

# Lewisham Strategic Partnership:

## Total Place review of Offender Management





## Introduction

In 2009 Lewisham Strategic Partnership embarked on a process, using a Total Place approach that sought to improve public services and to generate efficiency savings across a range of services involving all our partners. This case study sets out how we approached the Management of Offenders theme and how we used client insight to identify ways in which we could improve the outcomes and efficiency of services to reduce re-offending.

## Context

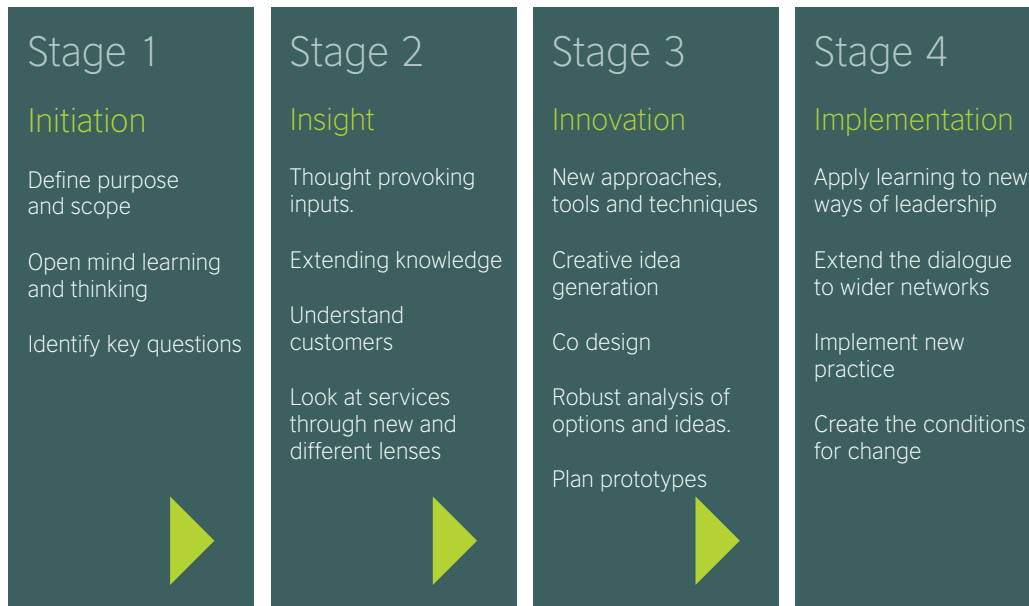
Nationally, over one-half of all crimes are committed by people who have previously been through the criminal justice system (Home Office, 2006). The evidence shows that within two years of being discharged from prison 64 per cent (of offenders serving over 12 months and 73 per cent of offenders who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

Services and interventions for adult offenders (18+) were the primary focus of this strand of work with the aim of reducing crime and the harm caused by repeat offenders. However, we recognised that in order to have a lasting and genuine impact on this problem we needed to do things differently.

When collaboration between public agencies is meaningful, deep-rooted and designed around citizens' needs, professional and organisational boundaries melt into the background and are replaced by a focus on improved services and outcomes for citizens. Our approach to Total Place in Lewisham has been centred on service redesign based on insights into the drivers of clients behaviour and perceptions of the services they received. We have examined in some depth the interaction between clients, services and agencies locally, from the client perspective and from that of the service providers. By analysing the client journey we found those points of contact and on the journey through and across different agencies where gaps, overlaps or inefficiencies in service provision occur.

# Light touch insight to innovation process.

Due to the timescales involved, and the desire to ensure a balanced approach to the level of analysis, we adopted a 'light touch' 4 stage process:



## Initiation

The first stage of the project involved defining and agreeing the scope of the project and the particular client group of interest. We focused on what happened to repeat offenders who had received sentence of over 12 months on their release from prison

**In this stage we identified some specific questions that would help guide our research in the insight stage:**

- What is the client journey from arrest to rehabilitation?
- What are the drivers of criminal behaviour amongst the target client group?
- What is the client experience of services and interventions?
- What are the range of interventions and services, both enforcement and support related, available to the client group?
- What impact do family or social networks have on the client groups offending behaviour?
- What additional interventions do highest demand clients experience?

The nature of these questions led us to consider quantitative and qualitative forms of client insight. Quantitative analysis was based on publicly available data on costs of service provision and re-offending rates. The focus of this case study, however, is on the qualitative methods and in particular our use of ethnography, client journey mapping and participative inquiry processes.

## Insight

The insight stage involved seeking new insights into client's lived experiences and interactions with services. It also sought to take a fresh look at the interfaces between services in order to identify gaps and overlaps. New insights would inform service redesign in the 'innovation' stage.

We focused on three techniques for developing insight:

- Ethnography with clients and service providers;
- Client journey mapping; and
- Participative inquiry through learning interviews

**Ethnography** is a form of social research that aims to generate deeper insights into the reality of small numbers of individuals. With ethnography, researchers spend long periods of time with individuals, observing their daily lives, their interactions with services and the wider environmental and social context of their lives. The purpose of ethnography is not to generate findings that can be extrapolated for whole client populations but rather to generate fresh insights and new perspectives, based on client experiences. Ethnography differs from traditional forms of consultation because it gets beyond the self reported observations of a subset of customers who are willing to participate in formal settings. In this project we undertook client ethnographies and also short service provider studies to identify whether there were cultural barriers to change.

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

**Client journey mapping** is a method that maps out a timeline of interaction between the client and service providers. The use of ethnography was a key input to this process and supported the development of 'personas'. Personas are descriptions of clients that consider their current reality, wants, needs and challenges and encourage us to put clients and their perspectives at the heart of our service offer. The process generated insights into service provision from the perspective of clients and highlighted opportunities for alternative ways of delivering services, overlaps, duplication and gaps in provision.

**The 'Participative inquiry'** approach used in this project involved engaging multi-agency service providers, clients and officers in identifying opportunities to improve services through structured conversations and workshops. Those in leadership positions, managers and frontline staff were encouraged reflect and build a shared perspective on the current reality of partnership working and collaboration. Together we identified what changes people could make individually, what incentives encouraged collaboration and what barriers – individual, institutional and regulatory – were getting in the way.

Our approach generated insights into gaps and overlaps in service provision. For more in-depth analysis please read our Offender Management 'Final Report', the full report on the ethnography study and watch our video Here we have selected some examples of insights that led to innovations in our service design and delivery:



## What is the client journey from arrest to rehabilitation?

The offender pathway post-release is at times chaotic and not aligned or integrated across agencies. The ethnography revealed that offenders are, in some cases, engaging with up to four 'key workers' across a number of agencies. There are many examples of duplication and overlap of provision and effort. For example, Probation, DIP, JCP, St Giles, and Housing Needs Advisors in Prison all provide sign-posting, information and guidance in areas including housing, benefits and employment and training. This can create or compound confusion and clients are at times unclear about who they are seeing, when and for what. Mental health issues and drug use impacted upon their ability to manage their time effectively.

Offenders experience multiple assessments. For instance, an offender with complex needs could receive up to 11 assessments by a number of different agencies in order to have individual need addressed. Across these assessments a significant amount of common data is collected.

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*“Steve said he became frustrated with services providers... he said all providers say the same thing, ‘blah blah blah’ and that no one could ever really help you.”*

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### Dave

Dave became addicted to heroin in his early 20s after his marriage broke down. Over the next 20 years, he committed hundreds of offences to fund his drug habit.

Dave has been to prison seven times. After his last stretch in prison, Dave was released to 'the worst tower block in Lewisham', where he describes living in 'crime-ridden hell holes with murders happening next door'.

Dave has been on methadone since he left prison. He appreciates the stability it brings and is hoping to stay on it for the rest of his life. Coming off methadone would mean going through the painful withdrawal process and losing disability benefits.

In prison, Dave did get an NVQ in catering, but is convinced a restaurant wouldn't employ him. Having been a heroin addict for much of his adult life, his health is poor. He has no work experience and feels that the only job he could get would be miserable.

Dave has learnt to do what you're told, even if it doesn't make sense. Anytime he's told to do anything by one of the services he just does it; Dave has completed the Enhanced Thinking Skills course at least four times.

## What are the drivers of criminal behaviour?

There are critical moments when clients are most likely to wish to change their behaviour and stop re-offending. The most significant of these is upon release from prison. However for prisoners wishing to change their behaviour, the way services are organised and delivered create significant barriers or challenges.

Two thirds of all Londoners in custody are held outside of the region making it harder for service to ensure the appropriate rehabilitative services are available for offenders upon release. Release dates are not systematically communicated to relevant agencies, and are often changed, making it difficult to have appropriate provision in place (such as housing and drug programmes).

Similarly this transition is hampered by high numbers of Friday releases when many of the support arrangements are not in place over the weekend. When drug using offenders are released without prescription drugs, they are more likely to re-offend and obtain illegal drugs.

Upon release offenders are commonly given enough funds to last up to two weeks upon release, yet it commonly takes 4-8 weeks before a benefit application can be processed and funds are accessible. Lack of funds increases the likelihood that offenders will return to acquisitive crime.

Drug use is a significant factor in the lives of many offenders. Delays and barriers to receiving prescription replacement drugs upon release from prison leads to an increased risk of re-offending. As one offender put it, if you can't find services, you can find your drug dealer.

### Tracey

Tracey started shoplifting to support her habit. She has been convicted several times but doesn't see how she can give up and live off £71 a week seeing as she needs to pay her rent, buy food, feed her dog and top up her phone.

### Steve

Steve has been in prison several times for violent offences, shoplifting and burglary.

Steve spoke about how prison life suited him. He worked out at the gym all the time and always left prison feeling really healthy and fit.

Steve spoke about what it felt like to leave prison. After the initial elation at being released, he said he found it difficult to readjust. He was used to the routine of prison and found it weird not to be told what to do.

When Steve was sent to prison for the last time, all his possessions, were given to charity. There was nothing he could do as he didn't really have any friends or family who could go and pick up his things.

On one occasion, Steve went back to live with his mum. When his mum decided to move out of London, Steve had to stay in the area because of his contact with probation. Because he made himself 'intentionally homeless' he wasn't eligible for any help and found himself living on the streets again. Different housing services would tell him to come back in two weeks. He said he started drinking really heavily to get into the hostel he was currently in because you needed to be an alcoholic.

## What is the client experience of intervention and service delivery?

Offenders most positive experiences of services were where they had a positive and effective relationship with a key worker, regardless of which service that worker was providing.

Repeat offenders may be required to attend certain courses as a licence condition but this was not personalised meaning that some offenders could be attending a course a number of times. The training was seen as part of the 'punishment' more often than contributing to rehabilitation.

Probation's interventions are primarily designed to address offending behaviour and are perhaps most suitable for offenders where there is a higher risk of harm or re-offending. Despite this, Probation are required to supervise offenders, often for over 12 months, even where they are identified as being low level of risk of harm or re-offending. For this cohort, lengthy supervision periods are often given by the Courts where there is high need despite lower levels of risk. As there are fewer appropriate Probation led interventions suitable for this client group alternative options have been explored. Instead, where there are criminogenic drug needs identified, this group of approximately 150 offenders could be more appropriately supervised by DIP (within current funding arrangements). This would enable Probation to focus on higher risk offenders, whilst also delivering an efficiency saving of at least £74,000 per year.

### Jock

Jock served a 3 month sentence for theft. Prior to this he had only had minor contact with the police. He is a trained whisky barrel maker and speaks Spanish and Portuguese.

Jock lives with Tony, who invited him into his home after finding him sleeping rough. Their flat is revolting and is home to 18 cats that urinate and defecate indoors. Jock was been resettled, but after a week had moved back in with Tony. Tony has a history of mental illness and encourages Jock to avoid services. He confiscates Jocks mobile phone and intercepts calls from service providers.

Jock is an alcoholic and drinks in the morning and afternoon to control his shakes and stomach pains. He is waiting to go to rehab.

Since being released from prison, Jock has been supported by the Diamond team, and he enjoys the regular visits from his case worker. Jock takes a great deal of pride in his appearance, even though he rarely meets anyone beyond Tony and the Diamond Team.

### Barclay

Barclay was in a 25 year relationship with Leonora. During this time, they 'dabbled' with drugs, including cannabis and heroin.

When Barclay was in prison he was put on a Subutex prescription, as he doesn't like the sweet taste of methadone. He was also put on Valium but didn't know why. After being inside for three weeks, he was

moved to post release accommodation in Brighton to complete his sentence. He said he liked being by the sea and wanted to stay in the area after he was released. He said he tried to sort out a flat himself but was told that he wasn't eligible because he hadn't lived there long enough and didn't have any family in the area.

After leaving the hostel, he returned to London and slept rough for three years. He met four other men

who he squatted in abandoned buildings with. At this point, Barclay started using heroin again. He spoke about how he tried to self refer himself to Hither Green hostel but was told that they didn't usually accept people that hadn't been referred to them by another agency. He left his name and number and returned to the squat. A year later, he got a phone call at 10pm asking him if he would come down to the hostel. They offered him a place and he moved in that night and stayed there for two and a half years.

## Deborah

Deborah is 40 and is a recovering heroin user. She has been to prison several times for shoplifting and other acquisitive crimes.

Abusive relationships have defined Deborah's life. On one occasion, her boyfriend beat her so badly she was lying unconscious in a pool of blood outside her home. The police alerted social services and her 5 children were taken into care. She said they 'should have taken me with them'.

Prison wasn't a bad option for Deborah. She liked the fact she had a routine and didn't have to worry about where the next meal was coming from. Sometimes she used to deliberately get caught so she could spend a night in the cells rather than on the streets.

Deborah used to panic when she knew she was about to leave prison. She spoke about the difficulty in getting your script transferred, and said that 'if you can't make contact with your services, you make contact with your dealer'.

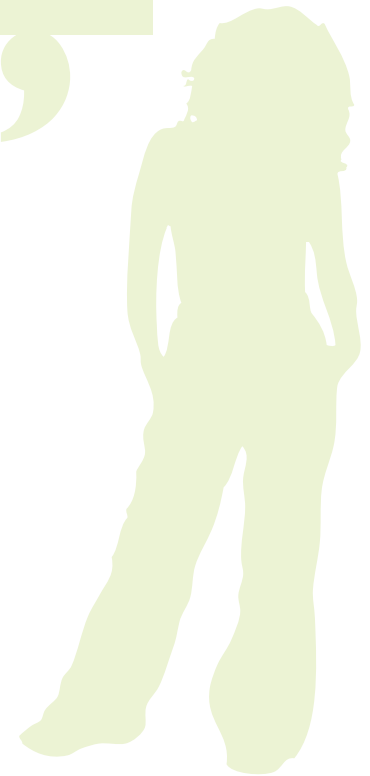
Deborah also couldn't understand why they would put vulnerable people recently released from prison into hostels that are known to house drug users. She knew that because she was in this sort of environment she would relapse.

Abusive relationships have defined Deborah's life. On one occasion, her boyfriend beat her so badly she was lying unconscious in a pool of blood outside her home.

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*“Tracey likes the way her DIP worker ‘goes the extra mile’. She rings her in the week to make sure she’s alright, print out forms and information and chases up applications.”*

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## What is the range and incidence of interventions with the client group?

Generally, offenders understanding of the various services and who provided them was sketchy with offenders attending various drug treatment, training and probation meetings with little clarity regarding the overall aims of their programme. Services appeared fragmented to the offenders interviewed.

Discussions with service providers themselves revealed that limited information sharing meant it was difficult to gain a picture of the range of services provided to a single person. An individual offender might be under the supervision of a probation officer, in receipt of social housing, attending drug treatment, have a social worker, be attending training without the various services being aware of the overall nature and scale of interventions.

Across the range of service provision there was no shared vision for reducing re-offending and different services worked to achieve different performance targets, some of which created disincentives to engage effectively to reduce re-offending.

### Ben

Ben (24) is a charming young man. He is very polite and well presented.

Ben is a former heroin addict and has been to prison 17 times on remand, and served 2 sentences. His crimes were mostly theft (shoplifting) and he also got convicted for burglary.

Ben currently lives in a shared house, with 3 other men who have been through drug or alcohol rehabilitation. Ben says that some of them are a bit weird, or have mental health problems.

Ben met his girlfriend Jo in rehab. Ben has managed to stay totally clean. Ben says that it's difficult when Jo relapses, but he's learnt a lot about himself and the process of addiction in helping to support her.

Rehab provided Ben with a chance to reflect on his life and take opportunities. In rehab Ben met Burt, who had been taken heroin for decades, and his body was a total mess. Becoming friends with Burt gave Ben perspective.

Ben recognises that a few important relationships have made a difference to his life. The first is the judge who recognised him when he came back into court and established a 'friendship'. Another critical relationship was with his Probation Officer – who he said saw potential in him.

## Tracey

Tracey got involved with drugs at a young age. Both she and her boyfriend were addicted to heroin. They had quite a settled routine of shoplifting, thieving and taking drugs.

Tracey started offending when she was 18. At first, she was involved with cheque book fraud. Now that, Tracey shoplifts to support her habit. She has been convicted several times but doesn't see herself giving up. She doesn't see how she can give up and live off £71 a week.

Moving in and out of prison meant that Tracey had become used to losing her flat and possessions.

Tracey is keen to go to rehab but doesn't want to leave her dog. She has heard about a facility in London that allows animals but hasn't made contact with them yet.

Tracey has formed a strong relationship with her DIP worker. Apart from her DIP worker, Tracey is not happy with her other supporting services. According to Tracey, Probation 'don't do f\*\*k all, you just turn up, talk to them for ten minutes and that's it'.



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*“Barley gets irritated at his different case workers asking him the same questions. He doesn't understand ‘why can't they just look at my case notes?’”*

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# Tracey's Journey

## 1983 | Pre addiction

Tracey started dating a drug dealer when she was 16. Although she wasn't taking drugs at this time, she became friends with drug users who used to buy drugs from her boyfriend. When her boyfriend was convicted for drug dealing, she stayed friends with same social circle and took over her boyfriend's role as dealer. She was introduced to heroin by the girlfriends of the boys she dealt to.

## 1984 | Started shoplifting

Tracey was now addicted to heroin and started offending to financially support her habit. Initially she was involved in cheque book fraud, buying a page for £3 and making £100. She would buy '600 cigarettes and loads of booze' from supermarkets and sell them to off licences.

## 1985 | First time in prison

Tracey was caught and convicted when she was 18. She was nervous about going to jail for the first time as she didn't know what to expect. When she arrived, she realised that she knew a number of people there which made it a lot easier for her. She admitted she felt bad for saying that 'it's not that bad' and the only problem was 'you couldn't do whatever you want'.

## 1986-2000 | Relapse

When released from prison, Tracey was clean but became involved with the same social circle again. She began using again and shoplifting. She would steal trolleys of meat and sell it on for 50% of the label price. Sometimes she would shoplift with her social circle, meaning they would steal larger items such as TV's and garden furniture.

## 2001 | Stable but offending

Tracey started going out with Steve, a local heroin user. Tracey started to use heroin again. They had a stable routine of shoplifting, thieving and taking drugs. In this time Steve did a degree in computer programming and got a job as a lecturer. They broke up when he refused to stop using. Tracey then self detoxed in her flat and remained clean for three years.

## 2008 | Reducing offending

Tracey went on a methadone script and continued shoplifting. 'But', she says, a local policewoman 'has it in for her'. Tracey says the policewoman has already falsely accused her on one occasion. Now, the fear of going back to prison and losing her house makes Tracey tense. She says she offends less because she thinks she's being watched.

## 2009 | Moving on

Tracey still shoplifts occasionally as she doesn't see how she can live on benefits money alone. 'But', she says, a local policewoman 'has it in for her'. Tracey says the policewoman has already falsely accused her on one occasion. Now, the fear of going back to prison and losing her house makes Tracey tense. She says she offends less because she thinks she's being watched.

### On the dole

Claiming benefits was her main contact with any formal service provider.

### Several verbal warnings by police

Caught shoplifting several times. Given written and verbal warnings.

### Arrested by police

Spotted on CCTV in a different supermarkets. Police came to her house and arrested her, took her to police station.

### Arrested by police

Becomes known to police and security guards over time. Picked up in store on numerous occasions.

### Contact with probation

Out on licence. Continued courses at Lewisham probation.

### Contact with DIP team

Referred to the service, put on methadone script. Building relationships with case workers.

### Contact with drug intervention program

Continues to attend meetings. Tracey likes her case worker and likes how she 'goes the extra mile' to support her.

### Housing organised

Tracey was surprised that she was given a one bed flat as soon as she left prison.

### Arrested by police

Wrongly accused of shoplifting. Goes all the way to court but gets thrown out by judge for insufficient evidence.

### Volunteering

Volunteers at the coffee morning run by a drug intervention program. Trying to start social groups with other people in the centre. Wants to volunteer in other schemes.

### Sentenced in court

Over the course of 14 years, she received several prison sentences ranging from 3 months to 2 years.

### Sent to prison

Stopped taking heroin, received help from drugs team inside the prison.

### Completed courses in prison

Completed several courses including NVQ Art and gained a certificate for teaching sport.

### Released - contact with probation

Weekly appointment with probation and more courses.

### Probation courses

Completed compulsory courses at probation. Didn't see them as being very useful to her.

## What impact do family and social networks have on the client groups offending behaviour?

On leaving prison offenders often returned to the same social networks that they participated in prior to imprisonment. Breaking the cycle of re-offending was particularly challenging when this was the case. Housing had a role to play in breaking such social networks by re-housing offenders in different areas, however, offenders may not be offered a choice and often they wanted to return to their old networks.

Family ties meant that residential rehabilitation was not an option for some offenders who feared that children might be taken in to care or that they could lose the support of their families and friends. This resulted in low take up of residential rehabilitation despite the efficacy of this approach.



*“She spoke of her frustration about leaving prison clean and ‘full of good intentions’ and being placed in a hostel next to drug dealers and users. She knew that because she was in this sort of environment she’d relapse.”*



### Omar

Omar is 44. He was expelled from school aged 13 for being aggressive and received no further education after that point. As Omar got older he trained at a boxing gym and would get into fights most times he went out. He became known as a street fighter.

Omar has been into prison twice, on charges of GBH with intent, assault and affray. He felt very comfortable with prison life. He enjoyed a fair amount of status, and felt in control of his world.

In prison, Omar discovered his creative and artistic side and loved going to art class. Omar said that he loved painting so much, that he used to smuggle art materials back to his cell, so he could carry on painting after ‘lock up’.

Omar repeatedly tells us that he ‘likes to be on his own’. He finds spending time with other people difficult, and struggles to deal with relationships of any sort. However, many times when he has been on his own, he’s blocked out his thoughts by getting very drunk. He is currently living in a hostel for people who experience problems with alcohol – and hasn’t had a drink for almost 8 weeks.

Omar has a 13 year old son and worries that he will follow his dad into a life of violence and fighting. Over Christmas, Omar was given permission to go and ‘baby sit’ his son. He really relished the opportunity to go, and the trust that his key workers showed in letting him leave the hostel for a few days.

## Innovation

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

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

These options are developed in more detailed in the Lewisham Total Place final report.



## Implementation

The 'skim' service redesign process informed the focus of the next steps and recommendations for further analysis. Recommendations are detailed in the Total Place report and include further development of propositions in the following areas:

- A Common Assessment Framework approach is developed to reduce the number of assessments of offenders (potential savings of up to £250,000p/a).
- A pilot is developed locally to introduce a single lead professional and shared database.
- Every London prisoner where possible should be released from a London prison at the end of their sentence, and release dates should be systematically communicated to relevant agencies and single lead professional.
- An enhanced prison release opt-in model is established to ensure rehabilitative support for offenders is targeted at those most likely to benefit.
- A whole system approach to outcome-based performance measurement (positive rehabilitation and reduction in offending) is developed across agencies in order to evaluate the effectiveness of current provision.
- Consideration is given to the balance of crime reduction resources allocated between the targeting of known persistent offenders and other activities.
- The supervision of approximately 150 offenders is transferred from Probation to DIP. This is consistent with the single lead professional model (potential savings of around £74,000 p/a).

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

## Challenges and Lessons Learned

The ethnographic research provided a fresh look at offender management from the client perspective and from the perspective of the many agencies interfacing with the client group. However, there were challenges in applying the technique.

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

With the repeat offender client group, patience and tenacity were needed to identify research participants and conduct the research. The client group are led chaotic lives and were and often drug users. This results in at times vague recollection of events. Gaining access to offenders can be difficult and must be done with care. Researchers must be prepared to take several attempts to connect with offenders and to develop a network of frontline service providers who can provide access to the client group. This means taking time to engage with service providers to explain the purpose and nature of the research and to gain their trust in providing contacts with their client group.

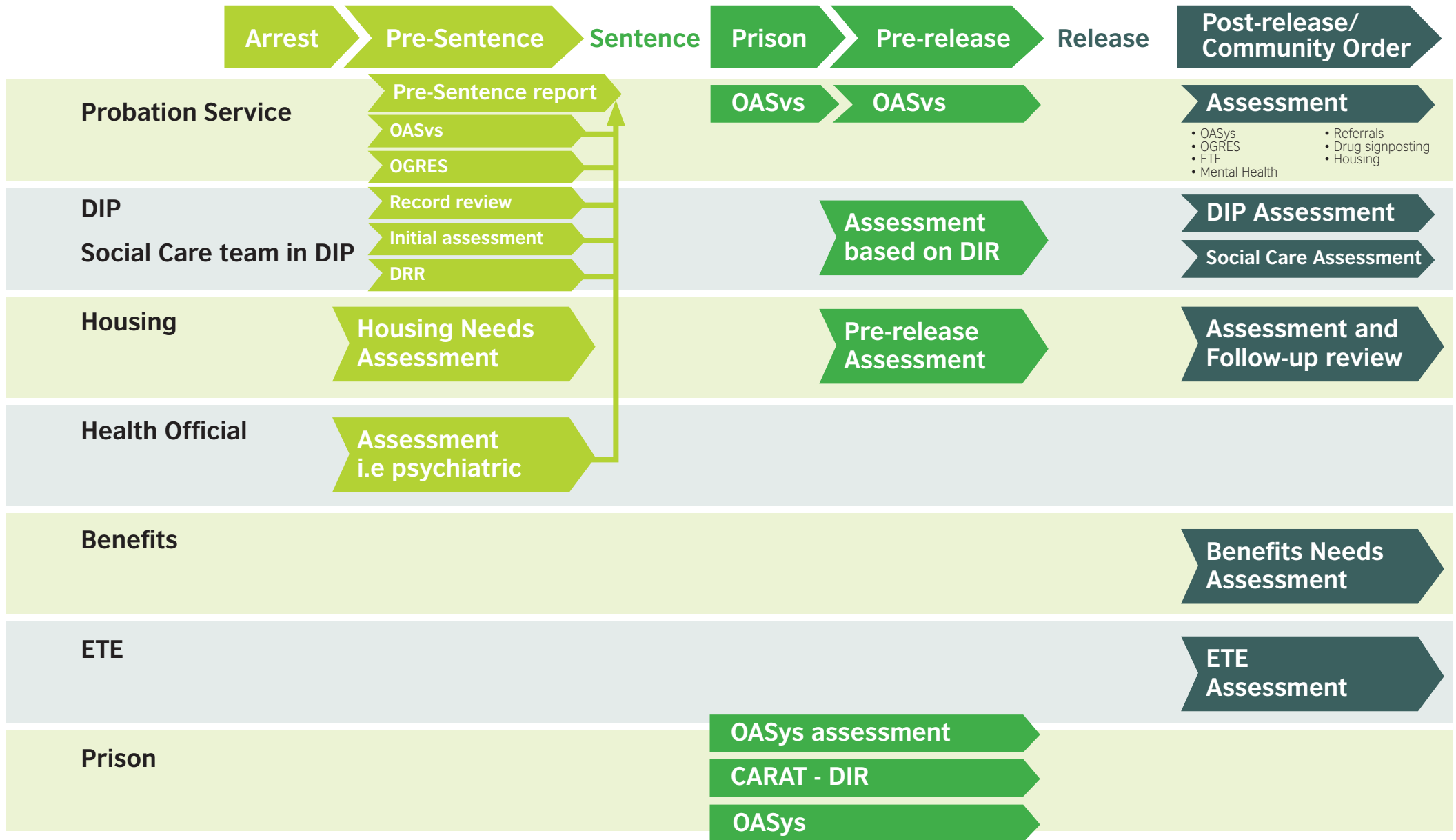
It is always necessary to consider the particular client group and the implications for researchers. For example, researchers working with vulnerable groups should have and provide evidence of acceptable CRB disclosures and risk assessments must be undertaken to ensure that researchers are not put at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

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

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



# Summary process map of prisoner journey.



# Probation Service – draft process map

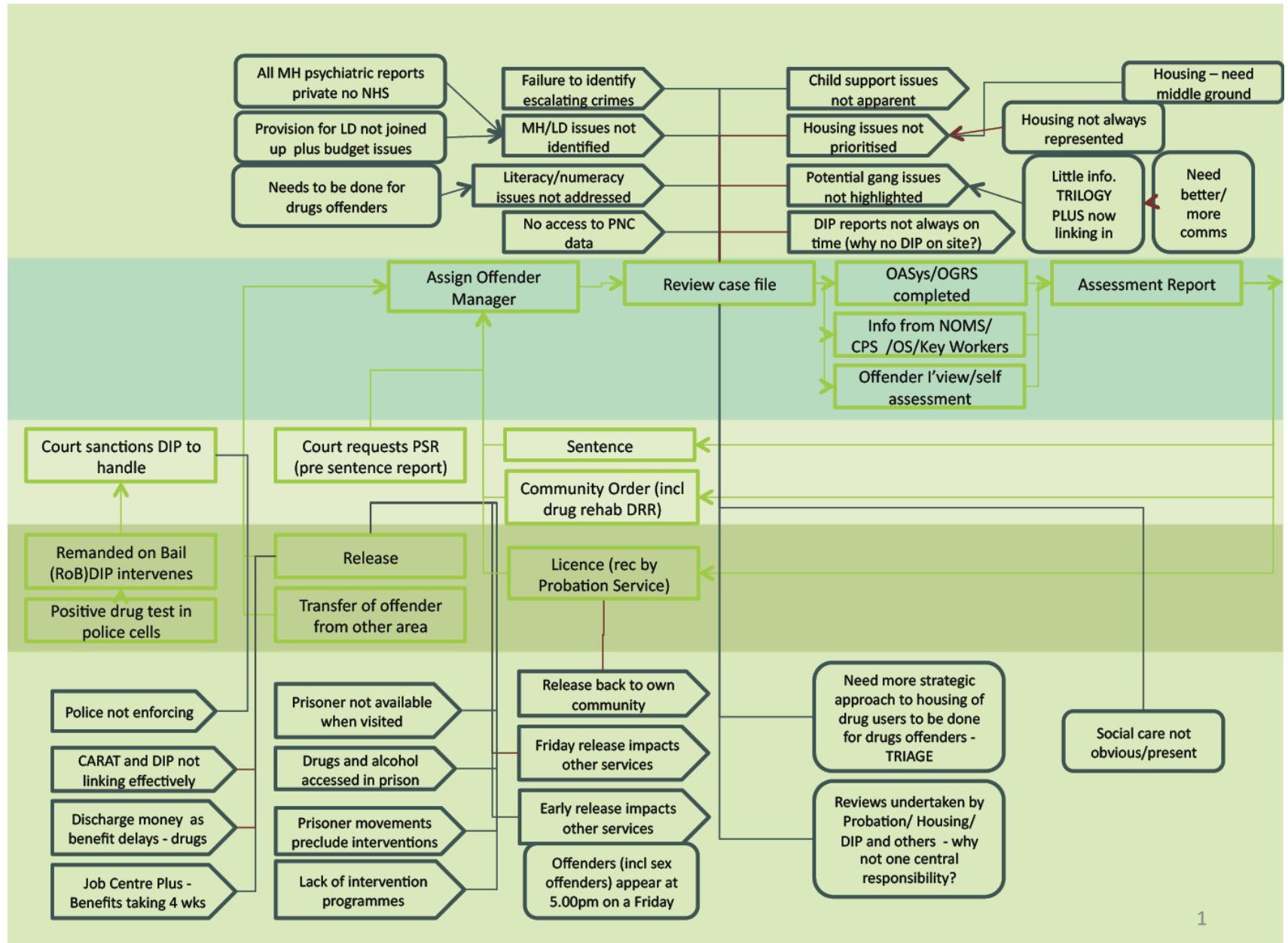
## Issues

## Probation Service

## Court

## Other

## Issues



**Lewisham Strategic Partnership:**

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