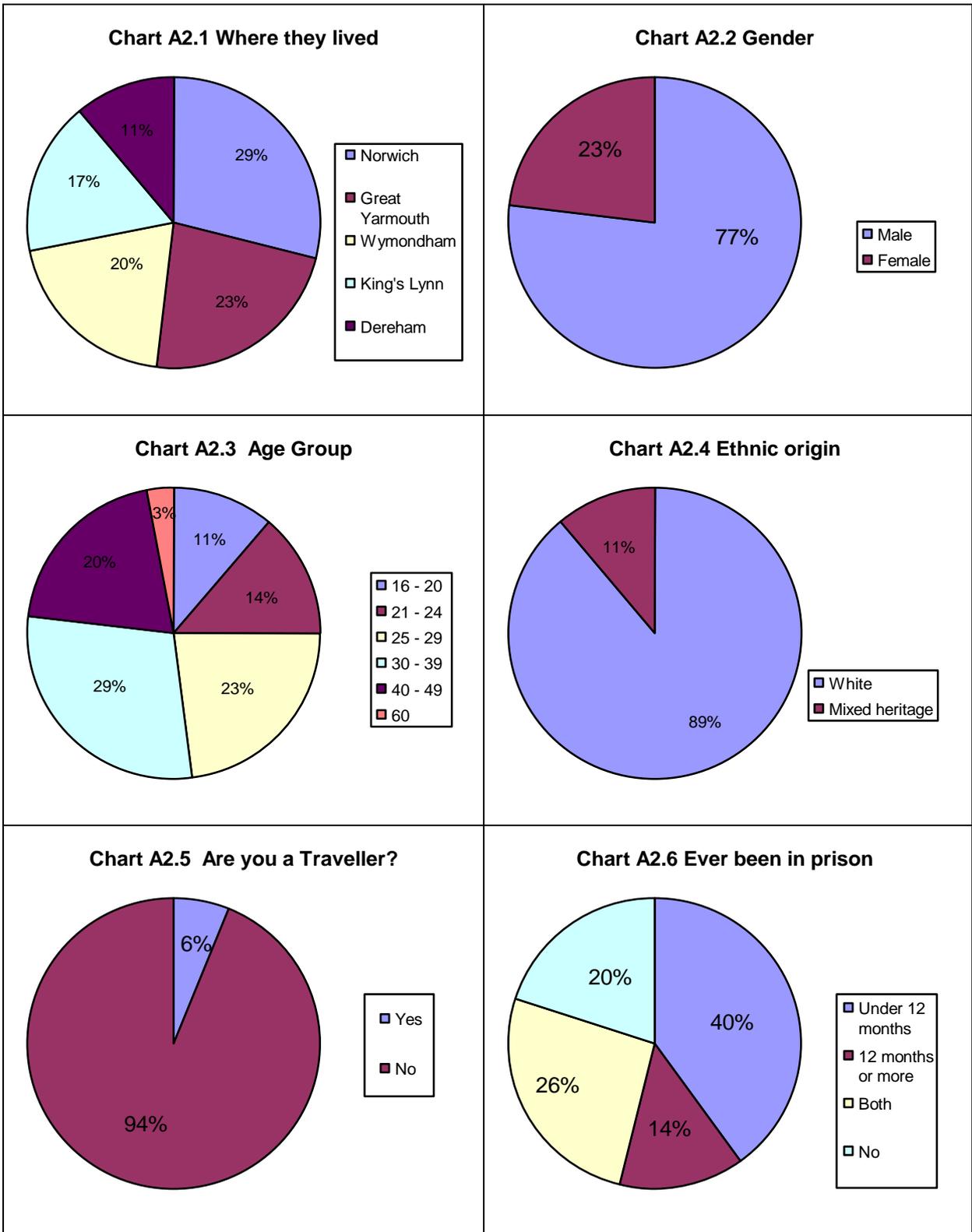
A2.2 As the offenders who participated in the focus groups were potentially vulnerable, a number of precautions were taken. Both the researchers possessed police 'enhanced disclosure' checks and had experience of working with vulnerable people. The participants were contacted through the accommodation providers who had daily contact with them. Information about the focus groups, their purpose, content, issues related to confidentiality etc. and how the information would be used was supplied to the accommodation providers as part of the negotiations for setting up the focus groups.

A2.3 At the beginning of the focus groups, the researchers went through details about the focus group to ensure that the participants understood its purpose, the topics that it would cover, issues related to confidentiality etc. and how the information would be used. The circumstances under which confidentiality might be broken were explained. The researchers stated if people wished to speak to them in private after the focus group they could do so. It was stressed that people did not have to stay in the focus group if it was uncomfortable for them and that if the focus group stimulated any distress for them they could speak to their key worker or another member of staff afterwards. The focus groups were structured so that they covered lighter topics towards the end of the session.

A2.4 Two people left a focus group part way through but both had made a significant contribution before they had left. Both later explained to the researchers why they had felt the need to leave. Three people availed themselves of the opportunity to talk more privately with the researchers after the focus group.

Details of the participants

A2.5 At the end of the focus group the participants filled out anonymous forms, which provided information on who had participated. This information is shown in Charts A2.1 to A2.6. These demonstrate that the focus groups included a good mix of people. The participants lived in Norwich, Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn and two smaller market towns. They included men and women, different age groups and some variety of ethnic backgrounds. Eighty percent had had experience of prison. Based on what was said in the focus groups, the participants also included people misusing drugs (at least 25 people), people misusing alcohol (at least 12 people), people with mental health problems (at least 6 people), sex workers (both male and female) and at least one Schedule 1 offender.



Source: Research Plus+ July 2004

Appendix 3

Statistics from the Eastern Region Prisons

A3.1 The Eastern Region Prison Service obtained data from most of the region's prisons on the accommodation status of prisoners on release for the three months April to June 2004.

A3.2 The total number of people in the prisons in the Eastern Region in August 2004 was 5,985 (see Table A3.1 below). There were 1,446 people in Norfolk prisons.

Table A3.1 Prison population in Eastern Region Prisons

Prison	Population in August 2004
HMP Bedford	482
HMP Blundeston	457
HMP/YOI Bullwood Hall	153
HMP Chelmsford	571
HMP Edmunds Hill	144
HMP Highpoint	809
HMP/YOI Hollesley Bay	272
HMP Littlehey	697
HMP The Mount	744
HMP/YOI Norwich	755
HMYOI Warren Hill	210
HMP Wayland	691
Total	5,985

Source: www.hmprison.gov.uk (August 2004)

Accommodation status of people released from prison

A3.3 The Prison Service Eastern Area Office provided information on the accommodation status of people released from the twelve prisons in the Eastern region between April and June 2004 (see Table A3.2 and Chart A3.2). This excludes HMP/YOI Bullwood Hall and April data for HMP Highpoint as the information was not provided.

A3.4 A total of 1,580 people were released from prison during the period. Although over half of them had permanent accommodation, a significant proportion of people from each prison were going to temporary or hostel accommodation or had no address. Overall 64% of people were released to permanent accommodation and 19% had no address.

- HMP/YOI Norwich had 70% of people released to permanent accommodation, this was the fourth highest, and 18% had no address. HMP/YOI Norwich is looking to raise the proportion of people released to permanent accommodation to 79%.
- HMP Wayland had 58% of people released to permanent accommodation, this was the fourth lowest, and 23% had no address.
- In HMP Edmunds Hill, a female prison, only 50% of people were released to permanent accommodation and 18% had no address. However there was

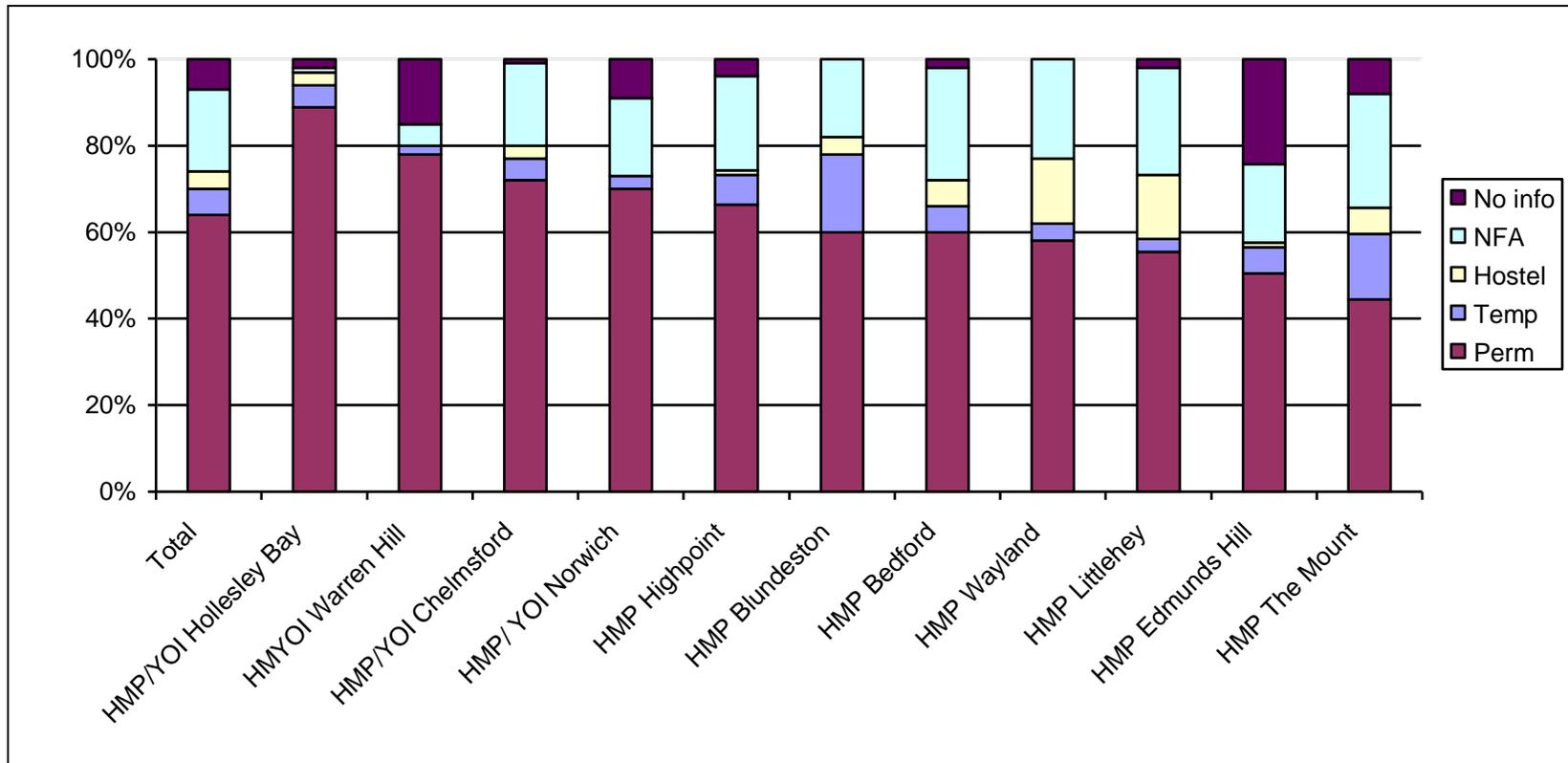
no information provided on 24% of people released from HMP Edmunds Hill. When the figures are recalculated, without the 'missing data', 66% of people were released to permanent accommodation and 24% had no address.

A3.5 No information was provided for 7% of people released from prison. There was a particularly high level of missing information for HMP Edmunds Hill (24%) and HMP Warren Hill (15%). If the 'missing information' is removed, out of a total of 1,474 people released from prison, 69% had permanent accommodation and 20% had no address (see Table A3.3 and Chart A3.3).

- HMP/YOI Norwich had 77% of people released to permanent accommodation, this was the third highest, and 20% had no address.
- HMP Wayland had 58% of people released to permanent accommodation, this was the ninth highest, and 23% had no address.

A3.6 The four prisons that included YOIs had the highest percentage of people going to permanent accommodation on release. This suggests that YOIs may have a higher proportion of people going to permanent accommodation on release. Further evidence on this was not provided from the prison statistics.

Chart A3.1 Accommodation status of people leaving prison in the Eastern Region



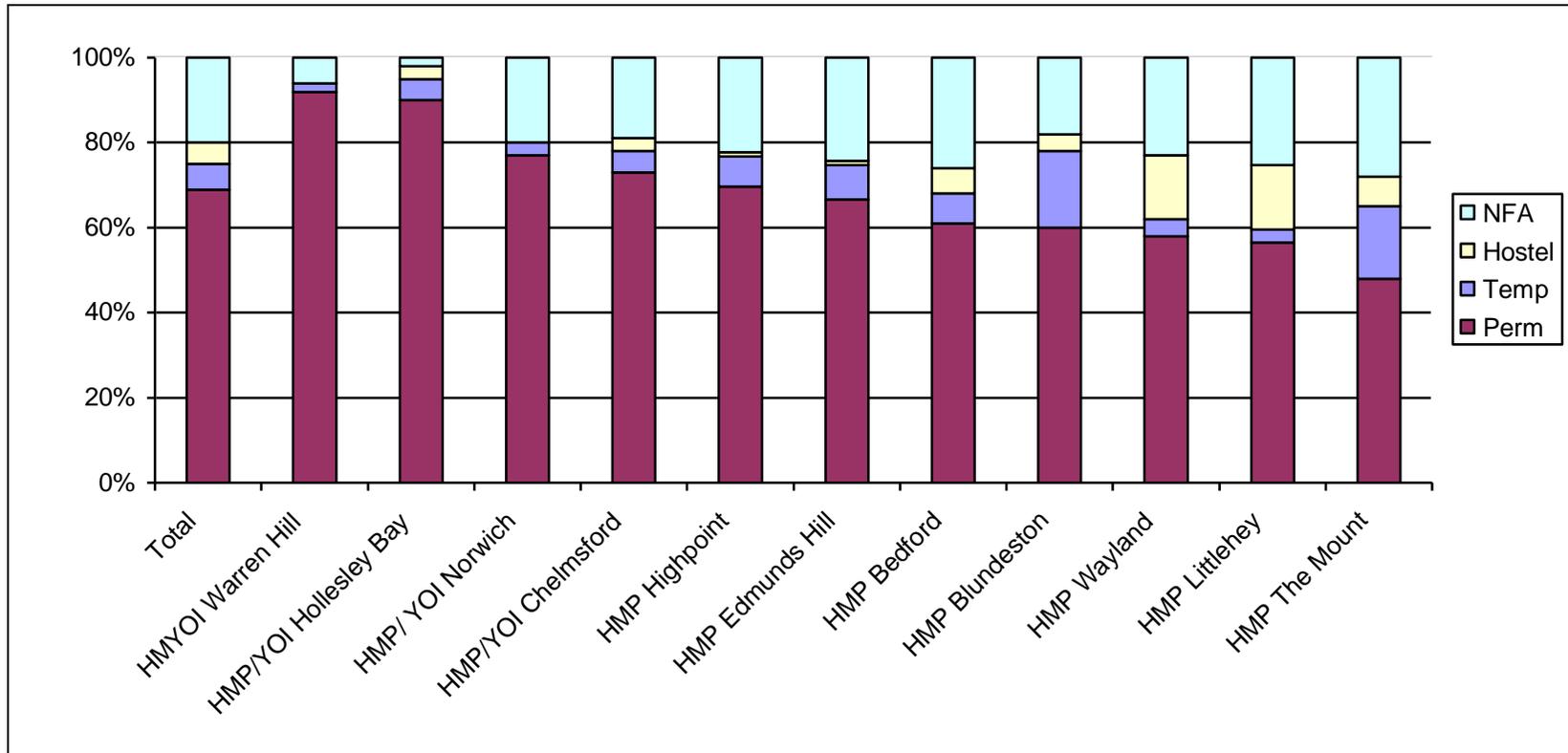
Source: Prison Service Eastern Area Office

Table A3.1 Accommodation status of people leaving prison in the Eastern Region

Prison		Perm	Temp	Hostel	NFA	No info	Totals
Norwich	Number	151	6	0	39	20	216
	Percentage	70	3	0	18	9	
HMP Wayland	Number	71	5	18	28	0	122
	Percentage	58	4	15	23	0	
HMP Edmunds	Number	99	12	2	36	48	197
	Percentage	50	6	1	18	24	
HMP Blundeston	Number	33	10	2	10	0	55
	Percentage	60	18	4	18	0	
HMP Bedford	Number	103	11	10	44	4	172
	Percentage	60	6	6	26	2	
HMP/YOI Bullwood		Info Not Available					
Chelmsford	Number	172	11	8	46	2	239
	Percentage	72	5	3	19	1	
HMP Highpoint	Number	74	8	1	24	4	111
	Percentage	67	7	1	22	4	
HMP Littlehey	Number	70	4	19	31	2	126
	Percentage	56	3	15	25	2	
HMP The Mount	Number	49	17	7	29	9	111
	Percentage	44	15	6	26	8	
Warren H	Number	75	2	0	5	14	96
	Percentage	78	2	0	5	15	
Totals	Number	1016	93	71	294	106	1580
	Percentage	64	6	4	19	7	

Source: Prison Service Eastern Area Office

Chart A3.2 Accommodation status of people leaving prison in the Eastern Region (No information removed)



Source: Prison Service Eastern Area Office

Table A3.2 Accommodation status of people leaving prison in the Eastern Region (No information removed)

Prison		Perm	Temp	Hostel	NFA	Totals
HMYOI Warren Hill	Number	75	2	0	5	82
	Percentage	91	2	0	6	100
HMP/YOI Hollesley Bay	Number	119	7	4	2	132
	Percentage	90	5	3	2	100
HMP/YOI Norwich	Number	151	6	0	39	196
	Percentage	77	3	0	20	100
HMP Chelmsford	Number	172	11	8	46	237
	Percentage	73	5	3	19	100
HMP Highpoint	Number	74	8	1	24	107
	Percentage	69	7	1	22	100
No information for April						
HMP Edmunds Hill	Number	99	12	2	36	149
	Percentage	66	8	1	24	100
HMP Bedford	Number	103	11	10	44	168
	Percentage	61	7	6	26	100
HMP Blundeston	Number	33	10	2	10	55
	Percentage	60	18	4	18	100
HMP Wayland	Number	71	5	18	28	122
	Percentage	58	4	15	23	100
HMP Littlehey	Number	70	4	19	31	124
	Percentage	56	3	15	25	100
HMP The Mount	Number	49	17	7	29	102
	Percentage	48	17	7	28	100
HMP/YOI Bullwood Hall	Info Not Available					
Totals	Number	1016	93	71	294	1474
	Percentage	69	6	5	20	100

Source: Prison Service Eastern Area Office

Appendix 4

Crime Statistics and Home Office Prison Population Projections

Introduction

A4.1 This appendix provides the detailed statistics to accompany Section 17 of the report. It presents statistics on recorded and detected crime, convictions and the size of the prison population over the past few years, together with the Home Office projections for the size of the prison population over the next five years.

A10.2 National recorded crime figures 1998/9 to 2002/03

1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
5,109,100	5,301,200	5,170,800	5,527,100	5,899,500

Source www.homeoffice.gov.uk

A10.3 Norfolk recorded and detected crime figures 1999/2000 to 2003/04

	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04
Recorded	59325	57259	58954	71270	69846
Detected	18062	14793	14720	17220	18441
% detected	30	26	25	24	26

Source: Norfolk Constabulary blue book

A10.4 National figures for those found guilty of summary and indictable offences 1998 to 2002

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Summary	1,128,000	1,066,500	1,098,200	1,025,500	1,083,000
Indictable	341700	342000	325500	324200	338300
Total	1,469,700	1,408,500	1,423,700	1,349,700	1,421,300

Source: www.homeoffice.gov.uk

A10.5 Prison population 1998 and 2002

1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
65,298	64,771	64,602	66,301	70,861

Source: www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Home Office projections for the size of the prison population over the next five years.

A4.2 There are four scenarios looking at the projected prison populations to 2009. They all project increases.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Scenario a	93,600	100,700	103,800	106,700	109,600
Scenario b	82,900	88,000	89,500	91,100	92,400
Scenario c	81,500	87,200	88,700	90,300	91,600
Scenario d	83,900	86,700	88,400	90,100	91,400

Source: Home Office – Prison population brief England and Wales, November 2003 and December 2002. (Cross and Olowe, 2003 and Hollis and Goodman, 2002)

Scenario a of the short-term projection: custody rates remain stable for young males and increase at 2% per annum for adult males. For female prisoners, custody rates are assumed to increase by 2% per annum for young prisoners, and increase by 3% per annum for adults. Average sentence lengths increase by 6% for young males, 4% for adult males, 5% for young females and 2% for adult females. Higher narrowing the justice gap option. This scenario leads to a total prison population of 75,900 by March 2004 and 82,300 by March 2005. The female prison population is projected to reach 4,700 by March 2004 and 5,000 by March 2005. The sentenced young male population is projected to reach 9,300 by March 2005.

The assumptions for **scenario b** are: custody rates decrease by 1% per annum for young males and increase by 1% per annum for adult males. For female prisoners, custody rates are assumed to remain stable. Average sentence lengths increase by 6% for young males, 4% for adult males, and remain stable for females. Higher narrowing the justice gap option. Under this scenario a prison population of 75,600 is projected for the end of March 2004, and 81,700 by the end of March 2005. The female prison population is projected to reach 4,600 by March 2004 and 4,800 by March 2005. The sentenced young male population is projected to reach 9,200 by March 2005.

Scenario c has the same sentencing assumptions as **scenario b** but with the lower narrowing the justice gap option. Under this scenario a prison population of 74,700 is projected for the end of March 2004, and 81,100 by the end of March 2005. The female prison population is projected to reach 4,600 by March 2004 and 4,800 by March 2005. The sentenced young male population is expected to be 9,200 by March 2005.

Scenario d assumes that: custody rates fall by 2% per annum for young males and young females, and remain stable for adult males and adult females. Average sentence lengths increase by 6% for young males and 4% for adult males, and decrease by 2.5% for young females and 2% for adult females. Lower narrowing the justice gap option. Under this scenario a prison population of 74,500 is projected for the end of March 2004, and 80,600 by the end of March 2005.

Source: Home Office – Prison population brief England and Wales, November 2003 (Cross and Olowe, 2003).

Note: Discrepancies in the above numbers are as shown in the two prison population briefs.