

# **CO-PRODUCING CRIMINAL JUSTICE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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## Acknowledgements

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## CO-PRODUCING CRIMINAL JUSTICE: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1. Introduction

1.1. This literature review was requested by the Community Justice division of the Scottish Government to advise on and inform the development of a user engagement strategy for criminal justice policy and practice. The purpose of the review was to provide an overview of existing research evidence relating to the concept, practice and value of user engagement in criminal justice policy and practice. In accordance with that aim it was agreed that the review should provide:

- A definition of user engagement
- A review of the available evidence for or against user engagement, giving particular attention to evidence arising from the Risk-need-responsivity literature, the Desistance literature, and the Good Lives literature.

### 2. Definition of User engagement

2.1. Processes of user engagement are referred to by various terms including user voice, stakeholder consultation, citizen participation or service user involvement (see for example Gallagher and Smith 2010); and in policy terms as personalisation, co-production and co-governance (Pestoff et al 2012) These terms refer to different forms and levels of involvement in various aspects of service design, delivery, development and evaluation. Within this diversity there can be identified typologies of user engagement, or co-production, which distinguish between individual forms of co-production and group and collective forms (Bovaird and Loeffler 2008).

2.2. Individual co-production produces outcomes that benefit the individual participants, and this is presently the dominant co-productive strategy. An example of this might be giving probationers a say on the nature and form of rehabilitative interventions, services and supports available within existing service provision. Group forms of co-production typically bring users together to shape or provide services, such as mutual-aid groups or, in Scotland, the 'Citizen Leadership' fora. This might mean involvement in decision-making processes focussed on policy development, service commissioning, design, delivery and evaluation, resource allocation and the operational and strategic management of services. Collective forms are those strategies that benefit the whole community rather than just groups of users, and include the Children's Hearing System lay panel members in Scotland and user led activist organisations such as UNLOCK. It should be noted that these are not discrete categories, other than in a conceptual sense, in terms of the outcomes the different strategies might produce.

2.3. Acknowledging the diverse meanings and practices associated with the term 'user engagement' we define user engagement in criminal justice policy and practice as: **a participatory and collaborative approach between citizen-consumers of services, policy makers and professionals to the design, delivery and evaluation of criminal justice policies, services and practices.** In accordance with this definition, we recognise user engagement as a complex and multi-layered concept that, in its application, needs to be considered within the context of the different types and forms of participation - from individual to group to collective.

### 3. Why User Engagement: Theoretical Evidence

#### 3.1. Promotes social justice

3.1.1. Duff (2001) argues that the justification for punishment is that the state represents community values and that the person being punished has both offended and is a member of the community they have offended against. This means that those who have offended must not be excluded from the rights and benefits of citizenship. Recognising citizenship status implies the need to support people to access opportunities to pursue 'active citizenship'<sup>1</sup>, which can be central to processes of change but under which user engagement as civic participation might also usefully be positioned. Engaging prisoners/probationers in co-producing change also accords with the anti-oppressive agenda and can take account of the many forms of discrimination that can impact on or influence an individual's offending or desistance. These wider issues around promoting social justice, are consistent with social work values, which include protecting the rights and promoting the interests of former prisoners/probationers; treating each as an individual and respecting and advocating for their views and wishes; valuing diversity and maintaining individuals' dignity; promoting equal opportunities for participation and challenging oppression and discrimination.

#### 3.2. Increases effectiveness, compliance, credibility and legitimacy

3.2.1. Evidence suggests that using the experience and expertise of those who have offended to inform the development of criminal justice interventions can enhance the credibility, meaning or legitimacy of those interventions to users. If services are co-designed or co-produced by former/current prisoners and probationers, they may well be more likely to be credible to users, fit for purpose and thus effective (Rex 1999, McNeill and Weaver 2010, Weaver 2011).

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<sup>1</sup> There is no universally agreed definition of Active Citizenship. Crick (2002:2) argues that it represents a focus on 'the rights to be exercised as well as agreed responsibilities'. Activity in this sense is often associated with engagement in public services, volunteering and democratic participation (see for example Crick 2000; Lister 2003).

3.2.2. In England and Wales, a *Clinks* (2011) survey of probation staff identified their belief that user involvement improved the way services were designed and delivered. Staff seemed convinced that not only does prisoner/probationer (former and current) involvement improve *operational* outcomes in terms of the way services are designed and delivered, but also contributes to more *substantive* outcomes such as supporting compliance and reducing re-offending. Moreover, staff recognised that there were *affective* outcomes for those involved, including improved self-esteem, self-respect and confidence. Former prisoners/probationers can provide useful and relevant insights into the challenges and issues faced by those currently involved in criminal justice services, thus improving the effectiveness of services. They can also act as credible role-models to current probationers. People are more receptive to influence where the change-agent is someone they can identify with (Kelman 1958). This can communicate a sense of hope that the same benefits or outcomes can be achieved by them and they may be more likely to internalise the benefits of responding to this influence (Weaver 2012). This is important because evidence tells us that efforts to support change and secure compliance rely on significant engagement from probationers with the purposes of supervision (Robinson and McNeill 2008). Change is, after all, not about what the worker does, or what is done *to* them, but what is done *with* the parolee / probationer, in collaboration.

## 4. Outcomes/ Benefits of User Engagement

### 4.1. The Risk-Need-Responsivity Model

4.1.1. The Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model of rehabilitation does not directly attest to the role or importance (or otherwise) of prisoner/probationer engagement in the development, delivery or evaluation of criminal justice policy and practice. Rather, it promotes professionally-led interventions designed, structured and delivered in adherence with the principles of risk, need and responsivity (Andrews and Bonta 1998). The contribution of the prisoner/probationer in this process is as the object or site of professional intervention or treatment.

4.1.2. However, recent reviews of RNR (including analyses of the 'disappointing results' of recent UK implementation studies) (Raynor and Vanstone, 1997; Raynor, 2004a, 2004b, 2008), generally conclude that there is much more to designing effective correctional programmes than a strict adherence to the principles of risk, need and responsivity. Other factors identified as important include the building of positive and participatory relationships between staff and probationers (Rex, 1999; Dowden and Andrews, 2004) and promoting amongst probationers 'active responsibility' for change (Braithwaite and Roche, 2001, Edgar et al 2011). In this respect a critical reading of the RNR literature provides some support for a more participatory and co-productive approach to the pursuit and progression of criminal justice outcomes.

## 4.2. The Good Lives Model (GLM)

4.2.1. The GLM is a theoretical framework which advocates a strengths-based approach to rehabilitation. It seeks to enhance individuals' capacities to live meaningful and constructive lives and, in so doing, promote individual well-being and desistance from crime. The GLM explicitly requires that prisoners/probationers should have a say in how they should be rehabilitated. This model therefore requires the active engagement of the individual and emphasises the significance of collaborative approaches to reducing recidivism and supporting change. The importance placed on collaboration and co-operation between practitioner and probationer speaks to models of individual co-production, where the benefits of engagement go essentially to the co-producer. This is due to the emphasis the GLM places on promoting the active engagement and voluntary contribution of the individual's personal resources in supporting change.

4.2.2. Ward and Maruna (2007) present a wealth of empirical evidence drawing on research from a number of disciplines to support the *theoretical* assumptions or conceptual underpinnings of the GLM. They recognise that 'the GLM appears to function well as an integrative framework, but ... there is a lack of direct, compelling research evidence for GLM-inspired programs' (Ward and Maruna, 2007:171), although some evaluative studies are in progress. A recent study by Harkins et al (2012), for example, suggests that programmes based on RNR and GLM approaches indicate equivalent efficacy at retaining participants and achieving change in areas targeted in treatment. However, the more positive future-focussed orientation of the GLM programme seemed to influence participants' motivations for future personal work, as well as supporting processes of self-discovery by generating increased insights into themselves, their values and attitudes and their potential. These factors are congruent with the literature on what supports desistance (see below). This suggests that adopting a positive, future oriented and constructive, collaborative strengths-based approach to rehabilitation can promote increased user engagement in the change process through enhanced treatment engagement and positive therapeutic relationships.

4.2.3. Adopting a GLM approach is, then, likely to increase motivation to change and support processes of self discovery and this has *potential*, in turn, to promote desistance from offending. While the GLM explicitly requires user engagement, evaluations do not provide direct evidence of the role, importance or outcomes of user engagement in isolation from other therapeutic factors. Given the focus of GLM on user engagement however, the evidence reviewed here would suggest that user engagement is a necessary pre-condition in efforts to enhance motivation to change.

## 4.3. Desistance

4.3.1. Desistance is not a model of rehabilitation but refers to a process of behavioural change, specifically ceasing and sustaining cessation from criminal activity. Despite an increasing evidence base revealing the dynamics of desistance, there is little research

on the role of criminal justice services and practices in supporting desistance (although see for example Farrall 2002, McCulloch 2005), and even less evidence identifying a direct relationship between user engagement in criminal justice policy and practice and desistance from crime as an outcome of participation. However, desistance research explicitly emphasises the significance of developing a sense of agency, or self-determination, social capital and of participation in generative activities in supporting change. Participating in user engagement processes and practices can be construed as a both a generative endeavour (Maruna 2001) and a form of group or collective co-production. Such networks can generate social capital and enhance feelings of individual and collective self-efficacy (McNeill and Maruna 2007). This would suggest that user engagement has potential to support wider processes of desistance.

4.3.2. Maruna and LeBel (2009:66), for example, suggest that when a person is voluntarily involved in a helping collective, he/she is 'thought to obtain a sense of belonging', or solidarity, through the 'sharing of experience, strength and hope', which is both a fundamental strength of mutual-aid collectives, and critical to their success. Moreover, there is some empirical evidence to suggest a positive relationship between generativity, volunteering, help-giving behaviours, advocacy or activism and desistance. In turn 'research suggests that engagement with helping behaviours can send a message to the wider community that an individual is worthy of further support and investment in their reintegration' (Maruna and LeBel 2009:69). Engagement in generative, mutual-aid and advocacy behaviours could, then, help to mitigate some of the stigma former prisoners/probationers face experience and support their reintegration and desistance.

4.3.3. LeBel has produced the most systematically robust evidence of the benefits of involvement in helping behaviours (2007) and advocacy behaviours (2009) for individuals' psychological wellbeing. He established a positive relationship between involvement in helping or advocacy behaviours and increased self-esteem and satisfaction with life. Moreover, he identifies a negative correlation between an individual's helping or advocacy orientation and criminal attitudes and behaviours. This indicates that helping or advocating on behalf of others may help maintain a person's pro-social identity and facilitate the maintenance of desistance. In turn, this would seem to suggest a rationale for investing in increased opportunities for people to engage in these behaviours.

#### **4.4. Evidence of Citizen Co-production in Criminal Justice in the UK**

4.4.1. There are numerous examples across the U.K of former/current prisoners/probationers being involved in the design, delivery and evaluation of services and the development of policy – in delivering programmes and services; providing peer advice and support, engaging in consultative forums and advocating for the rights of similarly situated others, running networks or organisations and providing feedback through evaluation and research. Again however, there is little



systematic or comparable empirical evidence of the impacts and outcomes of prisoner/ probationer involvement in and across these areas. The appendix provides a selective overview of these different forms of user engagement and, where available, evidence of their efficacy or impact is summarised.

4.4.2. In general, the *process* of user participation or co-production is claimed to offer 'intrinsic benefits' for individuals (Carr 2004:8). Intrinsic benefits are those individual personal gains acquired through participation. These include, for example, gains in self-efficacy, self esteem and increased social contacts which collective involvement in having a say on matters of concern can produce. There is some evidence that the process of co-production can also benefit communities and services in terms of 'strengthening communities, increasing citizenship and promoting social inclusion (Scottish Office 1999); improving the design and delivery of services and ensuring they better meet the needs of those who use them (Scottish Executive 2006)' (Smith et al 2011:2). However, there is limited evidence of tangible *outcomes* of user-led change achieved in Criminal Justice in the UK. While intrinsic benefits are important, there is no significant evidence testifying to the efficacy or otherwise of user engagement processes in promoting change and improving services, policies or practice. This does not mean that that these changes and improvements are not occurring, just that they are not systematically evidenced.

#### 4.5. Conclusion

4.5.1. There is very little systematic and comparable research evidence relating to the concept, practice or value of user engagement in criminal justice policy and practice. In large part this reflects that fact that, in the criminal justice context, the concept and practice of user involvement has been scarcely analysed, rarely progressed and almost never made subject to robust evaluation (Weaver 2011; Weaver and Lightowler 2012).

4.5.2. Nonetheless, beyond measurable or tangible outcomes, there is evidence to suggest that the process of participation can offer intrinsic benefits for individuals, services and communities.

4.5.3. The evidence reviewed here suggests that involving prisoners/probationers in the design, delivery and evaluation of criminal justice policies, services and practices can improve the design and delivery of services and increase the credibility, legitimacy and meaningfulness of interventions. In addition, there is some evidence to suggest that explicit efforts to involve prisoners/ probationers in service design and delivery can contribute to: supporting desistance and enhanced compliance; the promotion of agency and enhanced self-esteem; the development of people's existing strengths; the consolidation of pro-social identities; the realisation of personal aspirations, and the progression and maintenance of change.

4.5.4. On the basis of the evidence reviewed, there is a rationale for pursuing a more participatory and collaborative approach between prisoners/probationers, policy

makers and professionals to the design, delivery and evaluation of criminal justices service. In addition there is a need to develop more robust systems and practices of evaluation which are capable of evaluating the efficacy, impact and outcomes of such an approach for the various stakeholders involved.

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## 5. Appendix

### A selective review of current approaches to citizen-consumer participation in justice services in the UK<sup>2</sup>

This appendix provides a selective review of some of the different forms of citizen co-production in the criminal justice system; where available, the evidence of the efficacy or impact of these different forms is offered.

#### 5.1. Involving reformed-offenders in programme delivery

5.1.1. Projects that fully engage former prisoners/probationers in the design, commissioning and delivery of rehabilitation programmes remain a comparatively rare occurrence in the UK, particularly in community-based criminal justice services (see Devilly et al 2005; Morrison et al 2006). However, examples do exist and are increasing in number such as, *Foundation 4 Life* (F4L) which is a London based programme which engages reformed offenders and former-gang leaders to deliver behaviour modification workshops and programmes to young people who are either offending or at risk of offending. For instance, they run a six week *Guns, Gangs and Weapons Programme*, which involves workshops, follow-up outreach and peer mentoring placement scheme. This initiative brings together prisoners on licence, reformed offenders, former-gang leaders, victims and their families and uses testimonies, group debates, role play and coping strategies as methods of intervention.

5.1.2. An evaluation of the workshops and programmes undertaken by F4L indicated that 90% of young people felt that the sessions had an impact on how they thought about the future and achieving their goals. On entry to the programme, nearly half of all participants said that they didn't care about the consequences of their offending; on exit, 20% said they would actively make a change; 30% had made a decision about their futures and 26% were beginning to think about the consequences of their offending. Moreover, 91% of reformed offenders trained as facilitators have not re-offended and some have gone on to obtain employment in youth work.

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## 5.2. Peer education / support networks

- 5.2.1. The term 'peer education' incorporates a number of different approaches including peer training, facilitation, counselling, modelling, support or peer helping (Devilley et al 2005). A well-known initiative, launched in 1991 in HMP Swansea, is the *Listeners* scheme, which is now widespread throughout the prison estate. Listeners are prisoners trained and supported by *Samaritans* to offer a confidential listening service to fellow prisoners who are feeling distressed. While there is limited empirical evidence of the effectiveness of the Listeners schemes, Dhaliwal and Harrower (2009), echoing LeBel's (2007) analysis of the impacts and outcomes of engagement in helping behaviours on the helper, found that 'listeners' take a high degree of personal satisfaction from their involvement in the scheme and experience significant personal growth, alongside changing attitudes towards themselves and others.
- 5.2.2. Peer-led programs can benefit all the principal stakeholders, namely prisoners/probationers, peer educators, and the host organisation itself, be that in prison or community. For prisoners/probationers, peer educators may have enhanced credibility and the approaches increased legitimacy and may be more accessible for harder-to-reach populations (Devilley 2005). Indeed, evaluating the outcomes of the *St Giles Peer Advice Project*, Boyce et al., (2009: ix) observe that the advisees were positive about the support they received, and 'especially appreciative of receiving help from someone who has 'walked in their shoes''. The Giles Trust *Straight to Work* project also employs former prisoner peer advisors following their release to provide intensive resettlement support for new releases, helping with practical issues such as financial, housing and employment matters. They meet prisoners at the prison on their release and provide ongoing support for as long as is necessary. This intensive programme of support is called '*Through the Gates*'. In 2009, this programme was estimated to have reduced re-offending by 40%, thus saving the taxpayer in the region of £10M (ProBono Economics 2010).
- 5.2.3. Nearly a third of the St Giles staff comprises reformed offenders. Their peer advice projects train serving prisoners to NVQ level 3 in *Advice, Information and Guidance* and these prisoners provide an advice service to other prisoners. In this vein, both peer advisors and advisees benefit. From April 2008 – March 2009, 145 prisoners across 18 prisons obtained their NVQ (Boyce et al 2009). Boyce et al (2009) found that the peer advisors were very positive about their participation in the scheme. They felt that the work they were engaged in was more meaningful and purposive than the normal occupations available in prison; they obtained a useful qualification, skills and increased their employability and work ethic; they experienced increased self confidence not least in coming to see themselves as good role models for other prisoners, and an increased sense of control over their life. Helping others was construed as both a motivation for and advantage of participation in the scheme (see also Devilly 2005; Edgar et al 2011). After obtaining their NVQs, peer advisors are deployed in a range of voluntary positions within prison and the community including the Citizens' Advice Bureau, Job Centre Plus, the *Toe by Toe* literacy

project, run by the Shannon Trust, as prisons race relations advisors, and as 'Insiders', who provide information and assistance to new prisoners. Participation in these roles and contexts may assist the peer advisor to feel more connected to society; coupled with the positive and purposive roles they occupy, which can influence the emergence of a non-stigmatised identity, participation in such initiatives may support former prisoners/probationers reintegration (Devilly 2005; Maruna 2001; Maruna and LeBel 2009).

### 5.3. Mentoring

- 5.3.1. NOMS, in England and Wales, is starting to use mentoring as a specific intervention alongside wider statutory services, including utilising the supports of former prisoners/probationers as well as people without direct experience of the criminal justice system (MoJ 2011). In part this can be construed as a response to policy initiatives placing emphasis on encouraging communities, and thus volunteers, community groups and citizens, to become further involved in criminal justice services and penal sanctions (Cabinet Office, 2010a; Ministry of Justice, 2008a, 2008b, 2009; Probation Circular, 2007) as well as promoting the engagement of former prisoners/probationers as volunteers and mentors in prisons and the community (see Ministry of Justice, 2008a, 2008b). The rapid growth and investment in mentoring schemes further fits with wider policy agendas in relation to enhancing the role of the third sector, civic renewal, active citizenship and *'The Big Society'* (Cabinet Office 2010b).
- 5.3.2. However, there is a particular demand for *peer* mentoring schemes amongst people currently involved in offending. A relatively recent Princes Trust survey (2008) established that 65% of young people under the age of 25 said a mentor would help them stop offending; 71 % of those surveyed indicated they would like a mentor who was a reformed offender, reflecting findings elsewhere (see for example Irwin 2005, Sowards et al 2006). There are numerous peer-mentoring schemes operating in the UK; only a brief selection are offered here by way of illustration.
- 5.3.3. The SOS Gangs Project provides pre and post release mentoring to young people imprisoned for gang related crime and has been operational since October 2006. The service is delivered by staff all of whom have had previous involvement in offending and there are consistent reports of impressive impacts on re-offending rates. It would appear that less than 10 per cent of mentees have re-offended, against a national re-offending rate of around 75 per cent for this age group (Rooney and Page 2009).
- 5.3.4. As with many other forms of co-productive practices in the criminal justice system, there have been few substantial studies evaluating the effectiveness of mentoring, let alone peer mentoring, and the evidence about the impact of mentoring on reducing offending is somewhat ambiguous (Joliffe and Farrington 2007). However, whilst the evidence around mentoring and offending may be limited, there may be

more short-term outcomes which can be readily identified (Lewis 2009). In terms of peer-mentoring, these outcomes can include enabling and creating responsibility, promoting positive change through role modelling, engaging harder to reach people and supporting people to access services (St Giles Trust 2011).

- 5.3.5. In Scotland, the *Routes Out of Prison* (RoOP) project employs Life Coaches, 70% of whom are reformed offenders or who have experienced problematic substance use, to support short term prisoners pre and post release. They provide peer support of both an emotional and practical form, linking clients to other services, offering advocacy support with issues such as housing debt, benefits advice, health and addiction, training, education and work experience. Between January 2009 – December 2010, RoOP signed up 3612 prisoners; 1557 (43%) continued engagement on release. The most common support needs identified by RoOP clients relate to addictions, homelessness and unemployment. 19% (n= 293) achieved an employment, training or educational outcome. Between August 2010-January 2011, 81 homeless people were supported to obtain accommodation; 88 people were supported to access health or addiction services and 123 people were supported to access financial benefits. The evaluation of the RoOP project found that peer support was highlighted by all key stakeholders including prisoners as a key strength imbuing RoOP with credibility with clients, encouraging their engagement with services and motivating them to make positive changes to their lives (for further details see Wise Group 2011).

#### 5.4. Councils and Forums

- 5.4.1. Prisons have been using some form of consultative user group for a number of years although the extent of participation and involvement varies widely (Clinks 2011; Edgar et al 2011). These groups take the form of various theme-based or functionally-driven committees or elected prison councils. However, Clinks (2011) found that there were few service user groups in place in community based services, where it was more common to find evidence of individual engagement practices, peer mentoring and peer support groups than consultative or advocacy-oriented service user groups.
- 5.4.2. The most recent work on prison councils has emerged from the reformed offender-led organisation, *User Voice* (2010) (more on which below) who have developed a model for prison councils around some of the principles and methods used for other democratic forums. What is, therefore, perhaps distinctive about this model is the emphasis placed not just on outcomes but on processes of engagement and *its* impact on those engaged. While the *User Voice* council model is in its relative infancy, the early indications of outcomes from the pilots conducted across three prisons comprising HMP Isle of Wight are positive, particularly in terms of prisoner participation in the process, comprising 58 % in Albany, 52 % in Camp Hill, and 51 % in Parkhurst. *User Voice* (2010) report that at the Albany site, during the pilot period, there was a 37% reduction in complaints from prisoners and at Parkhurst the

number of segregation days reduced from 160 to 47 days, which they suggest may be indicative of a reduction in prisoner dissatisfaction and tensions. User Voice (2010) found that their model requires some adaptation to reflect the challenges presented by prisons populated by short sentence prisoners. They found that at Camp Hill, the high turnover of prisoners meant that continuity and discussion were constrained. Notwithstanding this, both prison staff and prisoners identified a number of benefits of prison councils. Prisoners identified that the councils were mechanism for prisoners voices to be heard, and as a means through which to gain access to staff and management structures, exchange information and improve both communication and transparency in decision-making. User Voice (2010) identified that while there were limited examples of significant changes, a number of smaller changes had been realised including changes to family visiting arrangements, shifts in prisoners' earnings, food choices and other domiciliary issues.

- 5.4.3. Despite the support of governors and senior officers, the pilot evaluation suggests that there was considerable scepticism in the early stages about the use of councils, particularly among prison officers. This seems to relate to issues of power – for example, that councils might mean that staff were being ‘managed’ by prisoners or that they would have increased access to senior staff than they did. Others saw councils as a senior management imposition, which emphasised the need for User Voice to engage more effectively with prison officers about the potential benefits of the council model in the early stages, to support their 'buy in'. The benefits identified by staff included the reduction of conflict and tensions and thus improvements in the management, engagement and education of prisoners and the redistribution of resources. Based on their success in HMP Isle of Wight, the User Voice council model has been extended to HMP Maidstone, HMPs Rye Hill and Wolds. They are currently piloting the model in four London boroughs of the London Probation trust, namely Greenwich, Haringey, Kingston and Richmond and Tower Hamlets.

## 5.5. User led organisations

- 5.5.1. *User Voice* is led by reformed offenders and was founded by Mark Johnstone in 2009 (see [www.uservoice.org.uk](http://www.uservoice.org.uk)). They have developed a democratic Council model that can be developed for use within prisons or in the community for probation, youth offending teams and other related services as outlined above. They also engage in consultancy working with clients to design projects aimed at accessing, hearing and acting upon the insights of those who are hardest to reach, including prisoners, reformed offenders and those at risk of crime. They also engage in advocacy work aimed at engaging the media, the public, practitioners and policy-makers.
- 5.5.2. *Unlock* is the National Association of Ex-Offenders, founded in 1999 and led by reformed offenders (see [www.unlock.org.uk](http://www.unlock.org.uk)). Their objective is the realisation of equality of opportunities, rights and responsibilities for reformed offenders by challenging the discrimination they face. They use their wealth of collective



experience and expertise to influence political debate, policy reform and public understanding. In this sense, UNLOCK focuses on the legal and structural barriers to reintegration, particularly surrounding the barriers to participation to employment, for example posed by current law and policy, in particular, the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 – which is the legislation that allows people to move on from their criminal past. UNLOCK is above all a campaigning group whereas User Voice is more concerned with changing systems, practices and processes that inhibit people making positive contributions and which marginalise the voices of those who are or were involved in the system. Their focus is on involving current and former prisoners/probationers in supporting processes of change, rehabilitation and service design, development and delivery. Of particular relevance here is UNLOCK's online discussion forum for reformed offenders. This enables people with shared experiences to provide mutual assistance, seek guidance and exchange knowledge. Both organisations seek to increase opportunities and remove barriers to participation for people who have offended, to support them to make positive contributions.

## 5.6. Feedback and Evaluation Research

- 5.6.1. There are numerous instances of engaging service users for specific Government-funded research on community sanctions. Obvious Scottish examples include the evaluation of the Community Reparation Orders pilot (Curran et al 2007), DTTO and Drug Court (Eley et al 2002; McIvor et al 2006), the Evaluation of the 218 centre (Loucks et al 2006), and *Constructs PSSO* programme (Schinkel and Whyte 2009) where the views of these participants were central to the evaluation process. Indeed, these evaluations are not without precedents. Client studies in social work initially developed in the 1970's (see for example Larner and Tefferteller 1966; Mayer and Timm 1970) and burgeoned in the 1980's (see Corden and Preston-Shoot 1987; Preston-Shoot and Agass 1990). However, as both punitive and managerialist pressures increasingly dominated criminal justice social work, services user perspectives have progressively focussed almost exclusively on obtaining feedback on service provision, and at that in a largely unstructured and limited manner, at the expense of accruing knowledge, based on service users' perspectives, on service development and processes of desistance and the role of the probation service within this (Nash 1996; Nellis 2002; Sheldon 1994). More recent work emerging from the desistance research, much of which has been informed by listening to and learning directly from people at different stages in the process of giving up crime, has addressed this imbalance to an extent – but not in any systematic or structured sense.
- 5.6.2. In England and Wales the National Offender Management Service (NOMs) have recently issued a mandatory, annual Offender Management Feedback Questionnaire (OMFQ). The questionnaire was developed to provide information about people's experiences of offender management, and the extent to which they were engaged in the process. It is designed to elicit whether people experience their sentence as an



integrated whole, whether they are actively engaged in the sentence planning process and whether their relationships with probation staff are experienced as professional and supportive of rehabilitation and resettlement. There is no such mandatory requirement in Scotland to elicit service user feedback in this way.

- 5.6.3. While this form of user involvement in criminal justice services is perhaps more common, it is also more constrained and passive than some of the approaches outlined above and invites feedback primarily on experiences of and efficacy of areas of service provision, reflecting the areas that agencies consider relevant. The extent to which service users' feedback influences service provision and the means through which this is in turn fed back to participants is widely variable. Still more infrequent is the involvement of service users in co-designing, co-evaluating and collating the feedback on service provision.

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