

## Report from the Discovering Desistance workshops held in London (11 May and 11 June 2012)



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For further details about the project see <http://blogs.iriss.org.uk/discoveringdesistance/>



## Introduction

This report is an output from the Desistance Knowledge Exchange (DesKE) project led by Fergus McNeill (University of Glasgow) and funded by the ESRC. The project team also includes Stephen Farrall (University of Sheffield), Claire Lightowler (IRISS) and Shadd Maruna (Queens University Belfast). For further information about the project see: <http://blogs.iriss.org.uk/discoveringdesistance/>.

The report is based on the contributions of those who attended two workshops about “Discovering Desistance” in London, on 11 May and 11 June 2012. Attendees were a mixture of policy-makers, probation officers, current and previous service users, people who have offended, family members of people who have offended, and researchers. The workshops followed an appreciative inquiry methodology, focusing on the positive and what works well. There were four key stages involved in the process -Discovery, Dream, Design and Destiny – details of each stage are provided in the relevant section of the report. The London workshops were facilitated by Stephen Farrall (University of Sheffield) and Claire Lightowler (IRISS).

The report presents the outputs and notes from the two days without offering analysis or comment. For this project workshops have also taken place in Belfast, Glasgow and Sheffield, between April and June 2012. The project team will be analysing the data emerging across the workshops and producing a more analytical and thematic report, to be made available here: <http://blogs.iriss.org.uk/discoveringdesistance/>. Via this link you will also find copies of the slides used at the workshops.

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# London workshop 1 (11 May 2012)

## Workshop Structure

10-10.10	Welcome, introduction to project and workshop
10.10-11.00	<b>Film Viewing</b>
11.00-11.30	Group discussion: Reflections on the film
11.30 – 12.00	<b>The desistance evidence base</b> – based on Insight paper - ‘How and why people stop offending: discovering desistance’.
12.00 - 12.45	Lunch
12.45 - 2.00	<b>Discovery phase</b>
2.00 - 2.15	Tea/coffee
2.15 - 3.45	<b>Dream Phase</b>
3.45-4.00	Sum-up and close

## Reflections on the film

Following a screening of the film The Road from Crime – see <http://blogs.iriss.org.uk/discoveringdesistance/documentary/> - attendees were invited to offer any comments or reflections.

- Fantastic piece - but problem with the word desistance, use the word healing.
- Desistance potentially another term - come out of academic discourse, not necessarily the right term for those working or going through the process.
- I experienced a safe place where I weren't judged- space to deal with traumatic experiences. A place to forgive myself. See prison experience as abuse.
- Probation officer- judging. Seeing me as the worst thing I've ever done.
- Forgiving and healing
- Humanity - takes away humanity unable to volunteer due to CRB check
- If you see person as the worst thing you ever do
- Stopping crime and staying stopping – resonates with me as a more appropriate term.
- The real experts are reformed offenders, and this is the biggest challenge
- How we start to work tougher to tackle this
- Appreciated the film, recognise own life in there, came flooding back.
- Notion of desistance, the film mentioned the role of families, but didn't dwell on it too much. Would have been useful to extend.
- To what extent - this discussion needs to be wider than criminal justice, all being involved in this discussion.
- Insurance agencies
- The idea of hope- the sense of hopeless you must feel when licence conditions read out.
- There are things the service does inadvertently which discourage desistance
- I really like the film, the concept of hope is something I try to hang on. Originally coming in naive but enthusiastic, and really confused about sentencing. Quite easily getting sucked into a system.
- You're bigger than someone who has committed crime
- The film is extremely inspirational. My team is working along these lines. However, we mustn't use sight of the complexity of some of the issues we are dealing with, and the people we are dealing with.

- Aggressive behaviour. But if we'd allowed someone to make a mistake there's danger to the public - what's the line here?
- A lot of what we saw on the film resonated with what we do- St Giles Trust. We'd been blissfully unaware of the theories of desistance, to us it's common sense.
- Theoretically informed, but not a theory of change
- Film represents my process (past, present, future)
- What matters about 'what works'?



- Actively listening
- Problem solving support
- Being non judgmental
- Time
- Showing a genuine interest
- Creative practice
- Responding to individuals
- Being there – support as required by the individual according to the need not risk
- Encouragement for difficult times
- Proactive and understanding employers
- Educating communities
- Cooperating between education staff and prison staff
- Positive engagement
- Re-integration/part of a community
- Creative risk management (eg enabling a service user to become more accountable/responsible)
- Probation and service user awards
- Service user councils
- Sharing good news
- Safe environment of supervisory relationship
- Communication and being honest
- Involving others – e.g. Family
- Service users understanding skills and how can apply
- Time
- Feeling of being needed
- Ways of speaking with others in a similar situation
- Understanding the relationships that people have (positive/negative)
- Finding out who was important in a person’s life: trust/interest
- A shared agenda
- Seeing “offenders” as people first
- Spending time with probation officer/probationer – changes
- Quality of relationships
- One stop show approaches – colocation of stakeholders
- High motivation by offender to secure employment
- Being there
- Good staff supervision from managers – reflective/counseling focused
- Learning from mistakes
- Volunteer networks
- Access to prisons for pre-release support
- Prioritise important piece of work
- Creating work environment in which having a criminal record is not important or even better is seen as an asset
- Problem solving support
- Getting to know people and being accessible
- Listening
- Having confidence in individual
- Being respectful
- Good relationship
- Providing help where agreed
- Openness to help
- Forming and maintain a good relationship
- Offender feeling that they were in a place to take on board their need to change

- Pro-active employers and fair risk-based priorities
- Email a “prisoner” – update prisoners on work the offender manager is doing on their behalf
- Making goals achievable
- Feeling that “you” matter
- Self-worth
- Approach of the individual
- Skills of probation officer and taking an interest in the case
- Not back in prison
- Researching community resources
- Accompanying to first appointment
- Encouraging them to see positives
- Acting as an advocate helping with correspondence
- Thinking out of box to improve relationship – changes dynamic
- Being supportive by sign-posting services
- Staff training/ investment
- Relocating away from a problematic community
- Positive staff and prisoner relationships
- Continued encouragement at difficult times
- Support workers in prison
- Belief that he would keep the tenancy
- Time spent with him to complete applications
- Growth in self-esteem/ self-belief
- Staff prepared to go the extra mile with clients – not giving up on them
- Willingness to take risks
- Understanding the benefits
- Having time to sit and work with offenders
- Personal relationship with housing staff
- Not counting failures, pre-judging or giving up hope
- Stability
- Finding a job
- Cases attending programmes and making the link to day to day life
- Seeing yourself as part of the community
- Skills of case
- Opportunities for courses and jobs
- Knowing about opportunities
- Probation officer taking the time to meet the cases family and case being happy for it to happen
- Shared responsibility
- Longevity in the relationship (stability)
- 3 or 4 way meetings i.e. with family, partners, partnership workers
- Being part of a PPO team which had access
- Support from one councilor
- Reflection on relationships and what worked well
- Crisis plan
- Long term programme of support
- Boundaries are broken down
- Listening carefully
- Building relationship with housing workers
- Communicating the benefits for the person and society
- Money being available for this expensive provision, match with it being at the right time

- Ongoing support across different prisons
- Enabling practitioners to work directly with service users to achieve a qualification
- Knowing the resources in your area
- Using gym qualification
- Peer mentoring
- Probation officer needs to make links to community agencies
- Looking forward to the future
- Harnessing wider community resources/ social justice services to support change
- Giving them access to facilities such as the telephone referrals forms
- Supportive training and staff development, focus on skills development
- Partnership working
- St Giles – through the gate
- Building positive relationships
- Family ties (bonds)
- Collaboration with GOALS project and referring service users to the project
- Discussing in a group or one to one session the link between thoughts, feelings, behavior – making it relevant to the individual
- Noticing their skills and talents
- Relating
- Clear boundaries and expectations
- Digital inclusion – access to the internet
- Restorative justice practices
- Horizontal support – peer support
- Staff having the flexibility to respond to their clients
- Staff going well beyond their job description to support clients
- Gave him time. Went to the house to wake him up.
- Institutional design which is built around belief in redemption
- He was motivated to get into detox
- To be given time
- Worker's experience of stopping offending
- Referral and liaison with partnership work
- Liaison with housing providers
- Opportunities
- Positive encouragement
- Confidence
- Support
- Help from employment adviser
- Individual needs being met – not just part of a system
- Positive two way experience – learning for both
- Managing expectations
- Use of ordinary language
- Cooperation between education and uniformed staff
- Good links with local housing and education workers in the office
- Showing you are interested in the person not the offence
- Positive comments from judges, magistrates at court reviews
- Empowering offenders
- Routes to employment in criminal justice system for ex-offenders
- Managers encourage innovation
- Ex-offender staff are part of the team and their strengths/qualities are recognised and rewarded
- Probation officer went extra bit



- Innovative
- Showed respect
- Job gave a reference
- Positive court reviews
- Giving importance to the positives
- Hearing people, but listening to what it said
- Sharing knowledge and practice
- Recognising the benefit of spending time with an individual
- Consistency of probation officer
- Building positive relationship
- Doing what you say you are going to do
- Ability to reflect
- Recognition of good progress – labels
- Seeing service users as partners and co-produce services
- Service user found it positive – sense of not being rejected
- Training on 121 work with offenders on difficult issues (i.e. DV, sex offenders)
- Positive court reviews – de-labeling
- Sharing / as much transparency as possible
- Built up good trusting working relationship
- Accessed community resources
- Encouragement to see potential benefits
- Non-judgmental approach by professionals
- Given respect
- Help him settle down by getting stable accommodation and money to (influence?) decision to stop offending
- Had enough
- Made life hell for everyone, had no respect for the system, wanted what others had, took drugs for my pain, commit lots of crime for my habit
- Reassurance will succeed
- Persistence
- Being able to manage rejection and supporting this advice in process help from others
- Access to money for deposit
- Working together we know what small steps could make a difference
- Other agencies can get stuff probation can't
- Sometimes going the extra mile
- Company and prison provided opportunity
- Offender supervisor/ myself supported applications
- He did well in interviews
- Going the extra mile
- Early identification that this was best and sticking to it by finding the time
- Trust, honesty, realism
- A job more important than 'the' job
- Partnerships
- (ETE?) Drug/ alcohol
- Accommodation
- More staff
- Creative risk management
- Multi agency working – same premises
- Integrated offender management initiatives
- Meeting upon release
- Communication with prisoners i.e. video link, email, good letters

- Reduced case loads to focus also on custody cases
- Digital inclusion – allowing residents in approved premises to search for jobs, housing, education on their own
- Building a long term meaningful relationship with the person
- Assisting cases to get onto courses, access to jobs
- Went out of his way
- Recalled – Did PO helped get job
- Practical help
- Red hook community court where new cases watch others, get congratulated on their success
- Challenging and not challenging – thinking at the right times
- Asking someone what do they want
- Say positive things – praise and being supportive
- Being ethical in your practice
- Self-belief
- Honesty
- Transparency
- Agreement to engage
- Building of personal and individual relationships
- Understanding of people’s needs: allowing them to identify them
- Being honest with the individual(s)
- A seamless approach
- True partnerships
- Utilising/valuing and acknowledging people’s experience
- Utilising/including people’s external social (family) networks
- Relationship – trust / empathy
- Allowed to continue in employment
- Service user attending a child protection conference for his child
- Involvement of the/a community response
- Learning from my mistakes and not repeating them
- Planting the seed
- Believing in the individual
- Getting to know the families of the cases
- Setting small step objectives that can be measured and acknowledged
- Using home visits as the main means of supervising someone
- Working closely with family members
- Rehab provision
- Getting a local authority to accommodate someone against all the odds
- Gaining employment
- Learning to read music
- Facilitating attendance at church for a sexual offender
- Positivity
- Housing permanent
- Securing housing for a homeless person via work with partnership agencies
- Belief of others (without judgment)
- Achieving secure home
- Running programmes and hearing examples of how people used the skills
- Time
- The feeling of belonging
- Employing ex-offenders to support peers on release
- Monthly/weekly learner/ prisoner voice sessions – feedback mechanisms from prisoners

- Getting someone into detox
- Contact with child when previously no contact
- Someone gets accommodation
- Gave the service user hope – and can do attitude
- Individual started working with counseling services
- Peer mentoring in education
- Saving lives
- Social enterprises site with training and qualifications
- Home visits
- Throughcare. End to end offender management
- Finance and debt management – taking responsibility
- Support for someone too scared/shy to join drug treatment – going with them to first session and calling to see how its going
- User involvement at all stages of interventions and organisations
- Finding support NA / AA etc
- Jobs
- Accommodation
- Supporting an individual into a T.C
- Writing letters to prisoners
- Identify an individual's skills / talent
- Belief in change from client
- Learning from failure – so you have....why?
- Belief in change from worker
- Ability to communicate with people
- Stable employment (NOMS / CFO) – not placements or training
- Positive networks – family, partners
- Peer support
- Paying bills today. Got my family back. No more crime. Love life today.
- St Giles Trust peer advisors gain L3 (?) certificate in advice and education - agency of change, hope and changing attitude
- Addictions support – continued, appropriate
- Awareness of entitlements e.g. older teenagers/young adults accessing support as 'looked after children' status
- Employment training – relevant to economic lives
- Real work experience (real wages, working conditions)
- Engagement in services before release
- Having ex-offender attached to probation to provide support to probationers around housing etc
- Helping an individual to manage debts and access support
- Service users realising how their thinking has had an effect on their behavior / offending
- Use of volunteers – peer mentoring
- Use of self in motivating / supporting change
- Service user achieving Koestler award and probation officer going to see his work
- Stayed out of trouble and formed new non-offending identity
- Found accommodation for a recovering heroin user after release
- Gets accommodation
- Gets a job which they enjoy doing
- Securing employment following a long term prison sentence
- Introducing probation officers to other family members
- Learned ways of dealing with his/her issues in relationships
- Giving out extension number – contactable

- When all the services join up
- Help families supporter know how to contact probation
- Ex offenders family / supporter having relationship with the probation officer as part of the plan
- When communities support the families etc, supporting the offender (rather than just judge)
- Keep families informed throughout remand and sentence
- Theory less important – group work – community working together
- Humanise relationships
- Challenging difficult behavior – holding people to account
- Groups for supporters etc. Talk on a level
- Early revocation – letter to the judge – pride
- Client gym programme for probation officer
- Family contact
- Caring / showing a genuine interest
- Housing / stability
- When I listened and understood the individual
- User voice – something to do
- Girlfriend
- Positive feedback
- Giving service users more time
- St Giles trust – through the gates
- Listening to and helping people unload their feelings/rage
- Structure / plan
- Preparation for release – timeliness
- Community hubs
- Having a clear contract with the person
- Housing
- Trust
- Service users' child coming off child protection register
- Validation
- Met partner family with probation officer and partner
- Sutton HUB – multi-agency approach for young adults with alcohol problems
- Safe environment – supportive housing
- Mentoring / sponsor
- Debt management
- Dog the bounty hunter
- Rehab centres
- User Voice – knowing someone's been through what you've ben through
- Service-user support groups
- National service as option
- Using service users. Red hooks
- Prisoners feeding back that they have found support of probation officer useful and that it has helped them think about how to maintain change
- Inviting probation officer to come and see her bingo hall
- Working in partnership to overcome practical obstacles to rehabilitation
- Doing learning/education classes in prison gym
- Linking to other agencies and family support
- Service user being awarded open college network certificate (his first qualification)
- Back to college
- Giving something back

- Finding out who I am
- Don't use anymore
- Paying attention to the details of each resident's needs
- Giving good attention
- Meeting an individual's family
- Working with 'offenders' outside the office environment i.e. visiting galleries
- Being allowed to say sorry, make amends
- Inspiration
- Story
- Rehab
- Re-entry worker in Harlem who used his own desistance to prove to others that it was possible
- Didn't re-offend and maintained liberty
- Doing what you say you'll do
- Engaging housing landlords
- Employment projects (employers)
- Referring to Red Kite learning
- Visiting individuals attending post programme
- Working with someone to get them housing
- Fair and proportionate sentencing
- Getting on to and completing a college course
- Working with employers to act as filter around disclosure to encourage positive employment
- Amnesty
- Multi-agency – 1 roof
- Safe environment – outside office environment
- Trust
- Fair sentencing - Understanding sentencing
- One to one support
- Housing
- Mentoring
- Service users completing the GOALS project which combines football and life skills
- How I felt
- Training placement with a company whilst in Cat D prison
- Multi-agency working to support cases get housing
- Having an offender feed back re ideas for change that they have found useful
- As a PO getting to know the case, and building the relationship



## **Dream Phase: Provocative propositions**

This phase draws on the examples of innovation or good practice/experiences that have been discussed in the discovery phase. Attendees were asked to develop 'provocative propositions', aspirational statements that realistically sum up 'what could be', if services, practices, policies were redesigned to support desistance.

Within groups attendees identified provocative propositions and were asked to record those they identified as being the most important. At the London workshop 27 provocative propositions were identified.

### **Provocative propositions:**

1. Every probation trust and prison should have active service user involvement which informs service delivery and policy
2. Statutory services need to be in a position to prioritise what is important/more autonomy
3. Reformed offenders should have the opportunity to have their record spent
4. Raise profile of probation in communities and improve interface with other public services/organisations
5. Probation offices/officers are connected with local communities
6. Language and culture shifted from punishment/public protection to reducing reoffending/ rehabilitation/ re-integration
7. Individualised and responsive practice should be prioritised using real service user feedback
8. We incentivise desistance, building up credit in prison for good behavior etc and then able to 'buy' resettlement package
9. Criminal justice policy is driven by evidence of what works rather than fear
10. All society takes a responsibility for desistance (organisations, families and individuals)
11. Reduce prison population by 50% (especially women, black men, those with mental health issues and those on short sentences), with freed-up money used more effectively
12. Racism is eradicated within the criminal justice system (and wider society)
13. All probation offices look decent and comfortable; where people can feel like human beings
14. People being supported are told first about things that are about them
15. One probation officer sticks with you, if you want them to, and if there's a change there's a 3-way conversation first
16. Counseling technique training is required for all those working with people who have offended

17. We focus on the positives, and what people have achieved
18. The meeting/work environment should be physically conducive to change
19. Co-production and partnership throughout the whole criminal justice system
20. Intensive Alternative to Custody to replace more custodial sentences, to get away from the short-term revolving door
21. All elements of the criminal justice system to actively recruit ex-offenders
22. Each London borough to have a team of paid ex-offender mentors
23. Re-branding the function of prison, from punishment to rehabilitation
24. 98% less people sent to prison
25. Stop those with sentences under 12 month being sent to prison
26. Stop sending mentally ill people to prison
27. The criminal justice system (including Ministry of Justice and NOMS) to commence recruiting reformed offenders



## London workshop 2 (11 June 2012)

### Workshop Structure

10-10.20	<b>Welcome and film re-cap</b>
10.20 -10.40	<b>Reflections on first workshops;</b> -Have you done anything differently as a result of the first workshop? - Update from all stage 1 workshops
10.40- 11	<b>Voting for Provocative propositions to be prioritised</b>
11-12.30	<b>Design Phase</b>
2.30 – 1.30	Lunch
1.30 - 2.30	<b>Destiny Phase</b>
2.30-3.15	Tea/coffee
3.15-4.00	<b>Sharing reflections from, and about, the process and sum-up</b>

### Reflections on the first workshop

Attendees were invited to reflect on the first workshop and think about whether they had started to do anything differently as a consequence of being involved in the project.

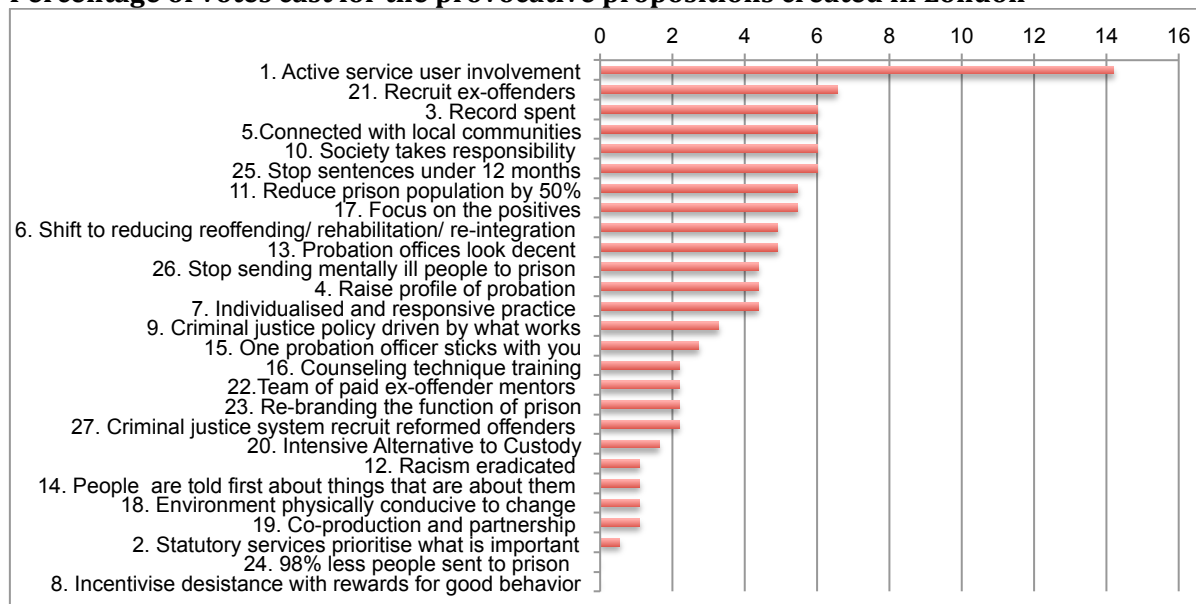
- I think we need to have a change about how we phrase things, a curriculum of words. I struggle with people that when they think they know me they use labels – I'm a criminal an addict. Its like you are not fit to be a part of society. I wake up every morning and I hate society, they hide behind the official. I have to be able to trust you. Its not my time – for my kids we may get something from it, but for me there's not going to be anything from the system.
- At what point will I be accepted. I haven't committed crime for 5 years. Allan has done well but he still faces the label.
- A lot of the film is talking about re-entry from prison. The interesting things at the last session were around helping people with the re-entry. Nothing ought to be outside the remit of probation officer.
- Societal response to offending is very complex, ex-sex offender on the queen's barge.
- I felt very inspired after the last session, in terms of thinking about the learning. Small things. Challenging the language is a little thing that I've taken away and felt able to do. Its also had an impact in terms of the issue about us being so risk averse, there's been a couple of instances were people who have committed very serious offences, and I started to question if there's a more creative way of allowing someone to 'check in'. And someone on a life sentence – rather than recalling, setting a number of conditions and offering support, but looking for alternatives rather than automatic recall. Not just using management and enforcement.
- I want you to hand me back my life, you have to take into consideration what I am capable of.
- Try to give clients more responsibility. What is more important is to look at their personal circumstances – housing etc. Then they can work towards making their lives better.
- I wanted to share the journey we're going on UNLOCK. Trying to change the language of "reformed offender".
- Training around violent extremism. One of the participants started using the term "service user". I liked the guy who said I have a solution come with me. We've got fantastic programmes and we need to learn from the language of those in the film – I found another world.

- Until recently we didn't have a voice. We have now set up a probation service community council – give us a voice. We can see when something is working right. Really good move.
- One of the big successes has been circles of support. One of the most rejecting is around sex offenders. There's something to learn from circles here. People are helping you for free, and people are selected for different reasons – so really ordinary identities. Don't think we've learnt from this – circles can be quite expensive in the way they are currently done – but there is something to learn here.
- Advise, be-friend, assist – is this still the objective of the probation service?

## Prioritising provocative propositions

Each attendee had five votes to cast for the provocative propositions they thought were most important. See the Dream Phase section above for a full list of provocative propositions. People could allocate their votes as they wished, i.e. they could allocate all five votes for one proposition or split their votes across several.

### Percentage of votes cast for the provocative propositions created in London



Provocative propositions	Votes	% of votes cast
1. Active service user involvement	26	14
21. Recruit ex-offenders	12	7
3. Record spent	11	6
5. Connected with local communities	11	6
10. Society takes responsibility	11	6
25. Stop sentences under 12 months	11	6
11. Reduce prison population by 50%	10	5
17. Focus on the positives	10	5
6. Shift to reducing reoffending/ rehabilitation/ re-integration	9	5
13. Probation offices look decent	9	5
26. Stop sending mentally ill people to prison	8	4
4. Raise profile of probation	8	4
7. Individualised and responsive practice	8	4
9. Criminal justice policy driven by what works	6	3
15. One probation officer sticks with you	5	3
16. Counselling technique training	4	2
22. Team of paid ex-offender mentors	4	2
23. Re-branding the function of prison	4	2
27. Criminal justice system recruit reformed offenders	4	2
20. Intensive Alternative to Custody	3	2
12. Racism eradicated	2	1
14. People are told first about things that are about them	2	1
18. Environment physically conducive to change	2	1
19. Co-production and partnership	2	1
2. Statutory services prioritise what is important	1	1
24. 98% less people sent to prison	0	0
8. Incentivise desistance with rewards for good behaviour	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>100</b>

## Design Phase

The third stage in the appreciative inquiry process focuses on designing a more ideal approach to supporting desistance, based on the examples that have emerged from the successes and achievements of the past. Attendees were required to think about what policies, practices and services might look like if they were designed in such a way as to better support desistance and to achieve the provocative propositions developed in the dream phase.

We selected seven provocative propositions to work on during this (and the following phase). These were based on the preferences emerging from the preceding voting exercise, with some attention paid to the over-lapping nature of some of the provocative propositions.

The provocative propositions we focused on are below, along with the notes from the group focused on this area.

Note one group changed their proposition slightly (changes in italics) and the number relates to their allocated number from workshop 1.

### **Proposition 1. Every probation trust and prison should have active service user involvement, which informs service delivery and policy**

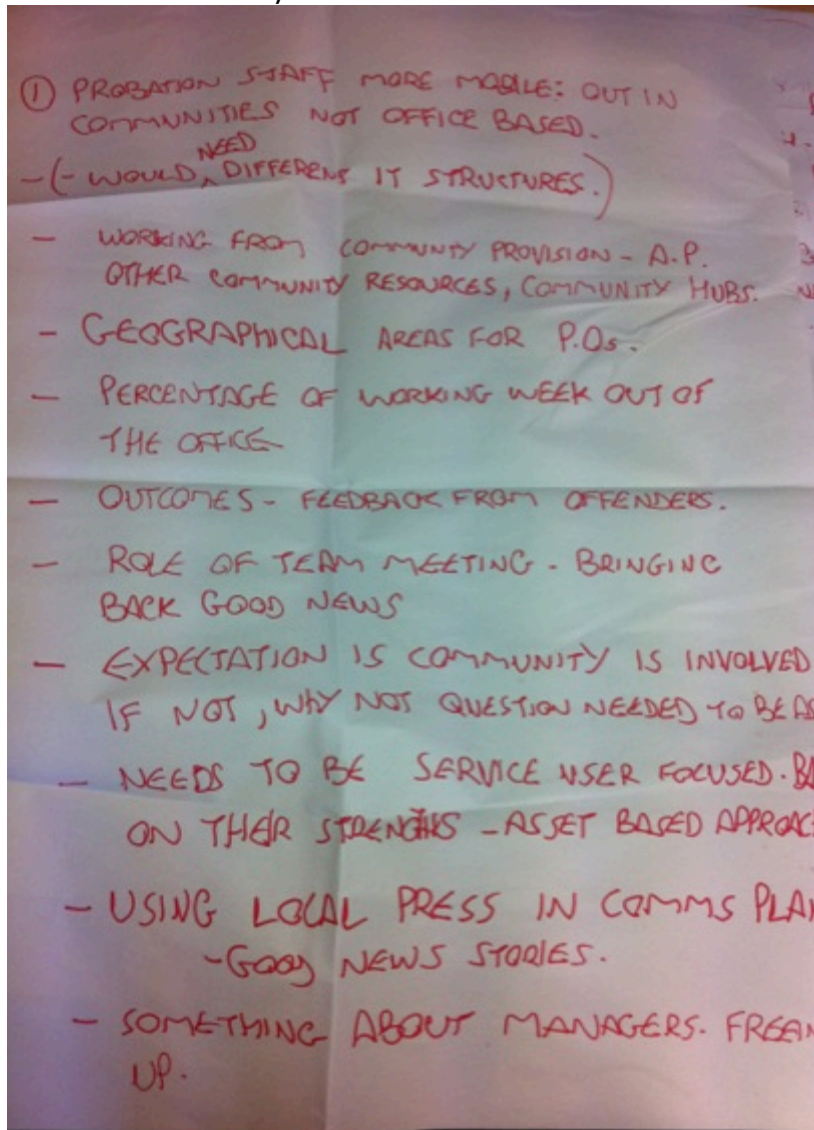
- Looked at different models but particularly the model of service user council. This is a representative model involving holding surgeries so other service users can feed in, minutes of meetings shared.
- How these service user representatives are housed and supported is significant. It is important that they are equal within an organisation. Should we be paying the service user representatives?
- Meetings with senior managers – people reflected that things could happen but that it is much easier to affect change as a group rather than as an individual.
- The group did not have positive feedback to report around service user surveys – these were not really valued. There was some discussion about securing greater service user input into the design of such surveys and the work to utilise the information to make changes.
- What do service users consider success? What do workers consider success? Are there similarities/differences? What does the government think too – how we ensure the service user voice also heard at the policy.

### **Proposition 3. Reformed offenders should have the opportunity to have their record spent**

- Some people's convictions never get spent, and those whose can often have to wait a long time. So we need a system which can help people to have it spent and also speed up the process for some people.
- Propose a criminal record tribunal – a review process for people whose conviction never becomes spent or whose record would take a long time to be spent.
- You can apply to the criminal record tribunal – its a paper based application in part. The panel making the decision about whether to approve the application consists of reformed offenders, probation officers and lay members.

- The criminal record tribunal is partly paid for by the individuals applying and partly government funded. It is means tested so that applications are not based on ability to pay, but those able to pay do so.
- We also need clear research about why allowing for records to be spent matters and why it needs to happen.
- Suggest a three-tier system:
  1. For certain crime types if it's a first offence and those who committed it are under 25 years old they are automatically removed after a certain length of time (based on the criminal records database).
  2. People can apply for review via the tribunal
  3. Stricter relevance test to employers about why particular convictions are relevant to posts advertised

**Proposition 5. Probation offices/officers are connected with local communities**



- Started with discussion about what do we mean by local communities? It isn't just organisations but also requires more involvement with families, circles of support etc.

- Discussion centred on how to support and encourage probation officers to get out of the office. Do we need to set a target for how to get out of the office – say set a target of something like 2 days a week not in office. Discussion about removing bureaucracy to allow this to happen.
- Integrated Offender Management offers an opportunity to work from elsewhere - other community centres, community hubs etc.
- Think about home visits in a different way to we do now. Thinking about how we support this in terms of IT. National standards – need to be braver in terms of releasing professional staff to do their jobs.
- Geographical areas for probation officers- have their own patch
- Team meetings need to be developed along the lines of action learning sets. We need to have more discussion about cases if we're all out and about more
- Performance changes – requires a clearer focus on outcomes

**Proposition 10. All society takes a responsibility for desistance (organisations, families and individuals)**

We realised we'd taken on a lot with this proposition! How to really view it from that bigger societal picture. Focused on 5 things:

- 1) Families - In relation to families (anyone important to people), as a society, we need to view families and communities as a factor for positive change. Had discussion about some families etc can be a problem, but accepted that in the majority of cases families, if supported, can be supportive.
- 2) Community Justice - Once you call it a criminal justice system, it becomes separate. We want to focus on a community justice system – other interventions are available and probation still there etc – but not just the criminal fraternity in terms of professional staff, involved. It incorporates more than this.
- 3) Schools – The role that schools can play, maybe moving into the prevention agenda. The importance of school provision and ensuring that people at risk of offending are not excluded. Excluding people who are at risk, is probably the worst thing that schools can do. How we reduce exclusion has to be a key focus of activity.
- 4) Attitudes – All angles, attitudes from society about individuals and communities, from offenders about citizenship.
- 5) Employers – There should be a quota for employers about their employment of people who have offended.

**Proposition 11. Reduce prison population by 50% (especially women, black men, those with mental health issues and those on short sentences), with freed-up money used more effectively**

- Timescale for doing this – is it a quick thing or long term?
- Educate sentencers about alternatives to custody
- More approved premises: one-stop shop residential services. Greater provision of intensive and residential support
- Preventing reoffending – better mental health, education, sure start etc
- Changing sentencing guidelines – only crown courts can send people to prison
- Public opinion – start with arguments around women and young people and prison
- Less enforcement
- Activate custody plus – legal provision already in existence
- Use probation trust to identify needs

**Proposition 17. We focus on the positives, and what people have achieved *and can achieve***

This group identified issues around home environment, respect, attitude and support.



Key points highlighted when reporting back were:

- The probation service's OASIS system (a case management system) does not allow a positive focus
- New framework is moving away from paper work to enable focus on people's strengths
- Home environment – need to do more home visits, and this can help us to think about the strengths around them
- Respect – we need buildings which are nice, to facilitate a more positive focus, and a language which shows respect for a person. The language reflects a client focus - what do you want?
- Interaction skills – need to ensure those involved in probation have good interaction skills
- Formal recognition when people do well – need to think creatively about rewarding success

**Proposition 21. All elements of the criminal justice system to actively recruit ex-offenders**

- Would be interested in seeing whether you can be an ex-offender judge or prison officer. This group however focused on the probation service given the backgrounds represented in the group.
- We identified some small step actions – we can look at our current employment practices, add statements about how we positively welcome applications from people who have offended
- Can look at disclosure processes
- We have recently created some apprenticeships (catering)
- We are investing in the role of volunteers – as a route to get into paid employment within the organisation
- Can look at the recruitment process and ensure this is not (just) a paper exercise
- We don't actually know how many ex-offenders London Probation Trust currently employ, so this is something we should start monitoring
- Can explore creating new roles (as well as recruiting existing roles)
- We need to accept that things may occasionally not work out (as they can do with any staff group)
- Interested in the 3-5 years predictive research referred to in the film in terms of making a case for employment of people who have offended
- Cultural shift – this is a natural next step – but need to promote successful examples and need to think broadly in probation officer recruitment and training



## Destiny Phase

This session is about 'making change happen'. Here we focused on what needs to be done to achieve the vision of the future established in the dream and design phases. Attendees focused on identifying what participants can do to move towards better practices, services and policies, and identified what others also need to do to make this happen.

### **Proposition 1. Every probation trust and prison should have active service user involvement, which informs service delivery and policy**

- We will be taking back to our different workplaces what we've learnt. Trying to influence things in some small way.
- Plan to have more events that are like this within the areas that are service users and probation officers – bridging the gap.

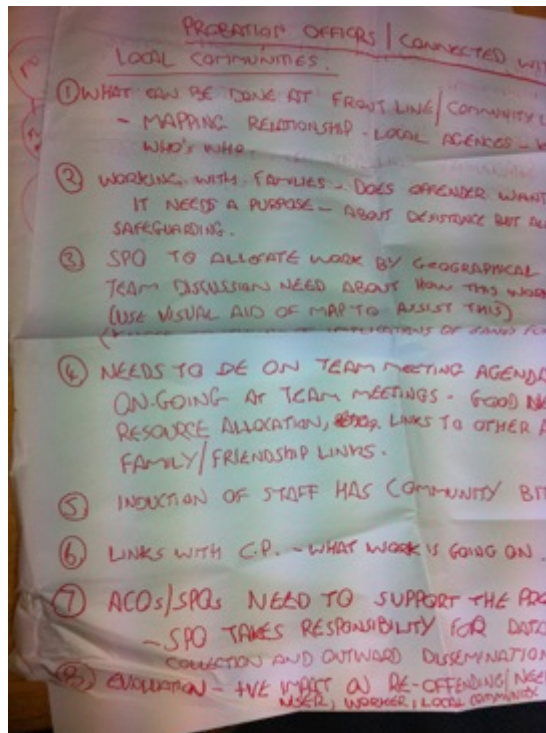
### **Proposition 3. Reformed offenders should have the opportunity to have their record spent**

- Evidence base – looking at the under-employment of offenders – establishing why this is important
- Pilot the approach of the value of having your record spent
- The need for the ministry of justice to recognise this group of people beyond the criminal justice dimension
- Need for employers as advocates
- Positive role models – people who have gone on to lead successful lives
- Educating the public/employers etc. that most people stop offending
- Ministry of Justice – Need to be leaders in employing people who have offended

### **Proposition 5. Probation offices/officers are connected with local communities**

- Map who is who within the local area in terms of agencies and services. Also look at the demographics in the area. This should also allow the identification of some of the gaps within the area. Also looking at gang activity within these areas.
- Families – who we need to see and why – perhaps providing guidance for what is appropriate/desirable.
- Senior probation officer needs to allocate work within each geographical area- need to explore how this works if someone transfers to another area. Use of visual and mapping tools to assist with this.
- Team discussions need to make sure there is exploration of how this all works. Also to highlight good news stories and linking to other agencies.
- We need to know what is going on with community payback – are there any schemes? What work is going on
- Induction of staff has a community dimension

- Evaluation – are there going to be outcomes which we can measure, we have to prove ourselves, that we are doing something effectively – qualitative measures required
- Shadowing colleagues in other agencies – making contact with other professionals in other agencies – building up healthy relationships (housing etc.)



**Proposition 10. All society takes a responsibility for desistance (organisations, families and individuals)**

- Cross-departmental conversations need to take place for policy change - at the strategic level.
- Help with the evidence required. We throw resources at an individual but not necessarily at the right time. Need to look at the individual – what works for who and when
- Media are a big issue – different stories that come from national and local media
- Volunteering with agencies, need to know more about offenders as people
- We have a duty to engage
- The research is important, desistance theories starting to change thinking
- Untapped power of victims – find a way to sell desistance

**Proposition 11. Reduce prison population by 50% (especially women, black men, those with mental health issues and those on short sentences), with freed-up money used more effectively**

- Educate sentencers. Joint work with magistrates. As practitioners we need to have more contact with sentencers to help inform what does and doesn't work, and to prove that community sentences can work.
- Be pro-active in probation reports – making case for alternatives to prison
- Collect information about recalls, with aim of making recalls to perhaps just 28 days
- Making links with mental health organisations
- We want probation managers to press for a change in law around recalls, making shorter
- Put more money into something which is a residential alternative to prison, a one stop shop
- Making case for why probation works – staff going out to give presentations about the value of probation
- New practice framework to help go extra mile, to try to reduce recall

**Proposition 17. We focus on the positives, and what people have achieved *and can achieve***

- Skills for effective engagement (SEED) An approach not the approach
- Reduce caseloads, by diverting at PR stage?
- Reduce the number of forms, have a maximum number of forms – if one form needs to be added then one needs to be removed
- Get rid of offender manager term
- Regular meetings held to practice justifying your decisions
- Proper training in listening
- Pro-social modeling training
- More time spent productively face to face
- Hope is the key
- Flexibility - some relationships don't work, recognise that and change it
- Be supportive as officers - contact housing, benefits etc

**Proposition 21. All elements of the criminal justice system to actively recruit ex-offenders**

- We're all members of the public, something about conveying a message about recruiting ex-offenders. Championing what we do outside work too.
- Intranet at probation trust- you can see what jobs are available for ex-offenders
- Changing perceptions by employing people who have offended – realising the potential of people
- The use of certificates – give out certifications for the completion of orders. Rewarding success.
- Using examples – sharing stories about what people can achieve
- Piloting apprenticeships